



# THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

AND MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE MILITARY AND NAVAL FORCES OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

Vol. I.

OTTAWA, MONDAY, APRIL 29, 1867.

No. 17

## THE HEROINES AT HOME.

The maid who binds her warrior's sash  
With smiles that well her pain dissembles,  
The while beneath her drooping lash  
One starry tear-drop hangs and trembles;  
Though heaven alone record the tear,  
And fame shall never know her story,  
Her heart has shed a drop as dear  
As ever dewed the field of glory.

The wife who girds her husband's sword  
Mid little ones that weep or wonder,  
And bravely speaks the cheering word,  
E'en though her heart be rent assunder;  
Doomed nightly in her dreams to hear  
The bolts of war around him rattle,  
Has shed as sacred blood as e'er  
Was poured upon the field of battle.

The mother who conceals her grief  
While to her breast her boy she presses  
And speaks a few brave words and brief,  
Kissing the patriot she blesses;  
With no one but her secret God  
To know the weight that weighs upon her,  
Has shed blood holy as the sod  
E'er drank on freedom's field of honor.

## SKETCH OF A WIMBLEDON RIFLE-MATCH.

SPECIAL trains had been running from Waterloo to Wimbledon throughout 'rifle week' as fast as passengers accumulated at the station. On Saturday, when the Queen's Prize was contended for, when what has been called the examination for double-first in rifle-shooting came on, crowds filled the carriages as fast as they could be got ready. We went down in the morning. Volunteers of all shades of uniform, with rifles, and pouches well stored with ammunition, were waiting on the platform, and took the train by assault as soon as it was formed. I sat opposite a gentleman in braid, with a long Enfield, and very positive opinions about the match. The carriage was full. We talked butts and projectiles all the way down. Wimbledon station was reached in about quarter of an hour, and we found an irregular stand of cabs waiting to take us to the common. 'Here you are, sir; Hansom! half-a-crown; two shillings.' 'Bus! plenty of room inside; shilling each.' We went by the bus. It bristled with arms, and was double loaded outside; the Volunteers sitting with their legs dangling down like those

of mutes on a return hearse. There was quite a study of pendent boot from the window at which I sat. In about a mile and a half we were set down outside a fence like a hoarding round a half-built house. Passing through the entrance, where we paid one shilling, we found ourselves on the common—a wide heath, with patches of furze, and a fringe of tents. The eye took in the arrangements at a glance. Within the fringe of tents, which contained mainly refreshments, were a row of others in pairs, about a hundred yards apart, opposite and corresponding to pairs of butts 500 yards off. These were mounds of earth, some 15 feet high and 30 feet wide. Beyond them was a still more distant line, nearly a mile off. In front of each stood the targets—plates of iron half an inch thick, and six feet square, white-washed, with a black centre two feet in diameter. The furthest were so distant that the centre was just visible as a little black dot not much bigger than that of an 'i.'

The tents from which the firing was going on were surrounded by crowds of people, who were kept from interfering with the shooters by a rope passed round a ring of stakes driven into the ground. The firing-tents on the right were occupied by the candidates for the Queen's Prize of £250; those on the left were hard at work at 'Aunt Sally.' We visited these first. 'Aunt Sally' is adopted from the popular venture of that name at fairs and races. You pay a shilling for your shot, and the receipts are divided at the close of the day among those who hit the centre. I walked up to the tent opposite the third pair of butts; a crowd of gallant Volunteers were waiting their turn to shoot. The tent from which they fired in rotation was about eight feet wide, open before and behind. At the entrance a man sat with pen, ink and paper, ready to receive the moneys, and put down the names of those who hit the centre. Some twenty men were standing in single file, treading close on each other's heels, and shuffling forward as the turn of the leading man came to fire; after which he moved off to the right, round the tent, reloaded, and took his place again in the line—like the procession in the smaller theatres. You might fire in any position. This liberty was freely used. Some stood; some knelt in the approved Hythe posture; others sat down, and gathered up their knees as if they were going to take their place in a circle of 'Hunt the Slipper;' others lay flat down on their stomachs. The mistakes made were occa-

sionally odd enough. 'Hollo! sir, you have forgotten to cock your rifle.' 'You have not put up your sight.' 'That is the wrong butt you are aiming at.' One fat fellow sat down with a jolt, and fired right up into the air!

Close beside each target was a bullet-proof iron shed, shaped like the body of a Hansom cab off its wheels: in this the marker sat, and signaled the result of each shot. A dark-blue flag showed that the centre was hit; a white one, that the white part of the target had been struck; a red one waved close to the ground, that the bullet had fallen short.

Armed with a race-glass, lent to me by one of the bystanders, I sat down on the grass at the entrance of the tent and watched the shooting. The target, I have said, was 500 yards off, and the centre two feet in diameter. No one was allowed to fire from a rest. This, then, was no child's play, though many of those present joined in it with great merriment. The party who were firing belonged to a genuine London corps; many of them, till within the last few months, never had a rifle in their hands. The shooting, however, was remarkably good. One smart young fellow was telling me how he knew nothing whatever about shooting until lately. When his turn came, he laid himself flat down on the ground, and quietly drove his bullet right into the centre—that is, he would have hit a man more than quarter of a mile off. I stood by the tent for some time; again and again the distant flag was waved, showing that that the target had been struck; and this was the skill of men who hitherto had spent their days behind the counter or at the desk. Think of that, ye sneering martinets, and swaggering French colonels! Here were thorough-bred Cockneys, poking fun at one another, but all the while making practice that would rival or even beat the famous Chasseurs de Vincennes, without seeming to think they were doing anything out of the way. A soldier alone, who stood by me, expressed any surprise.

Presently, the order came to cease firing; and the markers, waving large red flags, to indicate danger, came out of their holes and went to dinner. Most of the spectators turned into a huge refreshment marquee, furnished by Strange, the caterer at the Crystal Palace. All tastes were suited; you could dine at any figure at well ordered tables, or be happy on the grass with a slice of bread and cheese and a bottle of porter.

During the armistice I walked up to the butts. For many yards in front of them the ground was covered with flakes of lead, the bullets that struck the iron having been,