

FACTS, FANCIES, QUIPS & COMMENTS VOLUNTEER NOTES

(By RIFLEMAN.)

FROM THE AUSTRALIAN PAPERS.

Said the Rev. Howell Price recently, regarding drinking habits in New South Wales:—"Young women in their teens take intoxicants without shame—strong wines, drink whisky, quench their thirst again and again with the best champagne—do it until their cheeks grow red and the eyes grow bright, and, perchance, before the evening is spent the feet grow unsteady. Not only do our young women do that, but our middle-aged women do the same thing."

Kingston never wasted words. When he drafted bills for the first Commonwealth Government, people who were used to old, diffuse draughtsmanship, gaped at his brief, conclusive snap—"Penalty, £10." But he was the same 27 years ago, when he made his will. This was the whole document:—"I, Charles Cameron Kingston, of Adelaide, solicitor, by this my last will, give all my estate, real and personal, to my wife, Lucy May Kingston, whom I appoint sole executrix hereof. C. C. Kingston." And the man knew his own mind so well that it stood at that to the end.

In a story in the "Boys Own Paper," Dr. Gordon Stables, a popular English writer for boys, lands his hero in Queensland, and makes him witness a snake-banquet, as follows:—"The reptile was over 20ft. in length, and had been cooked whole. Dragged out of the cooking-stove, it was turned around till its head touched its tail, thus forming a circle. Grace having been offered up, in the shape of the strongest clubbing the weakest to make room for them, the natives sat down to lunch, side by side, all around the snake, each being allowed about a foot of snake."

The other day the keeper of a swell restaurant in Melbourne was asked to explain how certain milk, that his employee had sold to a customer, managed to be 59 per cent. water. The customer—an inspector, it happened—asked for "a glass of milk." He was thirsty, so he ordered four glasses. Then he put portions of the four samples into bottles, and had the stuff analysed. He had paid 3d per glass, equal to 1/4 a quart; and as the Victorian Dairy Farmers' Association's present price is 1/4 a gallon, the restaurant-keeper stood to make 300 per cent. profit, even if he supplied absolutely pure milk. But, apparently, a mere 300 per cent. wasn't any use to him. At court he admitted having put four quarts of water into a 50-gallon can of milk, "to make it more palatable to the customers."

"Reasons of State" will prevent the British China squadron coming to Australia to participate in the welcome to the American fleet. Probably the chief reason of State is a desire to avoid an exposure of Britain's naval nakedness in these waters. Britain has the greatest fleet on the sea, but by reason of the free trade which makes the country dependent on foreign food supplies, and the decay of the military forces under the voluntary system, it has to gather its ships round its own coasts and stand on the defensive. If every British warship between Suez and Valparaiso was mustered, the whole fleet couldn't fight the best Jap or U.S. battleship. It is better for Britain to stand on its dignity, and say it isn't taking any, than to gather the pathetic scraps together in the presence of the Uncle Sam armada and say, "This is the whole blessed lot."

Up North they are telling weird and disquieting tales of how Japanese survey boats are making charts of the Barrier Reef. Of course, it is not being done openly, and the boats engaged on the work are ostensibly becho-de-mer fishers. One Queensland sea-slug hunter relates how he surprised a boat taking soundings, while an officer on deck

was engaged in doing something with a large sheet of paper fastened to a drawing-board. Immediately the Queensland boat hove alongside the sounding was suspended, and the drawing-board carefully covered up, while the Japs, suave as ever, gave the Queensland the water he was short of. This boat was working South. A couple of days later he fell in with another boat of the same sort, working north, from which he concluded that the Japanese Admiralty's survey of the Barrier Reef is just about complete.

The Sydney bottle-oh and rabbit merchant is up against trouble. Not long ago the Second Hand Dealers' Act was passed, and this makes him take out a license, and puts him to no end of trouble. Now, the Local Government Act is in force, and under this glorious statute, councils are empowered to levy license fees on all street purveyors of merchandise. Sydney contains about 40 such councils, and each one is reaching out for license fees. So the bottle-oh, who can't always tell when he reaches the end of one pocket-handkerchief borough, and is into the next, is expecting more trouble and more expense. Apparently he will require 41 licenses—a general one and 40 municipal ones. If the State devoted as much attention to the big land monopolists as it does to the empty bottle merchants, it would be much better for the State.

A MAORI'S FENCING CONTRACT.

"Lo!" writes from Dargaville to the "Bulletin":—

"During a five years' sojourn in this much-boasted country, I have often heard it claimed for the Maori that he possesses massive intellect, excels in business, is a great toiler, and is generally the boss coloured man of the globe, and better than most whites—outside the land of the Prohibition craze.

