

the same space, at the same speed, and so on. Whether this be so or not, the greatest importance must be attached by all practical men to the suggestion as to collecting data for evolutionary purposes from the performances of the various ships, and of tabulating them for use in fleet evolutions, an idea for which the credit is due to Com-mander Dawson. The kind of information that would thus be collected is indispensable if the peloton formation is to be adopted, and it is already adopted in the French Navy, if not also in the Russian. As the *Revue Coloniale* so pointedly says: "The interior arrangements of a fleet in order of battle can only be rendered truly effective by a thorough acquaintance with the special qualities of every vessel in the fleet." But this knowledge cannot be obtained except by some such method of experimenting and tabulating results as Commander Dawson has suggested. Until this is done—and there is no reason why it should not be commenced within the next forty-eight hours—we see no good whatever in introducing signals for the peloton formation in the naval code.

#### A TAXPAYER'S IDEA OF THE MILITIA.

From time immemorial the militia of the country has been the subject of all sorts of sneers and taunts on the part of "grasping taxpayers" and every dollar expended by the authorities for the support or encouragement of the National Guard has met the wolf-like growls of these avaricious land-holders. They look upon the militia from one point of view only, and that is from the direction of their pockets. To illustrate this we append the following idea of a correspondent of the *Brooklyn Eagle* regarding the militia, as called forth by the proposed purchase of a site for the Thirteenth regiment armory. He says:

Coming to the theory of militia, for intramural service, that proposition is inherently absurd. The fundamental principles of its organization are for field service only, and its establishment in this country has been with no conception other than that of national defence. Its long lines, cumbrous weapons, and phalanx characteristics, are wholly unsuitable to the streets of a city. It has never been called upon except as a mere incidental resource, something like using a fire engine to drive a swarm of bees from a valuable horse. And then its application has been so savage, so misdirected, so indiscriminating, so like the club of a giant upon the skull of an infant, that it has in every instance been a disgrace to civil government in time of peace. Witness the 13th of July riot, and the Astor Place riot. The draft riots do not come into the argument, for they occurred in time of war, when all things were exceptional, and the enemies of the Government were entirely segregated from the rest of the people. Besides this dependence upon the militia for the preservation of the peace is a standing insult to and a derogation of our costly police. By this arrogation of the militia, the *esprit de corps* of the police is vitally wounded. They do not feel dignified with the highest idea of guardianship of the people. And, too, this preference seems all the more nonsensical when we recollect that the police are, as a body, mature men, trained for danger, mured to hardship, and are living a life of continued military discipline. Police service is their profession, and they have no other calls to distract them from duty. All of these qualifications are opposite to those of the militia. The militia are young men, almost

unanimously romantic in their military ideas, unused to danger, and, when called upon on that rare occasion of riot—which don't happen once in the life time of average militiamen, and which is always more of a bugaboo than a real mischief—they are apt to become nervous, and to go off half cocked. One platoon of well trained, old man police, with revolvers and clubs, acquainted with the rogues and the toughs, is worth in a street fight, a whole regiment of militia, and it is they who should have our spare money. Some of our prominent militia officers, who may be justly proud of their positions and their commands, bluster out about the economy of the militia, in saving the property of the city in case of a riot. Stuff and nonsense! History shows that they always kill more innocent than guilty, but that the police make a sure pop every time. What is the consideration of property when compared with one innocent life taken? Then, too, we are not the actual possessors of a riot, but we are the actual possessors of a continual drain upon our pockets for this militia. The militia tell us they are nearly self supporting, but the Joint Board, we see, calls for \$12,000 a year in the budget for the current expenses of the militia; and we are going to be importuned each year for \$150,000 for an armory.

