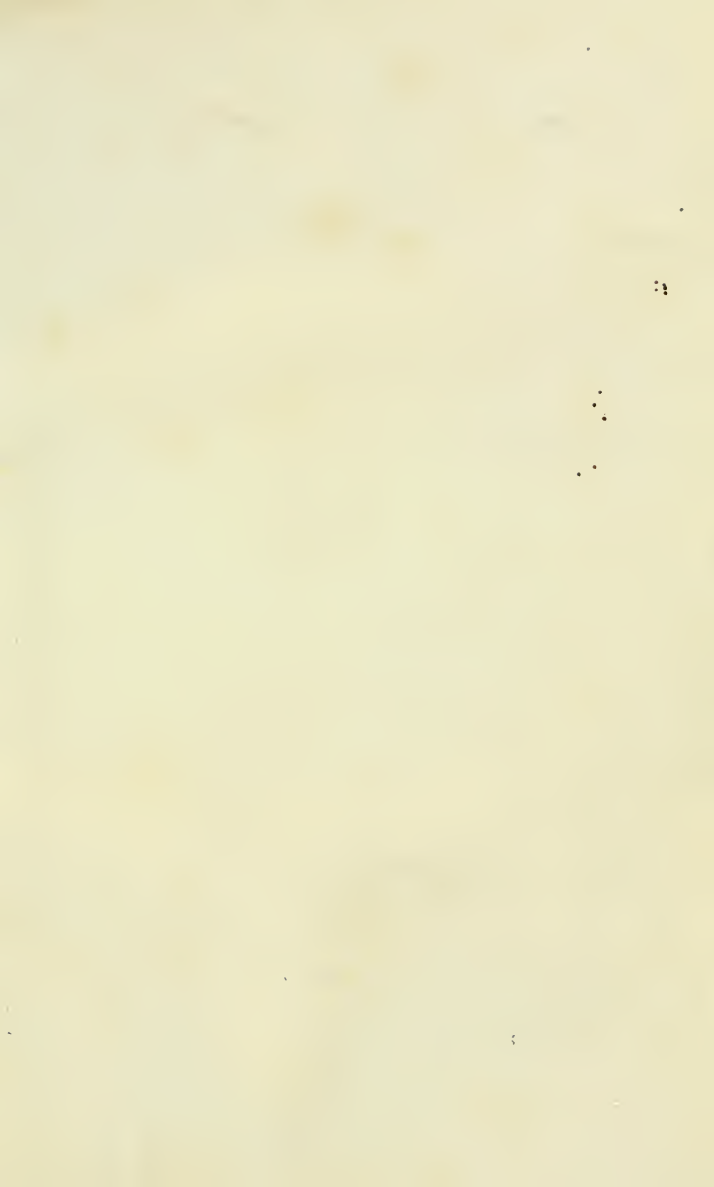




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LONDON SCOTTISH VOLUNTEER RIFLES.

SPEECH

OF

LORD ELCHO, M.P.

AT FREEMASONS' TAVERN, JULY 4.

WITH A WOODCUT AND APPENDIX.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE.

LONDON :
J. RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY, W. ;
W. H. SMITH & SON, 186, STRAND, W.C. ;
AND ALL THE RAILWAY STATIONS.

1859.

PRICE SIXPENCE.





KNICKERBOCKER DRESS FOR VOLUNTEERS.—(See Appendix.)

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LONDON SCOTTISH VOLUNTEER RIFLES.

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FELLOW COUNTRYMEN !

YOU must allow me to express to you my deep and grateful sense of the honour you have done me in asking me to take the chair at this meeting. When invited by the Highland and Caledonian Societies to preside on this occasion I assented without hesitation, anxious thereby to testify my readiness to promote the object for which we are now met together. There are indeed, I well know, many Scotchmen in London who from their position and ability are much better fitted than myself to fill this chair, but there is no man who takes a deeper interest in this Volunteer Rifle movement than myself; for I am confident that volunteer corps of riflemen, if properly organized, may be made a most important and valuable element of national defence. This was the opinion of Mr. Pitt, who said in 1804, —“That he thought the volunteer system might be made a permanent, solid system of defence, and a great source of national energy.” This would appear to be the opinion of the Government now, who have sanctioned the formation of volunteer rifle corps; and, judg-

ing by the energy and zeal which are everywhere displayed in the matter, this would also appear to be the opinion of the people of this country. Such then being the popular feeling, it would be strange indeed if the sons of Scotland, who have ever been noted for their loyalty, their patriotism, and their valour attested on many a bloody field and in many a clime, had been backward in this movement. Gentlemen, I look to this meeting as laying the foundation, not of a mere company or club of Scottish riflemen, but of a Scottish Brigade, which shall, in its skill in the use of the rifle, in its organization, and in its appearance, bear comparison with any other volunteer corps in the metropolis or in the country—nay, which shall be not less distinguished amongst the volunteers than are the Highland regiments in the line. There is no want of the native raw material in London, which is said to be overrun by Scotchmen. All that is wanted is, that it should be well worked up. There is no lack of patriotism or of spirit in our people. All that is required is a conviction of the necessity of this movement, and of the practical efficiency of this means of national defence. We must, in fact, look upon the establishment of these volunteer rifle corps not as a mere childish playing at soldiers, but as a sound and lasting element of national strength.

