

# THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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## Topics of the Week.

New interest is given to the proposed inter-regimental matches of the Canadian Military Rifle League, by the proposition made by Capt. John S. Shepherd, Secretary of the National Rifle Association of America, that the League matches should be participated in by teams from both countries. Capt. Shepherd's letter will be found in full in another place in this issue. As it is proposed that the League teams shall be drawn from single regiments, rather than from cities, it would not be fair to pit them against city teams of the United States; but should any of the latter be desirous of engaging in such contests no doubt the Canadian riflemen would gladly arrange for them independently of the League matches. In this connection, the following extracted from the *U. S. Army and Navy Journal* will be read with interest: "In view of the probability of the World's Fair being held in New York, an effort is to be made to revive the international small-bore and military matches in connection therewith. Correspondence with leading riflemen of England, Ireland, Scotland, Australia, and Canada, discloses a disposition on their part to again engage in a contest with American experts for the world's supremacy, and it is quite within the range of possibilities that 1892 may witness another memorable series of struggles before the targets of Creedmoor."

By all accounts the Artillery Association business meetings this year will be quite as lively as the last annual meetings. There are vexed points to come before both the Ontario and Dominion Associations, with very positive advocates on both sides. The trouble is mainly financial, a much mixed dispute having been in progress all the year as to affiliation fees. A great deal of unprofitable bickering is apt to result, unless one side will gracefully give way. For the sake of the associations we sincerely trust that the dispute may be thus amicably arranged. And concerning the proposed new constitution for the Dominion Artillery Association, we are informed that its financial provisions are very objectionable to a great many, and that unless they are re-arranged the whole scheme will be stoutly opposed.

## Umpires.

Our criticisms upon the field day in Toronto on Thanksgiving Day having been so generally appreciated and taken in the same friendly manner in which they were written, we venture to add a few words on the same important subject, bespeaking a like reception for them. The object of such field days is, of course, to train officers and men, as nearly

as possible, how to act if the country were invaded. Those officers and men then, who give up time and money to learn upon this important point, are entitled to receive every possible assistance and support, and to avail themselves of the best obtainable instruction. This instruction we find fully laid down in the Revised Infantry Drill Book, part VIII., s. 37, page 411, entitled "Rules to be observed by the troops," and also on page 406, s. 36, entitled "Umpire Regulations."

It is only fair to the troops engaged that these "regulations" and these "rules" should be thoroughly known by the umpires. They ought to be able to give chapter and verse for each decision, and to make a note of the same for the umpire-in-chief's information. And yet we venture to think that some of the umpires employed upon the day in question were totally unacquainted with these rules. At all events, many gross violations of the rules have been reported.

Regulation 9, for instance, seemed hardly once to be taken into consideration; and neither did it seem to be fully understood that "orders from the umpire staff are to be considered as emanating from the umpire-in-chief, and are to be carried out at once without demur." Indeed it appeared that some of the umpires never thought of this, otherwise they would scarcely have allowed rule 2, sec. 37, to be continuously broken: "No troops are to approach within 100 yards of an opposing force. . . . . When this limit is attained the opposing forces are to halt, cease firing and wait." Regulation 13 (a) says: "Infantry judiciously posted. . . . cannot be dislodged by a front attack by a force of less than two to one. (b) If. . . . behind a shelter trench, bank or other equivalent cover. . . . they cannot be dislodged by a force of less than three to one. (c) If these attacks are not preceded by artillery fire the proportion of attackers to defenders must be increased to three to one. Every one of these regulations was plainly broken and in one spot a section of the attacking force, led by a mounted officer, bravely charged up the face of a hill behind the bank of which there were defenders outnumbering the attackers by at least two to one. Not only that, they ran on until within a few feet of the enemy. According to the book this attack came under sec. 36, regulation 13, (c) and they should have been ordered off the field, together with the mounted officer. Instead of this the defenders were ordered to fall back. This is simply one instance taken to emphasize the point. There were many similar cases upon that day. Both sides were full of honest enthusiasm which led them to perform what would have been, in actual fighting, prodigious acts of bravery, but it is the umpires' duty to see that enthusiasm is not carried to the extent of teaching the men actual harm instead of good. An umpire's duty in a case of this kind is clearly laid down, and by strictly following it he would have taught the men a really good lesson for the future, whereas, by his failing to do so, from whatever causes, the men were encouraged to exhibit further disobedience of orders.

We would be sorry to create in the mind of any officer who was kind enough to fill the thankless office of umpire, the impression that his actions are being made the subject of unfriendly criticism. The duties of such an office cannot be mastered in a day. To so thoroughly

understand the rules that they can be correctly applied amidst any excitement, requires long familiarity with them, and we have no doubt that on this occasion the umpires had but short notice that they were desired to act. If, however, these field days are to be of regular occurrence, pains should be taken to secure well in advance a staff of umpires who have time and inclination to thoroughly master their work. Might it not be possible for the umpire-in-chief or the D. A. G. of a district where a field day is going to be held to give some lectures to his assistants beforehand. If a formal lecture is thought undesirable, the information might be imparted in a friendly chat over a pipe. There are many senior officers, who are some of our best, who would gladly attend a lecture on the subject, knowing as they do the constant changes and alterations that have taken place since they got their first commissions. The better they are the more readily will they acknowledge the possibility of being a little rusty, and take any opportunity to rub up a little. One thing is certain, that if a great part of the advantage of a field day is not to be lost, it is absolutely necessary for the umpires to know and do their duties.

