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Topics of the Week.

New interest is given to the proposed inter-regimental matches of the Canadian Military Rifle League, by the proposition made by Capt. John S. Shepherd, Secretary of the National Rifle Association of America, that the League matches should be participated in by teams from both countries. Capt. Shepherd's letter will be found in full in another place in this issue. As it is proposed that the League teams shall be drawn from single regiments, rather than from cities, it would not be fair to pit them against city teams of the United States; but should any of the latter be desirous of engaging in such contests no doubt the Canadian riflemen would gladly arrange for them independently of the League matches. In this connection, the following extracted from the *U. S. Army and Navy Journal* will be read with interest: "In view of the probability of the World's Fair being held in New York, an effort is to be made to revive the international small-bore and military matches in connection therewith. Correspondence with leading riflemen of England, Ireland, Scotland, Australia, and Canada, discloses a disposition on their part to again engage in a contest with American experts for the world's supremacy, and it is quite within the range of possibilities that 1892 may witness another memorable series of struggles before the targets of Creedmoor."

By all accounts the Artillery Association business meetings this year will be quite as lively as the last annual meetings. There are vexed points to come before both the Ontario and Dominion Associations, with very positive advocates on both sides. The trouble is mainly financial, a much mixed dispute having been in progress all the year as to affiliation fees. A great deal of unprofitable bickering is apt to result, unless one side will gracefully give way. For the sake of the associations we sincerely trust that the dispute may be thus amicably arranged. And concerning the proposed new constitution for the Dominion Artillery Association, we are informed that its financial provisions are very objectionable to a great many, and that unless they are re-arranged the whole scheme will be stoutly opposed.

Umpires.

Our criticisms upon the field day in Toronto on Thanksgiving Day having been so generally appreciated and taken in the same friendly manner in which they were written, we venture to add a few words on the same important subject, bespeaking a like reception for them. The object of such field days is, of course, to train officers and men, as nearly

as possible, how to act if the country were invaded. Those officers and men then, who give up time and money to learn upon this important point, are entitled to receive every possible assistance and support, and to avail themselves of the best obtainable instruction. This instruction we find fully laid down in the Revised Infantry Drill Book, part VIII., s. 37, page 411, entitled "Rules to be observed by the troops," and also on page 406, s. 36, entitled "Umpire Regulations."

It is only fair to the troops engaged that these "regulations" and these "rules" should be thoroughly known by the umpires. They ought to be able to give chapter and verse for each decision, and to make a note of the same for the umpire-in-chief's information. And yet we venture to think that some of the umpires employed upon the day in question were totally unacquainted with these rules. At all events, many gross violations of the rules have been reported.

Regulation 9, for instance, seemed hardly once to be taken into consideration; and neither did it seem to be fully understood that "orders from the umpire staff are to be considered as emanating from the umpire-in-chief, and are to be carried out at once without demur." Indeed it appeared that some of the umpires never thought of this, otherwise they would scarcely have allowed rule 2, sec. 37, to be continuously broken: "No troops are to approach within 100 yards of an opposing force. When this limit is attained the opposing forces are to halt, cease firing and wait." Regulation 13 (a) says: "Infantry judiciously posted. . . . cannot be dislodged by a front attack by a force of less than two to one. (b) If. . . . behind a shelter trench, bank or other equivalent cover. . . . they cannot be dislodged by a force of less than three to one. (c) If these attacks are not preceded by artillery fire the proportion of attackers to defenders must be increased to three to one. Every one of these regulations was plainly broken and in one spot a section of the attacking force, led by a mounted officer, bravely charged up the face of a hill behind the bank of which there were defenders outnumbering the attackers by at least two to one. Not only that, they ran on until within a few feet of the enemy. According to the book this attack came under sec. 36, regulation 13, (c) and they should have been ordered off the field, together with the mounted officer. Instead of this the defenders were ordered to fall back. This is simply one instance taken to emphasize the point. There were many similar cases upon that day. Both sides were full of honest enthusiasm which led them to perform what would have been, in actual fighting, prodigious acts of bravery, but it is the umpires' duty to see that enthusiasm is not carried to the extent of teaching the men actual harm instead of good. An umpire's duty in a case of this kind is clearly laid down, and by strictly following it he would have taught the men a really good lesson for the future, whereas, by his failing to do so, from whatever causes, the men were encouraged to exhibit further disobedience of orders.

We would be sorry to create in the mind of any officer who was kind enough to fill the thankless office of umpire, the impression that his actions are being made the subject of unfriendly criticism. The duties of such an office cannot be mastered in a day. To so thoroughly