

good things before them is begun by some hundreds of volunteers. With the champagne the voices flow, and by the time the cloth is removed the stiffness of first meeting has passed, and all enthusiastically honor the toast, "The Health of Her Majesty." Another, and yet another toast has to be drunk, and then the noble chairman rising gives, as he terms it, the toast of the evening, "The Volunteer Service."

How eagerly each word was listened to, it is needless to say; nor will we stop to notice how the continued cheering showed that all His Royal Highness said was fully approved of by the gallant men around.

It was a grand speech—heartfelt, soldier-like, and to the point, and the advice so kindly offered ought to be acted upon. Whether it is or not, another year will show. True it is, as the chairman observed, "that this is essentially a movement of defence, and that modern science brings us changes from day to day with such rapidity, that we hardly know what the morrow is likely to produce"—and that—"it is necessary to be prepared, and being so, we could say, 'here we are, come if you dare'." His Royal Highness proceeded to point out the advantages of a thorough knowledge of drill, rightly intimating that when a man has mastered drill, and learned to perform evolutions steadily, he can acquire "loose drill;" inasmuch as there is much more knowledge required in learning how to make the best use of a bush, tree, or rock, than at first meets the eye. It is on the expressions of the noble chairman, regarding "to do nothing but shoot," "loose drill," and the necessity for making the movement permanent, that we for a moment interrupt our narrative of the Volunteer Lovee, Dinner, and Ball.

To those studying the composition of these volunteer corps, and their complete dependence for stability and permanence on the pecuniary support of members, it appears as if eventually the parade ground would be neglected for the target, and the result be for the volunteers "to do nothing but shoot." Their drill to be worse than "loose," in the common acceptation of the word, and their permanence as "a reserve, to aid both the regulars and militia," somewhat mythical. So long as the uncertain attitude of our neighbor continues, so long will an income be found for each company; but as soon as trust is established, the rumors of war hushed, and friendship evinced, though it be but outwardly, then will the volunteer cease to pay his annual subscription, the honorary member lose his taste for shooting, and the donation giver be found wanting. Without an income, and that a large one, it is impossible that any company can exist; and, however much Adjutants of battalions may exert themselves, however much Inspector-Generals may rail, or Deputy-Inspectors report unfavorably, still strict attendance will not be obtained from effective members at any other drill but practice; and, from the lack of money sufficient to keep up good drill-sergeants, the volunteer company will sink into an ill-organized rifle club.

If it is really intended that this rifle movement is to take root downwards, and remain a strong and healthy plant, something more must be done for it by the country, than appointing gentlemen of acknowledged ability to report upon its proceedings, and receive certain necessary returns. Some help must be given to individual companies, or—we say it in sorrow, for we can see no other result—eventually they must fall off in discipline, and become mere target-hitters, and

not a reserve to aid either the regulars or militia.

From the way in which many of the commanding-officers of these companies have been selected, and from their very slight knowledge of the duties entailed upon them it is necessary that at least one person in the company should have a good knowledge, not only of drill and musketry instruction, but of the filling up of forms. However anxious a gentleman may be to have his company efficient, he will be unable to see it so, unaided, and should the commanding officer have no knowledge of drill, the more necessity there will be for this aid being of the best. The better it is the greater sum to be paid for it; and the greater the ignorance of the officers attached to the company, the greater the responsibilities of the sergeant, and the more necessity for his being a very superior man.

The superior man can always be obtained by paying for it, and will be kept up probably so long as the annual subscriptions come in; but let these fail, and the first expenditure reduced would be the sergeant, thus at once rendering the company inefficient: for no volunteer, be he private, sergeant, lieutenant, or captain, will in all time to come give up the necessary daily hours to drill, and filling up the numerous returns demanded.

To keep these companies efficient a sergeant, or sergeant-major for each must be found by the Government, and be paid at least £50 a year. For this daily attendance at the place of drill should be demanded, and this would the efficiency of the company be insured, and one source of present expenditure and future anxiety be removed.

