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The Volunteer Review,
AND
MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE

"Unbrided, unbought, our swords we draw,
To guard the Monarch, fence the Law."

OTTAWA, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1875.

TO CORRESPONDENTS—Letters addressed to either the Editor or Publisher, as well as Communications intended for publication, must, invariably, be pre-paid. Correspondents will also bear in mind that one end of the envelope should be left open, and at the corner the words "Printer's Copy" written and a two or five cent stamp (according to the weight of the communication) placed thereon will pay the postage.

LIEUT. J. B. VINTER, of Victoria, and Captain H. V. EDMONDS of New Westminster, are our authorized Agents for British Columbia.

We have to call the attention of our readers to the very valuable article from the Edinburgh Scotsman entitled, "English and American Finances," in which the mismanagement of municipal funds under the free and easy system of our neighbours is strongly contrasted with the economy and real progress evident in British municipalities.

As an instance, the city of London has laid out over £13,000,000 sterling within the last ten years on the Thames embankment and drainage, and her debt is only a little over four millions sterling, her population is over four millions of souls; while New York with about 700,000 of a population and without any great public works, has a debt of £31,515,678 sterling, equal to £45 sterling for each inhabitant. The lesson is one deserving attention.

We have to acknowledge the receipt of No. LXXXII. Vol. XIX. of the "Journal of the Royal United Service Institution. It contains the following articles:—On the Organization of the Communications of an Army, including Railways; On Training Boys for Soldiers; The Gatling Gun, its place in Tactics; Naval Guns and Gunnery; Some account of the Observations recently made by the Corporation of Trinity House on

Fog Signals; Fog Signalling by Explosions; Fog Signals for Vessels under way; Discussion on Fog Signals; A New System of Naval Tactics; Innes' Self-acting Gun Carriage with Evaporating Muzzle; Plan for Protecting Ships (at anchor) Blockading a Port from attacks by outriggered Whitehead or Harvey Torpedoes; Delinquents of Hair's Minute Sea surface Animals, from coloured drawings by Mrs. Tynbee—Part III. This number has an unusual amount of interesting matter, of which we propose to take advantage at a future time. The delicate coloured drawings by the lady contributor deserve great praise, as they much command admiration.

We are indebted to the courtesy of a friend for a copy of the London Times, of 4th October, from which we extract an article on the recent "Prussian Army Manœuvres in Silesia," which will be found acceptable to our readers for many reasons, especially, as the completeness of organization is contrasted with the short comings of the regular British army, especially in those departments of the general staff in which the higher qualities of intelligence, as manifested in the transmission of orders in the field reconnaissance and the many onerous duties appertaining thereto.

In order that the whole bearing of the case may be more easily seen, we have reprinted the original letter in another page, and the comments of the Times thereon is as follows.

"A Military Correspondent has lately furnished us with some interesting sketches of the Prussian Army and of its Manœuvres in Silesia; in his letter this morning contains a general review of some of the strong points in the Prussian system. The spectacle he depicts may well be fascinating to a soldier's eye, for it is one in which every circumstance and consideration is absolutely subordinated to the object of producing the highest possible degree of military efficiency. The Manœuvres are rendered as near to the reality of war as is practicable without bloodshed, but they are only a visible illustration of the intensity with which every element of the Army is maintained at the full strain of warlike energy. It is reported, indeed, that the physical exertion imposed on the troops in such Manœuvres has inflicted casualties resembling those of a campaign, and that in Germany itself remonstrances against this severity are beginning to be heard. But if the work is overdone, it is in pursuance of a system which applies to all ranks and deals with every detail. The Emperor, by universal admission, sets the example; and, from the Chief of the Staff to the newest recruit, every one is called upon to exert himself to the uttermost of his powers. The last war was no sooner over than, without allowing themselves a moment's repose, the military authorities began to extend their Army and improve its organization; and no degree of success achieved by any arm of their Force relieves it from continual criticism and amendment. If there was one branch of the German Forces which won especial admiration in the late war, it was the Cavalry. Four years have barely passed, and our Correspondent has been attending Manœuvres the special

object of which is to test by practice some plans, which have been slowly matured, for improving the art of handling Cavalry. The German Staff have come to the conclusion that much has still to be learnt on the subject, and they are consequently studying it in the field as diligently as in the closet. It is still more characteristic of their vigilance and thoroughness that on the very field of victory they recognized some grave defects in the management of their Infantry, and that they are now endeavouring to remedy errors which, as our Correspondent has already explained, they candidly admit ought to have cost them dear. In fact, every part of the Army is equally maintained in practice. From Companies and Regiments to Army Corps, every subdivision of the Force receives its special training, and the working of the whole machine, from the highest point to the lowest, is effectually tested. No part is suffered to rest, or left to be refurnished when the occasion arises. The Army, for practical purposes, is little less than always at war, and its condition is almost that of a perpetual bivouac.

"It is to this established habit that the various excellencies detailed by our Correspondent may mainly be traced. The ordinary administration of the Prussian Army is a War Administration, and the necessities which war imposes are perpetually present to the minds of its chiefs. Our correspondent cannot avoid reflecting obliquely on the strange contrast which in some respects the English Army presents, and our soldiers doubtless need to learn many lessons from the great military model of the day. The only justification of the cost in men and money entailed on a country by the maintenance of a Regular Army is that all its members, Men and Officers alike, should keep themselves ever prepared and ready, both in discipline and in military intelligence, to take the field. But the difficulty of our task cannot be understood until it is recognized that we work under precisely the opposite condition to that which prevails in Germany. Our thoughts and habits are all of Peace, and our administration of the Army is consequently too much of a Peace administration. We centralize the departments and the commands, not because Englishmen have any particular love for centralization, or any considerable capacity for it, but because the advantages of decentralization have never been forced on us with the terrible urgency which Prussia has experienced. We ought, indeed, to have learnt something of this lesson from the Crimean War; but when the war was over we reverted to our peaceful habits and aims. Our War Office and our Horse Guards seem to us like any other public Department; and we have scarcely thought about the matter sufficiently to recognize and carry out the essential differences which ought to distinguish them from the rest. It is certainly time, however, that in some particulars we imitated the Prussians without delay. Nothing can be more admirable than the system of individual independence and responsibility which our Correspondent describes. In any future war commanders of subordinate rank will certainly be obliged, whether they like it or not, to act as much on their own responsibility as the captain of a ship in the heat and obscurity of a naval action. The rapidity of movements, the unexpected effects which are sure to be produced by artillery, combined with the vast size of modern Armies, will in an increasing degree throw officers on their own resources of judgment and resolution. But if they have not been trained to act independently beforehand, they will be unable to do so when