Believing then, gentlemen, that such are your views and feelings upon this question, I shall feel it my duty upon this occasion—in the first place, to endeavour to show the necessity, now existing, of some permanent means of defence in addition to our regular army and militia;—and secondly, that that means presents itself in the readiest, most efficient, and cheapest form by the

organization of volunteer rifle corps, such as we are met here for the purpose of forming;—and thirdly, I propose to offer a few remarks on the formation, dress, and armament of our Scottish Brigade.

First, then, as to the necessity of some additional means of national defence. In 1804, when Mr. Pitt expressed himself on the subject of volunteer corps in the words which I have already quoted, our shores were threatened by the First Napoleon, who had assembled on the heights of Boulogne, where his statue now stands, a large and powerful army for the invasion of this country. To meet this threatened attack, all the resources of our empire were employed, and all the energies of our people were aroused. We had upwards of 700,000 men under arms, besides 730 vessels of war, including 200 sail of the line, afloat. Then, indeed, the danger was imminent, and the necessity of defensive measures was beyond dispute. Our fathers faced the danger like men; they quailed not before the threatening storm, which, at length, rolled away from our shores, and burst in another quarter. The army which was destined for the invasion and conquest of these Islands was prudently directed against another and less prepared enemy.

Now, gentlemen, what cannot fail to strike us in reading the history of those stirring times is this, viz., that at a time when England had the undisputed command of the seas—when she had 730 vessels of war afloat, fully manned and equipped, including 200 sail of the line—she yet did not consider herself safe without having at the same time upwards of 700,000 men in arms, besides spending large sums in the erection

of martello towers, and in the fortification of our coasts. Our position in 1859 is indeed different. It is, unquestionably, not one of immediate, nor even of threatened danger. Napoleon III. is our ally, and not our enemy; but, after having inaugurated his reign by the celebrated announcement that "the empire is peace," he is now walking with gigantic strides in the bloody footsteps of his uncle; and, although he is now our ally, we must not, as our chief security, trust to an alliance the permanence of which no man can predict. Therefore I say that, with war reigning in Lombardy, with Germany in wild excitement, with treaties (which the world has not yet seen) existing between France and Sardinia, and between France and Russia (based possibly on the partition of Europe), who can tell what an hour may bring forth? Who can tell that soon, notwithstanding our anxiety and firm resolve to observe a strict neutrality, we may not be sucked into the vortex of war, and compelled by what is due to our honour and our interest, nay, to our very safety and existence as a nation, and as one of the great Powers of Europe, to draw the sword? Now I do not wish to be misunderstood: I do not think it *probable* that we shall be invaded, but the question is too vital to be allowed to rest on probabilities; we ought to render a successful invasion an impossibility—we ought as far as possible to make ourselves entirely independent of the friendship and forbearance of any foreign potentate.

Looking, then, to our position as prudent men, and guarding, not against the *probability*, but against the *possibility* of a successful invasion and the recurrence

of these periodic panics, which are so discreditable to us as a nation, let us see how far we are prepared to meet, as we ought to be able to do, every possible contingency of war, even the combined attack of two such great Powers as France and Russia. Our fleet, which must ever be our chief defence, though it has been greatly increased by the late Government—for which I thank them—must not be our sole reliance. Our forefathers did not trust to it alone at a time when the navy of France was greatly inferior to that of England, whereas the French navy at the present moment is, in point of effective ships of the line, little, if at all, inferior to our own; and whilst we, with all our maritime resources, have no organised system for the sure manning of our ships, every fisherman on the coast of France is available for the purposes of war. If ever danger is to come to us from that quarter, we must be prepared to meet it at eight and forty hours' notice.

Gentlemen, much has, as I have said, already been done, and much is, I rejoice to hear, still doing, to place the navy of England on a proper footing; still, when we consider the facilities which steam now affords for the concentration and disembarkation of armies on any given point, surely no sane man would trust the safety of our country to the navy alone. We require a second and impregnable line of defence. Have we got it? I fear not. I am not going to trouble you with figures and matters of detail, but, as you well know, with all the demands that press upon us from India and the colonies, the number of regular troops now available in Great Britain is not great; a

large proportion of that number, moreover, is composed of boys; and the militia, though nominally 120,000, does not, I believe, really muster half that number, because Governments have not had the courage to enforce the ballot, without which a militia force can never be brought into a proper state.

I speak not of the Pensioners, nor of the Yeomanry and Police, and I only give expression to the general feeling and to the opinion of military men, when I say that our second line of defence—I mean our means of defending our hearths and homes in the event of an enemy effecting a landing—are not such as we can confidently rely on. It will therefore, I think, be readily admitted that some additional force is required. Our army estimates are already so large that we can hardly look to any increase in that quarter, or in the militia, though we have a right to expect, from the very able man who now presides at the War Office—(A voice, “The Crimea”)—I hear a gentleman refer to the Crimean campaign; but I must, in justice to the present Minister of War, remind that gentleman that at that time the War Department was not organized as it now is, that Mr. Herbert was not then the responsible Minister of War, and that now, for the first time, he is on his trial in that capacity. I say, then, that we have a right to expect from the very able man who now presides at the War Office, that the organization of our Army and Militia will be completed, and that they will shortly be put into a state of thorough efficiency. What we have, however, now to consider, is whether, assuming the necessity of some additional permanent means of defence,

