



The Meteor.

Edited by Members of Rugby School.

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WERE all other motives absent, one, and a powerful one, would still exist, to lead us to speak, and contribute to the welfare, of our School Rifle Corps. We feel, when we begin to treat of it, that it has for us a familiarity, a fondness of association, which quite distinguish it from any of the other subjects which may engage us. For, as our readers will doubtless remember, the *Meteor*, when in its very infancy, united itself with the military element of the School, and the pages of its first number bore the names of those who had recently assumed the uniform of the R.S.B.C. We may be pardoned, then, if we speak at some length, and with much earnestness, on our present subject. At about the same time as that we have been mentioning,—the time, namely of our first appearance,—as will be also remembered, the hearts of Sergeant TAIT, and, indeed, of all true friends of the School, were delighted by a very sudden rekindling of the martial spirit among us. Our Rifle Corps had been established several years, but from various causes—principally the gradual decline of the spirit which had originated it—it had become miserably contracted; the members became fewer, the attendance at drill and at the butts smaller, the numbers dwindled to a solitary company, and even the most blind and sanguine were forced to allow a lamentable decline. Yet in spite of all this, in spite of the distance of the range, in spite of the attractions of cricket and racquets, there was one thing left, one thread, as it were, by which the friends of the Rifle Corps might snatch it from its threatened fate,—namely, the Public School Competition at Wimbledon.

And this was not overlooked: by degrees the School were gradually brought to feel that it was disgraceful that the School which had once held the Shield in its keeping, the School which could maintain its own so well in cricket and football, should fall so miserably short of its past doings and its present capability in this one respect; and at the beginning of this year, by the energy of the Captain and some of the Masters, the number of recruits exceeded that of the old members; new rules were made for drill and shooting; and, most important of all, new and improved rifles were got for the Eleven. These exertions were fully answered by the results. In the Summer Term many of the winter recruits were found to be fit for the Wimbledon team; foreign matches were introduced, in the majority of which the School was successful and above all we were, as we heard at the Concert, “a very good second” for the Wimbledon Shield.

It is with the hope of advancing, in some measure, the next step of the Rifle Corps, that we are writing now. It is proposed by persons who have the interest of the Corps very much at heart, to have it *enrolled*. In case some of our readers may have forgotten or never known what this term implies, we will explain a little. Any School Rifle Corps (having a certain number of efficient members) can, on application to the Lord-Lieutenant of the county, be sworn in and become enrolled. What this enrolment means is best seen by seeing what are its results; and to save time we will take them in our case by dividing them into two classes—the advantageous and disadvantageous. Firstly,

as to the advantageous results. In an enrolled corps every extra-efficient member—that is, every member efficient both in shooting and drill—receives 30s. a-year, every member efficient in drill alone, £1. In addition to this, were our Corps enrolled, Government would pay the sergeant-instructor 2s. 6d. a-day, and supply every enrolled member with a rifle and 60 rounds of ammunition per annum. Now these great advantages are really enormous in the case of our School Corps. For it is undeniable that nothing more hinders the progress of our rifle-shooting than the deficiencies of our range, which is short,—capable only of 800 yards practice, of which 200 are useless in the summer,—and only attainable by a considerable walk. Within the last few months another range, which could be reached in a shorter time, and 1000 yards in length, has been found; and the expense of this would be fully covered by the profits of a single year's enrolment. For, reckoning the pay of 40 extra-efficient and 50 efficient members at £110, and the saving in the cost of the sergeant-instructor and ammunition at £30 and £13 10s. respectively, we find that the amount received by the Corps from Government, if enrolled, would be more than £150 per annum.

Now what disadvantages are to be set in the balance against these? Few, we venture to assert, and of little weight. Firstly, a change in the character and acquirements of the officers would become necessary. It can hardly have been overlooked by any careful observer that the officers of the Corps—we speak with no dishonour of the many distinguished names to which Captain, Lieutenant, &c., have been prefixed—have hitherto had but little to do with the manœuvring, &c., of the men. Enrolment would alter this. All the officers would then have to become masters of the drill, both company and battalion, and this, with the short tenure of office many of them enjoy, might be found a difficult task. In the next place, the Corps would have to attend three battalion drills and one inspection every year, at the head-quarters of the battalion.

Our article has grown to a prodigious length, and it is time to conclude. We recommend the subject to our readers' best consideration: may we not say with a hope that we have proved that the movement which it is desired by the officers of the Corps to make, is a good one, and that we may predict for the R.S.R.C., if not the glory

which a certain dreamer pictured, with its Russian spies and Austrian informers, at any rate, if it be enrolled, a prosperous future.

A NEW reign has begun, and we are looking forward with pleasure to the entire absence of dispute and indecision in all Football matters, under our new Committee. Big-Side has passed its Reform Bill without a murmur, and considers this virtual suicide as the crowning success of all its deliberations last Term. Perhaps some members had scruples about so sudden a change, and, despairing or careless of getting so far as a division, stayed away: anyhow, the attendance at the Levée was rather less than usual. The Rules for Football Arrangements were proposed with the winning tones of a Disraeli, and some vague expression about "large discretionary powers" was satisfactorily explained away as really nothing,—it only made the Committee perfectly absolute. Henceforth Big-Side will not be required to do anything more than hear and obey what its nine representatives have to say on all matters of Football. Still there is comfort in the hope that House Matches and their troubles will be well managed, and conducted with the decorum that such solemn struggles deserve, and not hurried over without reference to the state of the ground, or, what is more, the condition of the players. We wish all success to the Committee, and at the same time beg to call their attention to one or two points. The attendance of the Caps at the usual Big-Sides during the week, was frequently remarkable for its irregularity and slackness during the last Football season. Perhaps this can now be remedied, if not by persuasion, by a system of fines, which could be arranged by the Committee, and exacted by any of its members. Again, "long scrummages" and "mauling" were becoming too common to keep the game as amusing or skilful as it used to be; and this is a fault easily corrected if first attended to in Little-Sides and the smaller matches.

THE SCHOOL CONCERT.

IN spite of the long period of nine weeks' holiday, over which we have to carry our readers back, we think it would be a grave error on our part were we to pass by without any notice in our present number the very successful Concert which the School Choir gave at the end of last term. For if we are grieved and driven to despair at the thought