

Current Comment.

THE BUSHMEN'S CORPS.

If the Bushmen's Corps, which some wealthy Australians propose to recruit for South Africa, is sent to the front, it will (says the Lyttelton "Times"), and so say all of us, be one of the most useful bodies of men in the ranks of the British Army. The "Bushman," "bush-riding," or "kangaroo-shooter," as he is variously called, is described as a plucky rider, and a marvellous flying shot. His height ranges from about five feet eight inches or nine inches to almost anything up to seven feet. He has been in the saddle ever since he could "toddle," and in some cases, even before that. His life has been spent in districts where food and water are often scarce, and he has learnt to make the most or best of whatever difficulty or predicament he may find himself in. He is always in the pink of condition, "as hard as nails," and is without the faintest knowledge of the word "fear." Above all, he recognises the value of caution and presence of mind, and as he never loses his head, he can be counted upon to pull himself out of any "corner." He rides as no other man in the world can ride. He has a pretty, workman-like seat, from which nothing short of a "regular crumple" will shift him. Withal, the Bushman will tend and nurse a sick mate as gently and kindly as will a woman. He will fight any man, even if he is "as big as a house." He will drink anything from "post and rails" down to turpentine, pain-killer, and boiling water; and he has subsisted on mutton and damper all his life. A better soldier for service in South Africa it would be almost impossible to obtain.

PATRIOT OR JINGO.

The finest sentiment may be reduced to an absurdity; the most pathetic and artistic story the more easily burlesqued in the hands of an incapable amateur. We have no wish to deride the fine patriotic spirit which led this colony, among others, to show the world that the Empire was united by sending forth her sons to fight in the cause of the Motherland. But are we not assuming a little too much? (says the Hawke's Bay "Herald.") It would really appear that England is in a terrible fix, and that only by the assistance of New Zealand will she be able to extricate herself. The sympathy and assistance we have accorded to Britain have shown that with the rest of the Empire we are one in our determination to maintain its integrity, and that is all England requires at our hands. To presume that our rate of help will in any way change the course of events is to cast a slur on England's military prestige. Britain is quite capable of managing the affair herself, as events will in a very short space of time tend to prove. But for the dilatory action of the War Office the war would have been practically concluded. As it is this negligence has been remedied, and although the campaign has been rendered doubly difficult by the delay there can be only one end. When the reorganised British forces get fairly to work the Boer horde will crumble before them like a house of cards in a gale of wind.

THE EFFECT OF A "LADY COUNCILLOR."

To a casual observer it would almost appear that the Mayor and gentlemen councillors were anxious to avoid debate in the Council because of the well-known conversational and argumentative ability of the lady councillor who sits at the table with them. There can be no doubt that Cr. Yates may be equal to any one of the others in debate, but surely she is not equal to nine, with the Mayor included. If this be admitted, they pay a very high compliment indeed to Cr. Yates. Yet, on the other hand, the business of the Borough suffers in consequence.

CYCLISTS AND PATRIOTISM.

No stone should be left unturned to prove that the athletes and cyclists of this glorious little land are, in their patriotic fervour, not one whit behind any similar body of Her Majesty's subjects throughout the length and breadth of that Empire upon which the sun never sets. The cycle man (says the "Wheelman") not have done

much, if anything, in the past to add to the lustre of England's glory; but it is not to the past we have to look; the future is more important than the past, and in this respect it will be found that the cycle will be an important factor in the destinies of the British Empire. We do not altogether refer to the military aspect of the question. The bicycle will doubtless ere long be a sine qua non in all future military achievements; but what will be its general effect upon the British as a race? As far as New Zealand is concerned—and we speak authoritatively—the tendency of the cycle has been to improve the general health and physique of those who have used it. It has been a loud cry during the past two or three decades that the race is degenerating; that the Britons of today are not to be compared with the Britons of Trafalgar and Waterloo; that we are too civilised, too well fed, too luxurious to last long as a dominant race; many go so far as to say that there are already strong signs of national decay. Whether this is so or not we do not pretend to say, but one thing we do know, and that is that the cycle has a strong and undeniable tendency to physical development; and further, and more important still, it is a potent means of bodily exercise for women as well as men.

