

[WRITTEN FOR THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW.]
THREE LETTERS.

A letter was written in England,
I penned by a Royal hand,
To her sick and wounded soldiers,
Struck down in a foreign land
"Tell them," she said, "that my sorrowful heart
Grieves for them night and day;"
And the wounded listened with glistening eyes
And sobbed as they turned away.
For a feeling too great for expression,
Was borne those hearts between;
The electric bond of sympathy,
Linked the humblest to their Queen.

A Widow spoke to her people,
Who mourned as she mourned; that day,
When her Consort, the truest, the purest and best
To Heaven had passed away.
"My sorrow can never find comfort," she said,
"The prop of my life has departed;
But my spirit finds rest in my people's grief
Though widowed, and broken-hearted."
And again through the land, the chord was struck
That thrilled each soul in its throes;
And her people's hearts went out to her then,
To comfort her in her woes.

A mother sat by the bed of her son,
With his fond grief-stricken bride.
While she prayed and watched for his parting
Death's arrow glanced aside.
And again she spoke to her people true,
And her heart's full depths were stirred.
"A mother gives thanks for her son to God,
Who her people's prayer has heard."
Then the pent-up voice of the nation gave thanks
And again came the answering thrill;
For she knew, and they knew, her people's love,
And sympathy, dwelt with her still.

Three letters, each simple and heartfelt,
Telling naught but the message they bore;
But fraught with a soul-born sympathy,
That thrilled each heart to the core.
Oh! what can avail the demagogue's strife
To a nation governed like these!
The generous wine that mantles the cup,
When still, has its dregs and lees;
But the nation once stirred by her anxious breath,
Knows the bond that exists between,
The Queen that loves her People,
And the People who love their Queen.

T. C. S.,
Lt.-Col. Vol. Mil.

Fort Erie, Jan'y. 2th. 1872

THE EDUCATION OF THE ARMY WITH
REFERENCE TO YOUNG OFFICERS.

(Continued from page 63.)

And now another question arises: What amount of professional knowledge do we require of a regimental officer? This is not so easy to lay down as it is for an Engineer, Artillery, or staff officer.

In considering this point, in my opinion as much care must be taken not to ask too much as to ask too little, bearing in mind that what you do ask for should be well done. For this reason we should only legislate in this matter for a fair average intellect.

I will here give the Prussian answer by stating briefly what amount of professional knowledge they require. The subjects are as follows:—

	Value.
Tactics	5
Science of arms	5
Fortification	4
Surveying	3
Knowledge of military duty. ...	3
Military drawing	1

It would be impossible for me to enter fully into the subjects comprised under

these different heads: it is sufficient to say that among much that is good and necessary there is much that is unnecessary for the regimental officer to learn, who has no wish or inclination to become a staff officer. When I say there is much that is unnecessary for the regimental officer, I wish you to understand that I do not for an instant mean to say that it would not be a good thing if all our officers could pass this examination, but in matters like these too much must not be done at first, and we must not carry our standard of examination too high at once.

Further, we should at once have to establish war schools to impart this extensive amount of professional knowledge.

And lastly, the Prussians are often obliged to relax their strictness of examination to allow the candidates to pass in this as in the other; so that, after all, their standard appears to be too high even for themselves.

Up to the 1st May, 1870, after obtaining their commissions, officers of our Guards and Line had no other examination to pass except the two laid down in the Queen's Regulations, for promotion to the respective ranks of lieutenant and captain, the subjects being technical and connected only with military duties, such as drill, Mutiny Act, Queen's Regulations, musketry, &c., except that in the examination for promotion to the rank of captain the candidate was required to show a sufficient knowledge of field fortification and reconnoissance. These two examinations are still retained, except the last mentioned parts; but in addition to them, all officers who have joined the Army since the 1st May, 1870, and all officers who have not passed the existing examinations for the rank of captain before the 1st July, 1871, are obliged to pass the second or special examination; the former class of officers within three years of their entering the service, and the latter class before they can attain the rank of captain.

