

Minor Matters.

The latest engine of destruction, which has won the endorsement of the United States, British, and Austrian authorities, is the Just-Alshau torpedo, which was perfected by a New York woman. The invention of this torpedo has been the life study of Captain W. Just, a former British artilleryman, but was not made practical until Dr. M. J. Alshau, Captain Just's fiancée, added the automatic side gear. I had puzzled over it for ten years, said Captain Just. And one morning, after we became engaged, I was puzzling over the draught of my torpedo, Dr. Alshau came up, and looking over my shoulder asked:—"What's going to make it come up? I will go under the water all right; that I can see. But what is going to make it come up at the right time?" I was a little put out, for she had put her finger on the weak spot, so when I told her it was a question easier asked than answered she turned the conversation. The very next morning she brought me draughts of the whole side gear. It is automatic, worked through gravity balance, and can be set like a clock—that is, if you wish the torpedo to go, say, three feet under water and then come up you set it at three, or if you wish it to go ten, twenty, thirty, or any distance, you have only to set it accordingly. She invented in a few hours a thing that had puzzled me for ten years. Dr. Alshau is a woman considerably under forty, and has a large practice in New York city. She has always displayed a decidedly inventive turn, but has, previous to the perfecting of this engine of war, devoted her talents to surgical instruments, and electric appliances to be used in her profession. A company with a capital of one million dollars has been incorporated to manufacture the new projectile.

Verily, the "Graphic" thinks, some people have more money than well, shall we say discretion? It is reported that a lady and a gentleman, who were evidently strangers to Christchurch, left a leather bag near Victoria bridge. It was noticed by two little girls, who, on returning it to the owners, were cordially thanked, and were informed that it contained one hundred sovereigns. The girls received a sovereign as a reward for their honesty.

Open confession is good for the soul of even the personage who lives by "the turf." During the hearing of a criminal case in the Supreme Court at Wanganui the only witness called for the defence was under cross-examination by the Crown Prosecutor, and after giving his name, was asked his occupation, his reply being that in the subpoena he was described as a Jeweler. Mr Fitzherbert then said: "Never mind that, tell us when you last rode in a race?" The smile hitherto irradiating the visage of the witness was somewhat overshadowed when he admitted that he did not know, and a further question as to his occupation elicited the reply, "I live." Pushing inquiry still further, Mr Fitzherbert asked was it not a fact that the witness had been warned of the principal race-course in the colony. This was indignantly denied, whereupon was read out to the witness several instances where such had been the case, and categorically asked, he had to admit the impeachments. The matter was clinched with the question, "Now, is it not a fact that you are generally known as a spileter?" The fleeing smile returned, as the witness seemed hesitatingly replied: "No; but I'd like to be one!"

There live in Christchurch at present a couple who were united with the marriage ceremony which prevailed at Gretina Green for many years. They are Mr and Mrs W. Ballintine, of the East Belt, and they were married in 1849. When Mrs Ballintine was only nineteen years of age, her parents, who resided in Edinburgh, decided to go to South Africa, and take her with them. But that threatened to interfere with certain plans for her future that she had made already, so she held a consultation with Mr Ballintine, and they decided that they should be married forthwith. As the vessel was to sail in three days' time, and as their marriage ceremony in Edinburgh would be hedged round with tedious formalities, they took the train for the Border. When the couple reached Lamberton, they told their case to the

landlady of the inn. She immediately introduced to them the Gretina Green priest, a Mr Sommerville, by whom the ceremony was performed. The couple returned to Edinburgh, and Mr Ballintine informed the bride's parents that she would be unable to go to South Africa, and they accordingly left next day without her. At one time at Gretina Green 200 couples were married in a twelve months. Up to 1856 the marriage ceremony was performed at the toll-house or the Gretina Hall, but in that year an Act was passed which made it necessary for the parties to live in the district for a certain time before the ceremony. Mr and Mrs Ballintine are old residents of Christchurch, where they have lived for twenty-two years.

She handed the draft to the paying teller. She was calm and collected, as if it was an every-day matter. "Madam," said the teller gently, "you have forgotten to indorse it." "Indorse it?" with a little worried smile. "Yes; you must write your name on the back here to show that you will repay this bank in case the issuer of this draft should fail to answer our call." "Oh!" she said, accepting the pen. When the teller looked at the draft again this is what he read: The ——— bank has always paid up what it owes, and you need have no worry. Therefore, I indorse this draft. Very truly yours, Mrs J. B. Blanks.

