

WEST LONDON.

THIS Battalion has issued a most interesting four page leaflet containing "Battalion Orders and Notes." From this, we are pleased to learn, that two Companies have been resuscitated since the publication of last Battalion Report.

AMONGST the various things notified are the names of new Officers, the dates and particulars of Church Parades, Drill Competition, Battalion Inspection, Gymnastic Competition and Display, Summer Camp, etc. Attention is also drawn to the Queen's Hall Meeting, and next Brigade Council Meeting, to be held in London.

THE following standard of efficiency for Companies is now laid down for the Battalion, and certificates will be issued to Companies fulfilling the Conditions.

- (1) There must be held during the session at least twenty weekly Drills, with an average attendance of 75 per cent. of the full strength of the Company, and not fewer than 20 Boys.
- (2) There must be held, weekly, a Bible-Class or Sunday School Class, with an average attendance of not less than 50 per cent. of the strength of the Company.
- (3) A Company Inspection must be held, and a satisfactory report of the Inspection must be sent in to the Battalion Executive from (a) an Officer of the regular army or auxiliary forces, and (b) a Boys' Brigade Officer appointed by the Executive.
- (4) A satisfactory report of the Company must be received by the Battalion Executive from the head of the Church, Mission, or other organisation with which the Company is connected.
- (5) The Company subscriptions must be paid to both the Brigade and the Battalion funds.
- (6) The Company must enter for the Drill Competition (first round only).

An Old Boy's Testimony to the Value of the Brigade.

THE following letter was recently received by an English Captain from one of his Boys who had removed to another town after serving for a number of years in his Company:—

DEAR CAPTAIN,—I am writing to thank you for your kindness in sending me the Company Card and Gift-Book. I should have written long ago, but I intended coming to the Bible Class last Sunday, as I was at M—, but I was unable to do so, so I am writing now. I am extremely thankful for them, because they bring with them pleasant recollections of times I have spent with the B.B. I never thought I should miss the B.B. as much as I do, and duties I once found irksome, I should be pleased to do now, but it is not to be, so I must be content. To people outside and perhaps to its Officers, the Brigade may seem to do but little good, but I can testify the opposite, and I am but one amongst scores. The teaching I have had from the B.B., both physically and morally, has served me in good stead many a time, and will do, I am sure, through life; and I hope, sir, that the little encouragement I can give will help you to persevere with the B.B. I am getting used to H—, with its new faces and ways, but I can never be, as I was at M—. I intend, however, with God's help, to do the bit of good I can in this new sphere of life. I get news from my old chums, and they tell me the Company is going to play the M— Boys at football, and I hope to be able to be there, as it is not far from here; but I must close, with wishes for a happy and prosperous New-Year, especially with the Brigade, from your

Ex-Corporal Bugler and well-wisher,

FRED STANSFIELD.

B.B. Work in Enfield.

Visit of the Brigade Secretary.

A MONTH before the date fixed for the visit of Mr. Smith to Enfield, the hoardings of the town were covered with placards announcing the meeting, and, as the day drew nearer, other means were taken to acquaint the public with what the Officers considered to be an epoch in the history of their work. Boys in uniform left handbills at every house in the town, and an effective canvass was instituted for the sale of tickets. Monday, 1st February, was the day fixed for the Demonstration, and on the Saturday previous, thousands of handbills were distributed at the railway stations, and throughout that evening a display of lantern pictures in the open-air was given in the market place, advertising the meeting and illustrating Brigade work. This novelty in advertising was, for four hours, the centre of attraction to an ever changing crowd, which at times blocked the roadway.

On Saturday, 30th January, Mr. Smith arrived in Enfield from Plymouth, and proceeded to visit the "Enfield Head Quarters," and inspected the comfortable Reading Rooms, the Printing Press, and other matters of interest. A very short distance away is the Drill Hall of the 1st Enfield, and the Officers and Boys of that Company felt it to be a great honour for the Brigade Secretary to be with them during the whole of their weekly drill.

The lower room at the Head Quarters was, on Sunday, the scene of two interesting meetings. In the morning Mr. Smith spoke at a united Bible Class of the three Enfield Companies, and in the evening was present at a lantern service for "Boys only." To say that the room was crowded would only convey a faint idea of the real state of the case. As a matter of fact 10 Officers and 220 Boys were squeezed in, and there was absolutely no standing room left. Both before, after, and during the service, there was perfect order and quiet, while Captain Toms, 1st Enfield, gave an excellent illustrated address on "Blind Bartimaeus."

As the evening drew in on the Monday, the rain, which had been threatening all day, began to fall, so that the united Parade of the three Companies, in the market place, was held under most depressing conditions, while the roads, being some inches deep in slush, did not tend to make things more comfortable.

However, the prospect of damp clothes did not damp the enthusiasm of the Boys, and a record Parade resulted. The Bycullah Athenaeum was reached in due course, and the 3rd Enfield band, before the meeting began, played some selections. A very influential platform had been secured, the speakers being two members of Parliament (from opposite sides—they had paired for the evening), besides Mr. Smith and the assistant Brigade Secretary, Mr. Harding. There was a large attendance, and the audience seemed thoroughly to appreciate the eloquence of the speakers and the displays by the Boys. These consisted of Sword Drill by the 3rd Enfield, Bayonet Exercises by the 1st Enfield, Company Drill and Ambulance Work by the 2nd Enfield.

