# NORTHERN MESSENGER

DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE.

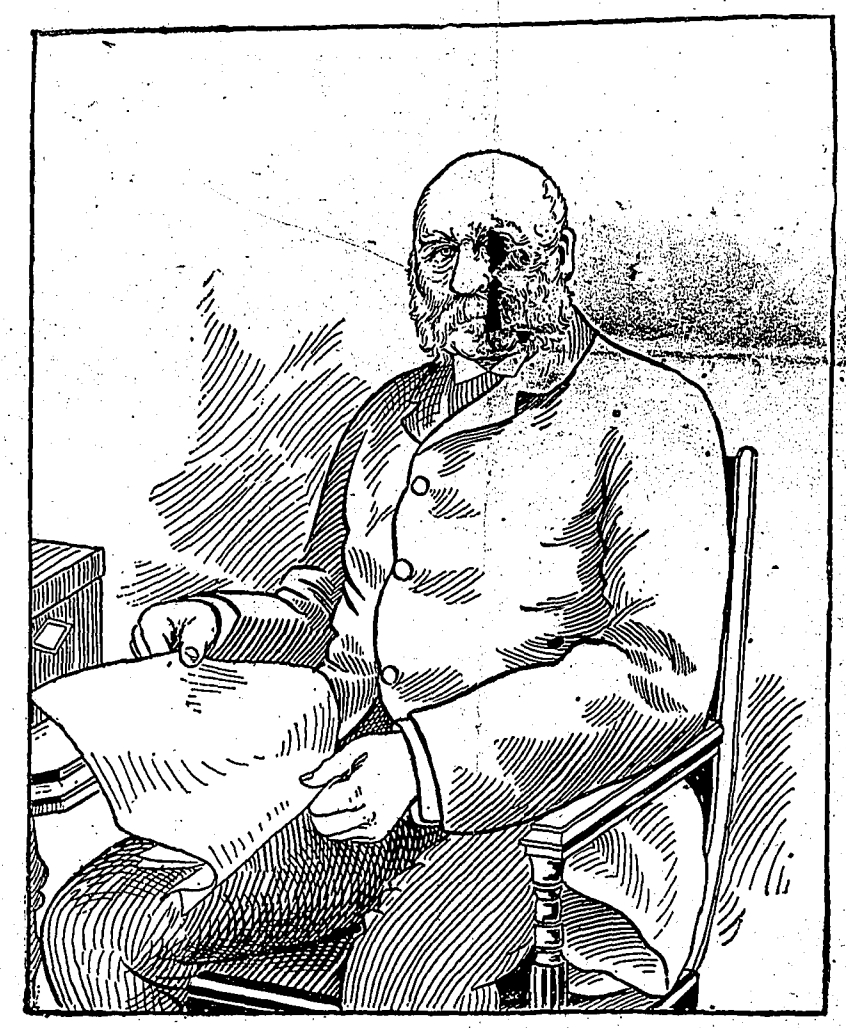
VOLUME XXVIII., No. 19. MONTREAL & NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 15, 1893. 30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.


## A ROYAL SOLDIER.

THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE AND HIS WORK.

*H. H. Pearse in London Graphic.*

The post of Commander-in-Chief of the British army is a position which the greatest soldier of this or any other country or age might have been proud to hold. The Duke of Cambridge must not claim to take rank with the greatest soldiers even of to-day, but there is none among them who has a quicker eye for mistakes in tactics or strategy, nor one with a fuller mastery of all details pertaining to the science of war, 'The Duke,' as he is always called throughout the army, owes his intimate knowledge of these things to an infinite capacity for hard work. That is a quality in which he resembles his uncle, Frederick Duke of York, and is resembled by the Duke of Connaught, of whom Lord Wolseley once said, 'There goes the hardest working officer in the army.' The Commander-in-Chief has his duties no less than his honors and privileges, and the Duke of Cambridge has ever been ready to take his share of the one as of the other. No matter how arduous or continuous work may be at the War Office, he has never shirked his proper share of it, or thrown on others' shoulders any of the burden that should be his. Indeed, his fault, if any, is rather the other way, leaning in the direction of doing for himself what might, with equal advantage, be deputed to others. Seeing that the Duke's first commission was that of a lieutenant-colonel in the 8th Light Dragoons (now the 8th Hussars), and that he never did regimental duty in any rank lower than that of field officer, his acquaintance with the minutiae of drill is simply marvellous. He has a sergeant-major's quickness in detecting the least thing wrong in a line of many men, and any irregularity of accoutrement he notes as certainly as he does a blunder in tactics. All this is in ordinary men so much the result of training and daily habit that one wonders how one distracted with the multitudinous calls of royal estate should have found either inclination, time, or opportunity to study and perfect himself in numberless small things that others only acquire with reluctance and by some exercise of force. He did not, like his nephew, the Duke of Connaught, go through the various ranks of cavalry and infantry before reaching high command. The Duke's first commission as a light dragoon was dated 1842, though he had held the rank of brevet-colonel unattached five years earlier. By 1845, at the age of twenty-six, he had risen to be a major-general. Such rapid promotion neither merit nor hard work could have won, but the Duke's great claim to be considered a soldier by nature is that while going forward so fast he did not neglect to look back or to qualify himself for still further advancement by mastering the very elements and groundwork of military science. By patient and ceaseless application he had to acquire knowledge of duties that had never come within his practical experience. How hard that is every officer worth his salt knows, and how perfectly the Duke of Cambridge succeeded many a subaltern negligent in minor details has found out to his cost. I was once especially struck with this in the case of a small cavalry patrol that should have been watching the manœuvres by which 'dodgy Dan Lyson' got round his adversary's flank on the Fox Hills, something more than twenty years ago. The cavalry officer had kept his few men too much together, and had shown no enterprise in watching the wily enemy's move-