we shall find it in the proposed volunteer rifle and artillery corps. I am confident that we shall I know that many military authorities hold a contrary opinion, and maintain that these Volunteer Corps would, in the event of invasion, be of no practical use, and would only hamper regular troops in the field. But surely those who hold this opinion will, upon reflection, admit that in the event of threatened invasion, this country would be in a far better position to resist it, and to repel the enemy, if that most intelligent and numerous class of the community which now enters neither the militia nor the regular army were taught to shoot accurately, and handle a rifle and sword-bayonet, and at the same time had that amount of organization and training which would, if they were called out in time of danger, enable them in a fortnight or three weeks to act together in battalions, than if these same men were, as they now are, for all purposes of defence, of no more use than so many old women spinning by the fire. It is vain to think that the Zouaves and Turcos of the present day can be met by untrained clods armed with scythes and pitchforks, which, as you will find if you refer to the history of bygone times, formed one description of force which, in case of invasion, was to assemble to repel the invader. Now, I venture to think that these Volunteer Rifle Corps may be made thoroughly efficient. The history of America, of La Vendée, of the Tyrol, and of Switzerland, sufficiently shows the value of such means of defence; and if we look to what is now passing in Italy, we see the wonderful success which has attended Garibaldi and his

volunteer rifles, who have made so effective a diversion on the right flank of the Austrian army. Of Garibaldi's men, the *Times'* correspondent says that they learn their drill and the use of their weapon in an incredibly short space of time, because, as he adds, they are an educated, intelligent, and superior class of men.

What number of volunteers we may expect to get I cannot pretend to say, but I have full confidence in the spirit and patriotism of our people; and we have lately seen what may be done in an emergency, when in such a town as Brescia, 3,000 out of a population of 40,000 volunteered for Garibaldi's corps. London* alone, therefore, if ever called upon to make similar exertions, might, according to the same relative proportion, furnish more than 200,000 men. We may therefore, I think, reasonably look to the establishment of numerous volunteer corps; and we may confidently trust to their zeal and patriotism, as well as to a spirit of rivalry and competition, for their skill as marksmen, and for their efficiency as soldiers.

Let me now say a few words on the objections which I have heard raised to these corps. I have already touched upon the chief objection to them—namely, that they would be inefficient for purposes of defence; but there are other objections urged against them. It is said that you cannot have these rifle corps in any number, from the difficulty of getting range, and the danger of shooting in all directions; that there is risk in thus arming the people and establishing a national guard; and, finally, that it will interfere with Yeomanry corps.

* London in 1803 had upwards of 50,000 volunteers under arms

Now, gentlemen, as a practical rifleman, accustomed to the use of the rifle from my childhood, I say, without fear of contradiction, there is no greater delusion than to suppose that it is necessary to have a long range to learn to shoot. These modern rifles, with the conical expanding ball, will unquestionably shoot with accuracy at extreme ranges—at 1,000 or 1,500 yards—but, in order to learn to shoot at that distance, there is no occasion to practise at a long range. The art of rifle-shooting may be divided into two parts—shooting, and judging distance.

Shooting consists—Firstly, in knowing in what position to hold the body when taking aim; secondly, in knowing how to take the sights, and aim at the object you wish to hit; and thirdly, in knowing how to pull the trigger by a steady pressure, without a jerk.

Now these things can be acquired without even powder and ball—simply by snapping off caps at a lighted candle. To teach men to shoot at a mark with ball, a range of one or two hundred yards is all that is required. Beyond this, it is a mere question of the sighting of your rifle; and the man who can hit a bull's-eye at 100 yards will be able to shoot no less well at 1,000 if his rifle is properly sighted, and he know the distance. In point of fact, as far as this matter of range goes, there is no more difficulty now in establishing rifle corps than there was in the practice of the bow in the good old days of merry England, when, by an act of Henry VIII., butts were ordered to be set up in every parish, so that the youth might be instructed in the use of the bow. All that would now be required would be the erection of walls or mounds at the back

of the targets, where there was not some hill-side against which to practise, and if additional precautions are thought to be desirable, a screen with an opening through which nothing but the ball and target can be seen should be erected at the other end of the range. Through it the rifleman would fire, and any chance shot which did not go through this opening would be stopped by the screen.

The other part of rifle-shooting, viz., judging distance, is perhaps the chief difficulty to be overcome. It is more from want of the power of judging distance than from any inaccuracy of aim—as many who hear me well know—that deer so often escape unscathed by the sportsman's bullet. Now, judging distance is taught by stationing men at certain measured intervals, say every 100 yards along any clear open space : a straight road would do. At Hythe, it is done along the beach ; in London, the Guards are taught to judge distance in Hyde Park. The men under instruction are singly made to guess the distances at which the different points are placed, and the answers are taken down in writing ; by this means they learn the degrees of distinctness with which the details of a man's features and form can be distinguished at different distances. Judging distance, therefore, does not require the use of a rifle, for it is not necessary to knock over a man with a ball to show that you know the distance he is off. There are, moreover, many instruments graduated to the average height of a man which are used for the purpose, and which in actual warfare the captain and officers of a company would do well to carry.

I come now to the social objection. I confess that on this score I have no distrust of the people of this country. Mr. Pitt had none in 1804; and it was said at that time that it was even better to run the risk of the people making a bad use of their arms than that they should not know how to use them at all. I do not believe that the people of this country are less to be trusted now; and although I should not be prepared promiscuously to arm them, still I have no fear in seeing arms given to the intelligent and respectable class of whom the Volunteer Corps will be formed; and as these arms are to be given by Government, they will of course be under Government control. So far, indeed, from considering the formation of these Rifle Corps as a source of danger to the State, I look to them as a source of much social good; for, composed, as I hope they will be, of respectable men from all classes of society, individuals will thus be brought into contact with each other who otherwise would never meet from year's end to year's end. You may depend upon it that the more people are brought together the better; social prejudices are thus rubbed off; and thus the different classes of society, by frequent contact, learn to know and appreciate each other.

