

The Army Service Corps are in want of a tune to march past to. It has been suggested that "Wait for the waggon and we'll take a ride" would be a suitable one. Failing this, "Marcellus," in the Worcestershire Echo, proposes "If you'll only put your shoulder to the wheel," as Tommy Atkins might be called upon to do this owing to the enviable (!) notoriety of our transport service.

The following letter will be read with as much interest by our Canadian Militia officers as though it were written on their behalf. We will be glad to hear comment on the subject:—

The Titles of Militia Officers.

SIR,—I think the time has come when some official decision should be given as to whether militia officers are entitled to adopt and use the titles which Her Majesty has been pleased to confer upon them, by their commissions, as various opinions are held on the subject. Some line officers appear to think that they only are permitted to use titles, and consequently it is not improbable that a feeling which should not exist between the different branches of the land forces is engendered. Adjutants of some militia battalions will not acknowledge the right of their brother officers to be designed as colonels, majors or captains, except officially when out training; and the latter, who give their services loyally, and often at considerable personal inconvenience and pecuniary loss, are placed in a most unpleasant position with the general public. This may account in a measure for the vacancies in various regiments not being filled up. Perhaps you will kindly lend your valuable aid in opening up this subject, which is one concerning a large body of officers who, if tried, would, perhaps, be found as good soldiers as those of the line battalions.

I think the authorities should give a clear decision on this point, which, if in favour of the Constitutional force, should be willingly and ungrudgingly accepted by the regulars. The names of militia officers retiring from the service appear in almost every Gazette, followed by announcement that they are allowed to "retain" their rank and wear the uniform of their regiments on retirement. If the view taken by line officers be correct, what an utter absurdity such a permission is.—Yours truly,

JUSTITIA.

In our last issue an absurd typographical error made us say that with Major Hall's retirement the militia was losing "almost its most active supporter" instead of almost its only active supporter in the Ministry.

THE MILITARY GAZETTE wants a newsy letter twice a month from a regular correspondent. Apply for particulars to the Editor CAN. MIL. GAZ.

Outing for November should win many new friends for this popular magazine. It is an enlarged number, and contains a wealth of wholesome reading, embellished with many fine illustrations. Notable features are: "Couleur de Rose," by Grace Ellery Channing, a masterly pen-picture filled with the atmosphere of Sunny Italy; "The Ainos of Northern Japan," by Henry T. Finck; "A Woman in the Mackenzie Delta," by Elizabeth Taylor; "Deer and Deer Shooting," by Ed. W. Sandys; "Aquatic Sports in Australia," by George E. Boxall; "Football of '94," by Walter Camp, of Yale, and a second paper upon the same subject, by Lorán F. Deland, of Harvard.

An Aluminum Torpedo Boat.

The Naval and Military Gazette, Oct. 4th.