Now as to the patriotism in maintaining a militia, it may be said that war is as uncertain as a riot. This generation of taxpayers are not likely to permit another war. The experience of the last war shows that a volunteer army can be raised, equipped, and drilled from raw recruits much sooner than they would be required for the field. The text-book and West Point will always be sufficient to start on without the continuous expense to the people of militia schools. We have our parade grounds, which is worth half a million of dollars, set aside for the mere purpose of forming "regimental" or "brigade front" once a year. What a monstrous and almost idiotic extravagance, considering the extreme improbability of any one of these militiamen ever being called upon in time of war to the "divisions of a battle know," or to "set a squadron in the field!" What can we do with a regimental or brigade front inside of the city? The only possible use of infantry in the city is for street firing, and yet the National Guard have never thought of making that a general drill. But even that is not applicable to the city, in ordinary riots, for a musket ball will go a quarter of a mile at all angles after it strikes a stone or brick, thus being likely to kill more innocent than guilty.

No fault need be found with the militia as a means of diversion to young men and to old men who are younger than they ought to be, nor with their *esprit de corps*. They come together from the noble impulses of manhood. The only suggestion to offer to them is that they should be entirely self-supporting, except as to arms and equipments. They are very pretty as they march along, as pretty as a theatre or a picture, and they bear just about as much relation to real war as a theatre does to real life. But we are a generous people, and will not higgie about a few thousand dollars a year for our militia if they do not make too extravagant and important demands. Let this be a warning that they might break the camel's back and themselves be the agency of the decline of their institution. The first and best days of the militia in the United States were immediately after the Revolution and the militia has had its revival and decline after each war. In a few years from now it will gain decline, and our deserted parade ground, for which the country was

sagacious enough to get quit claim deeds, may yet be utilized.

When the capital of the nation was almost entirely at the mercy of a rebellious South this same depreciated militia was the first to respond, and the prompt service rendered by the Sixth Massachusetts, Seventh New York, and the hosts of our militia organizations, will ever be memorable in the history of the country. It was upon these very same militia men the government largely depended for officers and instructors of the disorganized masses of patriotic citizens then flocking to the aid of the government, and there is scarcely a militia regiment of those days; that did not then and during the war furnish hundreds of officers to the raw masses in the field. It was to the schooling—be it little or great—obtained in the militia that our Army was indebted for many excellent officers, and it was this same militia that saved the capital in the beginning, and in the end aided largely in putting down the rebellion. The Government has shown that with its small standing Army, it must depend in case of war upon its militia; and it has been too long blind to its own interest in not adopting some such national militia law as has been urged upon the attention of Congress. In time of peace, particularly in large cities, the organized militia has a moral influence, and without the effect upon the mob of their knowledge of the presence of troops in New York it would not be secure a day from riot. This city contains at all times a turbulent class, ready to avail itself of any excuse for plunder, and a class which a police force three times the present strength could not control, as the experience of our draft riots has shown. In the absence of the militia at the front in 1863 the mob, in face of the efforts of the regularly organized police, held partial possession of the city for days. The militia in the "Orange riot" of 1871, despite its blunders, quelled an organized riot in a few hours, and the effect of the militia action on that day has preserved the peace on the 12th of July ever since. There are people who would have the National Guard engaged in a series of fighting annually, so as to show to the public that they really are valuable in preserving the peace. The militia can be made less expensive and more effective by judicious weeding and general reduction, but citizens who in any way depreciate its value as a school for the Army in time of war and a safeguard of the public in times of peace, are evidently talking about what they do not understand. If the militiamen were now called upon for a day's actual service, the training young men obtain from their connection with a properly organized and disciplined military body is worthy all it costs in time and money. The argument of the *Eagle* proves only that if we have a militia it should be properly organized, properly trained, and properly disciplined. Carried beyond that to its first conclusions, it would do away with every school and college in the land, turn our churches into factories, add our institutions of learning into workshops. There is an argument which can be made in favor of doing away with the whole of our complex modern system and returning to the primitive simplicity of our ancestral tillers of the field and keepers of the flocks, but until that conclusion is reached we shall continue to believe that the Army, with all of its belongings, is an institution in its way quite as necessary—as the press, for example, and that organizing a good company in the National Guard is quite as important as reporting items for the *Eagle*, or—perhaps we may be persuaded to admit—as writing for the—*Army and Navy Journal*.