As regards the objection of interference with the Yeomanry, it is unquestionably desirable that they and the Volunteer Rifles should work well together; for if they do not, if there is to be any jealousy between them, it can only tend to their mutual disadvantage. For this purpose, I think the Yeomanry might be connected with, and, as it were, form part of the Rifle Corps. They should in fact be mounted riflemen, armed with

rifled carbines instead of the useless old iron tubes they now have; and the two corps might then be trained to act together and support each other. The tenant farmers who belong to the Yeomanry might then perhaps be induced to provide clothing and accoutrements for some of their farm-servants, selecting the most active and those who, by running the straightest furrow, would probably turn out the best shots. I have here, moreover, a letter from Colonel Kinloch, the efficient head of our police in Scotland, in which he suggests that a certain number of light Armstrong guns should be attached to each corps of Yeomanry cavalry, and if this were done we should have a complete, and I hope efficient, system of defence, composed of volunteer infantry, cavalry, and artillery. I have thus, I hope, disposed of these objections. Indeed, there is one and one only other objection which is deserving of notice, viz., that the formation of these volunteer corps would lead in time to the reduction of the regular army; but, to guard against this, the *minimum* regular force required for the defence of the country should be fixed by competent authorities, and under no circumstances should it then ever be diminished.

I come now to the practical question—How shall we set about enlisting Scotchmen in our volunteer corps? It appears to me that the way would be to divide London into districts, taking the Post Office divisions, and endeavour to ascertain how many persons in each parish would be willing to join the Scotch Volunteer Rifles, finding their own clothing and accoutrements. The rifles, be it remembered, are to be provided by Government. The cost of dress and accoutrements

ought not to exceed £3 or £4 per man. Many would, no doubt, besides, purchase their own rifles; and those who are unable to join as effective members might be induced to subscribe, and an age should be fixed when a man should retire from active service and become an honorary member of the corps. A subscription should likewise be set on foot in each parish for the purpose of paying drill instructors, and defraying the cost of hiring ground for practice, of erecting butts, of purchasing ammunition, &c., &c. These would be annual expenses, and would have to be met by an annual subscription. It would, moreover, be desirable to set apart a certain sum annually for prizes for the best shots—for I look to the spirit of rivalry and competition (which is the very soul of our cricket clubs) as much as anything to perfect and keep up these corps; and there ought, in my opinion, to be a biennial or triennial national gathering, when national prizes* should be shot for, as is done in Switzerland at the *Tir Fédéral*, to which the Swiss, I am told, send subscriptions from all parts of the world.

It might be advisable to fix an entrance fee and to require a fixed annual subscription to the funds of the corps from every member. But these are matters of detail in which we might be somewhat guided by the proceedings of the Victoria Rifles, who have been for some years established in London.

On the subject of dress I have only to repeat what I have already stated in the columns of the *Times*, that

* Parliament might not unreasonably be asked to vote a small sum for this purpose, following the precedent of the Queen's racing cups and plates.

I am convinced that the only fitting dress for a soldier is the knickerbocker, legging, and laced ankle-boot.* Some I know are in favour of the kilt as a national dress; but though it is the best dress in the world for walking on open ground, I question its merits as a costume for skirmishing amongst the hedgerows of Kent or Surrey. The knickerbocker has all the advantages of the kilt as regards freedom of limb without any of its disadvantages. Moreover, the knickerbocker, legging, and laced ankle-boot have this additional recommendation, that they resemble in a great measure the dress of our peasantry. They might indeed be almost said to constitute an existing national costume, for the English peasantry generally wear breeches, leggings, and laced ankle-boots; and the Irish peasantry wear breeches. The main difference between the two is this: the Englishman buttons his breeches, and the Irishman habitually wears them unbuttoned. The colour of the dress should be grey, light or Austrian grey, the material tweed, with facings of whatever colour may suit the fancy of the corps. The worst colour for riflemen is the *invisible* green, which is worn by our regular rifles, so called, I presume, because there is not a trace of green about it—it appears perfectly black; and if you go to Aldershott, you will find that the invisible green of the rifles is more visible than any other colour on the heath. A friend has sent me a curious extract from Jameson's Journal, showing the proportion in which men are hit in action according to the colour of their uniform:—"It would appear from numerous observa-

* See Appendix.

tions that soldiers are hit during battle according to the colour of their dress in the following order—red is the most fatal colour, the least fatal Austrian grey. The proportions are—red, 12; rifle green, 7; brown, 6; Austrian bluish-grey, 5.” This is curious and instructive, if true, and in these days of arms of precision, when the Austrian Tyrolese jägers have been knocking over the French officers like popinjays, the colour of a soldier’s or volunteer’s coat becomes an important consideration.

In former days, at the period to which I have already more than once referred, the colour chosen for volunteers was red, in the hope that the enemy would mistake them for the regular troops; but I hope to see our volunteers acquire such skill in the use of their rifle that the enemy would prefer meeting a man in red to one in grey.

