

MILITARISM

THE word "militarism" is incessantly used at present; and many people seem to think that the word is an argument. Do we spend six millions a year on the militia when a former government spent only one? It is militarism. Do we propose to aid in the naval defence of the Empire? It is militarism. Does Great Britain propose to spend several additional millions on her navy? Militarism. Does some one argue for universal training? Militarism again. Let it be proposed to teach little boys to march, and let it be proposed to rank the whole manhood of a nation in armed camps: the same word is used. I need hardly urge in the UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE that the use of the one word in so many connexions is hardly intelligent. Neither need I press the point that reiterating a word is not argument. But the habit of lumping everything relating to arms in the one condemnation is so inveterate, and I believe so dangerous to the public welfare of Canada, that I am emboldened to discuss the subject with some deliberation.

First, a necessary word on the fact which underlies the subject. War is an existing fact in the world; our whole discussion must be coloured by our attitude to it. We are constantly assured that war is the worst evil which afflicts the world; that war is the worst thing which can befall a nation; and when the preachers of this doctrine wish to be especially picturesque, they quote General Sherman's declaration, that "War is hell." Having had a glimpse of war, I have a deep sense of its seriousness, and a strong desire to see my country preserved from it. But I like to look at these general statements steadily and seriously. I wish to put two or three considerations.

I take first almost any district of Western Africa within the sphere of British activity. Prior to the advent of the