

## THE LITTLE GRAVE.

"It's only a little grave," they said,  
 "Only just a child that's dead;"  
 And so they carelessly turned away  
 From the mound the spade had made that day.  
 Ah! they did not know how deep a shade  
 That little grave in our home has made.

I know the coffin was narrow and small,  
 One yard would have served for an ample pall;  
 And one man in his arms could have borne away  
 The rosewood and its freight of clay;  
 But I know that darling hopes were hid  
 Beneath that little coffin-lid.

I know that mother stood that day  
 With folded hands by that form of clay;  
 I knew that burning tears were hid  
 "Neath the drooping hush and aching lid?"  
 And I know her lip and cheek and brow  
 Where almost as white as her baby's now.

I know that some things were hid away,  
 The crimson frock and the wringing gay;  
 The little sock, and the half-worn shoe;  
 The cap with its plumes and tassels blue;  
 And an empty crib, with its covers spread,  
 As white as the face of the sinless dead.

'Tis a little grave; but, oh! how sore!  
 For a world-wide hopes are buried there;  
 And ye, perhaps in coming years,  
 May see, like her, through blinding tears,  
 How much of light, how much of joy,  
 Is buried with an only boy!

## THE VOLUNTEER FORCE.

We have not the remotest idea of what changes the Government contemplate making in connection with the Volunteer Force. That they intend to do something is promised in the Speech from the Throne; and in order that the subject may receive the most matured consideration, we hope that the measure will be introduced at an early stage of the session, and not left to the end to be hurried through without being properly discussed.

We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the Volunteer Force is not at present in a satisfactory condition, and we have every reason to believe that such is the opinion of the country. A large proportion of the numbers who are returned annually as *bona fide* members of the Force, are not such—that is to say, when the period for annual drill comes round in order to fill up their ranks Captains of Companies take anything they can lay their hands on that they can designate "a man," from little boys to old, worn out, half-blind incapables who are absolutely useless for practical purposes. These join for the period of drill; they help to fill up the ranks; but when the next annual drill comes few of them are to be found. The work of filling up has then to be gone through again.

There is no military system which, as the result of experience, cannot be improved. We have read innumerable statements condemning the present system; but we are not amongst those who are disposed to cry it down altogether. The present state of the Force is not attributable wholly as many allege, to the system itself, but to many other circumstances which are familiar to every volunteer officer of experience. The present system has, to use the familiar expression, worked wonders in its time, and has developed an amount of native military spirit highly creditable to the country. We have no hesitation in saying that, while at the present time a great amount of apathy is manifested towards the Force by our young men, and officers experience great difficulty in keeping the ranks full, any threatened internal disturbance or external aggressive movement, would in a few hours call together any number of men the Government might require for active service.

The question of procuring an effective Volunteer Force is not a party one—at any rate it should not be made such. Valuable suggestions made from the Opposition side should not be ignored by the Government, and we hope when the subject comes up for discussion that it will not be so much the object of the Government to carry a party measure as to secure a system which will prove efficient and most acceptable to the country. The Premier is a volunteer officer and as he is practically acquainted with the working of the present system, he will be able to bring his experience to bear in dealing with the question when the new scheme is laid before the Cabinet. There are a few points to which we would wish to draw attention, and in connection with which important improvements might be made.

We are of opinion that, considering the expense they necessarily undergo in connection with the Force, Volunteer officers when they are called out for their annual drill should be paid, according to their rank, the same as if they were on active service. An increase in the pay of the men, too, would prove beneficial. Officers, who, as a rule are not troubled with a superfluous amount of this world's riches, have innumerable expenses to meet in connection with their corps which the general public know nothing at all about, and it is only right that when they make sacrifices of time and money in the interest of the country they should be paid, to say the least of it, decently. The system of paying a dollar a day to officers in respect of their rank is a mean one, and a return to that of giving them active service pay when performing their annual drill in camp should again take place.