### Bravo! Stairs.

(Rev. K. L. Jones, R.M.C., Kingston.)

As soon as news reached the Royal Military College that the Stanley expedition had arrived at Zanzibar, the staff adjutant, Lieut.-Col. McGill, despatched the following telegram to Lieut. Stairs, R.E., a graduate of the college and Stanley's right hand man:

"Stairs, Zanzibar: Bravo! Cadets." Two days afterwards came the reply: "Cadets, Kingston: Thanks, comrades."

Up the gleaming river stretches of the Congo's widening tide,  
Where the rivelled grass and sedges teem with monsters Argus-eyed;  
Through the fever-laden forests, where the craven heart despairs.  
Onward pressing, never faltering—Bravo! Stairs.

Thoughts of cool Ontario's waters, rippling on Fort Frederick's \* strand,  
Or the white-maned ocean horses, scouring Nova Scotia's sand.  
Come, like dreams, to weary toiler, as 'neath Afric's sun he fares,  
But the strong will never waver—Bravo! Stairs.

Marshalling his dark battalions, all impatient of control,  
With a firmness and a patience earnest of a noble soul;  
First in danger, never laggard, Alma Mater's crest he wears,  
Thrilling with "Truth, Valour, Duty" †—Bravo! Stairs.

Bearing Britain's torch of freedom to the darkness of the grave,  
Striking chains and riving shackles from the scarred limbs of the slave;  
Loosing captives where they languish, braving lions in their lairs,  
While the world looks on in wonder—Bravo! Stairs.

Weave the maple with the laurel, though its veins are tinged with red,  
Place the chaplet, in its freshness, proudly on our hero's head;  
Canada grown grander, nobler, from the glory that he bears,  
Shou's from all her lakes and forests, Bravo! Stairs.

\*Fort Frederick guards the peninsula on which stands the Royal Military College.  
†The motto of the college crest.

THE MONTREAL WITNESS is offering great inducements to its subscribers this year, in the way of books and pictures, comprising 198 different offers, including Macaulay's and Hume's Histories of England, Dickens, Sir Walter Scott's Works, George Eliot, Cooper, Thackeray and Washington Irving's, handsomely bound in sets; also Pansy and other leading books. The pictures are "The Horse Fair," "The Angelus," "Christ before Pilate," "A Scottish Raid," all celebrated pictures of the day. The *Witness* enters on its forty-fifth year, and continues to be a favourite family newspaper and champion of temperance and moral reform. Its County Historical Story Competition, which every school boy has heard about, and which has created so much interest in the Dominion, is being continued this year, prizes of greater value being offered. The premiums are extended to the subscribers of the *Daily Witness* and the *Northern Messenger*, so that all will have an opportunity to secure them. The prices of the different publications are:—*Daily Witness*, \$3.00; *Weekly Witness*, \$1.00; *Northern Messenger*, 30 cts.

Emperor William of Germany seems to have the knack of touching the popular heart. Recently, in sight of a cheering crowd, he helped the aged Von Moltke put on his military coat, buttoned it up for the old man, and turned up his collar. The next day the humble miners at Recklinghausen were indulging in frantic hohs at the receipt of a kindly message conveying the Kaiser's congratulations on the gallant rescue of a party of entombed workmen.

### The Canadian Military Rifle League.

The proposed league matches are attracting attention in the North-west Mounted Police, and should the regulations be so framed as to permit their entry, it is altogether probable that there will be some teams from that body. An officer of the Queen's Own, Toronto, has recently received from Staff-Sergt. Gordon, of the Police, who formerly was a member of the Queen's Own, a letter in which he states that the Police are quite anxious to enter in the matches if possible. By the way, Sergt. Gordon's Toronto friends will be interested in learning that he was the winner of the Governor General's Silver Medal at the Provincial Association meeting held at Regina last fall.

#### PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL CONTEST.

The following interesting letter speaks for itself:—

NEW YORK, 11th January, 1890.

MR. WM. R. PRINGLE,  
*Secretary Canadian Military Rifle League.*

DEAR SIR,—I have been informed that it is proposed to hold a series of inter-city telegraphic rifle matches next summer in Canada. Could arrangements be made to have these between teams from cities of both the United States and Canada, and thereby increase the interest in military rifle shooting?

Yours, very truly,  
JNO. S. SHEPPERD,  
*Secretary N. R. A. of America.*

### The Rifle.

#### THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION.

The prizes won at the South African Wimbledon, the great annual rifle meeting of Cape Colony, which took place a week or two previously, were presented at Cape Town, on the 19th of October, Sir Gordon Sprigg, the Premier, being the presentor. Speaking of the progress of the colonial rifle association, Sir Gordon said that in its first year (1880) the programme consisted of six matches, and £250 was distributed in prizes. This year, a silver shield, several cups and gold and silver medals, and £573 were shot for. In respect to the loss which the association had sustained by the death of Major Inglesby, the speaker said he was a man who threw the whole of his energy and enterprise into the volunteer movement. He passed away in the midst of an active life, and left behind a vacant place which will not be easily filled. In connection with the late Major Inglesby's captaincy of the Cape team which was sent to England in 1887, Sir Gordon Sprigg said that following on the precedent set in that year, he understood that it was contemplated to send another team to England to represent the Colony in 1890. In view of this intention he urged upon his hearers, and through them the great body of volunteers in that country, to work out the idea to a practical conclusion. Speaking in his official capacity, the Premier said that if the matter is properly taken up, and the volunteers themselves are in earnest about it, and prepared to contribute a fair proportion of the expenses, the Government will not be slow in advising Parliament to supplement any deficiency that may arise in providing the whole expenditure that may be necessary.

