

try—as has been the case in the history of our own glorious republic—but were compelled to serve under despotisms which were more exacting than any right minded individual or any government could to-day conceive of.

Following this comes the feudal system. This also belongs to the old order of things, and although somewhat of an improvement over the former state of affairs, yet it was nothing more than a system of serfdom. The great objection to it was that it hindered the growth of free nations and all free institutions by dividing up countries into innumerable petty lordships and despotisms. The right of free thought and free action in matters pertaining to the common weal was denied the vassals and serfs, by their overbearing lords and masters, and no matter how unjust and unrighteous the cause; no matter what poverty and distress it brought upon themselves and their families they were compelled to uphold the cause of a tyrannical and unjust master.

This leads us up to the more modern institution of standing armies, where a nation holds in readiness for an emergency a body of well trained and disciplined troops, who, instead of being compelled to serve for the advancement of a few selfish lords do so for the upholding of what to them is dearer than life, their country, and while uniting themselves thus with the army are paid for their services.

Lastly we come to the division which includes the entire able bodied male population of a country as was the case in our late civil war.

We thus see that there has been a steady though, slow progress, in the line of the organization of armies from the very lowest state which could possibly exist till now it has reached a standard which time only can determine whether it can be improved upon.

The military history of the United States is as strange as the rise and rapid growth of the nation. Threatened by no powerful or war-like neighbors it is not necessary that it should support a large standing army; but when an occasion arises

which requires the services of a greater number of defenders, how eager are the people to respond to the call.

What greater valor, discipline, or self sacrifice could possibly be exhibited on any occasion than was shown by our noble and honored defenders of liberty in the late war?

No soldier ever fought in a nobler cause than that for which our beloved fathers sacrificed themselves. We, to-day, as free American citizens should feel proud that we are the sons and daughters of those, who in their country's emergency, so nobly rendered their services. So much the more should this be the case when we consider the great sacrifice it required on their part.

The tender ties of home and kindred and all that man holds most dear that had to be left behind perhaps never to be enjoyed again in this life. How many sacrificed a life of prosperity and happiness, enlisting in the service at a time when their education and mental development was most important, thus being deprived of this great advantage and rendering their future life one of toil and privation, whereas, on the other hand, it might have been one of comparative ease and luxury.

The survivors of this great struggle have united themselves into an organization truly and beautifully called The Grand Army of the Republic. This organization as the name implies is composed entirely of members who served in the war of the rebellion. The originator of this great scheme was General Stephenson, of Illinois, who made the first draft, of the ritual, in the year 1866. Its membership has grown steadily, until to-day it has on its rolls over four hundred thousand veterans.

The organization is divided into departments, each state constituting a department, and these are sub divided into smaller divisions called posts, each post taking its name from some one of its members who distinguished himself by some act