

CORRESPONDENCE.

FROM ST. CATHARINES.

BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

Nothing of importance in connection with the Volunteer Force has eventuated for some time with the exception of the military ball held here on the 11th inst., in the town hall by the officers and members of Capt. Thompson's company, No. 2, 19th Batt., which proved a decided success, about 90 couples participating. Great taste was displayed by the members of the company in decorating the hall for the occasion with flags and other suitable devices, &c., particularly prominent among which were the colors of the old 2nd and 5th "Lincoln" Militia regiments with the principal battles of 1812 emblazoned on them. In fact, the room was ornamented in better style than I have ever seen it on any preceding occasion.

Dancing commenced about 9 o'clock and was kept up until an intimation was given which caused the party to adjourn to the Pickwick House for supper where ample justice was done to the good things, served in recherche style by the obliging host of the establishment, M. S. Cole. After which, having returned to the ball room, the Volunteers and their friends enjoyed themselves immensely until almost daylight.

I am not prepared to describe the elaborate costumes of the ladies, so must beg to be excused, as I am convinced I would not do justice to those who graced the occasion with their presence. There were not so many citizen soldiers present in uniform as should have been owing to the fact that some or indeed most of the uniforms of the force are barely presentable, although a goodly number of scarlet coats with the dark blue of the artillery and cavalry interspersed imparted a pleasing brilliancy and variety to the festive scene. Ensign G. Miller, of No. 10 Co., acted as floor manager with his usual urbanity, and succeeded, as he always does on these occasions, in the arduous task of pleasing everyone.

Several changes are occurring about this time in the 19th Batt., as the Surgeon, Assistant-Surgeon, and one Captain intend to resign, and I believe one or two more officers are contemplating a similar course before long.

On the 12th inst. Capt. Oswald's Battery turned out to inter with military honors the remains of their late comrade, Sergt.-Major McCann, who died rather suddenly of inflammation of the lungs; the Orange society of which he was a member, also assisted at his obsequies.

The promotion of Sergt. R. Gourley to the vacant position of Second Lieutenant in the Battery, caused by the resignation, of Lieut. Brady, is considered a highly satisfactory appointment.

Lt.-Col. Currie has just succeeded in obtaining a grant from the County Council to pay for the rations supplied to the men

while in camp last September; he deserves great credit for his exertions in the matter as the men had long ago given up the hope of seeing it.

A LITTLE GOSSIP ON SOME MATTERS OF TASTE.

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

SIR:—The power, the importance, and the influence of the Press—the Fourth Estate—have, for many years past passed into a familiar aphorism. Yet to the man of acquirements and of cultivated taste, how considerable a portion of this mighty institution cannot be other than a subject of grief and contempt.

When we are daily aware of gross perversions of truth for political ends in the leading journals of the country—when we realize the stupendous juggle and humbug involved in the great mass of advertisements—when we have witnessed the humiliating spectacle of a leading newspaper condescending to fill up its columns with the prurient details of an American domestic scandal, which would have been doubly disgusting had it been possible—when we shrug our shoulders weekly over the sickening trash in the shape of romance which deludes the readers of country newspapers with the idea that they are being edified with actual delineations of life and manners—when we are continually disgusted with the illiterateness and want of even respectable conventional knowledge which is perpetually apparent in newspaper reports of the most ordinary social occurrences, (we say nothing of the prevalence of the most careless typographical errors), we are perforce driven to confess that the Press of our country has many a stride to take before it can approach the tone of that of Great Britain.

The faults, however, of a portion of the Canadian Press are mostly of a nature incident to an as yet imperfectly welded nationality. They are also partly due to the absence of that higher standard of journalism which it would be disgraceful to a country of time honored historical associations not to possess, and are, at all events, trivial in comparison with those of the Press of the United States.

To an inconceivable political profligacy (both home and foreign) a shameless mendacity, and a turbulent and upshot arrogance measurable only by the height of a crazed conceit and the depth of a profound ignorance, it has recently conspicuously added a compound of about equal parts of a flunkeyism worthy of the chronicler of Lady Young's appearance on a parliamentary occasion some time ago (may I be pardoned for mentioning a lady in such a connection), and an offensive insolence which would disgrace a costermonger.

Both these peculiarly American traits have been manifested in reference to Prince Arthur. The impertinence in gratuitous deprecations of attentions to him. The

snobbery in almost every line reporting his proceedings.

In fact the visit of the Prince has afforded the Americans a grand opportunity for the display of their leading characteristic—bad taste—and, far from neglecting it, they have gone in for the full enjoyment of a surfeit of it, of course with honorable exceptions.

Few things are more disgusting to persons of taste than the sensational headings under which such matters as royal visits are ordinarily described in this hemisphere. It sometimes happens, however, that amusement at the naïveté or ignorance which prompts their adoption overcomes one's disgust.

This was particularly the case with one delicious caption which arrested our attention in a recent report of the Prince's proceedings. It was:

"HIS ACCENT."

This was pronounced to be "unmistakably English," otherwise it was stated, it would have been difficult from his speech to determine his nationality.

The sapience of this remark requires no comment, but it was so worded that we might have doubted whether it were intended to be derogatory or complimentary, were we not aware of a remarkable American conceit that Englishmen cannot speak their own language correctly, and that Americans are the only people who can.

Neither is this happy conceit—for where ignorance is bliss, &c.,—entirely confined to the States. Owing partly to the vitiating prevalence in Canada of American pseudo literature it has obtained among ill informed Canadians, and even among some who should be better informed. Now, "I'm no saying," as Lauderdale says in that clever, though somewhat dry, novel "A Son of the Soil," that there is no ground for the idea. Unfortunately there is a good deal. Every educated Englishman is aware of provincialisms, which are in many counties a total and effectual disguise to the language. He is also painfully alive to the tendency not, unhappily, by any means confined to the area of the sound of Bow Bells, to drop the H where it should be aspirated, and to affix it where it has no place.

This vulgarism, and the expletive adjective "blasted," with which the unpolished Briton is but too apt to adorn his conversation, are constantly heard by our immaculate cousins from the essentially lower class English who constitute the bulk of British emigration to the States. This unhappy word "blasted" appears more peculiarly to strike the sensitive ear of the Yankee from its being generally pronounced with a pretty good, broad, open A, and we suppose, to offend that delicate organ by reason of its contrast to the sharp, snapping, barking enunciation to which the American ear is familiarized, and which sets the teeth of an Englishman on edge, especially in the case of ladies.