As to arms, the best weapon I know is Lancaster’s smooth oval-bored rifle—such as is used by the Sappers, with a sword-bayonet, which, if thought advisable, might be of the Zouave pattern. I have myself used the oval smooth-bored rifle for the last nine years in deer-stalking, and can therefore speak practically as to its efficiency. There is, likewise, an excellent breech-loading rifle, made by Westley Richards, which would be an admirable weapon for our volunteers. Indeed, I cannot help thinking that, if we could induce the Government to sanction the adoption of a smaller ball (that of the Westley Richards being 480), a short rifle of this kind, with a barrel not over thirty inches in length, would be the most suitable weapon for volunteers. It might be slung on the back like a chamois-hunter’s

rifle, and the volunteer might further be armed with a strong eight-feet long bamboo, which would serve as a leaping pole, and to the end of which, when required, a stout bill-shaped pike might be fixed. This pike, when not required, would hang from the waistbelt like a bayonet. A pike of this description would be a formidable weapon against cavalry; and the leaping-pole would greatly facilitate skirmishing in an enclosed country like England.

I have now, at the risk of exhausting your patience—and I thank you for the kind attention with which you have listened to me—brought under your notice the principal points connected with this subject; I have endeavoured to show the necessity of providing some additional means of defence, and I have urged the formation of volunteer rifle and artillery corps as the readiest, the cheapest, and at the same time the most effective means that can be devised. I have likewise endeavoured to meet the objections which I have heard raised against them. I, gentlemen, have done, or, at least, I have endeavoured to do my part as chairman of this meeting; it is for you now to do yours; it is for the people of this country to respond heartily to the appeal that has been made to their patriotism by the Government, by enrolling themselves as volunteers. All that is required is a little exertion, a little self-sacrifice in purse and person. The danger, it is true, is not imminent; I do not even believe that at this moment any real danger threatens; but do not, on this account, be lulled into any false security. When danger really threatens it will be too late to arm; do not, therefore—trusting to your insular posi-

tion and to our neutrality in the fearful contest that is now raging on the plains of Lombardy—do not neglect the means of guarding yourselves against the like calamities, against the possible occurrence in our own island—on which, for 800 years no hostile foot has trod—of those horrors which now make the eye to swim and the heart to sicken every time we open the daily prints, whose columns are filled with the ghastly details of hecatombs of slaughter. Lord Bacon tells us, in his essays, that the principal point of greatness in a state, is to have a race of military men; and he further adds, that Solon said well to Cræsus, who ostentatiously showed him his gold: “If any other come who hath better iron than you, he will be master of all this gold.” Let us, gentlemen, apply the moral to ourselves; let us be warned in time by the words of the Grecian sage, and by the fate of the Lydian monarch. I am now speaking in the centre of the emporium of commerce; we have amassed in this country wealth greater than the world ever saw; let us take care that no “other come who hath better iron than ourselves.”

[Since the foregoing was spoken peace has been made, and the Emperor of the French has announced his intention of reducing his armaments. These events, however, important though they be, should not affect the enlistment of the volunteers, as the object aimed at is the creation of a force which will materially add to our permanent security.—ELCHO.]

APPENDIX.

I.

RESOLUTIONS OF PUBLIC MEETING, HELD 4TH JULY.

1. Moved by Sir JOHN HERON MAXWELL, Baronet, and seconded by Sir CHARLES FORBES, Baronet :—

“That, as the present condition of affairs on the Continent of Europe may lead to complications that will render it impossible for Great Britain, with due regard to her material interests and high station among the nations, to maintain a position of neutrality, it is expedient that Scottish residents in London and its neighbourhood be invited to participate in strengthening the defensive resources of the country, by forming a Volunteer Rifle Corps, to be designated the “London Scottish Volunteer Rifles.”

2. Moved by Sir CHARLES FORBES, Baronet, and seconded by COSMO GORDON, Esq., Fyvie :—

“That for the purpose of more effectually carrying out the object contemplated by the first resolution, a Subscription List be formed for originating a fund from which Arms and Accoutrements can be supplied to such volunteers as may be unable to defray the necessary expenses from their own funds, as well as for meeting the incidental expenses of the Corps.”

II.

OBJECTS AND GENERAL RULES OF THE LONDON SCOTTISH VOLUNTEER RIFLES.

I.—OBJECTS.

1. To contribute, as auxiliaries to the regular troops, to the permanent defence and security of the United

Kingdom against foreign invasion, or internal rebellion connected with expected, threatened, or actual invasion.

2. To teach the use of the rifle.

3. To promote the cultivation of military and other manly national exercises and games by prize competitions, and such other means as may be considered advisable.

II.—MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION.

1. The Corps to consist of Effective and Honorary members, both of whom to be connected with Scotland by birth, marriage, or property.

2. Effective members on admission to be not less than 17 years of age.

3. Effective members to pay £1 entrance, and £1 annual subscription.

4. Honorary members to pay not less than £5 entrance, £1 annual subscription, or £10 as a life-membership fee. Any Effective member who has served three years, and become unable to continue to serve from any cause considered satisfactory by the Committee, may become an Honorary member of the Corps without payment of entrance fee, but must continue to pay his annual subscription.

5. Candidates for membership to be admitted on approval by the General Committee or Sub-committee, after recommendation by one officer, or by two members of the Corps.

6. Any member may resign on giving fourteen days' notice, when the Corps is not on active service, but he will not be entitled to receive back any part of his subscription.

7. Officers to pay a fee on appointment, and on promotion.

8. All subscriptions to be paid in advance.

III.—ARMS, UNIFORM, AND ACCOUTREMENTS.