#### A NOVEL SKIRMISHING TARGET.

Says the *Volunteer Record*:—"The very latest thing in skirmishing targets that we hear of—except, of course, the switch-back bounding tiger referred to in another par—is the figure of a man which can be made to advance, retire, stand, kneel, and lay down at the will of a wire puller placed out of danger. If the dummy soldier can be thus made obedient to his manipulator, he represents about as neat a thing in mechanical triumphs, as has been heard of lately. It will be thought, however, that the ingenious inventor might, while he was about it, have gone a little further and placed a rifle in his interesting creation's hands, and contrived to make it, or him, load and fire at his attackers in return. A new charm, not to say a fillip of excitement, would be added to the now prosaic skirmishing practice if the figure could be made to return the fire of his enemy with effect. Moreover, the principle might be carried still farther, whole companies, battalions, and why not armies, of these soulless contrivances might be rigged up and sent into the field. The wars of the future could be fought with them entirely, instead of with the flesh and blood beings who have hitherto been utilized for these purposes. The production and maintenance of the former would be far less costly than the latter, to say nothing of the battles being less destructive, as the combatants could be used over and over again. Who says now, that the millenium is not within measurable distance."

## BISLEY COMMON.

The opinion of that veteran rifleman, Captain Cortis, on any matter affecting shooting must necessarily carry a good deal of weight; his impressions, therefore, of Bisley Common, as expressed at a recent dinner, at Arundel, are worth reproducing. In reference to his having visited Bisley, in company with Sir Henry Fletcher, Captain Cortis said he believed it would be impossible to find any range in England superior to Wimbledon, but he was most favourably impressed with that at Bisley. It was a fine honest range, a more honest range possibly than Wimbledon, and one where the shooting would be more even, and without so much "fluking." It also appeared to be suitable for camping, having a covering of stunted heather such as was seen on the Yorkshire Moors. Captain Cortis does not think that any inconvenience will be experienced from the sand, about which much misgiving has been expressed.

## HYTHE SPECIAL VOLUNTEER COURSE.

Last week saw the very necessary, but at the same time somewhat monotonous exercise of "position" drill concluded, and the commencement of "class" firing. Ten rounds at 200 yards were first allowed as practice to "sight" the rifles, and after that, by degrees, the 3rd, 2nd and 1st classes, as practised by volunteers, were the orders of the day. Though on some occasions the light was good, the wind was invariably contrary, being that known to shootists as a "fish-tail" one, and that, too, from the front. The consequence was that men who for years had been marksmen found the conditions of weather, unknown rifle, etc., too much for them, whilst the highest aggregate scores made by the first four marksmen were 187 to Mellish, 175 to Freemantle and Moore; and the crack shot and popular right wing instructor, Captain Bagnall, though used to the ranges, only succeeded in putting on 174.

In connection with this shoot was knocked up an amusing auction and selling sweepstakes, the tickets being 2s. 6d. each, and some 150 being issued. Mellish went at auction for 21s. 6d., and as the first prize was £18, the purchaser found his market; whilst Bagnall who fetched £3. 10s., coming in fourth, left his purchaser in the unenviable position of getting nothing for his money.

On Saturday a great "International" shoot—being eight representatives from England, Scotland and Ireland—was shot with the new magazine rifle. As the Irish were numerically weak, the conditions of service were modified by their eligibility being tested by the quantity of "Irish" they had imbibed in times past and present. Whether the latter had anything to do with the shoot cannot be stated, but the team came in third with 531, whilst Scotland headed the list with 622, and England made 590—seven rounds at 200, 500 and 600 yards, Wimbledon scoring. It is probably not generally known that an entirely new sight has been adopted for the magazine rifle; and taking this into consideration, and that the competitors had never handled their individual rifles before, the score may be regarded as fairly successful; Captain Stead, of the English team, who had been unsuccessful as a marksman, putting on the top total for England of 90, whilst the best score of the whole teams was put on by Major Harley, the D.A.A.G., who amassed 92. On the completion of the match, the captain of the Scotch team said it was quite evident his men could fire with a rifle unknown to them and with novel sights, so that *when* the magazine is issued to the volunteers, he thought the Irish should be supplied first, and then the English, to give them a chance of a little practice, to put them on an equality with their Scotch brethren.

In addition to the range practice, judging distance by sound, and volleys with "blank" were again repeated, and "communicating" drill commenced, with lectures on the methods of keeping musketry returns; also drill with machine-guns and private practice with the new magazine rifle, finishing up with volleys at 300, 400, 600 and 800 yards, and the use of range-finders.