For the purpose of assisting the officers in preparing for this examination, garrison instructors have been appointed to all the large garrisons in England and Ireland, and also at Halifax, Malta, and Gibraltar, and lately in India; thus our own authorities now answer the foregoing questions much as the Prussians do.

They demand the simple education of a gentleman from the candidate for a commission, and a certain amount of professional knowledge from the young officer. I will now state what that knowledge consists of.

Military Law,—comprising a thorough knowledge of the provisions of the Mutiny Act and Articles of War, framing of charges, and forms and proceedings of courts martial.

The candidate must also give evidence of having studied some standard work on military law.

Field Fortifications.—comprising distribution of working parties, when engaged in throwing up field works.

Tracing and constructing breast-works and the simpler kind of field works, rifle pits, putting hedges, walls, bridges, and buildings in a state of defence.

Making gabions and fascines, and forming revetements of various materials.

Making and planting palisades, abattis, obstacles, &c.

Knot-tying, lashing spars, making turtle spar-lever bridges.

Laying out encampments and construction of field kitchens, and attack and defence of outposts, and street fighting.

Field-sketching and reconnoissance, comprising how to read and understand a military plan or map.

To make a sketch of and report on a road, river, outpost and position.

The examinations are conducted under the immediate supervision of the Director-General, and are partly written, and partly oral and practical. Sealed printed questions are sent by the Director for the written part, and the rest is conducted on the ground by a board of examination, consisting of a field officer, an engineer officer, and a garrison instructor. The printed questions are answered in the presence of a member of the board, and are returned, with the answers and a written report of the oral and practical examination, to the Director-General, with whom rests the granting of a certificate of competency. That the establishment of this special examination is a step, and a very long step, in the right direction, few will be found to deny; and it appears to me that the subjects selected are such, that the quotation of what should a regimental officer know is almost solved; and here I wish to bring to your notice a fact which speaks volumes for the good sense and feeling of the British officer. The passing of this examination was not made retrospective, but virtually the officers themselves have made it so. From the time that the garrison instructors have been installed in their stations until now, there has been an unceasing flow of students attending their lectures, of all ranks, from ensign to major, and most of them Volunteers. The greatest encouragement has been given in the matter by the general officers commanding districts, and in almost every case by the officers commanding regiments, and the services generally: and every assistance has been rendered us by the Royal Engineers. Since my last half-yearly inspection, about 450 officers have attended the garrison instructors, out of whom very few have been young officers on whom the examination was obligatory; this I do not regret, as they will work all the better a little later. The instruction given, and which has been eagerly received, has consisted principally of military surveying, road reconnoissance, and field fortification, in both cases theoretical as well as practical; and I think I may say that nearly every one of those officers can now use an azimuth compass, make a fair military sketch of a piece of ground, a fair reconnoissance of a road, read a map, and reduce or enlarge a map to a given scale; and many of them can superintend the throwing up of a field work, trench, &c., the making of gabions, fascines, military bridges, and campovens. To day's Times, in a leading article in support of the claims of geography (which I have already spoken a word in favour of) has the following remarks. Talking of the German Army in the late war, "it was commonly remarked that every officer and almost every soldier carried a map in his pocket, and seemed to know as much about roads, bridges, fords, and bridle-paths as the country people themselves. It is to be feared that very few of our own officers would be capable of thus feeling their way through an enemy's country by the aid of maps and topographical manuals, even if our War-office should have the foresight to prepare such maps and manuals in prospect of a campaign. I can assure the writer of that article that now a great many English officers could do as well in this matter as the best Prussian officer that ever put foot in stirrup; and that I believe the War-office would have the foresight to prepare maps, &c., if this country would grant the money for it.

I may be too enthusiastic on the subject, but I am convinced that in five years' time, as far as the necessary professional training of the regimental officer is concerned, the