

For "THE REVIEW."

## WIMBLEDON.

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(Concluded.)

The amusements of the camp are various to suit the tastes of all. A large tent made for this purpose is pitched every year, and fitted up with a stage, and all the necessary appurtenances of a theatre, and two or three times a week Amateur Theatricals take place, got up principally by the St. George's Rifles, assisted by professional talent from town for the female parts. Readings from *Pickwick* etc., by amateurs are also given, and the fund generally gets the benefit of one of the excellent entertainments of the "Bona Fide Christy Minstrels" from the St. James' Hall. You are made sure of a merry evening at this theatre. The proceeds go to the funds of the N. R. A. Another large circular open tent is put up "pro bono publico," affording a pleasant shade, where the band of the London Scottish enlivens the camp with music during the mid-day rest, and at other times. That corps each year is accompanied by its band. Under this tent also, Divine Service is performed on Sunday, where you have an opportunity of hearing some noted preacher, who volunteers his services for that occasion. It is a popular place of worship for the public. On one occasion, when the troops were marched there, the colonel, finding every seat occupied, politely said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, you are all welcome to my seat, but I must request you to vacate the remainder for the troops, as the camp service is for their benefit," upon which the seats were good humouredly vacated. On week day evenings this is the favorite resort of "Sungists," where may be heard "The Sea is merry England's," "Britons never shall be slaves," and similar songs, which Englishmen so delight in, and thus going from one part of the camp to another, in the calm July evening, all are to be seen enjoying themselves; the Highland corps with their bagpipes and reels attract a great many admirers. There also is the counties' Square, where a marquee is allotted to each county, represented in the competition, and the passer by may hear the members of the various corps discussing in the different dialects the events of the day, and speculating on their hopes of the morrow. In addition to the tents pitched by Government, several corps have formed their own camps, rendering themselves independent of any of the advantages I have alluded to, the example of which was first set by the well known and hospitable "Victorias," but not followed till the last year or so. Some of these private camps are very neatly laid out and fenced off, and kitchens established according to the ingenuity of the proprietors, here all classes of society are to be seen, assisting one another, diving into the mysteries of

the cuisine etc. All distinctions are sunk in this camp life and all sorts of people meet together, I saw the Duke of Wellington (the Colonel of the Sutherland Rifles) enjoying a beefsteak still spluttering from the camp fire, along side of him that celebrated Philanthropist, who attained notoriety about that time by his individual experience of the horrors of a night in the casual wards of London, endured by him for the benefit of his fellow creatures. These different corps entertain their friends in a most hospitable manner. Punch is brewed in the evening and dispensed liberally, songs and dancing kept up with great spirit till last post sounds at 11 o'clock, when the National anthem may be heard from dozens of different choruses; within 15 minutes, "Lights out," sounds, when all is quiet save an occasional benighted one, who is anathematizing, as he stumbles over the tent ropes, which calls forth a corresponding anathema from the interior. Illuminations are well got up twice a week. At 9 o'clock the entire camp is brilliantly lighted by hundreds of lamps, which flash forth at the same instant from the tops of the flag poles, butts, etc. The private camps also, vie with each other in the beauty of their illumination, Chinese lanterns, electric and lime lights prevailing. A Balloon with a brilliant light attached, sent up one evening, was visible for about 25 minutes. A couple of days after, a paragraph under the head of "Phenomenon," appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, describing our balloon so accurately as a meteor, that it reminded us of the gentlemen whom Dickens describes, as having discovered a Phenomenon, when Mr. Winks accidentally opened his dark lantern, while searching for his Fiancee. The camp is visited by 10 or 15,000 people daily from London and the country round, the Prince and the Princess of Wales generally pay it a visit; the Duke of Cambridge and all the military authorities also take a great interest in the proceedings. About 5 or 6,000 Volunteers have this year competed for prizes. A plan of the camp and ranges, and a programme giving information for the day's firing is printed every morning for sale, so that the Volunteers have no difficulty in finding the firing point at the correct time. Members of these corps, who have visited private camps, but have not joined them, frequently atone for their absence by sending down a cask of beer, or case of wine; and the ladies endeavour to relieve somewhat the arduous duties of cookery, by contributing hampers of turkeys, delicacies, etc., to their friends in camp. The finances of the N. R. A. are in a healthy condition, having a good credit in the Bank, though the expenditure is £500 a day. The Belgians this year added to the general liveliness, about 150 of them came over, and their foreign uniforms were very picturesque, but for any purpose of shooting they might as well have remained at home, as they could not compete in any

way with our Volunteers, they fire only at very short distances and had a target told for their especial benefit, with a prize to shoot for, as their rifles are poor, and what struck me as being very peculiar, do not remain at half cock.

Having given a general description of the camp and its interior economy, I will endeavour to describe some of the proceedings that attract so many volunteers and people. The National Rifle Association was organized almost immediately after the Volunteers were formed, for the purpose of encouraging rifle practice throughout the Kingdom, and comparing the first year 1860 with this present year 1866, the country has reason to be proud of the results, both as regards improvement in firing and members competing. It has been found necessary to increase the number of ranges to 85 or 90. The long ranges are lettered, and the short ones are numbered both at the butt and firing point, and of a size sufficiently large to be easily distinguished from any point within the enclosure. The size and painting of the targets is similar to that of the Service. The system of marking has been brought to great perfection both for safety and accuracy. The markers are all stationed in a pit at the foot of the target and 3 or 4 feet in front of it, this is covered in, and a view of the target is obtained through a thick glass trap door, thus obviating the danger arising from the splashes of the bullets, from which many slight accidents used to occur. After a shot is fired, the trap door is let down, and a black, white, or red disc, with a brush attached to it, is placed over the shot, showing its position first and washing it out after, so that the next man has a clean target to fire at, and mistakes cannot now occur. The event of the meeting is the Queen's prize, open to Volunteers only, fired for by squads of twelve men from each battallion: there is great competition for a place in this squad, which is obtained by shooting merit only. The Queen's prize is divided into two stages, and 100 prizes are distributed, to the hundred best shots in the first stage, sixty of whom only compete in the second stage i. e. 800, 900, and 1,000 yards, with new Whitworth Rifles supplied by the council, thirty of these are given to the thirty best shots in the first stage, the last two or three rounds at 1,000 yards, are fired with great care and amid much excitement. It takes seven or eight days to complete the firing for this prize; so many compete this year, I think 1,200 if not more entered, so much honor is attached to the winning of it; and it is indeed a Queenly prize, a cup or money value of £250, with the gold badge and gold medal of the Association, and also the before mentioned hundred prizes in the first stage. Prizes for Volunteers only are fired for in most cases, with the Enfield Rifle and Hyth regulations. All comers prizes are fired for with any rifle and any position. One of the best pri-