

Mrs. Douglas Robertson, of Auckland, is visiting her many friends and relations in England. She has just returned from Bournemouth, and is at present staying with Colonel Marvin. After a brief stay at Cambridge she will accompany an aunt after Christmas to Mentone, and will probably go on to Italy for the winter. Her visit to England will probably last a year or more.

In his account of his recent expedition to the region of Tanganyika Mr. E. S. Moore told the members of the Royal Geographical Society of some extraordinary forests of heath found in the vicinity of the Mountains of the Moon. The heath was not as we know it in England. The trees grew to a height of sixty feet, and resembled the Alpine pine forest, only on a gigantic scale. For centuries these heaths had grown, died and rotted away, with the result that the true ground was covered with a spongy mass of vegetation forty or more feet deep. As they were crossing this heath belt very now and then a carrier would disappear in this vegetable mass, and would have to be hauled out by ropes from a hole forty feet deep.

Evidently Mr. Moore's carrier did not appreciate his foot being on his native heath.

It is, I think, a great pity that some of the colonial volunteers who went creditably through the greater part of the Transvaal war should now be furnishing their escutcheons by posing as fair-weather-cum-piepic soldiers and growling because the hospitals, the food, and fifty other things were not exactly as they had expected them to be. Of course they were not. War is scarcely a review. Things constantly go wrong. Scandals are numerous and terrible tales of neglect here or mismanagement there can always be proved up to the hilt. But what then? That is WAR, and the sensitive colonial who expects the comforts of a sham fight on a campaign had better stop at home next time.

A singularly intemperate letter appears in the "Chronicle" to-day signed Emily Nicol, of Auckland, the secretary of a Red Cross Nursing Brigade, which offered a contingent of nurses for the front and received a snubbing "No, thanks" as reward. She is (not perhaps unnaturally) spiteful on the subject of the hospital mismanagement, and hits out recklessly. It may smooth her ruffled feathers to learn that a picked body of London lady nurses (boasting far higher professional qualifications and experience than I suspect, Auckland's gallant little band could claim) were equally firmly repudiated. The truth is the military authorities—fearful of scandal—didn't want nurses. There were, I know, scores in Capetown who simply couldn't get to the front. Such dandies of wrinkled visage and uncertain age as arrived were promptly picked up, but not the attractive Flossies and Topsyies who had just decided—the darlings!—that to nurse a nice, handsome Tommy Atkins was their vocation.

Mr Lawson Johnston, who died last Saturday, aged 65, was the inventor of "Bovril," out of which he made in round figures two millions. He devoted his attention early in life to the composition of concentrated foods, and succeeding beyond his anticipations tried a number of experiments on the lines of Liebig. From one of these came "Bovril," which proved more savoury and palatable than any of its predecessors. It is unquestionably the best thing of its kind, and very unlikely to be improved on.

The literary riddle is an engaging pastime of the moment which I can cordially recommend to Christmas parties on a hot afternoon at the Antipodes. The hostess asks "Why did Anthony Hope?" and after several futile replies such as "Because the Heart of Princess Oara was his," a prize is awarded to the ingenious inventor of "Because Mrs Campbell Praed." A favourite conundrum of this class is "Why did Julie 'Opp?' Answers are various, but the favourite seems to be "Because she heard Hayda Coffin." One is also asked: "What gave Barry Pain?" "To see Flora Haggard?" "Because he had to Marie Corelli." A very neat one. Finally, as a mixture of sport and politics, "When does Albert Trotter?" "When Gibson Bowles."

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**Personal Paragraphs.**  
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Mrs Arthur Russell (Palmerston North) and her family spent Christmas with Mrs Russell's parents, Mr and Mrs T. C. Williams, in Wellington.

The Mayor of Christchurch, Mr Reece, and his family are spending the Christmas holidays at Kowhai Bush.

Mr Stead and Mr Wilfred Stead were among the Christchurch visitors to Auckland for the races this week.

Mrs Buttes (Wellington) has returned to Wellington from her visit to Hawera, where she was present at her son's wedding.

Dr. and Mrs Cleghorn arrived in Wellington last week by the Waiwera, from their trip to England.

Miss Hilda Moorhouse (Wellington) is staying with Mr and Mrs Jack Stodholme, at Coldstream, South Canterbury.

Miss Johnston (Wellington) is the guest of Mrs W. Barton, at Fareham, Featherston.

Mrs Marshbanks and her sisters, the Misses Gore (Wellington), went to Christchurch last week for the tennis championship meeting, which is being held there.

Miss Fitzroy (Napier) is staying with Mrs W. Harten, at Featherston, for the Taubauuika races.