This is not much to ask from the nation for a force that will, in the event of war, or even threatened war, save her millions. All we argue is, that if this volunteer force is to be permanent, and an auxiliary to the line, the whole expense of making it such should not devolve upon the volunteers themselves. Such expenses as cleaning and repairing arms, ammunition, repairing butts and targets, hire of long-range practice grounds, are in all conscience enough for limited subscriptions to bear, and average £120 yearly. These charges the volunteers appear willing to undertake; but the willing horse may be pressed too hard, and the nation, by being penny-wise and pound-foolish, lose their hold on a force, the noblest and truest ever raised.

To return to the dinner, which virtually concluded with the speech made by Earl Ripon, who, after saying "it would depend on the members of the force themselves whether the movement was to be worthy of the land," added, "Let the spirit of patriotism in which the force had originated be perpetuated, and it would afford to the country a most valuable defence in any emergency which might arise."

The hour of ten is past, and it is time that the new Floral Hall should be inaugurated. There is a general move, and the volunteers are in cabs and coaches driven, by the most civil of cab and coachmen, to Covent Garden.

"You had better get out and walk, sir, for there are a thousand cabs ahead," says the policeman on duty, a quarter of a mile away from the entrance door; and our volunteer, after a shiver, turns out of the conveyance, and passes through the crowd waiting to see the show. There is a little chaff, but not much—the hearer is too anxious to get inside the Hall to listen, and ere long enters the building.

"Have you a great coat?" asks a man hold a ticket in his hand; only to be an-

sured in the negative, and presenting his card of admission to an attendant at the foot of the staircase, Captain —, of — Volunteers, squeezes himself up, hidden between masses of crinoline and glittering uniforms.

It is slow work ascending, and rather a service of danger worming a way through that terribly narrow door leading to the head of the small staircase, down which all who join the heaving mass in the Floral Hall must proceed. The long shining sword, supported in the left hand of our volunteer, is more in the way than any thing else, its ornamental effect barely compensating for its unhandiness; and the chaco held, or rather crushed, in the other hand, or under the arm, is simply a nuisance, and would be parted with could a vacant space, the size of an inch square, be found on which to put it.

Vaulted and garlanded roofs, architraves ornamented with green leaves and roses, band by Coote, dancing done by volunteers, and galleries of beauty, all must be left, for our volunteer would wish to see, if not try, the good things said to be on the stage of the Opera. Once again on those narrow stairs, and crushing and crushed does the volunteer, chaco and sword, press on to see something new. How hot it is in that passage, and how inclined he feels to stop half way in one of those boxes, and from it survey the proceedings on the stage! But now refreshment is necessary, and the volunteer is not the man to yield to pressure, even though it be from the strange garments of the weaker sex. One narrower door than any yet gone through, and Captain —, of —, is grasping for an ice, under muslin clouds, and against a table loaded with a pastry cook's conceptions. The debris of something better than sponge cakes and biscuits tell our volunteer that he should have come earlier; and finishing the homœopathic ice just received, he resolves to visit the shades below. In the crypt he is told supper is going on, and such a supper too—all the good things of the season provided by Messrs. Staples, champagne, hock, and claret flowing like water, and everything else to be had for the asking.

Once again is Captain —, of the — Volunteers, chaco, sword, and all squeezing and being squeezed. Regardless of fainting beauties, and muttered exclamations of the uselessness of pushing, our hungry and very thirsty volunteer struggles towards the well lit crypt, where the "tables they groan with the weight of the feast." It is slow work, and an hour has passed without much progress. Disheartened, but not yet defeated, our gallant Captain returns to the charge, and scorns to yield, for is he not a British volunteer, and at least entitled to receive what he has paid for?

Another hour and the infernal regions are not yet attained. The Styx of human bodies seem impassable, and no friendly Charon is there to help a hungry soul across. A murmur runs through the seething mass that the crypt is full, and that four thousand men and women are struggling for an useless purpose. Six hundred men have placed the groaning tables under contribution, and there they will and must remain, for return they cannot.

"Right about face," said Captain —, of —, and with the feelings of an injured Englishman, does he commence the retreat. Slowly, but not so slowly as in the advance (people make way for him, hoping to get his place) he proceeds. Gasping, and hot, he once again nears the stage and with one struggle more, is free. Another homœopathic ice, one cup of cold coffee, and the British volunteer, tired with his day's exer-