

Editor's Table.

THE UNITED STATES ARMY will claim the attention of Congress early in the approaching session. The act of last session carried into effect one suggestion offered by the Secretary of War in his last Report, but by no means the most important one. It added two regiments of infantry and two of cavalry to the standing force, which raised the authorized strength of the army to 16,648 men. The real force does not probably exceed 12,000 to 13,000 men, including staff, dragoons, artillery, and infantry. Whether this moderate addition—an authorized number of 2432 men—will answer the purpose required and expected by the Secretary, namely, the suppression of all frontier troubles without the aid of the militia, remains to be seen.

But an increase to this or even a greater extent is a matter of trifling importance in comparison with the other questions relating to the army which call earnestly for settlement. It is perfectly certain that so long as the republic of the United States endures, it will never employ, in time of peace, a standing army large enough to defend its frontier. Public sentiment would not tolerate such a thing. It would be, in the opinion of ninety-nine men in every hundred, a useless expense. Wars do not spring up, like winds, between the going down and the rising of the sun; they are preceded by a series of unmistakable premonitory symptoms; and no nation that is ruled by sane men can, in the present day, be taken by surprise by a declaration of war. Nor is there any solid truth in the old notion that a long course of discipline in time of peace qualifies the soldier for active service in time of war; experience proves that six months' drill teaches him all he can learn till he is placed under fire, and that recruits hastily enrolled from the ranks of the militia and extemporaneously drilled, are likely to prove as efficient in the field as soldiers who have drawn pay for mere garrison duty for twenty years. On the other hand, the danger of Pretorian bands is well understood, and not likely to be forgotten. Soldiers, like Romish priests, are dead branches of the national tree. They bear neither fruit, bud, nor leaf, but only serve to burden the trunk, and occupy a space needed for the living shoots. Nor is their moral example better than their material usefulness. At all ages of the world's history, in the most civilized as in the most savage nations, masses of men assembled together, without women and without the family relation to impart self-respect and independence to each individual, have sunk, more or less deeply, into vicious habits, and become an ulcer in the community. For these and other kindred reasons, it has always been the sentiment of the American people that it was safe and proper to dispense with a standing army, and to trust, in the hour of danger, to a force extemporized from the ranks of the militia. The act of last session is not inconsistent with this principle. The couple of thousand extra men whom it authorizes the Department to raise are required for the special purpose of keeping in awe the Indians of the interior of the Continent. In a few years it is fair to presume that natural causes will have diminished the numbers of these Indians and driven the remnant beyond the limits of civilization; when this occurs, the necessity for the maintenance of

the new regiments will disappear, and the army will be reduced at least to the old figure—an effective force of from 10,000 to 11,000 men.

From the very reasons which deprive the act of 1855 of material importance, other questions relating to the army derive immediate and vital interest. The policy of dispensing with a standing army is only safe so long as a body of efficient and well trained officers is maintained to lead the militia in time of war. Officers can not be extemporized. No man can become an engineer in six months—hardly in six years; nor can any one acquire without long and severe study such a knowledge of military tactics as would be required to qualify him for command in the field. The science needed for the construction of the simplest field-work is the fruit of persistent toil. And though the highest efforts of military skill have been flashes of genius rather than products of study, it is quite obvious that the latter was essential to render the former available. Even Napoleon could have done nothing had he never been a pupil at Brienne. We may leave to patriotism the duty of finding us soldiers; but we must provide officers ourselves, and keep them ready on hand.

This applies not only to the higher grades, but to the lowest commissioned officers in the service. A second lieutenant stands as much in need of training as a commanding general. His responsibilities are not so extensive, but they are more direct; if the one must answer for the issue of battles, the other has in charge the lives of individual men. In the field, regimental officers may be said to hold the lives of their men in their hand. Upon the experience and sagacity of the captain the health and efficiency of the company almost invariably depend. Discipline enjoins but one thing on the soldier—Obey. Whatever his own common sense may dictate, he can not give it a moment's thought; his part is to obey; and however suicidal the service required of him, he must perform it or be shot. How extensive a mischief may be wrought by intrusting the lower commissions of an army to incompetent men, the dreadful story of the British before Sebastopol tells but too plainly. The subalterns and captains in that army were, for the most part, young men ignorant of the art of war. They had never learned it as a trade. They had bought their commissions and their uniforms together. When they had learned the words of command their education was complete. Of the wants of men in active service, of the scientific rules which govern the movements of small bodies of soldiers, of the devices by which skilled officers husband the lives of their men or inflict additional loss on the enemy, of the most primitive hygienic laws, they were as ignorant as the same number of tailors or seamstresses. The consequence was, that while the French army suffered barely the average loss from accident, disease, and exposure, more than half the British force perished from these causes. It is true that the horrible inefficiency of the British commissariat and medical departments had much to do with the difference; but its prime cause was unquestionably the gross incapacity of the inferior regimental officers.

