

THE CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

COMMENT AND CRITICISM.

Col. Irwin's plain speaking.
The popular estimate of D.C. ammunition.
Caution in handling weapons.
Military titles at all times.
Mounted infantry training in England.
No general orders.
Repeating rifles in Europe.

PERSONALS.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

CANADA AS A REMOUNT STATION.

THE ROYAL MILITARY TOURNAMENT.

SELECTED.

Common sense on parade, or drill without stays.—*Colburn's Magazine.*

THE FIELD BATTERIES' SCORES.

MESS ROOM YARNS.

THE TARGET.

REGIMENTAL NOTES.

OUR TRADING COLUMN.

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Comment and Criticism.

COL. IRWIN has been inspecting a number of the artillery corps, and has not hesitated to point out the weaknesses of the several batteries. He told the Winnipeg men that their appointments were dirty. Next we hear of him in Charlottetown reproving the brigade there for falling off in their small arms drill, and finally he chides the New Brunswick brigade for insufficient acquaintance with gun drill. Now all this is in direct contravention of the traditions of the militia. Every corps inspected ought to be told they were the finest body of soldiers in the Dominion of Canada, and perfect in all their duties and equipments. But we wish all our inspectors had, like Colonel Irwin, the courage of their convictions, and would, even while making allowances for the few opportunities afforded for training, point out with a kindly feeling the most prominent weak spots brought out by their inspections; for with that course alone can we ever expect to secure some permanent improvement.

STRAWS show which way the wind blows. At the forty-third battalion's prize meeting this month both Dominion and English-made Snider ammunition were offered for sale, the former at 17 cents and the latter at 20 cents per package, yet in spite of the difference in price nearly three thousand rounds of English ammunition were sold, and *only thirty* rounds of Canadian. Could anything indicate more emphatically the convictions of Ottawa marksmen as to the relative merits of the two? and the English cartridges were twelve years old, too.

THERE is a certain amount of satisfaction felt in the average human breast when the didn't-know-it-was-loaded fool manages to kill himself, instead of his sister or his friend. The other day a tradesman undertook to weigh out gunpowder while smoking a cigar. We imagine we can see him bringing in the canister with an air of being superior to the ordinary precautions of powder retailers, with his hat nicely balanced on one side of his head and the cigar knowingly cocked up out of the opposite corner of his mouth. Unfortunately the cigar fell into the powder and three men and a shop were destroyed. We were reminded of this incident by Mr. Bliss's exhortations to riflemen to be careful how they handle their arms. In his little work on wing shooting he says: "The first thing I would impress on your mind in taking care of a gun is to always handle it as though it was loaded. That is the *only* safe rule to follow, and if any of my readers have ever been so foolhardy as to point a gun at any one in fun I hope it will be my good fortune never to meet them, for I should hold them in utter contempt and not be slow to express it. The longer I handle a gun the more afraid I get of it, and the more disposed I am to hunt alone, or with only one or two others. This is not a temperance essay, but I will say right here that I would not under any circumstances go out in the field with a man who got drunk. If a man thinks he has lived long enough, let him "shuffle off decently and in order," but for Heaven's sake don't let him be killed by some fool that thinks he is a sportsman and goes out so drunk that he can't tell his friend from a jack-snipe."

THE question of the right of officers belonging to the auxiliary forces to use their military rank out of uniform has been brought up by the *London Standard* and by the *Admiralty and Horse Guards Gazette*, the latter taking the ground that as the commissions are conferred by the Queen, the subject *must* use, and the public acknowledge, the rank. So far as we are concerned in Canada, we think it would be injudicious, to say the least, to insist on any such practice. While it may be perfectly true that an officer may claim his rank at any time, it would too greatly cheapen the value of that rank to hawk it about through one's civilian avocation, and by universal consent the difficulty seems to have settled itself naturally; those who have permanent military appointments or are prominently connected with the militia usually retain their military titles permanently, whilst others usually only assume theirs when on service.