The individual comfort of every officer attending the course has been the unceasing care of the much-respected adjutant Captain Murphy, whilst their scientific education has been ably supervised by Colonel Burton, the chief instructor; and notwithstanding the arduous duties of the commandant, Colonel Tongue, in connection with the musketry of the whole English army, he has found time to perfect a grand improvement in the Slade-Wallace equipment, so far as the carrying of ammunition is concerned. We shall deal with the subject specially later on; at present suffice it to say that it does away completely with the cumbersome pouches on each side of the waist-belt, and enables 100 rounds of ball to be carried *round the waist* without the soldier being sensibly aware of the weight he is carrying. The manufacture of these waist bandoliers, so to speak, is in itself a marvel, not a single stitch being in the whole affair, the webbing material being woven throughout. It is unquestionably a great improvement on the belt and pouches, and used in conjunction with the other Slade-Wallace parts, is about the finest thing we have yet seen in the matter of the soldier's equipment.—*United Service Gazette, 28th December.*

## THE NEW RIFLE.

As a result of the suddenly-arrived-at decision to issue the new magazine rifle at once to the infantry troops of the Aldershot division, the infantry armourers of the camp have been undergoing a course of training at Enfield, to qualify themselves to fit, change and repair the various parts of the new weapon and its magazine. The ammunition to be served out with the rifle of the future is, however, not the cartridge of the future, the final decision in respect to the components and construction of the latter having yet to be arrived at. As yet only 200 rounds per rifle are to be issued for experimental practice, the powder being of the black kind, instead of the brown and smokeless compound which in theory is, some day, to supersede all other.

## Rifle Shooting Matches, Past vs. Present.

[By an Old-time Volunteer.-- In Volunteer Record.]

Only those old volunteers whose energy in the cause has kept them in the ranks for upwards of the past eighteen years or so, can fully appreciate without explanation the distinction in all its bearings conveyed by the above title. Strange although it may at first appear, the main differences which are decidedly for the worst are caused by the introduction of the improved breech-loading firearms which have done so much in altering the conditions of modern warfare; but let us explain our meaning.

The ordinary rifle shooting of the present day must be pretty familiar to all. Squads of a small number of men are formed to shoot at different hours to suit each other's convenience as far as possible. When the appointed hour arrives, the men are called up in pairs to the front, and firing alternate shots, get off their allotted number of rounds in about a quarter of an hour. If it is only a single range competition, *i.e.*, completed at one distance, the great majority of the competitors hurry off to catch the next train back to business, and are seen no more that day, having only been perhaps half an hour upon the range. If, however, the competition is carried over more than one distance, a little more time is naturally required, but not much, for having completed the shooting at one range, no time is lost in passing on to the next, and so on as above.

It is true that in some cases one range at a time is finished by all the competitors (if the number is not very large) before another is commenced, but under these conditions each man is apt to stroll off with his own particular croun, well knowing that he will not be wanted again for perhaps an hour or two. But in the olden time when the muzzle-loading Enfield was the weapon of the force, things were far different. When an old hand was competing for any substantial prize, the accurate getting off of each individual shot was such a matter of deliberation that if a competitor, or pair of competitors, had been allowed to fire all their shots consecutively, matches would have lasted for days. Now, the breech loading cartridge is inserted in a second or two, and has to be used just as issued. Then, the twisted end of the paper containing the powder had to be bitten or pulled off, in doing which there was a danger of spilling a few grains of the charge. Even in those early days the disastrous consequences which might ensue from this, were fully understood, as several little instruments under the name of cartridge-testers soon found their way into the market. Generally speaking, they were brass tubes into which the powder was poured before putting it into the barrel. If the charge did not come up to a certain mark, it was filled up from a "waster" cartridge, one of which always formed part of the kit of a shooting man. The question of the powder having been seen to, the proper regulation of the bullet next required consideration, the rough and ready method laid down by musketry instructors of simply putting it base downwards into the muzzle of the rifle, and wrenching off the tube which had held the powder, being considered to give unsatisfactory results, as the tube did not always break off where it was intended to, but brought off a strip or two of the lubricating paper surrounding the bullet, thus exposing it unequally to the bore of the rifle. The necessary division then was made with a sharp penknife, and the ball placed "square" in the muzzle and then carefully rammed home, the operation being most deliberately performed. After loading, there came the settling down into the required position, an operation which, together with the necessary calculations as to wind and light, took some little time, thus accounting for the men not being allowed to shoot all their shots consecutively. When, therefore, only two or three targets were available, squads of from fifteen to twenty or even more men were formed, who fired single rounds according to their order. It will, therefore, be understood that a match of any importance took considerable time, and as only an interval of about fifteen or twenty minutes between each shot was allowed to lapse, no one could safely leave the range until the shooting was all over. Thus, the men were much more thrown together.

In those days too, married men of frugal minds took advantage of these protracted contests to combine business with pleasure, as it were,



by bringing all the family down to a sort of picnic upon the range, and towards mid-day there might be seen many a little social circle laying the foundation of future friendships. Jones *mater* would come down provided with a well lined basket, which Pte. Jones had supplemented with a jar of ale from the most adjacent public house. Up to that time Jones may not have exchanged more than a few dozen words with young Smith or Robinson, who have come unprovided with provender, but a little community of interests had been established during the match—an almost imperceptible puff of wind had given them simultaneously a bad outer or a miss, leading to mutual condolences, or a little "tip" had been given, resulting in a badly wanted bull's-eye, so that when feeding time came Smith or Robinson would be invited to take "pot luck," the result being that many a lasting friendship was started upon the range.

