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The Massachusetts Riflemen.

Happy in the belief that they could "lick all of British creation," the team of Massachusetts riflemen who distinguished themselves in England this year arrived at New York on the 10th inst. They got a great reception there, and were addressed by Mayor Grant, whose remarks are not devoid of general interest. "I have great pleasure," he said, "on behalf of the City of New York, in welcoming you upon this occasion, and still more in being able to congratulate you upon the great success which you have achieved abroad. Washington said with truth that 'the great defence of a free government is a well-regulated militia.' It has always been the policy of our government to keep up a small standing army, and to trust to the citizen soldiery of the various States for our defence in time of trouble. This the history of the nation has shown to be wise. While other countries are almost crushed by the immense standing armies they are compelled to maintain, while the streets of foreign cities are crowded with uniformed men taken from civil life and supported by taxation, here the professional soldier is practically unnoticed among us. It is therefore of great importance that everything which renders our National Guard efficient in war should be encouraged, and that those who show themselves proficient should be commended. Among all the duties of a soldier there is none more necessary than skill in the use of the rifle with which he is armed. You have not only demonstrated that at Creedmoor, but in the five contests in which you have been pitted against the selected riflemen of the English volunteers you have nobly maintained the honour of the United States. Our people are proud of the skill you have shown, are proud of your victories. Our sister State Massachusetts, which you have so worthily represented, will undoubtedly receive you with all the honour which is your just due. I desire, on behalf of the State and City of New York, to join with it in tendering to you my sincere congratulations upon your success and my best wishes for your future."

At a banquet subsequently given, in replying to a toast to the team Major Frost, after expressing satisfaction at the unbounded hospitality extended to them by the English riflemen, continued: "The team did its best abroad, and got all it went for and a little more. I think that after our experience we could go over again and beat them worse than we did this time. As it is, they haven't realized yet what has happened."

All of which, no doubt, greatly tickled the hearers, for we are told parenthetically that "laughter" ensued. But the team's spokesman was scarcely fair in his remarks. The Englishmen generously shot the Americans on the latter's plan, not on the English, and the Americans admittedly had an advantage in the sights used, thus making the contest on uneven terms as far as the weapons were concerned, to say nothing of the fact that the Massachusetts were a well practiced team chosen from the whole state, whilst those they met were merely regimental or district association teams, come together just for the matches, and with little or

no preliminary team practice. This is what Major Frost says of his team: "Upon the whole it is the best I could choose. It is true that I might have selected a few individual shots who would have done better than any one of my men, but I looked for an average team. I wanted a team in which jealousy would be entirely absent, and where it would be a matter of indifference who would be first or last man. We worked together so well and spurred one another on so much that I attribute our success greatly to those facts. In all the matches in which we were engaged there was only a difference of 22 points between the best man and the lowest man. Considering the number of shots fired that difference is paltry indeed."

On the subject of the relative merits of the rifles, Major Frost says:—"To me the Springfield is the better arm up to 500 yds. What it is beyond in team matches remains to be seen. We won the 600 yds. distance in four out of the five matches, but lost the other by nine points. Our sight undoubtedly overbalanced the extra fifteen grains of powder shot by the English arm, but what the Springfield would do with eighty-five grains of powder yet remains to be shown. Again, there is the relative capacity of the competing men to be considered, and the excellence of the team coacher. What the Martini-Henry can do with a decent rear-sight will, in my opinion, soon be demonstrated, for I think the English volunteers, at least the marksmen, will soon have an improved sight issued to them. Opinion favours it, and our demonstration of the possibilities of the Springfield, especially in skirmishing, has rather fanned the flame."

There would be many difficulties in the way of such a match, but we would like to see a meeting between this crack Massachusetts twelve and a similar number from some Canadian province, firing on conditions fair to both. For instance, whilst each team retained its accustomed sights—as the test would be one of sights and rifles as well as men—the position might be made "any, with head to target," at all ranges, in place of "standing" being insisted upon at 200 yards. Our Canadian marksmen have had very little practice in off-shoulder shooting.

Topics of the Week.

This is from the *Critic*, an interesting weekly published at Halifax, and which gives not a little attention to matters military: "In view of the military proceedings which have been a feature of Carnival week, we again draw the attention of the Minister of Militia to the anomalous positions of Deputy Adjutants General of Militia, who hold only the rank of Lieut.-Colonel. In England the rank of Brigadier has been granted in the volunteers—a force, unlike ours, totally distinct from the Militia. Our D. A. G.'s are actual Commanders in their districts of very considerable forces. The D.A.G.'s of Nova Scotia, command not only this Province, but Prince Edward Island as well. The comparative junior substantive rank of our D. A. G.'s leads to numerous unpleasant complications when they are working with regulars as well as on social military occasions; and, while we are on this subject, we would recommend to Sir John Ross' staff (the General himself is all that could be