

The Rifle.

THE MILITARY LEAGUE.

The secretary of the Canadian Military Rifle League has received from Major Peters, of C Battery, R.C.A., an interesting letter in reply to his invitation to the battery to take part. "I should like very much to enter a team," he says, "but being armed as we are with the short Snider the ranges make it impossible for us to enter. As you are aware, at 600 yards the short Snider is useless. It is essential that the men should use only the rifle with which they are armed. If your object is to encourage young shots I should suggest 200, 300 and 400 yards, for hundreds of young men will enter and possibly make a good score for the shorter ranges who will not think of attempting the longer ranges. Besides, don't you think it is a pity that 300 yards, the most useful for actual service, should be neglected. The 500 and 600 ranges are, of course, the favourite distances for the older shots, and it seems impossible to get up a match without these ranges. But rifle shooting will never be as popular as it should, till some one cuts down the distances to those most useful on service. Many shots who are disgusted and discouraged by distance will readily compete when the range is reduced."

Regimental and Other News.

A happy compliment was paid to Lt.-Col. the Hon. J. M. Gibson as the midnight bells of Hamilton tolled out the old year. The officers and men of "D" company, 13th battalion, marched up to his residence and after firing a *feu de joie*, gave him three hearty cheers. The gallant Colonel replied feelingly, and invited the stormers to come in. This, however, they would not do, owing to the lateness of the hour, but marched back to the armoury.

The New Year receptions were well attended by Montreal military men. In the absence of Lt.-Col. Henshaw, Major Radiger and other officers of the Victoria Rifles received numerous callers throughout the day. The Sixty-fifth had their quarters beautifully decorated. Lt.-Col. Dugas, assisted by Major Prevost, Major Ethier and other officers received a large number of callers. Deputations were sent to all the English regiments and vice versa. Lt.-Col. Caverhill, assisted by Mr. Ewan McLennan, received at the Royal Scots quarters. There was a continued flow of visitors including many of the officers of other city regiments. Sergt. Clarke with his pipers made things lively for a time. The Sixth Fusiliers made merry in the armoury. A number of military callers were received and congratulations exchanged. Lt.-Col. Massey, assisted by Lt.-Col. Lyman, Lt.-Col. Linton and Lt.-Col. Gardiner, did the honors.

The 53rd Battalion, of Sherbrooke, Que., have issued a neat and attractive holiday card bearing the regimental crest, and the words, "We wish our comrades the compliments of the season." Thanks, same to you.

The 21st Fusiliers.

Corp. Hunt, of No. 1 Co., was instantly killed at Walkerville by a G. T. R. engine on Thursday, December 19th, and buried with military honours at Windsor on the following Sabbath. The members of Nos. 1 and 5 Companies, staff and band attended almost en masse. The service was conducted by the chaplain of the regiment, the Rev. Mr. Gray, and held in the Presbyterian Church. Corp. Hunt, whose untimely death is greatly regretted by all, was a fine soldier, an excellent rifle shot and a good citizen.

Pte. Joseph Ley, of No. 2 Co., Leamington, died suddenly of heart disease on Christmas Day, and was buried with military honours on Thursday, the 26th December. No. 2 Co. turned out very strong, under the command of Lieut. Alderton. Col. Wilkinson was present in uniform. The deceased was a brother of Capt. Ley, and served continuously in No. 2 Co. for 27 years. He served with his company on the frontier during the Fenian raids of 1866 and 1870. He was a useful, genial and kind-hearted soldier, and a good citizen, and will be greatly missed by all.

No doubt the regiment will enter the "Rifle League" with at least one team.

Col. Sergt. Laing, Corp. McAnnany, of No. 3 Co., Corp. Kettles, No. 2 Co., and Corp. Lodge and Pte. Dobson, of No. 1 Co., join D School of Infantry at London, for a short course of instruction, on the 1st January. Others of the regiment were excluded from want of room at the school.

FUSILIER.

Fancy and Trick Rifle Shooting.

(Shooting and Fishing.)