Mrs Ralph Fitzherbert (Marston) is visiting her relatives in Wellington, with her little daughter.

The Bishop of Wellington and Mrs Wallis were present at the distribution of prizes at the Wanganui Collegiate School on Tuesday last, his Lordship the Bishop presenting the prizes.

Miss Coleridge (Wellington) has returned home from her visit to Mrs Walter Johnston at "Highden," Awahuri.

Amongst present visitors to Rotorua are Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Samuel, who are spending their honeymoon there. Mrs. Samuel was a daughter of the late Mr. Samuel Yates, of Parangarenga, and Mr. Samuel is the oldest son of Mr. Harry S. Samuel, Conservative M.P. for Limchouse, London. Mr. Samuel returned to New Zealand from South Africa last September, where he had been serving with the Gloucester Regiment, and was invited by a wound in the thigh. Owing to the recent death of the bride's father, the wedding was a very quiet affair, only relatives being bidden to the ceremony and quiet breakfast which followed.

A pleasant euchre party was held on Friday evening, the 4th instant, at the new tea-room, Hamilton. Nine tables. Mrs. Oldham won first lady's prize, a parasol, Mr. Sandes, first gentleman's, a pretty pair of silver sleeve-links, Mrs. Short (Ponsonby), won second ladies', a bottle of smelling-salts, and Mr. Cleghorn (North Shore), second gentlemen's, a pen-knife.

Mrs. J. Short (Ponsonby) has been spending the Christmas holidays with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Holloway, Hamilton East.

Mrs. Palarait (North Shore) has just returned home after a visit to her relatives at Hamilton.

Mr. Francis (Auckland), spent a night in Hamilton last week on his way to Rotorua for his holiday.

Mr. and Mrs. Stevens and family have gone to North Shore for some weeks. Mrs. Dyer and family (with whom they have changed residences) have come to Hamilton for the holidays.

Miss Parker, who has been staying with relatives in Melbourne for some months, has returned to her home, "Biverslea," Walkato.

Miss Matthews and Miss McHarg, late of Napier, have left for Auckland, their future home.

Lieutenant Ross, of Napier, who arrived from South Africa, was accorded a hearty welcome by the local volunteers and citizens. He went to the war with the Fourth Contingent, and, as his leave expires in a month, he will then return to the front.

Mrs. and Miss Devenish, of New Plymouth, are at present visiting Wanganui.

Dr. and Mrs. M. J. Christie have been visiting Mrs. H. Bayley (Mrs. Christie's mother), of New Plymouth, but have now returned, taking with them Mrs. Bayley for a short time.

Mrs. Anderson, of Wanganui, is visiting her mother, Mrs. Hursthouse, of New Plymouth.

Mr. N. Miller and Mr. Kibble, who have been visiting Rotorua, have returned to New Plymouth.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Shaw, of New Plymouth, are visiting the lakes of the South Island.

Miss Paul and Miss Lawson, of New Plymouth, are visiting Hawera.

Mrs. Tilly and Miss O. Tilly, of Auckland, are paying a visit to New Plymouth.

Mrs. W. D. and Miss Meares (Christchurch) are staying at Hammer Lodge, Hammer Springs.

Mr. Graham, Mr. F. Graham, and a number of other gentlemen, are away trout fishing.

Miss Garrick has gone to Timaru for a change, having been very unwell lately; Mrs. de Vries has gone with her.

Miss Lorrimer (Wellington) spent last week in Christchurch; she was the guest of Miss Fairhurst, and returned home on Monday.

Miss Leatham (Wellington) is on a visit to Mrs. Appleby (Christchurch).

Mr. G. G. Stead and Mr. W. Stead (of Christchurch) have returned from Auckland after the races.

Miss Freda Marsden (Christchurch) has gone to Wanganui for the holidays.

Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, The Point, have been staying at Miss Lean's, Cambridge Terrace, during the holidays.

Mr. Bright, of Blenheim, went to Napier to spend Christmas, where Mrs. Bright had arrived from Auckland to meet Dr. and Mrs. Cleghorn, who proceeded there shortly after their arrival from England.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Black, of Blenheim, spent the Christmas holiday with Mr. Pollard at "The Delta," Benwick.

Mr. Charles Fulton, of Blenheim, has been appointed a Government hemp grader, a position he is well qualified to fill.

Mrs. C. Watts, of Nelson, arrived in Blenheim on Saturday, and has gone to stay at Hank House, Waltholp, with Mrs. Monro.

Mr. Vickers (Blenheim) returned from Wellington on Thursday, where he had been spending a few days.

