

with him. Let the battalion assemble in different parts of its county where ground can be procured at a reasonable rental. This would give the residents a far better opinion of its corps, and lead to more interest being taken therein than the present two-year brigade system. Have the battalions brigaded once in four years but from company headquarter's drill the good—General deliver us. I have seen this company headquarter's drill carried out in past years, and I unhesitatingly declare it to be a delusion and a fraud. Year after year and before I joined the Canadian Militia I took particular note of the system. Companies would contain from 15 to 30 men during the time before inspection, but on inspection day the ranks would be full, and that with men and boys hired, and uniformed for that day, who would have undergone a couple of hours at manual and platoon practice in order that their total ignorance in drill would not be too apparent. I have known many men hired for from \$1.50 to \$2 a day for inspection who could not tell the right from the left flank of a company, and who never joined the ranks unless upon a similar occasion and for a similar consideration. Discipline, the fundamental portion of a soldier's career, is at its lowest ebb. At company headquarter drill even distinctions of rank are almost obliterated. In battalion, those faults, if not entirely cured, are certainly mitigated. There are other abuses creep in at this company headquarter drill, which I will not now dilate on. Let the battalions get together yearly within the limits of their counties, so that those who know may impart knowledge to those who are backward, have all the men under the supervision and command of the commanding officer of the battalion; by this means knowledge will be gained and discipline in a very great measure maintained. I have to take exception to "Oxford's" statement, "it is certainly a fact that members or officers of rural corps are hardly able to instruct their corps in the formation of fours or turnings." Although there may be several of that stamp in the rural, as well as in the city corps, there are still a good many to whom this libel does not apply. I do not know what axe "Oxford" has to grind, but he cannot sharpen it for a long time by writing on matters of which he either knows nothing or which he wilfully misrepresents. As to the "many good men of social position, etc., etc.," I would only say, if they cannot afford a few days in a year for drill away from their own door yards, they would be of little use should any emergency call them to a wider field. They had better stop at home and leave the field open to those who are willing to sacrifice their time for the benefit of their country. Again, "The city companies are becoming more efficient every day." The disgrace is theirs if they do not, with drill sheds and geographical facilities at their disposal. That "the rural corps is less efficient than it was 25 years ago" I deny in toto, and I believe my opinion is as good as "Oxford's" until he proves his assertion by facts, and the burden of the proof lies on him. Again, his proposition of "drilling rural corps at headquarters without pay," this is unmitigated bosh. You would not have a dozen battalions (rural) left in a few years. Why, even in England at the present moment the question of paying volunteers and otherwise indemnifying them for their time is being seriously agitated, I must now note a peculiar style of logic in "Oxford's" letter. "It must be borne in mind, however, that the officers to-day, who have passed their examinations at the schools, are much more competent to instruct than the officers of 20 years ago." This after stating that "the rural corps is less efficient than it was 25 years ago and that members or officers of rural corps are hardly able to instruct their corps in the

formation of fours or turnings." To finish: "Fathers do not like often to allow young boys to go to camp, but if drills were at company headquarters, young men of about 18 years of age would join and these make the best of soldiers."

Query. In case it was necessary to call out a battalion in case of trouble, or even once in ten years for brigade evolutions, would "fathers be supposed to have the option of withdrawing their innocent progeny from the companies for fear of contamination when away from paternal oversight? With those few criticisms on "Oxford" communication, I beg, Mr. Editor, to subscribe myself,

CAMBRIDGE.

Brattleboro, Vt., Sept. 5, 93.

To Capt. A. M. Irving.