Doubtless many who have witnessed exhibitions of fancy rifle shooting, at both stage and circus performances, will be surprised to learn that the almost incredible shots they have so often witnessed, and by the hour looked upon as marvellous tests of skill with the rifle, are nothing but a mere sham—tricks which, by their ingenuity of invention, are likely to deceive not only the few, but the many, novice and expert riflemen among them. The public see the shots apparently made as announced, and takes it for granted that the feats, although remarkable, are really accomplished. To show they are not, and the manner in which many of the shots are made, and the devices resorted to to make them, the writer gives the result of a talk with a once noted rifle expert, who, for five successive years, gulled the public of almost every city in the United States with his wonderful skill.

The audience, said he, sees the shots apparently made as announced, and takes it for granted the feats, though remarkable, to say the least, are really done. Sometimes some smart Alec in the audience gets an idea this or that shot is not just as legitimate as they are announced, but when he wishes to convince himself and investigate, the performer guys him into submission. The public expect impossibilities, and a stage shooter that cannot gratify it with a rifle can expect no engagements. He did not wish to infer that all stage shooters resorted to trickery in performing their acts, but those that do not are few, and of the many "champions" now gaining a livelihood with the rifle, filling stage and circus dates, only three or four are giving a strictly legitimate performance. Dr. Wm. F. Carver to-day stands preëminent as the finest fancy rifle shot in the world, but even he resorts to trickery to create the requisite amount of sensation the American people are always looking for, and also to avoid infringing on the city ordinances governing the shooting of rifle bullets in all large cities. Shooting glass balls thrown up by an assistant on foot, while the shooter rides a broncho at full gallop, and apparently breaks them with a .45 calibre bullet, shot from a repeating rifle, is a farce. In place of a solid ball the .45-calibre shell is loaded with ½ oz. of No. 9 shot, which, when it attains the distance the ball is when thrown has a spread of, at the very least, two feet. The once famous Austin brothers, though they had some rather unsolvable fancy rifle tricks in their list of stage shooting, were considered square and fair, as were also Butler and Bahman, the former now the lucky half of Miss Annie Oakley. As a team, Butler and Bahman never had their equal. They were always concocting and scheming new acts together, their last being shooting peanuts off one another's bare heads, firing simultaneously. This was abruptly ended one night by Butler feeling a peculiar sensation in his forehead immediately after his partner had fired, the .22 calibre bullet from his rifle having struck him a little above the centre of the forehead, glanced and circled under the scalp, almost back to where his collar button was.

The performances of rifle bullets are equally as dangerous by their unreliability and queerness of flight as they are accurate, and the phrase "as straight as though shot from a rifle," is, to be funny, not exactly straight. Only the most expert riflemen alone know the real danger attending rifle shooting. Never venture to stand within 100 yards of where the bullet is sure to strike, either side or back of where any rifle shooting target has been placed. The things that will change a rifle bullet's flight from one inch to one mile are as innumerable as they are curious and unaccountable. To cite Bret Harte, who relates in one of his novels of two gamblers getting into a dispute over a game of billiards, both simultaneously standing on opposite sides of the table, whipping out their revolvers and firing, and the bullets meeting half way between the two and falling as one welded together, on the billiard table! That may be fiction, but truth and reality will outdo that, as many soldiers who have seen active service will verify.

As regards certain fancy stage rifle shooting which, by the way, at its best now does not pay, the retired expert, after requesting the writer to classify by number the different shots, explained them by starting off with:—

Shot No. 1. A composition ball, made small for the purpose, is hung upon a nail fixed into a round iron plate target. The ball is easily broken by shooting anywhere within two inches about it by the bullet, at that short range, splattering to pieces upon hitting the iron plate. Surrounding the plate the bullet strikes is generally placed a projecting 1½ inch iron plate to confine the splattering.

Shot No. 2. Crackers of two inches in diameter, are used for targets, and can be readily broken by hitting anywhere within four inches of them, using the same plate as used for shot No. 1.

Shot No. 3. Another way of breaking crackers, without hitting them, is by using a board 12 x 2 inches for a target, and having a small wire passing through the board with a small hole in it at the end where the cracker is placed. The cracker is then stuck on the wire and a