

## ANNUS IRÆ.

There's a stain of blood in the wintry sky —  
 There's a scent of blood in the freezing air —  
 The hollow blast goes moaning by,  
 Sick with its burden of despair.  
 For the leash has been slipped from the dogs of  
 War,  
 And their muzzles are red with human gore;  
 And fast by the couch of the dying year  
 Gather the phantoms of Woe and Fear

Who is to blame, that a world so fair  
 Arithes in the throes of a monster-birth?  
 Who is to blame, that a crimson glare  
 Mocks at the gloom of a shuddering earth?  
 Who is to blame? Ah me! I woe!  
 Saxon or Gaul it matters not,  
 Never was lacking to Adam's seed,  
 A glib excuse for a selfish deed.

Year that it is trodden a bloody path,  
 Flaming the banner of empty pride,  
 Year that has crushed in thy frenzied wrath  
 Legions of victims who fought and died!  
 Dark is thy record to eyes that mourn,  
 Hateful thy name to the widowed breast,  
 Draining its milk for the nursing burn  
 'Mid the horrors that hang on thine awful crest!

God still reigneth, and we who wait,  
 Weary with vigil, but not dismayed,  
 Beat at the bars of the crystal gate,  
 Hoping and trusting in mercy's aid;  
 Hoping to welcome the sway of Peace,  
 Trusting the promise of days to come,  
 When the angry glare of the trumpet shall cease,  
 And the wall of the perishing ranks be dumb.

## A FEW WORDS ON CANADA.

BY A CANADIAN.

[CONTINUED.]

This delicacy has not resulted in inconvenience as yet, for the reason that Canadians have not forgotten the traditions of their fathers, and the new blood infused has not lessened the martial spirit of the people. Considerable portion of the population is naturally inclined to the profession of arms, and it is not surprising that Canada has utilized this element by accepting voluntary offers to serve in her army, instead of drawing indiscriminately by ballot from the ranks of the reserve.

By selecting those portions of the year within which the men composing the rural corps can best be spared from their industrial pursuits, much has been effected in the way of drill. The days intervening between the spring work and hay harvest, and after the fall seed has been put in, are the brief periods best suited for this purpose, and the few days thus to be spent in camp, can be, and is, to a great extent, looked forward to as a season of comparative relaxation from the more laborious occupations incident to agricultural pursuits in Canada.

The active Militia, as now organized, is made up entirely of men who have voluntarily joined the force, so that no necessity has yet arisen to make use of the ballot in providing means to take the place of those who have completed their periods of service from time to time. It is therefore evident that the military spirit of the people is fully equal to the requirements of the law as regards primary organization and drill, and it is fair to suppose that, should the necessity for a more extended period of continuous annual drill be acknowledged by Parliament, the same spirit of patriotism which animated the men in bringing the organization to its present development, will tend to keep the ranks filled by voluntary enrolment.

The Reserve Militia is, however, the backbone of the organization, as additional men, required to fill the ranks of and supplement the present active force, must in cases of necessity be drawn from the reserve. The necessary machinery to enable this to be effectively done, is therefore kept in working order from time to time.

The different stages of progress in organi-

zation may be stated briefly as follows: After the war of 1812-15 the militia was in a quiescent state, the population was sparse and limited in number. The country new and undeveloped, demanded the concentration of the energies of the people in other pursuits. The rebellion of 1837 attracted attention for a time, but being crushed no steps were taken towards permanent organization until 1846, but then the money resources of the country were not considered sufficient to warrant expenditure, and very little was done prior to 1856. Then a small active force was organized, and the strength added to from time to time, until 1861, when the war of the rebellion in the United States and the seizure of the steamer *Trent*, having Messrs. Mason and Slidell on board, awakened us to the necessities of the times, and found us with an active force numbering not more than 12,000, and with a militia in other respects entirely untrained. The Imperial Government, impressed with the urgency of the situation and the want of preparation for defensive measures in Canada, took active and effective steps to indicate to us the duties free government imposed.

