

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

Since our last issue, when we announced the escape of the McLeans and others from the camp of Big Bear, very little of interest or importance has transpired at the front. No doubt all is bustle and stir amongst the troops themselves in their preparations for their return journey, which will have begun before this reaches our readers. We can well imagine the eagerness that must be felt in all ranks to return to their homes and to civilization, after an absence fraught with so many dangers, anxieties and trials; to say nothing of the pleasure and pardonable pride all will feel when their return to their respective headquarters will be the signal for congratulations and praise from "friends, countrymen and lovers." From all that has appeared in the public press, anent the arrangements suggested as a fitting welcome to our brave boys, we predict an enthusiasm such as has never before been witnessed in Canada, and we trust that no expression of feeling, political, religious, or sectional, will occur, to mar what ought to be a bright spot in the memory of all true Canadians.

There are some ugly reports in the papers, lately, of bickerings between the troops of the various commands, which must give extreme pain to every friend of the force. It is not seemly that after our volunteers have won for themselves the highest praise for their achievements—alike on the march and in action—that any jealousy should arise between them. The reproach has often been made against Militia and against Canadians, that they were not amenable to discipline; and it certainly looked as if our field force successfully contradicted this as-

persion. Shall it then be said, that, after cheerfully overcoming the real hardships of the Campaign, any of the men should lower themselves and their comrades, by nursing fancied wrongs? The first duty of the soldier is obedience; and if a man imagines he is treated badly, it is his duty to submit for the good of the force. Let all remember to "bear and forbear"; let those who think they have had some advantage forbear to boast of their success, or to taunt their brothers with their comparative ill-luck; and let those who think themselves ill-used, bear the treatment in full assurance that those in authority are acting with judgment and experience, and that when time shall have allowed matters to be seen in a more impartial light, they will see some good reason for what now seems unjust. Of one thing they all may rest assured, their reception on their return will not be gauged by their achievements, but by their willingness to achieve.

That each city or town which has had the misfortune to lose volunteers in the North-west rebellion feels that it owes to them and itself some recognition of their heroes' death, is shown by the unanimity with which all have agreed to take action in the matter and by the many memorial funds that have been inaugurated. Winnipeg proposes to erect a \$5,000 monument in honor of her dead citizens in front of the city hall. Through a misapprehension on the part of the canvassers, who adopted the principle that subscriptions should be limited to one dollar each, only a fifth part of the sum required, has, up to the present, been promised, but nobody who knows our western metropolis doubts that the larger amount will be readily forthcoming. St. Catharines has inaugurated a fund to erect a monument to Alex. Watson of that place, and the feeling of all Canadians towards the fallen is shown by the circumstance that two residents of New York, who previously belonged to the militia force of the vicinity, have forwarded an unsolicited subscription towards this fund.

A matter that requires serious consideration is whether the target practice of our militia, as at present conducted in the annual camps, is not an utter waste of ammunition, and whether this part of their annual training should not be radically changed. Rural corps go into camp for twelve days, from which a Sunday and two days for going and returning must be deducted. In the remaining nine days they must be sufficiently drilled into shape to make a respectable showing on a brigade field day. This leaves very little time for musketry instruction, aiming and position drill, even for those battalions whose turn comes last for practice, while the first who fire have no chance for the necessary preparation, even if their officers were willing or competent to give it to them. Thus we find recruits, without the first idea of sighting a rifle, or of the meaning or value of trajectory, set opposite a target, with the one notion that they must fire off their twenty rounds as quickly as possible, so that the musketry instructor may not be delayed in his return to mess. All this is so utterly wrong that it seems strange a remedy has not long ago been applied: probably the reason is, that a suitable method of conducting such practice would be most difficult to arrange.