The Misses Anderson gave the tea at the Marlborough Tennis Courts, Blenheim, on Saturday afternoon, and a large number of members and friends were present, among whom were—Mesdames C. Watts (Nelson), Monro, E. Chaytor, Redman, Black, Griffiths, Anderson, James, P. Douglas, A. Green, B. Clouston, Greenfield, the Misses Horton (3), Smith, Chaytor, Hodson, Winstanley, Carkeek, M. Dousin, Farmer, Greenfield (3), Giblin, E. Bull, Broadbent, and Messrs Greenfield (2), Crump (Masterton), Rose (Wellington), Hunting, Dr. Anderson, and many others.

Mrs. Coleman and several other Napier ladies have presented a festival altar frontal, and also a set of hangings, embroidered with white lilies, for the pulpit, lectern, and litany desk of St. John's Napier Cathedral.

The Rev. Mr. McDonald, of Wai-pawa, while driving home from Takapau through the Waipukurau Gorge, last week, met with an accident, owing to his horse falling and breaking the shafts, thus throwing out the occupants of the vehicle, who fortunately, however, except for a few bruises, were not much hurt.

Miss McLaughlin has arrived in Napier, after a long absence in Wellington.

Mrs. and Miss Margolouth, after about a month's visit to Auckland, have returned to their home on Milton Terrace, Napier.

Miss Lyndon, of Napier, has left for a visit to the South.

Mr. Dinwiddle, of Napier, has gone to Christchurch to be present at the Championship Tennis Tournament, now being held there.

Dr. Cleghorn, late of Blenheim, has returned from a visit to England, and is now staying at the Masonic Hotel, Napier.

Mrs. Westall, of Napier, is staying with friends in the country.

Mr. J. W. Joynt, of Wellington, is in Nelson for the holidays.

Mrs. and the Misses Fell, of Nelson, have gone to Wellington for a trip.

Mr. Harold Moore, of Wellington, is staying in Nelson with his people.

Mrs. and Miss Broad, of Wellington, spent Christmas with Mrs. Colt, Brightwater, Nelson.

Mr. E. Lewis, of Wellington, was in Nelson for Christmas.

Mr. R. Kingdon, of Nelson, has gone South for a trip.

The Misses Stevens, Ethel Ledger, and Dorothy Bell, of Nelson, left by coach last week to spend Christmas with Mrs. W. Adams, "Langleydale," Blenheim.

Miss E. Atkinson, Christchurch, is spending her holidays with her mother in Nelson. Mr. P. Atkinson, of Westport, is also home for a few days.

Miss Lita Jones, of Auckland, is visiting her people in Nelson.

Miss Poole, who has been in Ashburton for many months, has returned to her home in Nelson. Her brother, Mr. H. Poole, is also back in Nelson for a few days.

Miss Olivier, of Christchurch, is visiting friends in Nelson.

Mr. and Mrs. James Marsden (nee Miss Eves) arrived in Nelson last week from Napier, and have gone to their pretty home at Stoke.

Miss Amy Cameron, of Auckland, is to be married on the 26th inst. to Mr. W. E. Rendall, of Wellington, and the wedding is to take place from her sister's (Mrs. Wm. Clayton) house, where she has been staying for some time. Miss Ethel Cameron, who has been on a long visit to her brothers in San Francisco, is expected back in time for the wedding.

Canon and Mrs. Pascoe are expected back in Christchurch shortly, having left England by the Gothic on November 22.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Kaye and a party have gone over to the West Coast for the Christmas holidays.

Mr. T. Garrard left for Hammer Springs on Monday morning for a week; the long hours and work at the Exhibition are proving very trying for him.

Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Wallace have gone to Albury (South Canterbury) for the holidays.

Mr. and Mrs. Alex. Newton (Wellington) are in Christchurch on a visit.

The influx of visitors to Rotorua during the holidays has been tremendous. Amongst the visitors from Auckland were noticed Mr and Mrs S. Hesketh, Mr and Mrs Baume, Mr, Mrs and Miss A. H. Nathan, Mr and Mrs J. K. Reed, Mr, Mrs and the Misses Bault, and Mr and Mrs Edmiston.

Mr. Austino Pavitt (Wellington) has been visiting his people in Greymouth.

Mr and Mrs E. Thomas, of Greymouth, leave for an extended visit to the North this week.

Mr. Austino Pavitt (Wellington) has been staying with his sister, Mrs Leslie Bull, in Greymouth.

Miss Edith Taylor, of Greymouth, has left for a prolonged holiday in Australia.

Miss Duncean, of Hokitika, has come to Greymouth for the races.

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