After the departure of the audience, the Boys, who were accommodated on the platform, were called to "Attention," and

the Sergeant-Major and two Colour-Sergeants advanced, and, on behalf of the Officers, N.-C. Os and Boys, presented Major Smith with a massive oak and brass inkstand in memory of his first visit to Enfield, and as a token of the respect in which he is held. Captain Toms then called for three cheers for Major Smith, who, after replying, called upon the Boys to give three cheers for their Officers.

So ended the Brigade Secretary's visit, which will undoubtedly give an immense fillip to B.B. work in Enfield. The Demonstration also proved a thorough financial success.

Conversazione of the South London Battalion.

TUESDAY, 2nd February, was the date fixed for the Annual Conversazione of the South London Battalion—this being rather more than two months earlier than usual. Although some Officers looked forward somewhat doubtfully to what effect this would have on the efficiency of Squads taking part in the programme, the result proved that all fears were groundless.

In spite of the inclemency of the weather, the attendance fully equalled previous gatherings. Even the weather, bad as it was, was not enough to keep friends of the B.B. away when the Brigade Secretary himself was to speak.

The spacious hall, the Head-Quarters of the 42nd London Company at Lambeth, was tastefully decorated with Chinese lanterns, ferns, etc., and formed a pleasant contrast to the fog and rain outside. Punctually at 8 o'clock the Battalion President (Captain W. J. Boorer) took the chair, and, after hymn and prayer, delivered his opening address, which dealt principally with the effect of the B.B. on its individual members.

The Chairman's address was followed by a display of Indian clubs by a Squad of the 24th London Company from Deptford, the excellence of which was much appreciated by the audience. After the 24th, came the 74th whose performance of Company drill was applauded as it deserved. Next appeared a smart Squad of the 42nd who gave a creditable exhibition of ambulance work, and certainly the expeditious way in which the Boys bandaged up their unfortunate comrade, suffering from a broken leg, a broken arm, and a broken head, spoke volumes for the excellent training received.

Whether it was done for the benefit of the ladies, whose nerves had suffered during the surgical operations, or not, is not known, but the next item on the programme was "Refreshments," which also went down very well with the audience.

Following food for the body came food for the mind in the shape of Major Smith's address—certainly the event of the evening. There is not space to repeat what he said in his speech, but by the applause and the cheering which followed may be judged the appreciation, in South London, of the founder of the B.B.

It is a difficult thing to obtain new and original items in B.B. displays, but we believe this was done by the 54th London Company in their "Incidents of a Route March." The Company entered the arena, preceded by two mounted cyclists. They had evidently had a long and exhausting march, to judge by the ravenous way in which, after they had piled arms and sat down, they devoured the rations which were quickly served

round. Their appetites having been satisfied—somewhat easily—an impromptu "Sing Song" was started which went on, until interrupted by the "Fall-in" in the middle of one of the choruses—"Quick March," and away went the 54th, to be followed by a Squad of the 82nd who performed their dumb-bell exercises in an excellent manner.

The 42nd next appeared to show what they had learnt in camp about a Sentry's duties. Guard was mounted evidently at the right moment, for no sooner were the sentries at their posts than night set in, the sun considerably setting very rapidly. As soon as the light grew dim, a stealthy figure was seen attempting to steal unobserved through the lines apparently with the intention of robbing the guard tent. However a gallant sentry challenged him. The guard turned out and the marauder was promptly made a prisoner. The sun rose once more. The Reveille sounded, and the guard marched off amid well-earned applause.

The National Anthem and more cheers for the Brigade Secretary brought to a close a programme that appeared to give complete satisfaction to all present.

Gallant Conduct of a Brigade Boy.

THE following letter has just been received by the Officer in charge of the 1st Watlingbury Company, in the absence of the Captain, (Alderman and Lieut.-Colonel H. D. Davies, M.P.), now on a voyage to Ceylon.

PLYMOUTH, 7th February, 1897.

"DEAR — The news you have heard of C. Field having attempted (I regret to say unsuccessfully) to save another Boy's life is quite correct.

"At about 8.30 P.M. last Monday, a Boy named Lowring slipped and fell off our port gangway stage into the water. The night was very dark, with drizzling rain and a strong ebb-tide running.

"Boy Field, who was commencing to turn into his hammock at the time, promptly seized the nearest life-buoy, ran down the ladder, and bearing a cry for help from astern, put the life-buoy round him and jumped into the water. He struck out towards the spot from which he heard the cry, but could see no sign of the Boy, and he was himself drifted for some distance astern of the ship, and picked up by one of our cutters in an exhausted condition.

"I have brought his plucky conduct to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief, and have applied to the Royal Humane Society for the bestowal of their medal or testimonial, as they think fit, and have little doubt that they will reward him with one or the other.

"I congratulate the Watlingbury Company of The Boys' Brigade on having supplied so plucky a lad to the Navy.

"Please remember me to Captain Login when you write, and,

"Believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"GEORGE F. S. KNOWLING,

(Commander, H.M.S. 'Impregnable,' Devonport.)"

Charles Field is a lad of seventeen. He belongs to the parish of Teston, near Watlingbury. He was for over four years a member of the 1st Watlingbury Company, in which he held the rank of Corporal, and was noted for his steadiness and good conduct. He entered the Royal Navy in April, 1896, with excellent certificates, and has been in H.M.S. *Impregnable* ever since. His first instructor in swimming was Lieutenant J. J. Cable of the Watlingbury Company, who taught him in the river Medway, which runs past Watlingbury and Teston.