A remarkable illustration of the voracity of the ferret has been brought under our notice (says the "Wyntham Farmer"). Mr Turnbull, of Tuturan, has been mysteriously losing some pigs from a litter a few days old. One morning, hearing the pigs squealing, he went to the sty, and saw one of the suckers apparently stuck in the mouth of a hole. On pulling it out, he found a ferret had got of it, intent on taking the pig to its lair. Not content with being caught in its depredation, the ferret cheekily followed the pig which Mr Turnbull had released, until the contact of that gentleman's boot with the body of the prowling little pest placed it hors de combat.

Our volunteers, or some of them, are the "Graphic" would like to remark, a very queer lot. We shall not be surprised to hear of them refusing to "go out" unless they get cream in their tea and feather beds. According to a Wellington daily, some indignation has been caused amongst the Wellington volunteers by the intimation that they will be expected to proceed to the Wanganui encampment via the Rimutaka, instead of by the direct route over the Wellington and Manawatu Company's line. The journey to Wanganui via the Wairarapa and Woodville will occupy over thirteen hours. By the direct route it would not take more than eight and a-half. Besides, the conveniences of dining cars do not obtain on the longer journey—which is a peculiarly tiresome one—whilst they do on the private line. So strong is the feeling in regard to the matter that a number of volunteers have declared their intention of not attending the encampment at all if they are to be put to the inconvenience of the longer journey.

When Sir Lyon Playfair was professor of chemistry at Edinburgh the Prince of Wales was his pupil. The following anecdote is recorded illustrating the faith of the pupil in his teacher. One day the Prince and Playfair were standing near a cauldron containing lead which was boiling at white heat. "Has your Royal Highness any faith in science?" said Playfair. "Certainly," replied the Prince. Playfair then carefully washed the Prince's hand with ammonia to get rid of any grease that might be on it. "Will you now place your hand in this boiling metal, and ladle out a portion of it?" he said to his distinguished pupil. "Do you tell me to do this?" asked the Prince. "I do," replied Playfair. The prince instantly put his hand into the cauldron, and ladled out some of the boiling lead without sustaining any injury.

The pastor of a church in ——— on leaving his study, which is in the rear of the church, saw a little girl, a friend of his, talking to a stranger. "What was that man saying to you, Madge?" asked the minister as he came up to the little girl. "Oh, he just wanted to know if Doctor C. was the preacher of this church." "And what did you tell him?" "I told him," she said, with dignity, "that you were the present incumbent."

He had made his fortune at Kalgoolie, and boarded the mail steamer at Albany, resplendent in all the most costly apparel and jewellery that West Australia could produce. Beto gangway was raised he had introduced himself to all the saloon passengers, and had announced that he was one of the wealthiest men the West had yet produced, and before hand was out of sight he had come into collision with three or four persons who declined to drink expensive liquor at his expense. It was then that the captain led him quietly aside and remonstrated with him. "The passengers are complaining, Mr Midas," he said; "they say that you force your company upon them, and that you are exceedingly rude when they decline to associate with you." The West Australian gasped. "But my name's Croesus Midas," he said, "and me an' my mates got more money out of the Kalgoolie than them passengers ever seen in their lives." The captain shook his head. "I can't help that, Mr Midas," he remarked; "but you must respect them while you are on this ship." The man of wealth strolled away, and took the first opportunity of informing those who had complained that they were puffers in comparison with himself. His money was the sole topic of his conversation, and he related anecdotes about his vast possessions on the hurricane deck, in the card-room, at the dinner table—everywhere, in fact, that there was a listener to be found. At last the monotony became intolerable, and when the middle of the Great Australian Bight was reached the captain spoke to Mr Midas again. His tone was preemptory this time. He told the troublesome passenger that, as he had failed to take notice of the first warning, he would not receive another, but would be confined to his state-room for the rest of the voyage if he offended again. The breath of Mr Midas was taken away at the audacity of the captain. Then he slowly recovered, and extending a weather-beaten forefinger said impressively, "Look 'ere, I'll tune you up. I got money, I 'ave, an' when I get to Melbourne I'll buy this 'ere ship, an' give you the sack."