These little domestic pictures sometimes, however, had a seamy side. A good money prize would be competed for, and Jones *later* having expressed his firm intention of winning it, Mrs. J. would discover that she badly wanted a new dress, or that the children wanted a few days at the seaside, the expenses of which could easily be defrayed out of the prize money. The eventful day having arrived, the entire family would go down to see the shooting. Whether from nervousness, or over anxiety, our friend would begin badly, but would assume a jaunty air, and tell the partner of his joys and sorrows that it would be all right at the next range—he could soon pull up. But it was not to be, and as a succession of erratic shots caused visions of silk dresses and trips to Margate to vanish into thin air, a gradually deepening gloom would settle on the family circle; and when it at length dawned upon Jones himself that rifle shooting was a delusion and prizes a snare, Mrs. J. would put more coal upon the fire, by a hint that it might be better if in future he left shooting to younger men, &c., &c. •

Taking it altogether, the old time match had a considerable value over that of the present; not only socially, but as regards training in shooting. Now, a man takes up his position and fires all his shots in such a short space of time that there cannot be any very great change in the strength of the wind or weather, but when intervals of twenty or thirty minutes between each shot occurred a fresh calculation as to allowance had often to be made for every round fired, the habits of observation thus acquired by the old shots having had much to do in placing and maintaining the Volunteer force in the proud position that it holds—that of being the finest body of marksmen in the world.

### Correspondence.

[This paper does not necessarily share the views expressed in correspondence published in its columns, the use of which is freely granted to writers on topics of interest to the Militia.]

#### HOW TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG SHOTS.

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE.—The lines from "Old School," in your issue of last week, were read with considerable interest. "O.S." draws attention to one of the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of the novice with the rifle. As at present, with the exception of a sickly nursery competition, the beginner finds himself immediately pitted against the *creme* of crack shots, without, of course, the slightest hope of success. Nevertheless it is highly creditable to the pluck and perseverance of our beginners, that so many of them enter annually in our Dominion and Provincial meetings. A greater exhibition of nerve cannot be produced than to see a beginner slipping coolly into his place, next to a Mitchell or Burns, and bravely run up his string of mags and misses. He feels that not only is his shooting capacity criticized through his unfortunate score, but even his mental condition is seriously questioned. The most merciless dramatic critic pales into insignificance before the remarks of one of your hard shelled crack shots; to him a poor score is unpardonable, and is clearly indicative of a faulty intellect. All this the beginner realizes at the earliest possible moment, and his path is not materially smoothed by the thought thereof. It is difficult, however, to advance a remedy to meet the exigencies of the case. There is a touch of incongruity in the proposal to choke off the old shots at a certain stage, as an incentive for the young marksman to reach himself this same choking off point. No; those who have succeeded in reaching the goal of crackism should be encouraged to remain there. But equal encouragement should be shown towards those who are climbing the tortuous path of colthood. To this end, rifle shooting should be divided into two distinct classes, with say 80 points as the dividing line between them, and all competitions be regulated upon this basis. Let the more numerous prizes be apportioned to the second class, but by all means have the Wimbledon competition confined to the first class; better have old England think that our shots are composed of a hundred men who *can* shoot than of ten thousand magpie producers.

ROBERT MILLAR.

Montreal, 13th January, 1890.

#### AN ANSWER TO "OLD SCHOOL."

EDITOR MILITIA GAZETTE.—As an old shot I would like to say a few words in answer to Old School.

If Old School would endeavour to ascertain how the old shots got to be able to carry off the majority of prizes at rifle meetings, he would probably find out something he doesn't know.

As to his college argument, what sort of a young man would want to spend year after year at college for a gold medal, and then stand a chance of losing it to some other rising scholar? I presume he would use his knowledge to further his own interests and that of his country.

It is not so with old shots, the most of whom spend their vacations if they can get any, shooting, because they like it, and to be of practical use to their country when needed.

We have all heard of the oft repeated complaints of cost of ammunition, &c., and it takes the average man with steady practice two or three years at least to become a good shot. Now, Old School would like to see these men step down and out, or forced to do so by the association, because their more unskilled brethren won't practice.

If he carefully counts up the cost he will find the old shots cannot get rich at rifle shooting. If he had been to Wimbledon even as often as I have he would find that in Old England the same men are on the common year after year. He need not go to much trouble to find at the very least four times the number of old reliables he credits Canada with.

I do not see why Old School should want to lower the standard of shooting to from 65 to 75 points. I suppose it's because he dislikes practice or won't spend the money. It's a pity if the majority are like him, because other countries would be apt to get away ahead of us while we would never improve. As to the appliances, perhaps he would do as well without them. He might get a little mixed and pull off the pipe instead of the rifle. I use only the sight elevator and the rifle as it was made. Of course there is a vast difference between a rifle match and a battlefield; nobody can doubt that. He states that experience has taught him that scientific shooting is no use when you are aiming at a human being. That is strange, to say the least of it. He has the advantage of me in that; I never fired at a human being, and possibly he never fired in a match, but I think it would require science and all other agencies combined, as in our skirmishing matches, to accomplish anything.

Our friend Old School might be of service to his country with the bayonet but he needs more practice with the rifle. "Practice! Practice!" I say, and thus wipe out the old shots.

Ottawa, 13th January, 1890.

O. S.

#### Regimental and Other News.

Pte. Geo. Atwell, of D Co. Infantry School Corps, caught the "grippe" whilst on leave of absence in Toronto and died there.

A meeting is to be held in Toronto shortly, under Col. Otter's auspices, to re-establish the Militia Institute.

Major Joshua Wright, of the 43rd Battalion, has been elected by acclamation an alderman for the City of Hull for the two year term of 1890-91.

Capt. John S. Hendrie, of the Hamilton Field Battery, sails from New York in the *Britannia* for a three months visit to England. He will visit Woolwich arsenal.