We are in this country in advance of the British in respect of materials for an army. They have

no school that can compare with West Point. Their engineers and artillery officers are educated, certainly; but the examinations, like most performances of the kind in England, are mere matters of form. The veriest blockhead may obtain a commission in the artillery. Nor is transcendent ability, or even decent proficiency by any means essential to enable a man with family influence to enter the engineers. As to the line, as we said, reading and writing, a page of Cæsar, and a little ciphering, are all that is expected of the applicant for a commission. With us, at all events, the ignorant and the hopelessly stupid can not expect to be intrusted with the command of United States soldiers. It is the unanimous verdict of foreigners that the Academy at West Point is equal to any military school in the world. The system of education pursued there is the fruit of the combined experience of modern nations, methodized by some of the ablest minds the country has produced. Unlike foreign institutions of the like character, it has been conducted from the first on the principle that time and usage can not consecrate error. The work of reform and improvement never ceases within its walls. Whatever is good in foreign schools has been imitated; and not a single suggestion of value from any source has been neglected. Altogether it justifies the remarkable encomium of the last Board of Visitors, that "it was difficult to conceive a course of instructions more perfect in its general arrangement." Of late years, the eminent merits of the system have been enhanced by increased rigor in its practical application. The excess of candidates over regimental vacancies has enabled the authorities to increase the severity of the tests, so as to exclude all who have not attained distinguished proficiency. At present, examinations at West Point are strict to a fault. The number of rejected candidates increases yearly. It follows that the young men who pass safely through the ordeal are pretty sure to equal, in point of military knowledge and natural ability, any school of officers in the world.

Thus far, therefore, we have been consistent. We have taken the first step toward providing the country with a nucleus round which an efficient army may at any time be called. But we have gone no farther. Having established the school, we seem to have considered our duty complete, and have left the fate of the scholars in after life to chance. More than this, we have absolutely done what we could toward disgusting them with the profession for which they were educated with such care.

Let us explain. Soldiers, like other men, must live. They can not all be men of property and fortune, unless we wish our army to be like that of Great Britain, a nursery for the most incapable of rich men's sons. Therefore we must pay them. It is their right and our duty. If we want men of intellect to devote that intellect to our service, we must reward them, if not as liberally as they might be rewarded in other professions, at least so adequately that they shall not lack the necessities of life or the comforts of the station of an officer. We need not enrich them at our expense; but it is folly for us to grant them so little that their minds shall be engrossed with the cares of poverty, and wholly unjust to them to accept their labor in exchange for a pittance which in any other walk of life it would be an insult to offer them.

It is but fair, in giving the pay list of the United

States army, to say that it was adopted forty odd years ago, and that the present War Department is in favor of an extensive increase. It is as follows:

Rank.	Pay per month.	Rations.	Forage for Horses.	Allowance for Servants.
Lieutenant-general*	\$250	40	4	—
Major-general	200	15	3	4
Brigadier-general	104	12	3	3
Colonel of cavalry	90	6	3	2
Lieut.-colonel of cavalry	75	5	3	2
Major of cavalry	60	4	3	2
Captain of cavalry	50	4	2	1
Lieutenant of cavalry	35 ³³ ₁₀₀	4	2	1
Colonel of artillery or infantry	75	6	3	2
Lieutenant-colonel of artillery or infantry	60	5	3	2
Major	50	4	3	2
Captain	40	4	0	1
First Lieutenant	30	4	0	1
Second Lieutenant	25	4	0	1