1. *Arms.*—Any member may furnish himself with a rifle, provided it is in conformity with the Government regulations. The rifles provided by Government, at the rate of five to every twenty men, will be kept in a building at the practice ground, under the charge of a person specially appointed for the purpose.* Ammunition (furnished by Government at cost price) will be provided by the Corps, but each member will have to pay for what he uses.†

2. *Uniform.*—Each member to pay for his own uniform and accoutrements, unless specially exempted from this charge by the Committee. The Committee to decide on the uniform and accoutrements to be used. The uniform to have some distinctive mark of nationality. A uniform to be selected the cost of which shall not, including accoutrements, exceed £4.

IV.—DRILL AND PRACTICE.‡

1. No member shall be returned as an Effective member of the Corps till he has (in accordance with the Government regulations) attended drill and practice during at least two hours in each of twenty-four days in the course of the year.

2. Saturday afternoons (during the months of April, May, June, July, August, and September) to be the time appointed for regular drill and practice. During winter drill to be at such place and times as shall appear to the Committee to be most convenient for the Corps:

* It is not desirable that volunteers should provide their own rifles until it has been clearly ascertained which is the best description of arm.

† The rate of payment will be about £2 10s. per 1,000 rounds. Should the funds of the Corps be found to admit of it, there will be a certain fixed number of rounds for practice allowed to each member, say at the rate of 100 rounds for 21 days.

‡ Mr. Lancaster has liberally allowed the Corps the use of his ground, which lies between Kensall Green and Wormwood Scrubbs.

3. Drill and practice to be made as little irksome to members as is consistent with securing efficiency.

4. The practice ground will at all times be open for the use of Effective and Honorary members.

V.—DISCIPLINE AND MANAGEMENT.

1. Members shall be subject to the Government regulations, and to such bye-laws as may from time to time be adopted by the Committee of the Corps. Discipline to be enforced by reasonable fines.

2. The general management of the concerns of the Corps to be conducted by a Committee chosen by the Corps. Members of Committee to go out by rotation, and not to be re-eligible till after a certain interval. Officers to be nominated by the Corps subject to the approval of the Lord Lieutenant of the county and of the Government.

VI.—FINANCE.

1. The direction of the financial arrangements to be entrusted to a Finance Committee, consisting of three and not more than three members, in addition to the Chairman and two Honorary Secretaries of the General Committee.

2. The Honorary Treasurers to be ineligible as members of the Finance Committee.

(The above Rules will be amended and amplified when the Corps is formed.)

III.

HOW TO DRESS VOLUNTEERS.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR,—At a time when the patriotic spirit of our countrymen is about to be embodied in rifle corps, you will perhaps find room in the columns of your paper for a suggestion which I venture to offer for the consideration of those gentlemen upon whom, in county

or in town, the duty may devolve of deciding on the dress to be worn by the volunteers.

The suggestion I have to make is, that the volunteers should not wear trousers. In making it I do not, however, propose to leave them without a substitute for this most important and necessary article of clothing, but I would recommend as a substitute what are commonly known as "knickerbockers," *i.e.*, long, loose breeches which are generally worn without braces, and buckled or buttoned round the waist and knee, and which are now in almost universal use among the sportsmen and deerstalkers of the Highlands of Scotland, who have to undergo great fatigue, and to whom the utmost freedom of limb is essential. It is from having had eleven years' experience of the great advantages of this description of dress that I am induced to urge its adoption, as I am confident it is the only fitting dress for a foot soldier, whose efficiency it would greatly increase. Trousers have no doubt their advantages—they are easily put on, and it does not much matter what shape a man's legs are when thus encased; but, to a sportsman who has once experienced the ease and freedom of "knickerbockers" or the kilt, they are simply intolerable. I speak not of the minor evils of braces breaking and buttons giving way, but of the constant drag on the knee in walking, more especially up hill, which is increased a hundred fold by the mass of useless, muddy, soaking drapery which the unfortunate sportsman in trousers is doomed to carry about his ankles whenever he finds himself in wet turnips, bog, or heather. So great, indeed, is this impediment, that I have heard it said that if two men equally strong and active were to start together for a day's sport in the hills, the one in trousers, the other in a kilt, the latter would outwalk the former by five miles in the course of the day; and, judging by my own feelings, I am disposed to believe in the general truth of this statement. Now, it is because I know

the “knickerbocker” to possess all the advantages of the kilt without its disadvantages that I am induced to urge its adoption. A foot soldier should be dressed in the way which will enable him to walk the greatest distance with the greatest ease to himself. The only difference between a deerstalker and a soldier is that the one pursues deer the other men, and what experience has proved to be best suited to the one should, I humbly think, be adopted by the other. If we look to history, we find that the kilt was the dress of the Greeks of Xenophon, and of the Romans of Cæsar—that the “knickerbocker” was the dress of the famous infantry of Spain, while the Zouaves and the Chasseurs de Vincennes, the *corps d'élite* of Napoleon III., are clad in somewhat similar garments. But more than this, all infantry soldiers, with the exception of our own, have gaiters reaching half way to the knee, into which they squeeze the ends of their trousers when on the march, to keep them out of the mud, thus assimilating them as far as possible to the “knickerbocker.” Such, at least, is the practice in the French, Austrian, and Sardinian armies. Thus, historical precedent, foreign example, and personal experience alike encourage me to recommend this dress to the favourable consideration of volunteer corps, in the belief that it would greatly contribute to their comfort and efficiency, besides greatly adding to the picturesqueness of their appearance. A stout ribbed worsted stocking and ankle boot are generally worn with the “knickerbocker,” but a legging either of leather, cloth, or coarse unbleached canvas might be added, which when wet or dirty could easily be taken off and cleaned. The colour of the dress should, I think, be light grey, and the stockings might, as when worn with the kilt, be of any colour that would harmonize or contrast well with it.