Quoting the words used by the Duke of Newcastle in his despatch to Lord Monck, under date 21st August, 1862:

"The growing importance of the Colony, and its attachment to free institutions, make it every day more essential that it should possess in itself that without which free institutions cannot be secure—adequate means of self defence. The adequacy of those means is materially influenced by the peculiar position of the country. Its extent of frontier is such that it can be safe only when its population capable of bearing arms, is ready and competent to fight. That the population is ready, no one will venture to doubt; that it cannot be competent is no less certain, until it has received that organization, and acquired that habit of discipline which constitute the difference between a trained force and an armed mob.

"The main dependence of such a country must be upon its own people. The irregular forces which can be formed from the population know the passes of the woods, its roads, its rivers, its defiles, and for defensive warfare (for aggression they will never be wanted), would be far more available than regular soldiers.

"It is in time of peace that preliminary measures of defence should be perfected, so that in the event of war they may be found so far ready as to ensure that an enemy shall not obtain a footing in the country before aid is forthcoming from other portions of the Empire."

In 1863 additions were made to the strength of the active force under an improved organization, so that in 1866, when the Fenians made their first attempt to cross our border, we had made such progress as to enable us to place men in the field, who, although defective as regards equipment, had courage and discipline to carry them safely through; and adverting to the effectiveness of the force as then organized the Adjutant General, (Col. Macdougall,) in his report on the state of the Militia for 1866, says:

"On his first arrival in Canada the Adjutant General was disposed to undervalue the importance of the existing Volunteer Force.

"Experience has convinced him that both as regards material and spirit, and also as regards proficiency in drill, acquired under great disadvantages, that force is of great value.

"A more severe test of the efficiency of the Volunteer system for defence could not have been applied than that which was furnished by the circumstances of last winter, and in no respect has it been found wanting but, on the contrary, fully equal to the calls made upon it.

"During the past autumn and winter an uneasy feeling was naturally produced along the whole of the frontier bordering on the United States by the preparations and threatened incursions of the Fenians, which was not allayed by the measures adopted by the Government in November of placing 500 Volunteers on service at Windsor, Sarnia, Niagara and Prescott.

"In these circumstances all the local Volunteer Corps along the frontier line showed an excellent spirit, and the alacrity with which they turned out spontaneously to defend the lives and properties of their fellow citizens at those points most exposed to anticipated raids, when those raids appeared imminent, is worthy of the highest commendation.

"On the 7th March, 1866, the Adjutant General, on his way from Ottawa to Montreal, received at Kemptonville, at four o'clock, p.m., a telegraphic message from the Honorable the Minister of Militia as follows:

'MESSAGE.

'OTTAWA, March 7th, 1866.

'To Colonel McDougall.

'Call out ten thousand (10,000) men of Volunteer Force. Send me by telegraph names of Corps. They must be out in twenty-four (24) hours, and for three (3) weeks and whatever further time may be required. Telegraph direct this evening from Prescott to Brigade Majors and Officers commanding such Corps as you think most desirable to be in readiness to move on your orders to-morrow.

'(Signed),

JOHN A. MACDONALD.

'By making use of the Post Office van, the Adjutant General was enabled, in the course of the journey to despatch messages and letters to the Militia Staff Officers of the several districts, prescribing the quota to be furnished in each district. On the arrival of the train in Montreal at midnight answers were received from all the districts announcing that arrangements were in progress; and by 4 o'clock p.m., on the following day (8th), it was reported to the Adjutant General that the total number of 10,000 men were assembled at their respective headquarters waiting further orders.

"By the afternoon of Saturday, the 10th, that distribution was effected without mistake and without accident, which, considering the great distances and the scattered nature of the Volunteer force in the country parts, reflects great credit on the zeal and alacrity of the Staff Officers of the different districts, and on the spirit and loyalty of the men composing the force.

"The country too is greatly indebted to the managers of the different railroads for their invaluable hearty co-operation, which could alone have enabled the military authorities satisfactorily to carry out their plans, and the promptness with which every service was executed and the entire absence of casualty, speak volumes for the efficient management of the lines.

"It is quite certain that in place of the 10,000 men called for, 30,000 could have been mustered within 48 hours; and, indeed, when the returns were received a few days after of the strength of the companies on service, it was found that the number called for by the Governor General had been