"I have long suspected the solidity of the argument, and have just had the suspicion duly sealed, signed and delivered.

"On tenders being called by Brass and Co. for falling and burning off ti-trees on certain land and the fencing thereof, my mate and I decided to take a hand. We calculated carefully, didn't spring too high, and felt pretty confident.

"But we struck a cow's nest in one Hone Tangiporangi—(as near as I can get)—who, roused by the present record stump in kauri gum and the attendant dearth of beer, brought the alleged massive intellect to bear, tendered about 7½ furlongs below us, and got the job.

"Ignoring several good camping places on the outskirts, Hone elected to roost on a partially-cleared spot near the centre of the job, and, with the help of his browner half and numerous progeny, he built the whare. Then he drowsed and smoked for two days, and after that, backed by his spouse and braised by the leaps and yells of his dirty small fry, he solemnly started—to build the fence.

"Hone didn't make the pace a very fast gallop, but in due time the five-wired obstruction became an accomplished fact. Thereupon Brass was gently tapped for enough money to pay for five days' drunk.

"On being granted pratique by the local publican, Hone and Co. again waded in with the small fry yelling very faintly now. He waded at such reduced speed that the major portion of the ti-trees was in fair burning order by the time chopping was finished. Then Hone fired up and let her rip. She proved a pretty good ripper, with a taste for fences.

"Mooching round this afternoon on the off-chance of flooring a stray pheasant for the camp pot, I saw the scene of 'one coloured brudder's' undoing. Of the once boisterous fence only an occasional post remained. The stringers had vanished, except some stunted bits suspended by the top wire. Glancing across the stream towards the whare, I made out a queer wreck, bearing much indication of having fought a game but losing battle in a public house with a six-engine Bendigo special. It was Hone, and he had beer-leaves in his hair."

The Penrose range is closed to all volunteers during fleet week to allow the visitors to practise.

Captain Kuyvert has agreed to give a lecture to the N.C.O. Club on August 7th, on "Outposts and Patrols." Captain Richardson (chief artillery instructor) was to have lectured on this date, but cannot do so till the end of the month.

Many replies are coming to hand regarding the team to be selected to fire against the fleet representatives. It is expected to place a first-class team against them. Some £20 is to be given in prize-money for top scores on the American side. If possible arrangements will be made to finish the match before 1 p.m., and entertain the team to dinner on the range after the match.

Apocryph of the difficulty experienced in getting even the Domain for the Fleet Review—was a question which tied his good story is told of a certain gallant Battery commander. He had to fire a birthday salute, and the fact was duly chronicled in the paper. On the day he and his cavalry rumbled up to the Domain gates and found them locked. The captain—a choleric man of war—sent an emissary to the park-keeper with a demand for the instant production of the keys. Down came the guardian of the park to where the battery horses were stamping impatiently, and the battery commander was fuming furiously. "Got no orders to let you in," said he of the keys. "What? Won't you open? Here, unlimber that gun—two of you take the wheels—two steady the trail. Now run that gun up to the gate—trail first, you idiots—hit the lock." Here the park man broke in: "Stop, please, captain, I shall be meekly. 'I've got the keys.'" "Very well," said the choleric skipper, "open the gate—limber up!" And by the time they had limbered up the park gates were being opened by the trembling keeper, and the battery proudly rumbled and clattered on to do its duty. They had omitted to get the formal consent of the Council, hence the bother. But a private letter from the Col. Colledge has been appointed secretary of the No. 3 A.G.A.

The resignation of Lieut. J. P. White from the Franklin M.R. is gazetted.

The Whangarei Rifles have elected Mr. A. Devlin as lieutenant of the company.

The headquarters of the 2nd Regt. A.M.R. have been transferred from Cambridge to Hamilton.

Col. Wolfe, O.C.D., has granted the use of Penrose rifle range to the American admiral for the practice of his men during fleet week.

The fleet review will probably cost the Government about £200. The pay will amount to about £500 ordinary, not Easter camp rate. Transit will cost about £175.

The First Battalion Band has entered for the contest which is to be held in Hamilton early in October. The band intend giving a musical programme in the Albert Park on Sunday afternoon next, when a collection will be taken in aid of the funds of the band.

The Whangarei Rifles are running a novel sort of miniature rifle tournament. The conditions of it are as follows:—The contest of five men from any trade, profession, or business establishment; entrance fee to be 5/- per team; 50 per cent of the entrance fee to be used to provide prizes.

Capt. Forbes, of the No. 2 A.G.A., intends to resign his position as "kipper" of the company as soon as he can get the balance-sheet prepared, which will probably be few weeks hence, or as soon before as possible. The company will then proceed to elect a successor of the candidates who are said to be offering for the position.