Hugh O'Neill, late of D Co. I.S.C., died at London, Ont., on Saturday last. He was born in Rondalstown, County Antrim, Ireland, some fifty years ago, and at an early age enlisted in the 1st Battalion, Wiltshire regiment. He was discharged, after twenty-one years service with full pension, second class certificate and four good conduct badges. Having migrated to Canada, he joined C Company, Infantry School Corps Toronto, in 1884, and served with them during the Riel rebellion of 1885, receiving the medal and clasp. Having left C Company he joined the 14th Prince of Wales Own Rifles, Kingston, then doing garrison duty at Fort Henry during the absence of A Battery R.C.A. After the detachment was disbanded, he went to London and joined D Company, serving until a few months ago when he was discharged invalided.

Winnipeg *Sifings* thus notices the Christmas dinner given at the Royal School of Mounted Infantry: "The sergeants gave a dinner in their mess rooms; and although they went through the form of inviting a few friends to partake with them, it was only a form, any one that appeared within hailing distance being made welcome at their hospitable board. The chief and Lt.-Col. Villiers, Major Buchan and officers came in. After taking a glass of wine each, the commandant thanked the sergeants for the support they had given him during the past year in putting the corp

in the high state of discipline in which it is at the present time. The D.A.G. and Major Buehan also spoke each receiving in turn three rousing cheers and a tiger. We were glad to see our Dominion M.P.P. there with his son Inspector Scarth, N.W.M.P. Mr. Scarth, M.P. seems to take a lively interest in matters military. As soon as the commandant and his staff left, the Sergt-major took his place at the head of the table. After dinner "The Queen" was drunk with all the honours, other toasts were proposed and suitably replied to, songs were sung and after a merry time the party broke up.

#### Belleville.—15th Battalion, A.L.I.

The new drill shed and officers' quarters at Belleville are now completed, and with gymnasium and armouries equipped with all modern and scientific apparatus and arrangements, are a credit to the militia of the Dominion. The officers have furnished their quarters luxuriously, and gave an "At Home" Smoking Concert last week which was much enjoyed by many of the prominent citizens at Belleville. The members of other corps visiting Belleville will be welcome at all times to inspect the headquarters of the gallant 15th.

No. 1 Company of the 15th battalion held their annual supper last week with their usual enthusiasm and appetite for good things. Capt. W. N. Ponton occupied the chair, and several other officers and ex-members of the battalion were present as guests of the company. These social reunions and revival of old associations generate an *esprit de corps* which is as necessary to efficiency as is discipline itself.

Major Prideaux Wm. Gillum, of H. M. 54th Regiment, died here last week aged 67. He was one of the heroes of the Indian mutiny, but was perhaps better known for his gallantry on the ill-fated troopship the *Sarah Sands*, for which he received a presentation sword and decoration. The officers of the 15th attended his funeral in a body, a last tribute to a gallant veteran and a good citizen. Major Gillum was manly, modest and friendly, beloved by those who met him in later life as he was by his regiment on active service, where old Indian veterans tell us his heroism was well known.

"Sleep soldier! still in honoured rest  
Your truth and valour wearing;  
The bravest are the tenderest—  
The loving are the daring."

The battalion have begun the practice of the new bayonet exercise and are arranging for Morris tube rifle practice.

The 49th Battalion furnished a firing party at the funeral of the late Sergeant George Wilson who was a member of H company of the Midland in the late Northwest Rebellion. Sergeant Wilson is the third "Midlander" who has died and been buried in Belleville since the return from the Northwest.

W. N. P.

### The Maxim Gun.

(United Service Gazette.)

This gun has lately claimed a great deal of public attention in an altogether new and unexpected direction. Until quite recently nothing but praise was heard about it, and the most inflated and highly-coloured language was used in its favour. On the amalgamation of the Maxim and Nordenfelt companies there was quite a rush for an allotment, and confident partizans refused to part with shares even at considerable premiums. Now the boot is altogether on the other leg, and the shareholders in the chilly atmosphere of drooping quotations are making their voices heard, not in the old jubilant fashion, but in whining complaints and petulant inquiries. A sinister rumour has got about that the Russian Government has returned some of these guns on the ground that they were not suited for the purpose for which they were designed. We do not profess to know anything with regard to the truth of this piece of information, but the statement has been circulated by one of the shareholders themselves and is now public property. We are fully alive to the great advantages the Maxim gun possesses, and we may add, do not by any means share all the views that now seem prevalent any more than a year ago we did not endorse all the acclamations with which its powers were placed before the country. We refused to be carried away by the first enthusiasm just as now we hesitate to sweepingly condemn a valuable invention.

In an article on quick-firing guns which we published at the commencement of the year we stated that such weapons, and especially the Maxim variety, were not likely ever to supersede field artillery, and must be regarded merely as an adjunct to it, and not as supplying a substitute for its fire. At that time, and even more recently, some very tall talk as to "pumping lead" was the order of the day. It was stated that field guns could not live within 3,000 yards of a machine-gun battery, and there was a distinct tendency in many minds to believe that a new weapon had appeared which would be cheaper and more mobile than field guns, and whose fire would be more effective than

shrapnel. We pointed out then that the difficulties connected with range-finding would be enough to place machine-guns at a hopeless disadvantage as regards guns that could see the burst of their shells, and we further hinted that even the most perfect mechanism will sometimes go wrong, and that mobility is no equivalent for power. Yet we admitted that for certain situations, and under certain contingencies, machine-guns had a great future before them both on sea and land. We are still "stiff" in these opinions, but are none the less ready now that the wind has somewhat veered, to defend their value in their own sphere, and, moreover, are prepared to say that we believe the Maxim gun to have several distinct advantages over its other rivals. The force of recoil, which in other systems is a difficulty, is here turned to good account, and performs a useful purpose in loading and firing the weapon. This in turn engenders other advantages. The action being purely automatic, no external force by lever or crank to fire it need be applied, and consequently its aim need never be diverted from the target even when it is discharging its projectiles. As long as the flow of cartridges is kept up it will, therefore, continue firing without any attention or assistance from a human being. But the fact of the action being automatic confers an exceptional superiority when the "jamming," which seems the *bête noir* of machine guns, has to be guarded against. This in other patterns usually occurs because the cartridge is damp and hangs fire, and is therefore partially withdrawn while in the act of exploding.

