

A MILITARY TOURNAMENT.

A PROPOSITION that has been going the rounds of military men is to have competitions between the various regimental districts in the matter of gymnastics. A tournament is shortly to be held in Toronto, at which it is to be hoped that teams from the various districts will be represented. Is it not possible to have a grand military tournament, something after the lines of the military tournament held in London? We have got our "Bisley." Why not then have our military tournament? A few weeks ago one of the leading military papers in the Old Country stated that representatives from the national forces would receive a hearty welcome to the military tournament. A team for this could be just as well picked as the twenty for Bisley are. Let the teams from the various battalions compete in a grand final, and the team winning the primer position be the one sent to represent Canada. If this were taken up it would give an impetus to such work in the force. Each and all would have the same chance, and there is no reason why a blue ribbon should not follow such a team across the "Pond." The material is here and requires only the gathering of it together to do so.

STRENGTH OF THE BRITISH ARMY.

TOMMY ATKINS in the British army is getting his wants well looked after. The old days are passing away; so much so that the veteran is wont to look with no favorable eye on the new state of things, and with his proverbial growl wonders if such a state of things is good for the army. That matters have taken a decided turn for the better is clearly shown in the reports just issued for 1895. The physical development of the recruit is to be still further looked after, according to the new syllabus which has just been approved of. A young man's fitness for the ranks is not to be judged by the number of days' drill he puts in, but must depend upon how he comes out of the examination of a board of officers, who will report whether he is likely to be a fit subject for Her Majesty's army or whether he be discharged as not being likely to become an efficient soldier. While in the depot recruits will have to do twenty hours' work a week, ten of which are to be devoted to gymnastic and physical exercise; of the remaining ten

hours, on his completion of seven weeks' work, he will commence a two hours march per day without valises, to be gradually extended to three or more in full marching order.

During the past year there has been no difficulty in securing recruits to keep up the army to the strength authorized by Parliament. This, too, with a decrease from previous years of the number who enlisted under standard. In the last five years the figures have fallen from 32.9 per cent. in 1891 to 19.9 per cent. in 1895. It is gratifying also to note that of the 1,370 who joined during the first six months of 1895, when re-measured on January 1, 1896, no less than 923 were found to have reached the full standard. The loss from desertion has been much less than in any previous year since the establishment of the short service, although there are 35,000 men more.

To the improvements in messing, and the comfort of the men being better looked after in barracks, are due in a great measure the falling off in misdemeanor.

The militia force also shows up well, notwithstanding the fact that during 1895 there was a decrease in the number enrolled. The number present at the annual training shows a marked improvement, and the number thus available for service is gradually increasing. This is probably due to the fact that payment of the bounty is made until the man actually comes up for his annual training instead of, as formerly, paying it when he re-engaged. The number of desertions from the effective strength has fallen from 12.9 per cent. in 1893 to 7.1 per cent. in 1895.

The Militia Reserve, which is comprised exclusively of enlisted militiamen, is a very popular force. Applications to enlist have not infrequently to be refused, as the establishments in many instances are complete. The reserve militia men receive a bounty of \$5, payable at the termination of each annual training. For this they make a still further engagement, which renders them liable to be called out for permanent military service either at home or abroad in case of "imminent national danger or of great emergency."

With the volunteers matters are very satisfactory. The only difficulty experienced in that force is the present dearth of officers. To meet this an additional sum has been taken out in order to assist officers in providing an outfit. A special sum has also been provided for grants to officers attending schools of instruction.

There were 400 more returned efficient than for the previous year, although there was a slight falling off in the numbers attending inspection, the total for 1895 being 198,673, as against 200,592 for 1894.

Altogether the British army is in a prosperous and healthy condition. The better looking after of the men, so that their position may be raised, will in a great measure do away with the prejudice that was often evinced by a probable recruit that while still hankering after the field where glory and renown were won, a soldier's life was bound by too hard an iron rule.

MEDICAL REQUISITES FOR CAMPS OF INSTRUCTION.

IN the past it has been held by those in authority that it was quite sufficient that the soldier attending a camp of instruction should have a pair of boots, an ill-fitting uniform, a threadbare blanket—he would be lucky if he were the sole occupier of it—and a shooting iron of some description. Times are changing and public opinion is supporting the Government in the large proposed appropriation for new armament. The idea is now beginning to invade the sanctity of the official mind, causing a certain unrest, a disturbance of old and rusty notions that perhaps the medical service is not what it should be, that possibly the stores of medical comforts and appliances and even requisites are not of the latest pattern or are entirely wanting. What an official nuisance these doctors are! Why, hey are actually getting tired of supplying the camps with medicines and appliances free of charge! Something must be done to put down such rank mutiny. Why not cut off their cocked hats and feathers and uniforms! Why have any medical officers; they could be hired locally at a camp like the other beasts of burden. Some people think that the medical profession has no social status in this country, and therefore no influence. Such a notion is an absurdity. The medical profession is held in high esteem by all classes, and if the members of it have not thrust themselves forward it is because they probably did not feel any necessity to do so. The militia is alive to the fact that medical officers are most anxious to do their work as well in their sphere as the combatants in theirs, and that both are interdependent. Militia medical reform is a battle cry which will rally the best elements in the force.