

MILITARY CYCLING.

In the present admittedly defective state of the Canadian militia, it is the opinion of many that the advocacy of radical reforms in equipment, and pleas for the introduction of new aids to the very limited stock of military appliances, are uncalled for, and tend to divert attention from the incongruities which exist in the simpler matters of drill and discipline. We differ from this view and hold that to ask attention to the most modern aids to military science will tend to the general good of the militia, by making still more prominent the inferiority of the force in all departments. In this connection general attention should be directed to cycling as a great aid to military proficiency. An article in the July number of the *United Service Magazine* brings out strongly the many advantages offered by the uses of the wheel in military training. The cycle offers to infantry a means of transport faster (under certain conditions) than can be afforded by horses, one that requires no sustenances, and does not tire out; it is shown that cyclists can travel from seven to ten miles an hour at little fatigue, noiselessly, throwing up no columns of dust to betray their approach, and can be lifted over almost any obstacle. In Britain, military cycling has attained great proficiency and is embodied in all leading volunteer corps; there are over 3,000 cyclists in the regiments in England alone, and an authorised drill-book for their special training has been issued by the Government. An instance of the proficiency attained in this branch of the service is in the work done last October by a detachment of the 26th Middlesex Rifle Volunteers, who, in heavy marching order, and carrying ten pounds of ammunition, rode on cycles one hundred miles in less than ten hours. Our Canadian roads are, it is true, much inferior to those of Great Britain, but they are evidently good enough for all practical purposes, as thousands of young men—members of the various bicycle clubs throughout the Dominion, devote their whole leisure time to the pleasure of wheeling. What is wanted is that the matter be officially recognized at headquarters; an immediate enquiry made into the pros and cons of the matter; and, if favourable, steps taken without delay to give practical encouragement to the organization of a cycling detachment in (at first) every city regiment. If necessary, let an experienced military cyclist be brought out from the English service, whose sole duty it will be to organize such corps in connection with each of our best battalions. It will be remembered that the experiments in this connection, made in the United States in May last, were highly satisfactory; eight men, not expert riders, did 18 miles in less than an hour and a half, over wretched roads, and each rider carrying an extra kit of 37 pounds.

THE BAND OF THE THIRTEENTH.

While opinions may differ as to the band of the Thirteenth battalion being the finest in Canada, there is no doubt but that it is a superb musical organization and one of which the whole Dominion is justly proud. The action of the Detroit Musician's Union in endeavouring to prevent their playing in that city, is at once a marked compliment to the Hamilton men, and an *exposé* of the narrow, miserable spirit that appears inseparable from the average American when dealing with men and things British. Jealousy, and a knowledge of their own inferiority in the rendering of military music were, no doubt, potent factors in the action of the Detroiters. Instances of such petty cowardice and exclusiveness from Michigan are strangely out of harmony with the frantic appeals from its sister State, Illinois, to all the world for their presence, products, and purses at next year's Fair.

THE MONTREAL ENGINEERS.

Rumours of an entire reorganization of this corps are heard, and, we believe, with a considerable degree of truth for foundation. A prominent and highly-respected civil engineer is mentioned as the new C. O., to be assisted by well-qualified and energetic subalterns. It is certainly time for such a step, as the condition of the corps, and the published report of the Inspecting Officer, are anything but flattering to Montreal's military reputation. The officers at present in nominal charge of the company have evidently lost all interest in it, and it is rather surprising that their resignations did not promptly follow the publication of Major Mayne's report. Lieut-Col. Kennedy has served long and faithfully his first commission dating back to 1863, and deserves ample recognition from the government for his services; but this does not alter the fact that the Montreal company is the only one of the three Engineer companies in Canada which is reported as practically useless as an Engineer organization; the Charlottetown detachment being mentioned in the same Report as highly satisfactory, and the Brighton (N.B.) company having won great praise from its excellent work at the Sussex camp this year. The N. C. officers and men of the Montreal corps are interested in the work and capable of becoming a very valuable force if properly trained; but in the absence of enthusiastic and well-qualified officers such is impossible. An instance of the state of things mentioned by the Inspecting Officer is that the very text-book from which instruction was given, last season, is many years old, and has for several years been entirely superceded. The establishment of the Canadian Engineer force is absurdly small, and its paucity is anything but creditable to the Department; but that nearly one-half the nominal strength should be reported as practically useless in scientific work shows a state of things that should have been remedied, or attempts made in that direction, within a month after the report reached headquarters.

U. S. MILITIA DISCIPLINE.

A marked difference of opinion exists in the United States as to the action of Col. Streator in inflicting the punishment of tying up by the thumbs, head shaving, &c., on Private Iams, for mutinous conduct while on duty near Homestead, Pa.; as a rule, the officers of the force uphold the Colonel, while the rank and file and a large section of the community, look on the punishment as cruel and barbarous. That the offender deserved prompt and severe punishment no one can deny; the force was on active service, and the offense was grossly treasonable. But torture is a thing of the past in civilized countries today, and it speaks little for the training of the American militia that an officer of that force should be so far behind the age in this respect. There is a crude and amateurish air about the thing which is not creditable to the gallant Colonel; it reminds one of a bigbulking boy, ill-trained and unlettered, tying down and torturing a dog who has disobeyed him. In Great Britain, France, Italy, or even Germany where military discipline has reached its highest point such a thing as an officer tying a man up by the thumbs, and then shaving half his head, would be thought decidedly *infra dig.* and unsoldierly; it was not long ago that the infliction of some similarly petty torture by a non-commissioned officer of the German army on a recruit, was made the subject of a district order, and landed the zealous N. C. O. in prison. In Great Britain such an act as that of Colonel Streator would have resulted in an immediate court-martial and the probable loss of his commission.