It is easy to imagine how the mechanism may thus be injured or put out of working order, and the fatal "jam" be brought about. The man working the crank may likewise in the heat of action become unduly excited and move it faster than will permit of the cartridges, which fall by their own weight into position, arriving there in proper time. They are often, in consequence, crushed while tumbling to their pieces before they have been ignited at all, and at the very moment, perhaps, when its help is most required the gun again becomes utterly useless to its detachment. In a system where the explosion of a cartridge is altogether dependent on that of its predecessor such mishaps are simply impossible, and two potent causes of "jamming" are got rid of entirely. The gun would simply cease firing if a cartridge did not explode, and a few seconds would suffice to set matters completely right. The fact that the Maxim gun has only a single barrel likewise permits of a jacket full of water being placed round it, and prevents the barrel becoming unduly heated during a rapid fire. These manifest and incontestable advantages must not be lost sight of by the public, nor should they be forgotten by the dissatisfied shareholders of the company.

While, however, we ungrudgingly concede so much in the way of praise, we do not hesitate to say that we feel suspicious of all complicated pieces of mechanism for service purposes, and would remind our readers that the dust and dirt incidental to all campaigning are also able to render "shooting machines" *hors de combat*; and the long marches into action along dusty roads are inevitable, and apt to test fittings to an extent they are never tried on the practice ground. By all means let us have some Maxim guns, but let us beware of putting too many eggs into one basket.

### In the Mother Country.

Major A. S. Harrison, of the 1st London Engineers, has introduced a new system of signalling, suitable for naval purposes, which is said to be far in advance of the present mode of signalling by flags. It is claimed for Major Harrison's invention that it does away with the necessity which exists at present, of having one system for day and another for night signalling, and moreover, that the system can be used internationally. "Wouldn't the latter recommendation be of a negative, rather than of a positive character in time of war?" asks the *Volunteer Record*.

Paragraph 369 of the Volunteer Regulations 1887, relating to musketry returns of battalions, is cancelled by the following order issued to officers commanding battalions a few weeks ago: "The battalion annual musketry return is to be prepared in triplicate under the direction of the adjutant. Two copies are to be sent by the officer commanding each battalion as soon after the 31st of October as possible, but not later than the 31st of December in each year, through the officer commanding the regimental district to the general officer commanding the district. One copy will be retained by the latter for reference, and after due examination he will transmit the other copy, with remarks, to the commandant of the school of musketry, to enable that officer to prepare his annual report for the information of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief. The third copy, together with the remaining musketry documents, will be retained by the corps for inspection when necessary." Passing from musketry returns to efficiency returns; the case of falsification of the latter which has just come to the notice of

the Commander-in-Chief must be of a particularly flagrant character to have "drawn" the War Office in the manner indicated by the circular memorandum just issued on the subject. "In this case," the memorandum says, that "the fraud was facilitated by the following irregularities:—Target practice registers being made up in the office instead of on the rifle range, and by members who had resigned during the year being kept on the rolls until after the 31st of October." Commanding officers are reminded by the circular that "registers must be taken on the rifle range, and every man's score must be entered on the spot, and verified by the signature of the non-commissioned officer keeping the register, and by the officer and non-commissioned officer superintending the practice, before leaving the ground." In reference to resignations, the circular memorandum lays down that "all resignations must be signified in writing, and the member must be struck off the strength of the corps after the lapse of a fortnight, or as soon afterwards as he has complied with the provisions of section 7 of the Volunteer Act of 1863." The document moreover states that a commanding officer is "to insist on the adjutant attending class firing as frequently as can possibly be arranged" Whilst adjutants and sergeant-instructors will always be severely dealt with, it is impressed on "commanding officers of corps that they are alone responsible for the correctness of returns signed by them, and if they permit any system to exist in the corps under their commands which is contrary to regulations, or which can afford any opportunity for fraud, they must be held responsible, and will render themselves liable to very serious consequences."

### Wolseley on the Red River Expedition.

Lord Wolseley gave a very interesting address recently at Toynbee Hall, Whitechapel, on the story of the Red River Expedition, commanded by himself, in 1780. His lordship premised that the expedition became necessary in consequence of the formation in 1867 of what was now well known as the Dominion of Canada, the provinces which had hitherto been independent being federated under one government. Among the provinces was one formerly known as Rupert's Land. Charles II, though a profligate monarch, had established some useful institutions during his reign, and among them was the Hudson Bay Company, which received a charter from him. The Company, up to quite a recent period, were the rulers of the country, and exercised an almost imperial sway over these great territories. He took the opportunity during the expedition of visiting many of the stations which the company had established. At the company's stores literally everything was sold "from a needle to an anchor." The master was everybody—parson, doctor, judge. He married the Indians, gave them physic, and if necessary read the funeral service over them. In fact he was a most useful member of society. This province, where the company was omnipotent, was one of those federated in the Dominion. At that time there was a small population assembled along the Red River. They were all trappers, collecting skins for the company, and skins were the only money current. They objected to be handed over to the new government—"like cattle," as they expressed it—without having their wishes consulted in any way. The majority of the people were "half-breeds, and they numbered altogether only about 15,000.