The No. 1 A.G.A.'s cup of joy is full to the brim! They have been graded as A, with 1st class in shooting, they are over a hundred strong, and the last lot of the blue uniforms has arrived. The badges which each man in the company gets for the great achievement also have arrived, and are to be distributed this week, as also the uniforms.

The officers of the 1st Regt. A.M.R. met recently, and decided that as no suitable ground was available just now, and for various other reasons, the proposed Regimental Mounted Scouts' competition must be put off till a later and more convenient time. It is to be hoped the proposal will not be allowed to drop.

The members of the Opaki Rifle Club's team, which put up the highest score in New Zealand for the "Daily Mail" Overseas Cup, will each receive a medal, as the highest scorers in New Zealand. It was originally intended to award silver spoons to the teams scoring highest in each centre of the Empire, but evidently the regulation has been revised and medals substituted.

The Penrose ranges time-table and officers for duty during August are:—1st August, 200 and 500 yards, Capt. Coultis; 8th, 200 and 500 yards, Capt. Plunge; 15th, 200 and 500 yards, Capt. Sherson; 22nd, 200 and 500 yards, Capt. Dawson; 29th, 200 and 500 yards, Lieut. Pullen, Capt. Dormer (secretary)

states that during fleet week sufficient targets will be reserved to enable the American team to practise. Targets not required by them will be available for local use.

A new corps, to be called the South African Scouts is being formed in Wellington. The "Post" says that in addition to applications for enrolment received from New Zealanders and Australians, Captain Gardner has received applications from ex-members of the Inniskillen Dragoons, Shropshire Regiment, Natal Mounted Rifles, and Brabant's Horse, and it is expected that the new corps will be strengthened by the addition of some of our own opponents during the recent war who are now resident in Wellington.

Col. Wolfe, O.C.D., has arranged that if the contingent men wish, and are able to do it, they may form a squadron and march with the mounted brigade. If not, they may participate in the review. The former is a privilege which I hope will be taken advantage of. It would be a fine addition to the interest of the review. The trouble is that the contingent men are not so numerous as to be able to do so, unless somebody makes it his business to see everybody there will be no parade worth speaking of.

I am glad to hear that Major Gardner is not to be allowed to pass out of the Garrison Artillery Division without a souvenir of his association with it. An album of photographs of the three regiments and officers is being prepared, and will be presented to the Major at an early date. The No. 3 Co. are also preparing a shield of photographs for presentation to the ex-captain of the corps, Acting Major Hazard, who has succeeded Major Gardner in the command of the Division. This will be presented as soon as it is ready—possibly on the same occasion as the former presentation, of which more anon.

A boxing tournament is to be held under the auspices of the Reception Committee and the Division of the Northern Boxing Association during fleet week, and I am glad to say that volunteer items will be included. There will be three events for volunteers only—light, middle, and heavy weights—and entries for these may be forwarded to Captain Kuyvert, who is an official of the Association. The prizes are good—£10 first and £5 second in each match. The sub-committee representing the Reception Committee is composed of Major Pitterson, Capt. Kuyvert, Plunge, Dawson, and (Surgeon) Neil, and Messrs. J. O'Brien and Willing. The arrangements are for a two-night tournament, which will be held after the N.C.O. Club dinner. This latter lasts from 6.30 to 8 p.m., and the tournament will conclude about 9.30. Supper and a musical programme will follow. This will provide two full evenings of amusement for the fleet men.

"Supplementary Expenses."

Many stories have been told illustrating the will and determination of "Kitchen of Kharitoun." The following, however, may not be generally known. On one occasion a difference of opinion had arisen as to the amount of money he might expend on the conveyance of stores to the front. He wanted a couple of thousand pounds for the purpose, but a niggardly pay department at Home protested that the estimate was much too high. "Can't do it for less," was the laconic response telegraphed to Fall Ma. This, however, only evoked a reply that he would not be allowed more than a quarter of the sum asked for. To everybody's intense surprise "K." wired back "All right" and proceeded to carry out the work he was engaged on. When the expedition was over, the Treasury officials were electrified to receive from its organiser a bill reading as follows:—(1) To conveyance of military stores, as per estimate, £500. (2) To supplementary expenses, £1500.

Elephants Stamped.

An explosion which occurred at one of the storage tanks of the Standard Oil Co., near Riversdale, California, stamped a herd of elephants attached to a travelling circus, which was about to begin a performance.

The largest elephant ran a mile, and then entered the court of Glenwood Hotel, where it knocked down and trampled to death Miss Ella Gibbs, a deaconess of the Congregational Church engaged in missionary work among the Chinese and Japanese population.

It gored and tossed three men, all of whom were seriously injured before it was secured.