A ration is declared by law to be equal to 20 cents. The officer, therefore, who is entitled to four rations, receives in fact 80 cents per day besides his pay, equal to \$24 a month. To this may be added a variety of odds and ends which swell the pay a trifle. For instance, a colonel may, if he please, keep but one horse, and pocket the two allowances of \$8 a month. He and other officers may make their own bed and cook their own dinner; by which economical device they will save the expense of servants, for whom the State allows them wages and rations. An officer in command of a post receives double rations. Under certain circumstances, officers draw extra allowances for quarters and fuel. A trifle may be saved out of the mileage allowed for traveling expenses. An extra ration is allowed by law for every five years' service. But all these items of profit together amount to but a very small sum; and the State is hardly so poor that its servants should need to trust to petty acts of parsimony to eke out a subsistence. Setting aside altogether these contingent pickings, the proper pay of officers in the United States service is as given in the following table:

Lieutenant-general	\$5880 a year.
Major-general	3480 "
Brigadier-general	2112 "
Colonel of cavalry	1512 "
Lieutenant-colonel of cavalry	1260 "
Major of cavalry	1008 "
Captain of cavalry	888 "
Lieutenant of cavalry	688 "
Colonel of artillery and infantry	1352 "
Lieut.-colonel of artillery and infantry	1080 "
Major	888 "
Captain	768 "
First Lieutenant	648 "
Second Lieutenant	588 "

The rates of pay in the British army are before us. It is difficult to institute a fair comparison;

* The pay of lieutenant-generals is here given as it was fixed in the Act of 1798, conferring the rank on Washington. The reader may be aware that some difficulty has arisen from the want of any provision with regard to pay in the resolution of Congress of 1855, authorizing the President to confer on a particular officer (General Scott) the rank of lieutenant-general by brevet. General Scott naturally claims the pay specified in the Act of 1798; but the authorities at Washington have up to this time refused to pay it on the ground that it was not so written in the bond. It is to be hoped that so manifest a perversion of the design of Congress will be shortly rectified. Should death overtake General Scott before the settlement of the question, those who denied comfort and ease of mind to his last hours will not be readily forgiven by the country.

for their allowances and rations, which are more liberal than ours, vary so much that they can not readily be estimated. But it is safe to say, as a general rule, that the pay of British officers (which is considered so slender that no prudent parent allows his son to enter the army without means of his own) is, in general, more than double that of Americans of the same rank. Omitting rations and allowances on both sides, their lieutenant-colonels of cavalry receive about \$2100, ours \$900; their lieutenant-colonels of infantry \$1552, ours \$720; their captains of cavalry \$1327, ours \$600; their captains of infantry \$1054, ours \$480; their ensigns (infantry) \$475, our second lieutenants \$300.

The materials for a useful comparison, however, are better found at home than abroad. It is a glaring fact that any ordinary book-keeper in Wall Street receives a salary larger than a major in the American army. The teller in a respectable bank is paid as much as a brigadier-general. A journeyman printer who is skillful at his business can earn as much as a captain of infantry. A carpenter makes more at his trade than a second-lieutenant at his. Yet look at the difference between the education, the ability, the duties, and the responsibility of each. Independently of the money responsibility—which is always great, and often harassing and ruinous to officers of the army—they are morally, and the commanding officer usually holds them actually, responsible for their men. They have spent four years in arduous study. The captain has been many years in the service; has perhaps been wounded, has necessarily suffered much hardship, and incurred ill-health. All, from the general to the lieutenant, are expected to be men of education and gentlemanly manners. The carpenter's wife may take in washing, and the family may be happy in an attic; the lieutenant's wife must be a lady, and likes to play the piano. The teller in a bank has his lodgings in a snug boarding-house, or keeps house and takes a few lodgers himself; the brigadier-general must live in state, and entertain hospitably the officers of his department.

How it happens, under such a starving system as this, that disbursing officers ever render any accounts of public moneys at all, is quite wonderful, and speaks volumes for the honor of the service. Surely if you acquit the poor woman who steals a loaf to feed her child, you can not bring the law to bear on the defaulting lieutenant who has to support a family on thirteen dollars a week, and spend \$20,000 of government money in a year! There is no comparison between the temptation in the two cases; and it is quite certain that, in the event of a defalcation by such an officer, the public sympathy would be as decidedly with him as it would be with the woman who stole a loaf.