Something should be done to make officers proficient in their drill and duties. It is an indisputable fact that not less than three fourths of our volunteer officers are lamentably ignorant of drill. They may have gone through the Military School, but since that time, although years may have elapsed, many of them have never opened a drill book. They are unacquainted with the changes that are always being made in drill, and when they go into camp many of them know less than the men they undertake to command. We have seen officers in camp who positively scarcely knew their right hand from their left so far as drill was concerned, this class is not confined to those in rural districts but among the languid swells, the effeminate, good for nothing, haw, haw, creatures who do little but yawn, smoke cigars, swear at and abuse their men, who tell you that "drill is a—d—d bore," the incapables and know-nothings are numerous. When officers don't know their duty it is hard to expect the men to know theirs. The former should be made to "read up," to pass an annual examination, so that when they go out for their annual training they would be all the better prepared to impart instruction to those under them.

The period of training should be extended to at least sixteen or twenty days. Eight days is altogether too short a time to spend in camp to be of any service to either officers or men.

It is high time that something should be done to reform the Military School system. We have no hesitation in saying that in hundreds of cases it has proved a sort of "dead beat" institution for Tom, Dick, and Harry out of employment, or to enable others to get \$50 to carry them to the United States. We know of a case which occurred a few weeks ago where a youth applied to a local clergyman for a certificate of

moral character in order to enable him to enter the School. The clergyman in question asked what his object was in going into the School to which he replied: "To tell you the truth, sir, I want the money (referring to the \$50) to take me to the States." Very properly the clergyman declined to accommodate him. While this youth failed many others have succeeded in obtaining the fifty dollars, after which they cleared out. The Military Schools have been prostituted to purposes for which they were never intended, and in no department of our militia system is reform more urgently needed than in connection with them. Hundreds of cadets who have passed through the Schools never before or afterwards spent an hour in the Volunteer Force. All they wanted was fifty dollars.

If we had space at our disposal we might very easily enlarge upon the many gross abuses connected with the Military Schools. They are almost sufficiently notorious, however, not to require pointing out. A radical change is needed, and the sooner the Schools are made something better than feeders for young boys and for men out of employment the better.

There are other points to which we desire to draw attention, but we must leave the subject for the present.—*Kingston Chronicle and News.*

## OUR ACTIVE MILITIA.

A thoughtful letter upon the active militia organization written by the Colonel of the "Simcoe Foresters," appeared in the *Globe* of Saturday. The writer, Lieut. Colonel McKenzie, is one of the most experienced, practical and successful militia officers in Canada, and his opinions on this subject are worthy of more than ordinary consideration. Except under the pressure of danger, it is always a popular move to reduce the militia estimate, but it should not be forgotten that the two great essentials for an army are men and money. If the militia estimates cannot be increased, the force should be reduced in order that our Volunteer army may be efficient. That there are both staff and regimental officers in the force capable of organizing, drilling, and handling troops with credit has been sufficiently proven. If the present officers had men and time to work in, they could make the force efficient as far as regards drill. But the officers are military mendicants, begging for men, and often forced to pick up anything in the shape of a man, in order to keep their companies from being gazetted out. Why should not officers who have worked hard to keep up corps, but have failed through no fault of theirs, have their corps recruited by ballot from the reserve?—This is the only true system of defence—a drilled reserve, and fill the active force with the bone and sinew of the country. Six days annually is the term allowed for drill and any man may judge that but little can be done with a regiment—one third recruits—in that time. For this service the officers of all ranks receive sixteen dollars, out of which they have to pay for their rations and any damage done to camp equipage. The arms are good, but no provision being made for their repair one-tenth of them are unserviceable. The accoutrements are not good. The men are enrolled for three years; new clothing is issued every five years. It is impossible to induce respectable young to wear clothing that has been in use three years—and the serge trousers will not last five years. If the burden of military service is to press light-