I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

ELCHO.

IV.

Letter from Major-General HAY, Head of the Government School of Musketry at Hythe.

HYTHE, 27th July, 1859.

DEAR LORD ELCHO, — I have much pleasure in replying to the questions contained in your letter of yesterday's date. You first ask whether, in my opinion, volunteer rifle corps may be made really efficient and permanent means of national defence. I am clearly of opinion that such corps may be made really efficient; and if so, there cannot be the slightest doubt that they would prove a most valuable and permanent addition to our national defences. One great advantage of such a force is, that it is purely defensive. Rifle-shooting, however, cannot be extemporized; it must be the growth of time, and should become, if the present movement is judiciously handled, a national habit. It requires no undue excitement to maintain its efficient action; it would prove an amusement in time of peace, but a mighty element of strength in case of invasion. I of course contemplate the enrolment of 100,000 volunteers, which number will increase in the ratio of the inducements held out, the tact displayed by the leaders of corps or companies, and the number of sites granted for practice. The question next arises, How to make these corps "*really efficient*;" for, unless they are so, we shall be better without them. There can be no difficulty, I conceive, in the matter if the rifle training is conducted on a perfectly detailed system, without which I defy any corps to become efficient in rifle-shooting, however long it may have been embodied: it may have the name of a rifle corps or club, but nothing else.

Without system such corps may possibly have a few fair shots, but the mass will remain untrained, as I feel convinced is the case as regards shooting in all our volunteer rifle corps which have been embodied for many years. The attention and devotion to their work

of the fifty volunteer gentlemen now under training at this establishment afford the most encouraging proof that I am right in not anticipating any difficulty in training volunteer companies. You next ask what course of instruction volunteers should go through, also the amount of drill I consider indispensable. In reply to the first of these questions, I consider a course of "*rifle drill*," before rifle *practice* commences, to be *perfectly* indispensable—a short course of such drill the fifty volunteers now here are going through. Without this preparatory drill (which need not take more than two and a half hours a-day for six days), the *practice* must prove an utter failure. With regard to your second question, *I consider the less ordinary drill the volunteer receives the better, if it interferes with the training to shoot, which should be considered paramount.* Company drill is dull work, particularly if indifferently imparted. When men are in earnest, and have a strong stimulus to exertion, such as a chance of immediate invasion, they will do more in three weeks in the drill line than, under ordinary circumstances, in six months, or, in fact, at all, if the drill prove irksome; therefore I say insure good shooting first, and then, if time admits, perfect the efficiency by company drill.

In my endeavour to answer your questions I have, I fear, troubled you with a longer letter than you bargained for. Pray impute this to an anxious desire on my part that this volunteer rifle movement should succeed, and that the country should reap the benefit of the large outlay, both public and private, which it cannot fail to entail.

Believe me to remain yours most faithfully,
CHARLES HAY, *Maj.-Gen.*

P.S.—I like much the style of dress for volunteers, a drawing of which you were kind enough to show me.

The colour I do not quite understand. Is the tunic tight, or loose like a blouse?—C. H.

V.

Extract from a Speech of Lord LYNDHURST in the House of Lords, 25th July, 1859.

“I will not trust the liberties of this country, its honour, and its interests, to any declarations or promises of any friendly Power, or of any Power whatever. I will rely on my own power, on my own resources, on my own vigour, and on the strength of my own right arm.”

VI.

VOLUNTEER CORPS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, Aug. 13, 1859.

Lord ELCHO, in moving for copies of any reports relative to the instruction of volunteers in the Government Musketry School at Hythe, said his object was to show that the volunteers who had placed themselves under instruction had applied themselves to their duties in the most praiseworthy manner, and had obtained considerable distinction. His noble friend at the head of the Government had the other night thrown ridicule upon the volunteer movement, and had talked about the “rifle corps fever” as epidemic. Now he (Lord Elcho) believed these volunteer corps, without any reference to the question of invasion, might be of great advantage as a permanent institution, and he therefore regretted that the noble lord had appeared to treat with ridicule the efforts which were now in progress for the establishment of a volun-

teer force. He wished to ascertain from the Government whether they regarded the formation of the rifle and artillery volunteer corps as an important and permanent element of our national defences, and whether they were really anxious that such a force should be established.

Mr. S. HERBERT was somewhat at a loss to understand on what ground his noble friend entertained doubts as to the intentions of the Government on the subject. The noble lord had said that his noble friend at the head of the Government (Lord Palmerston) had in the course of debate casually used some such expression as "the volunteer fever;" but, although such an expression might have fallen from his noble friend, he could only say that he (Lord Palmerston) was the first to sanction the formation of these volunteer corps, at a time when there was no very decided popular feeling in their favour. He thought that fact was a much stronger indication of his noble friend's opinions than any casual expression which he might have used in debate. So far as the Government generally were concerned, he must say that if they had wished to discourage the formation of volunteer corps they had not been very successful, for at this moment there were upwards of 90 corps in process of formation, and proposals had been made to lords-lieutenant for the establishment of a considerable number of additional corps, with regard to which no official communications had been made to the Government. These corps would, no doubt, soon constitute a very numerous force; but if they were regarded as substitutes for any portion of the regular army, he thought a great mistake would be made. (Hear.) He had himself given them every encouragement and facility in his power, because he was satisfied the gentlemen who formed those corps did not themselves wish to be put on the footing of substitutes for the army (hear, hear);

but great advantages might undoubtedly result from the existence of auxiliary corps of this description, consisting of persons who went through a regular drill, and made themselves masters of the weapons with which they were to be armed. (Hear, hear.) He would readily produce the report of General Hay, and as it was extremely honourable to the volunteers, he would beg to read it to the house. General Hay said :

