

A wide-awake tavern keeper, or energetic young store keeper, determines to turn to account the excitement which prevailed all over the country in 1866. A public meeting is called and stirring speeches are made. The Country is in danger; "God Save the Queen" is given in all kinds of keys, and "Rule Britannia" with all manner of variations. The Fenians catch it rough (with the tongue). The meeting is not at all unwilling to have a slap at the Yankees, and is unanimously resolved, that Slabtown must have a Volunteer Rifle Company. Three cheers for the Queen terminates the meeting, which is immediately re-organized in the next tavern.

After a little delay and some difficulty, a sheet of foolscap, with pen and ink is procured and volunteers press forward by the dozen. Next morning a roll of fifty or sixty names is forwarded to the Militia Department, with the request for a Service Roll and immediate inspection.

The Government, glad to get men, (as there was then every prospect of their being wanted,) make no unnecessary delay, and the papers are sent on forthwith. A letter, with the magical O. H. M. S. on the envelope, renews all the previous excitement. The captain (*in esse*) immediately calls together the company, the last man coming in on a run, lest he should be late. The conditions of service are read, and every man signs without hesitation; (they are ready then to sign anything.) A week after, the company is inspected by the Brigade Major, who pays them a glowing compliment on their loyalty and fine personal appearance. The next week they are gazetted, and there you are "The Slabtown Volunteer Rifle Company, Captain Blank."

Drill is commenced forthwith, military ardor burns high in the breast of every volunteer, and there is an average attendance of forty or fifty men. The captain is stern and attentive, and the company really makes wonderful progress. The rifles and uniform arrive, the men are paraded and have a shooting match—and a second company could be organized on the spot. The first year, the company is a perfect success; the next, a slight weakness is apparent; the third year, there is a decided falling off; the fourth year, the captain thinks he can muster about forty, *if he gets time enough*; the fifth—well, he don't know; "the men, you see, were called out to drill last year at a bad time; a good many of them lost their lay, and some more lost their places, and they didn't like the way they were treated when in camp at Jericho," etc. The sixth year, the captain and ten or a dozen men are all that remains of that famous company. The novelty has worn off, the excitement died out, and nothing has been introduced as a substitute for either; and although a capital drill shed, costing some \$700 or \$800, has been erected at the company headquarters, the shed is devoted to agricultural shows.—Where the tramp of armed men, and the sharp word of command could be heard a couple of nights in the week, you will now find two or three threshing machines; and where you could turn out forty men in two or three hours, you may now hunt all day and not be able to parade a dozen. Patriotism and pluck, with here and there an eye to business, was the motive power which started the volunteers; but the organization (if you choose to call it such) of all, was more or less alike, and all alike are now in the condition of the Slabtown Rifles.