A physician with a statistical turn of mind has been estimating the proper distance covered by a woman in dancing through the ordinary ball-room programme. An average waltz, the doctor estimates, takes one over three-quarters of a mile. A square dance makes you cover half a mile; the same distance is covered in a polka, while a rapid galop will oblige you to traverse just about a mile. Say there are twelve waltzes, which is a fair average; these alone make nine miles. Three galops added to this make the distance twelve miles, while from three to five other dances, at a half mile each, bring up the total to from thirteen to fifteen miles. This, too, is without reckoning the promenade and extras. "As a means of exercise," says the physician, "it will thus be seen that dancing stands at the head of the list. In golf, for instance, the major part of the exercise consists in the walking around the links, following up the ball; and yet, even in golf, not so much ground is covered as in an evening's dancing."

Colonial offers of support have by no means been confined to the great self-governing colonies like Canada and Australia. Among the smaller, but equally significant offers, of assistance have been the following:—
 Jersey: £5000 for a battery of six guns with a detachment of Jersey Artillery Militia.
 Trinidad: 125 Light Horse, with gun.
 Barbadoes: Light Horse to fill up Lord Strathcona's regiment.
 Jamaica: The Jamaica Militia offered, but refused.
 Malta: The Maltese Artillery are now in garrison at Cairo.
 Mauritius: £2000 for the distress in Natal.
 The West African Colonies: Mentioned in the Queen's Speech at the close of last session. Troops offered, but refused.

The Federated Malay States: Troops offered, but refused.
 This last offer has an interesting history. The Malays in Capetown are much attached to Mr Rhodes personally. When matters got threatening at the end of last July, they held a meeting, and cabled to the Mahy Sultans in South Africa, but the offered troops had to be declined.
 Hong Kong: Artillery and police offered, but refused.
 Needless to say all the refusals were grateful and graceful in character.

Apropos of rats, remarks a contemporary, twenty years ago the most popular song of the day throughout the British Empire was "The Ratcatcher's Daughter." It was really the original forerunner of Chevalier's coster songs. The first verse was as follows:

"Not long ago in Westminster
 There lived a ratcatcher's darter,
 She didn't quite live in Westminster,
 'Cos she lived 'tween the side of the water.
 Her dad sold rats and she sold sprats,
 All round and about that quarter;
 And all the gentlefolks tuk off their 'ats
 To the purty little ratcatcher's darter."

The beauty of the girl attracted a wicked nobleman, who ran away with her. This disgrace on the ratcatcher's house drove her father mad, and he imagined himself to be selling sand, instead of rats. The song finishes with a tragedy:

"He cut his throat with a bar o' soap,
 And stabbed his moko arter.
 So here's an end of lily white sand man,
 Donkey, and ratcatcher's darter."



There is no doubt that we live in an age of worry and excitement, and as the struggle for existence is anything but conducive to good digestion or an appetite that can relish anything, the palate of the average work-a-day individual has to be tickled and tempted in a variety of ways. We are often lectured about the evil effects of an overindulgence in tea or coffee, not to mention intoxicating liquors, until many people are bewildered what to turn to for a beverage, which shall be at once agreeable to the taste, and supply the desired nourishing and stimulating qualities. Public attention has been freely drawn to the merits of Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, as supplying a long-felt want in this direction. It is not simply a cocoa, but a preparation of two or three other ingredients, which give it great nutritive and invigorating qualities. It is, therefore, not merely a pleasant beverage, but a food and tonic in the bargain. Its success has certainly been phenomenal, and that is perhaps the best warranty for the claim made on its behalf, that Vi-Cocoa has the refreshing properties of fine tea, the nourishment of the best cocoas, a tonic and recuperative force possessed by neither, and can be used in all cases where tea and coffee are prohibited.
 Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa is neither a medicine nor a mere thirst-assuager. It is a food at the same time that it is a beverage, and thus answers a double purpose in the building up of the human constitution, and must render it highly serviceable to everybody, especially the workers in mills and shops of various kinds among whom tea has hitherto been so excessively drunk; while it has the further advantage apparently of being easily digested and of agreeing with the most delicate stomach.
 Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, in 8½d packets and 1/4 and 2/2 tins, can be obtained from all Chemists, Grocers, and Stores, or from Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, Limited, 260 George-street, Sydney. As a test of its merits, a dainty sample tin of Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa will be sent free on application to any address, if, when writing ((a postcard will do), the read-

New Zealand's brave and hardy men
 Will drive the Boers from hill to glen,
 Old England's sons have not forgot
 Majuba Hill—that dreadful blot.
 They'll fight all weathers, fine or wet,
 Nor care for cold that they can endure,
 Which knowing well they can endure
 By taking Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.
 (Adv.)