“I have the honour to forward, for the information of his Royal Highness the General Commanding-in-Chief, the enclosed return of the results of the performance in shooting of the noblemen and gentlemen of the rifle volunteer corps, who have just completed a course of instruction at this establishment, and to report, in reference to the method pursued, that the morning was devoted to carrying out a detail of daily work, as per annexed statement, so modified as to meet the requirements of a volunteer company, the members of which it is presumed will not be able to devote more than two hours and a half daily to the musketry drill and practice. The desire, however, on the part of these volunteers to become fully acquainted with every detail connected with the system and the method of working it was so great that the whole day was spent in acquiring this information. Proficiency in the several practices being always measured by a figure, I am enabled to draw a comparison of the shooting of these volunteers with that of parties of officers (averaging from 40 to 45) in the last three courses. The result is in favour of the volunteers, the highest figure of the former being 46·94, of the latter 47·07 points. I have confined the comparison to the shooting of the officers, as from their superior intelligence they always (when subjected to the same amount of preliminary drill) beat the men. When it is considered that these volunteers were composed of noblemen and gentlemen most of whom had never fired with a rifle before, and not any at a longer distance than about 200 or 300 yards, and when the short period of six days allotted to the performance of the preliminary drills is taken into account, it not only affords the most convincing proof of the energy and intelligence brought to bear on the work in which these volunteers were engaged, but at the same time it points clearly to the great benefit the country will derive from enlisting the services of the educated classes of the population in the movement which is now in progress for the enrolment of volunteers for rifle companies and corps. I do not hesitate to say that if the training of these volunteers is regulated by a well-detailed system which will ensure a preliminary preparation before practice is allowed to take place, that in a few years a most im-

portant reserve (comprising as it will a class of persons who never enter the regular army or militia, but who from their education and intelligence are eminently qualified to make the very best marksmen) will be at all times available, and afford a most valuable and permanent addition to our national defences. The interest taken by the noblemen and gentlemen herein referred to in the practice convinces me that rifle-shooting, if properly conducted, cannot fail to prove henceforth one of the most interesting of our national amusements. I feel it right to observe, however, that unless rifle training is conducted on a proper (and I would venture to recommend a uniform) system, utter failure will ensue. We shall have rifle corps in name, but not in reality."

He thought the warning of the gallant officer was not without its value, but he could only say that the Government were glad to have an opportunity of expressing their gratitude for the exertions which were being made on this subject, and he was satisfied, from communications he had had from many gentlemen who were engaged in the formation of these corps, that there was no intention on their part of merely playing at soldiering, but that they were willing, by drill and practice, to render themselves efficient for the defence of the country in case of need. (Hear, hear.)

Lord PALMERSTON begged to disclaim any intention to speak in terms of indifference or disparagement in regard to any question of national defence. (Hear, hear.) On the contrary, he was perfectly sensible of the importance of a serious movement on that subject. In his opinion, however, the movement had not been very serious in some cases, but had rather been taken up as a pleasant pastime for a few days. So far, then, from undervaluing such an enterprise, he could only say that when in office before he took certain steps which he was afraid were not very successful, with a view to form volunteer artillery corps in our seaports. He had sanctioned the establishment of the Victoria Rifle Corps in that town, and also of rifle corps in Devonshire. And if the country was impressed, as it ought to be, with the real importance of having some

organization of that kind for our permanent national defence, not in substitution of, but in addition to, our other forces, and if those who entered would enter with a full determination to remain and be available when any emergency unfortunately occurred, he could say that her Majesty's government would give them every encouragement. He could only repeat what he urged as to the formation of volunteer artillery corps in our seacoast towns, where there was much valuable property that might be exposed in any sudden attack.

FORMS TO BE FILLED UP AND SIGNED.

No. I.

I request to be enrolled as an EFFECTIVE MEMBER in the
LONDON SCOTTISH VOLUNTEER RIFLES.

Date

Address

Occupation

Signature

TO THE HON. SECRETARIES OF THE
LONDON SCOTTISH VOLUNTEER RIFLES,
10, PALL MALL, EAST.

No. II.

I request to be enrolled as an HONORARY MEMBER in the
LONDON SCOTTISH VOLUNTEER RIFLES.

Date

Address

Occupation

Signature

TO THE HON. SECRETARIES OF THE
LONDON SCOTTISH VOLUNTEER RIFLES,
10, PALL MALL, EAST.

[TURN OVER.]

No. III.

I subscribe, as under, to the Funds of the LONDON
SCOTTISH VOLUNTEER RIFLES, the sum of £ , of
which £ is my Annual Subscription, £
my Entrance Fee, and £ a Donation.

Date

Address

Signature

TO THE HON. SECRETARIES OF THE
LONDON SCOTTISH VOLUNTEER RIFLES,
10, PAUL MALL, EAST.

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