

It is wonderful how much more some of these press correspondents know than the authorities at headquarters. According to the former the medals are ready for distribution, and it has been decided to issue clasps for the actions. It will be time enough to believe all this when it is officially announced. There is also no truth in the report that Lieut. Freer has been recommended for the Victoria cross. The origin of the rumor is doubtless that somebody has been reading the general's despatches of May last, and has jumped to the conclusion that the mention of Lieut. Freer there involved such a recommendation, which it assuredly does not.

The Port Hope *Times* is aggrieved because the contingent of the Midland battalion hailing from that town have received no memorials of the campaign similar to those awarded members of other companies by their grateful fellow townsmen, and suggests that the ladies should take the matter up, appropriate the balance of the benefit fund amounting to some \$60, and collect sufficient additional money to present to each man an English sovereign, suitably inscribed. It seems to us it would be a pity, as well as illegal, to deface the coins, but better than giving money in any such way would be to invest the amount in providing a recreation room for all the militia in the town, or if such a room at present exists, in improving its fittings.

Within the last few days an officer and an ex-officer of the Northwest Mounted Police have died. Inspector A. F. J. Gautier, who was only recently appointed, died in St. Boniface. He had had considerable military experience in the French service, and was a brother of Mr. Fred. Gautier, well known in Winnipeg, and formerly a lieutenant in the G.G.F.G. News has also reached us that Major Shurtliffe died in Colorado a few days ago of consumption.

NOTIONS OF A NOODLE.—X.

"MY DEAR MISTY,—I fear that the 'Notions of a Noodle' must soon come to an end, for no matter how great the noodle may be he cannot forever be manufacturing 'notions' for other people to find fault with. I cannot, however, wind up my remarks without one shot at the color of the uniform, long since altered in England when troops proceed on active service. I do not suppose that we can ever in this country afford two distinct dresses for the militia, and I do not imagine that any amount of writing or lecturing will prevail upon the majority sufficiently to cause us to relinquish the sparkle and glitter of the scarlet and gold for the sake of the insignificant demands of active service. Therefore, in all likelihood, we will hold on to the show coat and let other considerations go to Bath. In spite of the change in this respect in the service outfit of the Imperial troops we still hear the old saying that scarlet is a good fighting color, and that after all it is the most difficult target to hit, &c. Well, this comparison is, unfortunately, always made with the green, or black as it really is, of the rifles, and the dark blue or black again of the artillery. But no sane person would ever for a moment maintain that either of these colors was anything but a walking target for an enemy. We paint our bulls' eyes black, and when we sally out for a trial shot with a rifle we certainly pick out the blackest stump to aim at. Who would ever think in the spotting field of donning a black costume, when it is known that from a sparrow to a bull moose all beasts and birds detect it before any other shade. Against the dried grass of autumn it shows up like the Confederate parson on the white horse, and as it happened with this reverend individual, 'the whole darned universe was shootin' at him,' so it happened the other day up west; and no matter how close the cover secured the dark shade we afforded was quite enough for the rebels and they always found us out; while they, not in their Sunday clothes, but in dirty shirts and blankets, were invisible. Hang up a black and a dirty white coat against the prevailing background in any country, and at distances where the black is a certain shot the other is not seen. These are very ordinary examples and well-known facts to many. But still there are certain people who do not understand it, and never will till some day they find themselves pitted

against an enemy arrayed in what we should have the common sense to put on our own troops.

"But how can any 'noodle' wonder at such apparent ignorance of or pig-headed indifference to the necessity of keeping pace, in uniform, with the constantly changing weapons of destruction, when it is noticed how we train our men for a campaign in the barrack squares at home. If other people in this world were held down by the cast iron laws and customs, bred up and instructed within the rigid rules, founded on the legends of the musty past, what a stand-still state the world would be in. It is a blessing that they are not, for if so we would find other professions working away on the old lines of superstition and darkness long since eradicated from the minds and actions of modern communities.

"We soldiers, however, still go on blindly, spending our valuable time in grinding into our young men drill and ideas of no use whatever on service; on the contrary, it unsettles the most staid and destroys confidence to find how utterly unfit it all is for the purposes intended. We are told that all this drill is the grand foundation of discipline; that drill and drill only will give men that quality. Well, if this be the case can we not have it of the right description. Could we not in some way designate the art of handling a rifle, that is shooting with it, 'drill'? What is discipline? To a great measure it is only confidence, at all events it takes that phase in action, and confidence is far the most easily disseminated by breeding individual trust in a man's own powers. Our plan now is, following, of course, in the lines of those supposed to be our proper models, to devote valuable time to the art of working men by intricate and difficult movements, the chief object consisting in working in masses, and on the principle of maintaining the 'touch,' devoting weeks and months to the task of successfully producing a wheel like a 'barn door,' and utterly losing sight of any individual confidence gained by educating men singly in the art of hitting it. It is astonishing how terribly apparent the idiocy of such an education becomes, when in action, or under other circumstances, men are called upon to move where accurate formations cannot be carried out.

"It is there the helpless condition of these strictly drilled men crops up; for the first time, under fire, each man is supposed to suddenly take upon himself individual action which at other times he is most decidedly sat upon for doing, or which only is allowed under very minute restrictions. Consequently the most fatal of errors are continually occurring in the shape of the determined inclination of men to group and keep together, true to their teachings in time of peace. This may be correct enough for an onslaught, where the enemy are unprovided with firearms, but once opposed to a good shooting fox it is madness. I wonder how long we will go on in this fashion? The rank and file believe, and the officers are convinced, that a 'march past,' a steady 'wheel,' and a 'good fit' make up all we want, and our permanent corps, with these notions uppermost, teach it thoroughly. I think 'K' company, I.S.C., fired twenty rounds for annual practice last year. How supremely ridiculous it is to be sure, when we calmly consider it all. This yearly practice is generally carried out, if it does not interfere with the drills too much. And how is it done? Well, an officer takes over a squad to the range; as a rule he has never fired a rifle more than the men, knows nothing about handling such things any more than his squad; there are fixed distances, nothing less than 200 yards, fixed positions and fixed rules; the officer is not to make a score, but to carry out rigidly the proper and correct adherence to the rifle exercise. If the Creator constructs a man so that a certain posture is mortal agony it is no matter, that is the way, and into that posture the recruit must get, if he never hits the target in a lifetime.

"I have seen many a list of scores where a man will run off his 20 or 40 misses at practice, perhaps two or three years in succession; it is a good joke; he is a good soldier though; a steady old barrack square machine, and, therefore, all that is required. Outside of these periods when the young recruit is marched to the range he is not allowed to handle his rifle for shooting, except where he may be conducted by some old ramrod of a n.c.o., who, bred up as he should be, allows no tampering with Her Majesty's regulations. He has never been able to shoot himself, and the idea of a young imp of a recruit wishing to do so is very properly considered impudence of the most aggravated nature, and therefore should be smothered at once.

"P.S.—I will continue this last letter next week, as it looks too long already."

The Winnipeg rebellion memorial monument project seems to be hanging fire. The contract was first awarded to Geo. Nott for \$3,300, but he could not get satisfactory securities and it was taken out of his hands and relet to a man named Gibson at \$4,500, who was given about three weeks to get security, but so far has not succeeded, and nothing further has been done in the matter. Is Winnipeg falling to the level of an effete eastern city?