

is well paid, a considerable sum of money. But to compensate for the additional duty thrown on their comrades, they have to suffer a deduction of about one-half of their earnings, which is paid into the subsistence fund of their company. Three advantages are obtained by this measure: the mess of the company is improved, the want of labor in the empire is lessened, and the monotonous routine of garrison life is diversified. As things are in Russia, not much can be said against this system, especially considering the long time of service of the soldier, and as the men fare well under it.

This peculiarity of the Russian service necessitates a peculiar administration and order of the mess. The men provide partly by their labor for their own subsistence; they are therefore allowed to manage the mess in a great many respects to their own liking. A strongly developed self-government reigns thus in an otherwise strictly regulated military administration.

Each company is divided, in time of peace, into four squads. For the management of the mess, each squad elects one man, and another man is elected by the whole company, to whom an assistant capable of keeping accounts is given. These men are called the *artel*, and the men themselves *artelshicks*. It is their duty to provide the necessary materials for the mess according to the amount of money received from the captain, either for a week or for a few days. This is no easy task, for on fast days the bill of fare must conform to the national custom and religious observances. After the bill of fare has been determined, the company *artelshick* buys the materials, which are closely inspected in regard to quantity and quality by the orderly sergeant of the day. After having been cooked, they are divided between the four squads, each *artelshick* watching over the interest of his squad.

The mess gives two meals daily, consisting generally of cabbage, or soup, or peas, etc., besides a good quantity of groats. Meat is served once a day, and must weigh when cooked one-half pound.

The rations are well prepared and fully sufficient in quantity; the hale, hearty condition and appearance of the men bearing ample testimony to these facts.

Besides the above-mentioned means to improve the rations, there is attached to each barracks a kitchen garden worked by one man per company, the expenses being paid from the company fund.

The plan of managing the company mess seems to be good, and might perhaps be introduced with some modifications into the United States Army, at least in time of peace. The companies here are small, about the same strength as the Russian; but as our companies generally mess together, six men do not seem to be required. Let the non-commissioned officers of each company elect one of their number, the private one, and the whole company an additional one, this last man to make all purchases, or to draw the rations in kind from the commissary, these three men to form a council of administration under the presidency of the senior officer—not company commander; let this council determine, according to the resources of the company fund, the bill of fare, and hold them responsible for the proper management of the company mess. The commander would, of course remain as now *ex officio* the trustee of the fund and exercise the necessary control. The elected members to be changed after a specified time and not to be re-elected immediately.

As it is at present, the captain is in reality chief cook, the first sergeant is assistant; and if they do not happen to possess natural

talent for this work, the company do not live as well as they might. Let the men have a share in the management of their own rations, and if they do not fare well, it is their own fault and must stop their growling. Against the introduction of this plan some objections may be raised, but it is believed to be practicable, and its adoption may have very beneficial results, and will certainly remedy some of the but too well founded complaints which the men are powerless in a great many instances to correct. The so called savings are generally not made in the manner contemplated by the Regulations. At ration day the first sergeant leaves with the commissary a certain quantity of articles to be paid for at the end of the month. Towards the end of the ten days he finds out, for instance, that he left too much coffee, but instead of drawing the quantity necessary to make tolerably good coffee, he uses simply less for each meal; in other words, he makes the amount he drew last, a proceeding which is generally followed with most articles of the ration; and then he boasts at the end of the month of the high figure of his savings, the height of his ambition being to show the most money saved.

The value of the ration is sufficient to give to the men good, substantial board. Nothing should be purchased out of the company fund but provisions and the necessary mess utensils, and company and post commanders should be held responsible that this is strictly observed.

In this connection it may be appropriate to mention the saving of flour as now practised at the different posts. The ration of flour is 18 ounces, giving barely enough bread for the support of a man. But the practice at most of the posts is simply to bake 18 ounces of bread for each man. The rest of the flour is sold, and the proceeds form, after deducting the expenses of the bakery, the post and regimental funds. Both these funds are unnecessary, and only complicate the administration of posts and regiments. Congress has decided that the expense of maintaining regimental bands is too heavy a burden for the national treasury; but as they seem to be indispensable, the powers that be simply order that they must be maintained out of funds gained from an insufficient issue of bread to enlisted men.

It seems also not to be right that men not stationed at the posts where these bands are kept should contribute to their maintenance. If regimental bands are indispensable, and the country at large be too poor to provide for the necessary expenses of their maintenance, make every officer and man give a fixed sum of his pay per month for the fund necessary to maintain them, but do not make the enlisted man alone pay for the privilege of having music at a post by depriving him of a part of his necessary bread.

The other purposes, forming regimental and post libraries, etc., for which the post and regimental funds are set aside, are very good in intention, but are very rarely carried out for the real benefit of the enlisted men, at least not the regimental libraries. The justice of the whole proceeding by which post and regimental funds are created seems to be doubtful, and the use of the funds creates but little good. Abolish these funds altogether, and divide the real *bona fide* savings made by baking the flour issued into bread, and not actually consumed, between the companies at the post, to be accounted for in the return of their company fund.

Other means might be found to provide for all the purposes for which post and regi-

mental funds are now used: collect the pay due to desertors after all claims of the Government have been satisfied, for instance.

At nearly the majority of posts there is sufficient land available for the purpose of cultivating kitchen gardens, their produce forming a very desirable addition for the company messes, but here again all the expenses are borne by the enlisted men. If officers are stationed at such posts, where fresh vegetables cannot be procured otherwise, issue to them at the same rate as to enlisted men; that is to say, if the family of the officer consist of six persons, issue to him the same quantity issued to six enlisted men, and when the expenses are to be settled, make the officer bear his share, the share falling upon the enlisted men to be paid out of the company fund.

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March 17, 1871.

FOREIGN NAVAL AND MILITARY ITEMS.

It is asserted that in the course of the summer a temporary camp of instruction for 30,000 men will be formed somewhere in the south of England.

In proof of the educational spirit which now possesses the British army, we have the fact that the whole of the schools of instruction are so full this month that the applications of many officers who were anxious to join on the 1st instant could not be entertained.

It is said that the entire system of Italian military defences about to be submitted to the Chamber is based on the supposition that France may be expected, on the first opportunity, to assail Italy. In this belief the mountain passes toward France are to be fortified, the fortifications of Alessandria and Spezia to be increased, and Rome and Civita Vecchia are to be protected.

The *Monarch* has been ordered to Portsmouth to fit with the hydrostatic screw-starting gear, described a few weeks since. We are pleased, says the *Broad Arrow*, also to learn that an order has been given by the Admiralty for the fitting the *Agincourt* with steering gear upon this principle, and that screw-starting apparatus will be added after that in the *Monarch* has been practically tested.

A letter from Toulon, published in the *Messenger du Midi* of the 5th of March, states that the disarmament of ships is about to be carried out upon such a scale as to leave in commission only the vessels absolutely necessary for the public service. It is even proposed to suppress the permanent naval stations in distant waters, and to adopt the American system, which is regarded as satisfactory, both as respects national influence and the instruction of seamen.

In answer to a question as to the status of the British military attachés at foreign embassies, it was explained in Parliament that the salary of the military attachés at Paris was £500 per annum charged in the estimates for the diplomatic service, and that all extraordinary expenses were allowed. Military attachés at Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg received £500 per annum each, together with £100 a year, for lodging money. It was not a five years' appointment. The present attaché had held the post from October 1, 1858. The military attachés hold the local rank of major-general, that they may have a higher local standing.