Dear Sir,—I have to thank you very much for the copy of The Canadian Military Gazette that you so kindly sent me. It is always interesting to see news of corps over the Dominion, and "Maxwell Drew's" poem shows that Canadian Volunteers are very like our men the world over. They used to say in India that the crack volunteer corps there could do more kicking in less time even than a battery of R.H.A. It is good for the health, I suppose. The native L. Artillery, the "Maori" gunners, do it, the Cape Mounted Rifles the Bechuana Border Police, the Behar Light Horse are just the same. If it isn't drill hall accommodation it is kit and equipment, and if it isn't that it's company promotions, and if it isn't that it's the general commanding the division. Your stanza about the "Drill shed leakin' like all out doors" goes home to me nearly. I've known a good many sheds like yours, and seen men drilling over their ankles in wet and getting a vicious satisfaction out of marking time very hard with a great many splashes. It's all part of the day's work, and I fancy that our Governments know that the average volunteer throughout all the empire will do more and in the face of more discouragements than any other human being. Rightly considered, official neglect is a compliment, but it's disheartening—very. Your corps is lucky in that it has seen fighting, and so has more confidence in itself than other battalions that are just waiting round and being treated to a sham fight once in a while. I should very much like to see your drill book if you could tell me where I could get a copy.

It was in my mind to make Thomas Atkins answer "Maxwell Drew" in the language of the barrack room, but on second thoughts I remembered that Thomas does not know Canada at all. Very sincerely yours, RUDYARD KIPPLING.

### Deserves Encouragement.

A well known Ottawa militia officer writes of the Canadian Military Gazette as follows: Such a vast improvement as has recently taken place in the mouth-piece of the militia deserves every possible encouragement on the part of the force, and no stone should be left unturned by the militia to make the financial standing of the Gazette worthy of the very successful efforts which have evidently been put forward by the management during the past few months to improve the paper. It seems to me that each of the last few numbers has been a decided improvement on its predecessor.

### Soldier Stories.

The best way of keeping a secret of course, is not to tell it, but it is not uncommon for this simple truth to be forgotten.

The prince of Orange was leading an army on a secret expedition, when one of his officers urged him to confide to him his plans.

"Can you keep a secret?" asked the prince.

"Yes, general," replied the officer, briskly.

"So can I," was the prince's conclusive reply.

### The Slapping Sal.

A story of the seas long ago.

It was in the days when France's power was already broken upon the seas, and when more of her three-deckers lay rotting in the Medway than were to be found in Brest harbor. But her frigates and corvettes still scoured the ocean, closely followed ever by those of her rival. At the uttermost ends of the earth these dainty vessels with sweet names of girls or of flowers, mangled or shattered each other for the honor of the four yards of bunting that flapped from the gaffs.

### Prizes for Rifle Competition.

The Military Gazette is and always has been supported principally by shooting men whose organ it has always been, and whose interest it is always ready and eager to champion. Wishing to do something on its own account to help the riflemen, the new owners of this paper have decided to offer a handsome prize for competition to any regiment or company in Canada. In doing this they are not trying to pose as philanthropists; they have a selfish object, as well as the promotion of rifle shooting in view. This object is to increase the usefulness of the paper and enlarge its field, by increasing its circulation. The more subscribers we have the better our paper will be.

The conditions then on which we will present these prizes are: 1st. Eight names are to be sent us, of members of your regiment, who are not at present subscribers to our paper, and who want to receive it. 2ndly. Sixteen dollars, the amount of the eight subscriptions for one year must accompany the names and these will receive the Gazette for one year.

The prize will then be forwarded all charges prepaid to any address in Canada, to be competed for by the Regiment thus qualified, all conditions of shooting, etc., to be settled by the committee of its rifle association, and the result and full details of the match to be forwarded for publication to this paper.

You will be astonished to find how many of your officers and shooting men, who would be much interested by our paper and to whom it would be of much practical use, do not subscribe for it. The following is a list of the prizes from which you may make a selection:

The Roll Call, by Mrs. Butler, size of frame 30 by 42 inches; Quatre Bras, by Mrs. Butler, size of frame 30 by 42 inches; Balaclava, by Mrs. Butler, size of frame 30 by 42 inches; Pour La Patrie, by L. Royer, size of frame 27 by 36 inches, or the pair; Trompette de Dragon, Detaille, size of frame 22 by 28 inches; Chasseur a Cheval de Neuville, size of frame 22 by 28 inches. The pair are beautifully colored engravings, while the other pictures are in black and white, and all are the work of Messrs. Boussod, Valadon & Cie., Paris, successors to the world renowned house of Goupil.

For a Mess Room or Armory no picture could be more suitable. Do you not think that your officers and men would be glad to get for your regimental matches, a prize worth fully \$12 at practically no cost to themselves?