The Canadian Government were rather in a hurry to get their affairs in order and everything settled, and they appointed a governor of the province and sent him out. When he arrived on the border he was met by a deputation who had dubbed themselves "The Revolutionary Government," and said that if he entered the province they would make him a prisoner and turn him back. A man named Riel was at the head of the baby revolution, and had got possession of Fort Garry. He was a man of bad character, for he had been convicted of stealing in the United States. Nevertheless he had got influence over the half-breeds. He was living in great poverty with his mother at the time of the outbreak, when he was appointed president. He did not oppose the expedition. This man wishing to show his authority, tried a man by court-martial, and had him shot. This murder excited great feeling in Canada, and the Government were obliged to bend to it and send an expedition. He was very glad to have the command, because he liked the country, and for several years previous had been in the habit, when he had a holiday, of going far back into the wilds of Canada, accompanied only by Indians. It was decided that the expedition should consist of a small brigade of three battalions, with guns and engineers. There was some difficulty about the route. Some people, his lordship said, amid laughter, suggested that they should be sent by the North Pole, but there were drawbacks to that, and ultimately they landed at Fort William, on Lake Superior, with a journey of 600 miles before them to Fort Garry. It was one great continuous struggle against the difficulties of nature and against time.

There were several circumstances connected with the starting of the expedition that were very disagreeable. Just before they set out a man

—an excellent man with the best intentions in the world—said, "I wish to tell you before you go—I shall never see you again, for you will never come back—that you are committing a crime in taking these men to certain destruction." The General replied, "I am only a soldier, and must obey orders. We have been told to go to Fort Garry, and you may take your oath we'll get there." And they did get there. The men worked as he had never seen men work before or since. There was no sabbath till they got back. The officers had perfect confidence in the men, and the men in the officers. They knew the dangers of the journey, 600 miles through a howling wilderness. The whole country was filled with lakes and small rivers, and the rivers were full of rapids. There was scarcely any game in the woods, and he did not believe the men got a good square meal the whole time till they arrived at their destination. Everything had to be carried, for there were no roads. They did as much of the journey as possible in boats, but at every rapid all the baggage had to be taken out and carried round with the boats, and it was very amusing to see the great rivalry which sprung up between the companies to see which could get in front of the other. The work did not improve their clothes. The empty flour sacks were used to mend the men's breeches, but by the time they got back there were very few breeches among them. There was a superstition that Englishmen could do no hard work without a certain amount of liquor, but from the time they started till the time they got back not a drop of grog was drunk.

At Fort Francis he was met by his friend Sir W. Butler, who, he was glad to say, was present. He had come from Fort Garry, and bore news which was worth its weight in gold. There was a very large assemblage of Indians at Fort Francis. Indians were sharp fellows in their way, and they wanted to get as much out of him as they could. They had a great pow-wow, and the head man spoke without drawing breath for quite half-an-hour, though he didn't understand a word of it. The Indians were very dirty people; if they wore clothes they wore them till they dropped off, so that they were not very pleasant companions. Lord Wolseley told some amusing stories of Indians. One was about a great chief who rejoiced in the somewhat unromantic name of John Thomas. This chief called upon him for the purpose of getting what he could from him for the right of way through the territory. He made a long speech in broken French, and at last the General to get rid of him took a florin out of his pocket and handed it to the chief. John Thomas carefully scrutinised it, and then, to the amazement of Lord Wolseley, gravely said, "Make it half-a-crown." His lordship paid a high tribute of praise to the Indian boatmen who piloted them through rapids in which the slightest mistake would have cost those in the boat their lives. When they arrived at Fort Garry they found that Riel had escaped. This was disappointing to the men, who had looked forward to a little amusement at the end of their march, but they had the satisfaction of eating the breakfast prepared for Riel and his followers.

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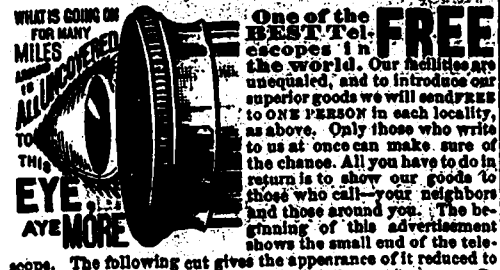
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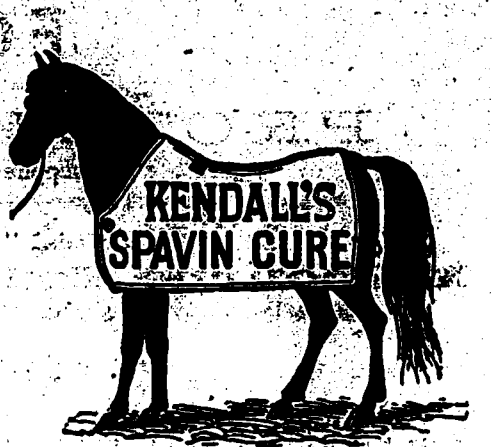
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