

the fact that the element of individual skill must again become an essential ingredient in the composition of an army.

Without efficiency in the handling of his rifle, no degree of perfection he may have obtained in the other parts of his drill will be of any avail, for the grand object of discipline is to place him in the field in such a position that he may use his weapon with effect, and if he does not know how to use it, the object for which he is sent into the field is defeated. But such knowledge implies much more than merely knowing how to load and fire, and until soldiers are thoroughly instructed in target shooting, it may as well be conceded that little or nothing will be gained by arming them with weapons whose superiority would give them an incalculable advantage if they were capable of improving it.

Discipline confers the confidence of power derived from the best possible arrangement of the masses whose united strength is relied on to accomplish the desired object ; but individual skill gives to each of the units composing those masses the self confidence which in fact constitutes their strength.

No one at this day will deny that henceforth a powerful military organization must be one of the necessities of our national existence. Whatever may be the plan of organization we adopt, the essential point on which military efficiency must depend in the hour of trial, consists in such familiarity with the use of arms as the civilian may attain without the necessity of military drill, and which once acquired will give him such confidence of power as no mere drilling can inspire.

It is, therefore, as a means of increasing our national strength by having in the country a large body of men who may at any time be converted into efficient troops, that it is desirable to inspire a popular taste for the use of the rifle,—the most formidable weapon which has ever yet been placed in the hands of the soldier, and on which we must mainly rely for the performance of the work of war.

It will not suffice for the leaders of public opinion to tell the