H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE, K.G., K.T., K.P.
FIELD-MARSHAL, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

ments. The Duke rode forward alone to see how the videttes were posted, then rode back to the subaltern and in round terms told him that unless he kept a better look-out, he would imperil a certain position by leaving it open for an enemy to penetrate. No enemy was in sight, but the warning was given a little too late, for when the videttes did push forward they found Lyson's cavalry in force coming up the very ravine indicated by the Duke, with guns and infantry close behind them. His Royal Highness has a reputation for excessive strategy and tactics, but that is not his weak point, and as a critic of others he certainly has no toleration for lack of initiative or of boldness in enterprise. In order to qualify himself for a command in the field under conditions that were never realized, and to make himself independent of all advisers, he put himself through a course of training in military science the result of which is apparent in the shrewd criticisms by which he sums up the achievements and blunders of all ranks at peace manœuvres. There are few who can do this in terser or more forcible phrases. Attaching great importance to discipline, he is, perhaps, something of a martinet in that respect; but, at the same time, he has every possible consideration for the men, whom he will not have exposed to unnecessary hardships for the sake of mere displays. Against reviews in hot weather or sham fights that must necessarily have exposed the rank and file to serious discomforts, if nothing worse, he has always set his face resolutely—and rightly. For that the soldiers owe much to their commander-in-chief.

It is not very generally known, except to soldiers, that the Duke, among other means of acquiring mastery of his profession, attached himself to the staff in Gibraltar for six months before taking substantive rank, and that for two years after being a colonel of dragoons he acted as a staff officer in the Ionian Islands, which had not then been handed over to Greece. He was a major-general commanding troops in the Dublin district and an inspector-general of cavalry at headquarters previous to his term of active service in the Crimea. On returning from that campaign he was temporarily without any specific appointment until he succeeded, in 1856, Viscount Hardinge, as General Commander-in-Chief of the military forces of Great Britain. But the two years of comparative freedom from military duties had not been wasted. He came to headquarters equipped with fuller knowledge and a determination to do his best for the efficiency of the army. All who have been brought in contact with him there know something of the means by which he has been instrumental in bringing about reforms of administration and measures tending to improve the condition of soldiers. He has always evinced, however, a great disinclination to be personally identified with changes in this direction. Enquiries instituted by him have been conducted by his orders, but the results in every case were embodied in formal reports that gave no clue to the original author, and probably His Royal Highness would not thank anybody for lifting the veil, seeing that he has never courted popularity. Conservative in his regard for all that could give distinction to military service, and very jealous concerning the honor of a soldier's profession, he has been slow to yield on points that seemed, in his opinion, to affect the morals of the army. Notoriously he was not an advocate for abolition of purchase, thinking that the door might thus be opened for the advancement of men whose only qualification was ability to master subjects set in examination. But leaders by birth and the traditions of their race have not suffered in the struggle so far. Competition has been only another incentive for them to put forth their highest efforts, and the consequence is that we have in the British army of to-day a greater proportion of distinguished officers descended from long lines of fighting families than at any previous period of England's military history. In old days the Napiers, Goughs, and Hardinges were exceptional in this respect. Recent events, however, have brought to the front not only such conspicuous examples of hereditary fitness as Lord Wolseley and Lord Roberts, but the Hardinges, Stewarts and Goughs are still with us, and numberless younger officers could be cited who have already shown themselves worthy to bear the names of illustrious ancestors. The lists of 'passed with honor' at Woolwich and Sandhurst every year furnish abundant proof that the old fighting races are not likely to die out or to be beaten in the struggle for distinction yet. The Duke, therefore, must have long since discovered that his fears on this score were groundless. His opposition to the short service, on the contrary, has been so far justified that a partial return to the old system finds advocates in some of our most able soldiers to-day. It


AUBERT GALLION QUE
W N Pozer 31&93