

Although the good men who framed the Constitution declared that a well-regulated militia was necessary to the security of a free state, and gave to Congress the power to organize, arm, and discipline the militia, the statement seems to be doubted or ignored by most people, and the power to contribute in this way to the safety of our government is treated by Congress as being one of minor importance or as one the exercise of which would involve that body in such dire complexities as would baffle all attempts at extrication. Congress did attempt to exercise this power away back in 1792, and the law then enacted remains unchanged today, — interesting chiefly for its antiquity, and conspicuous for the absurdity of requiring a body of 6,000,000 citizens to arm themselves and report annually for military drill. Of course the law is of no practical use.

Gradually, without the aid or direction of Congress, the militia has divided itself, "by a process of natural selection," into two classes, the unorganized and the organized. The latter is, doubtless, in some degree, an approach to the militia which the constitutional pro-

vision had in view, but in the majority of States it has not received proper assistance. Though it has been the training-school for some of our greatest officers, and has rendered valuable service on many occasions, it is more often made the target of wit and ridicule than the object of praise. The toast proposed by Gen. H. Derby expresses the views of too many: "The militia: invincible in peace, invisible in war; they only want an opportunity, but may they never be wanted."

Of course there are various reasons for such opinions, but perhaps the most important is that the militia is not regarded as "being necessary to the security of a free state" because it is not "a well-organized militia." The meager appropriations have left it poorly equipped, and have deprived it of much of the training to be afforded by camps of instruction. The enlistments have been too largely from that class of men whose impulse to join is begotten of a love for the "pomp and circumstance of war," and the object has been too often to attract attention by gaudy display rather than to merit it by worthy effort. Officers have been chosen with more regard

for social position than for ability to instruct, and train, and lead; and doubtless, in some cases, the fortunes of political contests have had an unwholesome influence upon the organization.

I think that the plan of a volunteer militia is preferable to any other, but I believe that it should be organized and trained with regard to the real purpose of its existence. This purpose, Gen. Ordway, observes, is two-fold; "In the states separately, to provide a force for the suppression of riot and insurrection, and to aid civil officers in the enforcement of law; in the states collectively, to provide for the emergencies of national defense." In these days of strikes and riots a good militia may often find opportunity to render service to the states in the way mentioned, and the most hopeful is hardly ready yet to believe that the nation will never again feel the need of a body of men with disciplined bodies and patriotic souls.

The obstacles to such a militia as would best meet these wants have in part been mentioned. They are not to be easily overcome, but should receive the more earnest attention for

the difficulty of their removal. The public favor could doubtless be gained by showing what a well-equipped, well-trained and patriotic militia would be like, but the public favor is in a great degree necessary in acquiring such a militia. The lesson must in some way be taught to every citizen that our fathers were not not mistaken when they said that a militia was necessary. They should see that while our merchants and farmers insure their goods and their houses, our country loses a valuable lesson if it does not see that true sagacity will provide for meeting possible emergencies, however strong the hope that they may not come. When this is learned, appropriations of money will come, and the greatest difficulty will have been overcome.

As I have suggested before, I think the militia should be composed of patriotic men, and men who also possess such moral character and intellectual ability as mark the class on whom the government must really depend. I do not see that military training must be separate from states-

manship, and I think that money is almost thrown away when given for the training of the opposite class. The position of a militiaman should be made a desirable one, and if this is done a higher standard of qualifications may be adopted.

But of equal importance to securing the right kind of men to fill the ranks is the selection of proper officers to command and instruct them. These should be selected with even greater care, and with a view not so much to appearance and social standing, as for a knowledge of drill, tactics, and the art of war, and for the ability to command and instruct. Such men would be hard to obtain if there were no school in which to train them, but nearly every state has a school endowed upon the condition, among others, that it shall teach military science and tactics. At these schools are detailed officers from the regular army, who are capable of giving the needed instruction, and having use of arms and other equipments needed in practical drill. The students who attend the agricultural colleges are of the kind that has furnished

nearly all our great generals. All that is necessary for the training of officers is that such colleges recognize the intent of Congress, and give more extended and thorough training and discipline. Then the agricultural colleges may become to the militia what the Military Academy is to the regular army.

In addition it would be well to have an officer detailed from the regular army to act as inspector-general under the direction of the adjutant-general of the State.

The amount of militia should be in proportion to the population of the State. Gen. Sherman suggested that each congressional district be allowed to raise a battalion of four companies, dividing the expense ^{among} between the nation, the State and the district.

With such provisions I think we might have a militia so efficient that all would be convinced that money so spent was really adding to the security of our country. The militia would not be the subject of ridicule, but the citizen soldiery would command respect, and would be better citizens for being soldiers.

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