WAR OFFICE MISMANAGEMENT.

Events are daily demonstrating that the English War Office has blundered; it has under-estimated the Boer forces, and has been caught unprepared for a campaign, the gravity of which ought to have been foreseen. The War Office appears to have had no accurate knowledge of the number of troops which the Dutch Republics could put in the field, or of the strength and quality of their artillery. There can be no excuse for the British artillery being inferior in range to that of the enemy. With our relatively small army, compared to the vastness of the Empire, it seems scarcely credible that we should have to suffer severe reverses in order to ascertain that the artillery possessed by the Boers is superior in range to our own. It is melancholy to reflect (comments the Wanganui "Chronicle") on the disasters that have been the direct consequences of the want of foresight and dilatoriness of those in authority.

WHAT KITCHENER HAS TO DO.

Now, the difficulties which Kitchener has to overcome are transport, the present insufficient diet of the army, and to improve the general condition of the men. Though matters have been kept very quiet (says the "Waikato Star"), still, if Buller, with his 33,000 troops cannot move any distance from his base, and must leave White to his fate, the causes of his inability are pretty obvious. The railway is probably in a very dilapidated condition by this time, especially as it is only a single line, unfit for the heavy traffic to which it has been lately subjected. There must be great difficulty and delay in getting the necessary supplies. But this is not the only evil. The army cannot move from its base unless it keeps in touch with the railway. Now the task before Kitchener is to organise such a system of transport as Roberts may be able to attempt a flank movement in order to turn the position of the Boers, otherwise, as Cronje remarks, the more English soldiers who come so much the better for the Boers, as they only get in one another's way.

OUR DEFENCES.

If Britain be engaged by any Continental Power as a consequence of the present struggle in South Africa she will undoubtedly have the support of all English-speaking people, and the ultimate result of any conflict hereafter will never be in doubt. But there is this to be considered: Britain's colonies (says the "Southern Standard") offer great inducements to privateers, and it might happen that while the main strength of her navy was engaged elsewhere stray cruisers could inflict heavy damage on our seaports. In the face of all this it is desirable that our coastal defence should be strong enough to

enable attack to be resisted, as the very fact of the colony being strongly defended would save us from attack. We have no doubt but that the representations of the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce will be heartily supported by other Chambers of Commerce, and we notice that since the above was written the Invercargill Chamber of Commerce has generally endorsed the Dunedin Chamber's resolutions, which doubtless will promptly be given effect to by the Government if occasion demands.

RUSSIA AND ENGLAND.

Whatever the motive by which Russian authorities are actuated in their present policy (says the "Otago Daily Times") it is not one which Great Britain can regard with complacency. It is plain that if it is not checked British interests in Asia are likely to suffer. Fortunately, however, the Foreign Office at the present time in the hands of a statesman upon whom the Empire can depend to see that its rights are safeguarded. The Marquis of Salisbury will have been kept fully informed with respect to Russian designs, and he will unquestionably be fully alive to the possibilities of the situation. It is more than likely, indeed, that he has foreseen the present position, and in this consideration we may find the true explanation of the refusal of the British Government to employ the Indian forces in the Boer war. The Indians may be required nearer their own homes.

THE COST OF THE CONTINGENT.

It is only natural that Mr Seddon, as Colonial Treasurer, should look with considerable favour upon the manner in which the public are trying to convince him, as Premier, that a third contingent should be sent to the assistance of the British forces in South Africa. Every penny subscribed to the War Fund will be so much saved to the Treasury, and so much taken off the responsibilities of the Government. But we still doubt, argues the Lyttelton "Times" in a thoughtful article, whether it is desirable that a large part of the funds required for the colony's military expenditure should be obtained by voluntary subscriptions. As a practical demonstration of the people's loyalty these are well enough. The man who backs up his expressions of loyalty with a handsome donation to the War Fund may at least hope to escape the charge of insincerity. But in a democratic country like this, where every section of the community is represented in the Legislature, the cost of any national movement, whether for war or for peace, should be borne by the general exchequer.