Policy, independent of principle, should dictate an immediate increase in the pay of the commissioned officers. When we wanted soldiers, we were forced to increase the pay of enlisted men; if we want to maintain an efficient corps of officers, we must do the same with regard to them. True, so long as there are rich men in the country, West Point will not be likely to lack scholars; but it will never do to trust to men who take to arms as pastime, and serve as volunteers. The country can not afford to rely on gratuitous service. We must make the pay an object to the officer, if we wish him to be reliable in the hour of need; and

if we seek to enlist the best talent in the nation, we must not restrict our choice to the small class whose private means render them independent of official emolument.

Any clerk in the War Department might be trusted to specify the increase that is required. We all know from experience how much it costs to live. Taking this as a basis of calculation, and remembering that the lowest officer in the service ought, with economy, to be able to live decently, it would probably be found that one thousand dollars a year would not be an extravagant sum to pay for the services of a second lieutenant. A graduate of West Point would command much more than this in most civil callings; he could not live suitably on less. The gradations of pay might be so arranged that the captain should receive \$1800 to \$2000, little enough, when it is remembered he may not obtain promotion before old age, and that his life will be spent in toils of the most arduous and responsible character. Three thousand dollars would barely suffice for a colonel. But the principle once acknowledged by Congress, no difficulty would arise as to the details. The country is not so poor as to need to starve the men on whom it relies for protection in the hour of danger.

Another important subject that will engage the attention of the Committee of Congress intrusted with the new Army Bill, is the question of brevet rank. It is at present hopelessly confused. Contradictory decisions have been rendered on every point that has been raised, and no one can tell what rank a brevet confers. So much doubt and uncertainty envelop the whole subject, that the only sensible mode of dealing with it is to obliterate the past bodily, and, reverting to first principles, to devise an entirely new system for the future.

The first point to be established is: Should there be any brevet rank at all? This question resolves itself into another, namely: Is it possible to insure a perfect equality of talents and zeal throughout the commissioned ranks of the army? There can be no hesitation in answering this query in the negative. Hence it follows that some means of rewarding superior talents and zeal should be provided. Of all the plans that have been used by military nations to attain this end, the promotion by brevet is the best. It is the only one which offers a suitable stimulus to the soldier, without violating the basis of justice on which military organization should rest. It is open to abuse, of course; but all human institutions are; and with the safeguard of a free press, the risk of its being used corruptly or unfairly is small. An objection has been preferred to the brevet system on the pretense that it is a monarchical institution; and distinctions have been drawn between the authority of the President and that of European monarchs, with a view to show that the power to confer army rank has not been delegated to the former by the Constitution; but none of these arguments appear to rest on solid grounds. Congress has power to "make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces;" and if it can be shown to be desirable to provide rewards for especial merit in the army by means of brevets, it can and ought to provide such rewards, and direct the Executive to distribute them.

Assuming, therefore, that the brevet system is sound in principle, it would appear proper that the power of conferring brevet rank should be con-

fided to the President, not only as commander-in-chief of the army, but as the representative of the nation, which owes this reward to its faithful servants. It might be provided that brevets, like civil appointments, could only be conferred by and with the consent of the Senate; they should never be granted except on the recommendation of the commanding officers of the army.

The next question which arises—the one out of which all the past trouble has flowed—is, how shall brevet rank take effect? Shall it supersede rank by seniority in any or all cases? It is impossible to disguise the fact—most, if not all of the confusion in which this subject has been involved has arisen from too much study of the terms of the law, and too little reflection on first principles. Brevet rank was established as a reward for merit. It was designed to be conferred upon officers who showed unusual gallantry or surpassing skill, but could not be promoted in the line of seniority until their immediate superiors, who had evinced no excess of gallantry or skill, obtained their promotion. It was intended, in a word, to be a door of escape from the inevitable mischiefs of the system of promotion by seniority. Now, it is clear that this intention can only be fulfilled by giving full effect to brevet rank. If, as is done at present, we confer upon a captain the rank of major by brevet, but at the same time decide that he shall still be commanded by the captains who were his seniors before the brevet, we simply nullify the latter. His promotion becomes a mere empty name, and rather a source of annoyance and heart-burning than a substantial reward of honorable ambition. Better abolish it altogether than leave it without solid value. Better confer no brevets than throw them, as at present, like apples of discord among the officers of the army.

