

THE U.S. NATIONAL GUARD.

The "New National Guard" is the title of a very interesting article descriptive of the National Guard of the U. S. A., its origin, history and present position, which appears in the February number of the *Century*, written by Francis V. Greene.

Speaking of the parade in New York to commemorate the centennial of Washington's first inauguration, Mr. Greene says it revealed to more than a million astonished spectators a force of over 30,000 soldiers, well armed, equipped and drilled, of whom not more than 2,000 were in the service of the U.S. It was the largest body of armed men assembled on this continent since the close of the civil war, now nearly a generation ago. It was a force whose methods of organization and support are unlike those of any other military system; and its present condition of excellence is the result of barely more than a dozen years of well directed effort.

The organization of an efficient militia, which was advocated by Washington on all proper occasions with his usual dignified but forcible language, is just becoming a reality, ninety years after his death.

In the bill of rights Congress was authorized to organize, arm and discipline the Militia. To the States was reserved the right to appoint the officers, and to train the militia according to the method prescribed by Congress.

In spite of the ample authority given to Congress little or nothing has been done to provide an efficient militia; for years the annual appropriation for its armament and equipment was only \$200,000, and it was not until 1887 that this sum was increased to \$400,000.

The quaint and obsolete law of 1792 remains the law of the land as to enrolment, etc.; and after his enrolment the citizen is to "be constantly provided with a good musket or firelock, of a bore sufficient for balls of the eighteenth part of a pound, a sufficient bayonet and belt, two spare flints," and many other articles which can now be obtained only by loan from a museum of antiquities.

The officers "to be armed to be armed with a sword or hanger and spontoon."

Every State in the Union has revised its military code since 1881, and in all but seven States there is now an organized uniformed and armed National Guard.

The organized militia numbers 109,674 or 9,000 officers and 100,000 men. The

average attendance at camp varies from 75 to 95 per cent.

The annual cost of maintaining the United States Army is about \$1,000 per man, as against \$450 per man in England and \$125 per man in Russia. The militia of the U.S. cost a little less than \$24 per man, of which the general government contributes one-sixth and the States five-sixths. Officers and men give their services free (except a nominal pay while in camp) and contribute for uniforms, travelling expenses and other purposes an amount which probably exceeds the amount paid by the States.

Of the total force about 94,000 are infantry, 5,500 artillery, and 7,000 cavalry. About one-half the force in New Mexico and in South Carolina is cavalry, and the proportion of this arm in all the Southern States is much greater than in the Northern.

In the matter of armament there is a diversity which would prove disastrous if the troops of different States should serve together in the field. In New York the Guard is armed (at the expense of the State) with the Remington, calibre 50, in Connecticut with the Peabody, calibre 43, in some of the States are still to be found some of the Springfield, calibre 50. With these exceptions the troops are armed with the Springfield, calibre 45.

In thirty-three States the law provides for an annual encampment of various length, from four to fourteen days.

A comparison of the systems of organization and instruction pursued by the States of Pennsylvania and New York respectively follows, then a claim for more liberality and encouragement of the force on the part of the Federal government, and an expression of opinion that an inefficient militia is worse than useless and the money spent upon it is wholly thrown away. If it is to be maintained at all, it should be kept in the highest state of efficiency consistent with its fundamental principle of being a voluntary unpaid organization of men, engaged in other occupations for a livelihood.

What should be and can be accomplished in the militia is to provide a force with a proper organization, uniformly armed, clothed and equipped, well instructed in book drill and in the rudiments of guard and outpost duty, but above all perfectly familiar, by constant practice, with its fire arm. Mr. Greene considers that this can be accomplished, and says it was a maxim of the Colonel of the New York 7th Regiment, never to attempt anything that could not be well done, and to do perfectly whatever was attempted.

The result is seen in a regiment which has the maximum strength of 40 officers

and 1,000 men, authorized by law, with over 200 instructed recruits on the waiting list, which qualifies every year from ninety-five per cent. to ninety-seven per cent. of its strength as marksmen, whose proficiency in drill is known from one end of the land to the other, and which furnished 667 officers and men to the volunteer armies of the civil war.

THE STORY OF A BRAVE DEED.

What one likes in Archibald Forbes's "Barracks, Bivouacs, and Battles" (Macmillan), is the air of freedom, the robustness, the jauntiness of these episodes in the pageant of war. Men do their brave deeds without parade and without false humility, but with just a touch of assumed carelessness. Of course no man risks his life without caring, unless he is utterly tired of it—and in that case there is no special merit in running after death. But really to enjoy life to the utmost, and put it all in peril for a sentiment or through ambition to wear a bauble of a cross which means Honor—that takes nerve; and to do it with a smile, as though it were one of the polite conventions of life which are expected of every gentleman, requires more than that physical imperturbableness which we call "nerve"—it demands a steadfast spirit.

So in these sketches when we read of Lord Wm. Beresford riding into the very face of death to snatch a wounded sergeant from the oncoming Zulus, we feel admiration for his humanity. And when we read that the wounded man refused to go with him because it would endanger two lives instead of bringing inevitable death to one—we say he also is a brave man. But when it is added that Lord William "swore with clenched fist that he would punch the wounded man's head if he did not allow his life to be saved"—the touch of humor brings the whole scene within the range of our sympathies. It is not a play any longer with actors of another race, but a bit of ordinary everyday life made ideal. Then we say "Here is a hero."

Then a third man appears, Irish Sergeant O'Toole, and he shoots down the pursuing Zulus, who are at the very heels of the over-burdened horse, and the three comrades together at last reach safety.

By and by the British troops sail home, but the news of the brave deed has long preceded them. Lord William is summoned to Windsor to receive the Victoria Cross. Surely he had earned it doubly; but there is room for even more "stuff" in such a hero. He will have no honor which he cannot share with O'Toole; and the Queen knows valor when she sees it, and gives two Victoria Crosses.

Then we say "Here is a hero who is not only humane and brave, but generous and modest, and withal he has a sense of humor. Why, he is not what the books call a hero—he is a Man, every inch of him, and I would like to take his hand and tell him so."—*Life*