TO OUR SECOND CONTINGENT.

Go, Brothers.

Our fathers fought for liberty;
Go ye, and brave as they
Encounter danger, agony,
And honour's call obey.

Go, not in wrath's unrighteousness
As monsters seeking prey,
But clad in blameless consciousness,
Go crush a lawless sway.

Go, brothers, where our standard waves
Before audacious foes,
And teach oppressors that all slaves
Are freed wherever it goes.

As Justice rears it to the sky,
And Truth protects its fame;
Your valour shall the proud defy
And grace your country's name.

For God, our Empire, and our Queen,
Be resolutely brave,
Till nations learn that all things mean
Are hastening to the grave.

God be your shield where dangers fly;
God guide you mid the fray;
The God of Battles, from on high,
By you His will display.

Dunedin, January 8, 1900.

TROOPER HUNT'S ADVICE TO THE SECOND CONTINGENT.

"My advice to fellows going in the next contingent is to take any private things in a small bag, including a small looking-glass, to shave with. Any requisites that cannot be taken on can always be sent back from Capetown. If you go with the Government kit alone you are without razors or anything of that kind, and they are most particular about shaving. Above all, a man should take a 'house wife' for sewing on buttons. I would also advise a pair of rubber shoes for use on board in wet weather. They won't chafe on your

wearing them, although you have to work barefoot at stables. I would not have met with my accident if I had had rubber shoes on."

A TRULY SENSIBLE SUGGESTION.

Among the many projects which have been put forward in connection with the settlement of South Africa after the war, one by the "Spectator" is deserving of notice. This is that some thousands of the reservists should be settled in the country, thus forming a body of men with military training, who could be depended upon to support the British authorities in case of need. It is considered that by this means the necessity for keeping a large garrison in South Africa might be considerably lessened. Assuming that a reservist or time-expired man was willing to settle in South Africa, there would be a saving of his transport and keep, perhaps £20. Land suitable for farming is plentiful without resorting to any large measure of confiscation, and allotments might be given to these military settlers, together with such sums of money as would enable them to make a start in farming. But that is not all. When the war is over the Government will have an enormous quantity of stores, horses, mules, carts, tents, sheds, and many other things, from tarpaulins to chaffcutters, which it may not be worth while to take home, and which would have to be sold for very little to dealers. It is suggested that such of these articles as might be useful to settlers should be distributed among them. The reservists would continue to receive their pay from the British Government, and it is proposed that the local government or governments should add an equivalent sum as an extra inducement. The military colonist would thus have something to live upon during the first few years, the most trying time of his farming. The "Spectator" thinks that it should not be insisted on that the men must become farmers. Any reservist with a trade or handicraft suitable to a new country, such as carpentering, bricklaying, blacksmith's work, etc., should receive similar encouragement. Such a scheme would, of course, involve some trouble and expense, but if carried out successfully it would materially help to lessen the difficulties of the situation. "If," concludes the "Spectator," "the Government had on the spot 10,000 reserve men, all of whom had their baptism of fire, who could be called to arms almost at a moment's notice, we should hear much less about the awful difficulties we shall be placed in by having to keep a great military garrison in South Africa."



Chills

Ever become chilled through and through?

The acute sensation of cold is followed by feverishness and aches in all parts of the body.

Finally the whole trouble settles in the throat and lungs in the shape of a cough.

There is nothing so bad for a cough as coughing.

Ayer's Cherry Pectoral

will cure these chills and coughs. A few doses are sufficient at first. More time is required later on.

Stop coughing and you will get well. Keep coughing and you invite bronchitis, pneumonia, or even consumption itself. Better stop your cough at once and thus end the whole matter.

Prepared by Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass., U.S.A.