The successful result of one of the most important and novel experiments in marine engineering was made public on Saturday afternoon. For some time past Messrs. Yarrow, the well-known torpedo boat builders and engineers of Poplar, have had in hand, at the order of the Ministry of Marine of Paris, the building of a torpedo-boat in aluminum, and this vessel, having passed her official trials with flying colours, was on Saturday on "private view" to a number of guests specially invited by Mr. Yarrow. The little vessel is designed as a "second class" torpedo boat, to be carried on the deck of large battleships, and used therefrom, when required, by being lowered over the side from the ship, to act for short spells in the immediate neighborhood as a scout, or to attack other ships in the confusion of battle under cover of the smoke of the guns. For a craft of this sort lightness of weight is naturally of the first importance. Not only does reduced displacement mean increased speed, but also, considering that the vessel has to be lowered out and lifted in by means of the ordinary tackle available at sea on board a battleship, it is indispensable that all weights should be reduced to a minimum. These torpedo-boats, furthermore, are placed on board ship high up on the upper-deck, where every increase or reduction of top weight materially affects the stability of the ship in which they are carried. The French Admiralty recently introduced such second-class torpedo-boats in their navy (although for some time past craft of the type have been used by us), and invited tenders for the supply of a number of them, making a combination of good sea-going qualities, lightness, and the highest feasible speed the criterion. Messrs. Yarrow's tender, which proposed aluminum as the material for the new craft, was accepted as the type for the whole class, with, as has been proved in the case of the first boat completed, the following results:—The new boat weighs 9½ tons, against the 11½ tons which is the weight of a steel-built boat of similar dimensions used in the British Navy, and its lighter weight has further enabled the new French boat to make an official run (under the eyes of a French Naval Commission) of 20½ knots, against the 17 knots which, up to the present, is the maximum speed our own best second-class torpedo-boats have attained. The comparative expense, on the other hand, is considerably greater in the case of the aluminum boats, the aluminum alone used in building the little French boat (a vessel 60 ft. long by 9 ft. 6 in. broad) itself costing £1,000 extra. On Saturday the French boat made a run from Greenwich to as far as off Crossness, travelling for part of the way at nearly top speed, but without the least vibration, a novel experience to all on board who had been the victims of the vibratory tendencies of all steel-built vessels. Something of this was, of course, due to the peculiar methods adopted by the builders for accurately balancing the engines; but, as Mr. Yarrow himself was the first to point out, the absence of vibration was in no small degree due to the natural qualities and "inertness" of the aluminum used for the making of the hull itself. The whole vessel is of aluminum (alloyed with 6 per cent. of copper) throughout—the framing, plating both of the sides and deck, funnel, fittings, and all portions of the machinery where it was at all permissible to use aluminum. The little vessel, it should be added, has boilers of the straight water tube type on Mr. Yarrow's well-known design, which are capable of raising steam

within five and twenty minutes of the fires being first lighted, while the engines are on the triple expansion system, and are capable of making, at full speed, from 580 to 600 revolutions per minute.

An Important Military Discovery.

How to ensure secrecy in the transmission of messages in time of war has at all times in the world's history exercised the ingenuity of the subtlest brains. Military history is full of the many curious devices which have been adopted to pass messages through the enemy's lines; but success in such a venture not only depends on the concealment being so perfect as to defy the most rigorous search, but on the *sang froid* of the bearer being so complete as to enable him to act the part he has assumed to nature. The most consummate actor may well be liable to falter at a critical moment when he has reason to fear that his secret may be wrested from him by any chance incident. As an instance a perfect *sang froid* may be cited the case of a French officer who passed through the German lines from Metz in the disguise of a peasant. The most rigid search having failed to discover the least sign of any incriminating document, and no suspicion being entertained as to his real character, he was allowed to proceed. In this case the message was done up as a cigarette, placed in the centre of an ordinary packet of cigarettes. As the officer was being searched one of the German soldiers, after helping himself from the packet passed it round to the others, who were fortunately polite enough to return the half-emptied packet to its owner with the precious cigarette inside. It is easy to imagine how the slightest imprudence on the actor's part would have precipitated a catastrophe, and how fervently he must have wished that the incriminating message could be spirited away during those few moments of suspense. In future, however, the perils of any such untoward incident as the discovery of a secret message compromising the safety of the bearer can be dismissed as an effete bogey of the past, and the veriest amateur actor, although he may be a walking portfolio of priceless value, will find no greater difficulty in circulating freely in territory occupied by the enemy than that entailed upon him by consistently acting up to his part.

The new discovery, which is to ensure the secrecy of despatches, consists in the application in a novel manner of invisible ink. Instead of the message being written on paper, it is to be written on the human skin. A general wishing to communicate with another officer will simply cause the message to be traced with a nail or a pointed stick, dipped in a special solution, on the epidermis of his messenger, who, on arrival at his destination, will be washed over with another solution, and, presto! the written message will become visible; yet another bath, and the message will disappear for ever. This valuable discovery, it is said, has been submitted to the French Minister of War by a Marseilles chemist. The solutions with which this wonderful result is obtained are naturally known only to the inventor; but, as he hails from Marseilles, it is probable most of his scientific researches have been directed to efforts to deal with the noisome odours of that not too sweetly scented port. If the secret, therefore, continues to be jealously guarded, Frenchmen suspected of being spies will run the danger, when caught, of being subjected to a preliminary course of disinfectants prior to being let go—or hanged.—*United Service Gazette.*