COLONEL LAIDLEY'S REPLY TO THE CHARGE OF INFRINGEMENT OF COLONEL WINGATE'S COPYRIGHT

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T. T. S. LAIDLEY

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Theodore Tiadley Laidley

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The Literary World

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ON the twenty-eighth of August last I received a letter from Messrs. Lippincott & Co., publishers of my book on rifle firing, stating that they had received a letter from Col. Wingate in which he claimed that my book infringed his copyright, and gave formal notice that he should take steps to suppress its publication. I replied at once that if I had been asked whether my book infringed Col. Wingate's copyright, I should have said that it did not. If I had taken from his book, page after page, as he had done in his manual from the Ordnance Manual, which is copyrighted, I should have thought I had infringed; that I knew there were passages in my book which were very similar to corresponding ones in his, for we both took them from the same source; that if Col. Wingate would point out to me the passages which he claimed violated his rights I would have the matter investigated by competent authority, and if I found the claim a valid one I would stand ready to make such amends as justice and equity demanded. About three weeks from this time I received through Messrs. Lippincott, in answer to this request, a long printed list of such passages. A few days thereafter I learned from the newspapers that Col. Wingate had published a pamphlet addressed to the public. He did not, as is customary in such cases, send me

a copy of his attack, it was not to be found on sale, and it was not till October 14, that I succeeded in obtaining a copy of it. In this pamphlet he asserts that my book was in two-thirds made up from extracts taken bodily from his. It also contained the list of references which he had sent to me.

It is the object of this paper to show that the charges made in this pamphlet of Col. Wingate's are utterly without foundation in fact. In addition, there have appeared in various newspapers statements which are equally without foundation, some of which will receive attention. In controverting these charges it is necessary to give a brief account of the manner in which my book was prepared, and to mention certain facts with which, under other circumstances, I should not trouble the public.

On September 17, 1877, I received an order from the Chief of Ordnance to prepare a complete system of rifle practice for the army. I had at this time only a few books relating to the subject, among which were the "Hand-book for Hythe" and "Heth's Target Practice," from which Wingate has copied so freely. I immediately went to work to collect others, and gathered together such as I could find—"Musketry Instruction in England," and corresponding works from France, Switzerland and Germany; a translation into French of an Italian paper; the fifth edition of Col. Wingate's Manual, published in 1875, (the sixth edition was not seen by me until September 29, 1879,) a few pamphlets, and some extracts from newspapers relating to the subject.

Until I was sixteen years of age I lived in a part of the country where game was abundant, and from my early boyhood was familiar with the use of fire-arms, my father and grandfather both being good rifle-shots. During my term of service in the army I have taken an interest in this subject, and was a member of one Board, and president of another, which were appointed to select the best breech-loading carbine and rifle for the Service. I was for several years

inspector of gunpowder, and visited all the powder mills in this country, and many in Europe. During my tour of duty in command of the Springfield Armory the subject of rifles and cartridges was my constant study. I made extensive experiments with different rifles, and constructed a military rifle which did more accurate shooting than any other of its kind of which I have any knowledge until within the last year. I have made several inventions in rifles, cartridges and powder, some of which I have disposed of for fair compensation, reserving to the Government the right to use them if they saw fit. In 1873, I visited Wimbledon during the firing season, and inspected the ranges, targets, marker's shelters, etc., and took notes of the same. I also visited the Firing School at Spandau, and made a similar inspection of it. I have visited the rifle range at Walnut Hill, when firing was going on, and examined particularly the marker's shelters, targets and general arrangements of the range. There is, at this arsenal, a short range and targets for rifle-firing, at which one club practices regularly during the season. From the above it will be seen how much truth there is in Col. Wingate's assertion, "that Col. Laidley probably never saw a rifle-range." The fact that I was selected by the Chief of Ordnance for the performance of this work would seem to indicate that I was at least, in his estimation, not without a certain fitness for it.

In preparing my book I consulted all such works as were accessible, including Wingate's, of which mention was made in the Preface, and selected what seemed to me best. There are considerable portions of Wingate's Manual, said to have been copied by me, which I have never read, and never expect to read, for the reason that a glance showed me there was nothing in them that I wanted, or which could not be found more complete in other works. The whole of my book, with the exception of certain parts, which were copied from a previous work written by me, the "Ordnance Manual," and the "Regulations of the National Rifle Association," were