If the brevet system is to be retained—and we have seen that it ought—brevet rank in the army should be equivalent to rank by seniority in the corps. A major by brevet should command all captains, and should take rank among the majors on all occasions, according to the date of his brevet; precisely as if he had attained his majority in the ordinary line of progression. The only objection to this plan would arise from the difficulty of locating officers promoted by brevet, from the want of vacancies. But this obstacle can be overcome in two ways. First, by the establishment of a retired list, on which superannuated or disabled officers—always a numerous class—may be placed on reduced pay; and, secondly, by increasing the staff, on the plan proposed in Secretary Davis's last report. The gradual transfer of old officers to the retired list, and the appointment of others to special duties on the staff or elsewhere, would leave ample room for promotions by brevet.

All will not concur in the propriety of these hints. Mr. Secretary Davis says, in his last Report, that "commissions by brevet ought not to be allowed to advance an officer in his own corps over his proper seniors." With all due respect to so distinguished a soldier as Mr. Jefferson Davis, we would ask simply, why not? If a man fairly earns reward and obtains it, why should it not avail him with regard to all persons? Why should zeal and gallantry be useless, in a practical point of view, in the corps in which they are displayed? What right has Captain A, who is careless of glory, to complain if his junior Captain B, by leading a storming-party, earns the brevet rank of major,

and becomes his superior? Is it not inconsistent with the fundamental principle of brevet rank, which Mr. Davis approves so highly, to deny it its proper weight in the regiment to which its recipient belongs, and where, above all other places, honor will be dearest to him? Is it not true, in fine, that the only objection to the universal effect of brevet rank rests on the old military prejudice in favor of seniority—a prejudice that will always command a majority of votes in the army, so long as genius is the exception and mediocrity the rule?

There are many other matters, in the organization of the United States army, which are sadly in need of reform. None, however, it is believed, save these two—the subject of officers' pay and brevet rank—are calculated to impair the efficiency of the corps of officers, and weaken a resource on which the country relies. On these two questions legislation is imperatively required. Without it, the commissioned ranks of the army must either be filled with incompetent persons, or become a nursery for rich men's sons; while, on the other hand, the unsettled condition of the questions relating to brevet rank must deprive the officer of his only substantial stimulus to exertion. Let us hope that the troublous state of the world will awaken Congress, and that the coming session will not pass over without the accomplishment of a reform which the national interests urgently demand.

Editor's Easy Chair.

WHEN we hear the elaborate discussions that arise about our Chair concerning the great war in the East, we often find ourselves asking our young friends whether, after all the enthusiasm with which they enter into the politics of other nations, they have any left for those of their own. There is young Ulysses, who cherishes hopes of a diplomatic career, and who smiles rather sneeringly as he smokes his cigar at Newport, for instance, and hears what Spoon says about the Crimea. When Spoon has done, Ulysses takes out his map, and shows the company that nobody but himself knows much about the matter. He is learned in Malakoff towers. He understands parallels and trenches. He has his sufficient theory of all the events, adverse or prosperous. He shows you conclusively why Canrobert failed here, and Raglan there; and not only why, but how, Pelissier and Simpson will fail, unless they take great care. He has plans for the management of the sick, for the arrangement of barracks, for the conduct of assaults. Ulysses knows distinctly what he would do if he were in command; and when he resumes his cigar, all the Spoons are persuaded that Ulysses is just the man for the crisis, and ought to be sent to the Crimea at once.

Now all this intelligence is worth something. This amount of accurate information, applied to other affairs, would be equally valuable. But is the West less than the East? Shall a man be so wise in another's interests, and know nothing of his own? Have contemporary foreign politics the same charm as foreign history, so that a youth shall pore over the papers as he pores over books? Why is a young American so interested in the allied and Russian movements in the Crimea, and does not concern himself with American movements of which he is a part?

These are the questions which, as a moral Easy