The Arm-Chair Warrior.

Ye amateurs of England
Who keep your native seats
And criticise so bravely
The fighting man's defeats ;
Ye turkey-carpet warriors
Who ventilate your view
Or what could be accomplished
If things were left to you.

My paper-map civilians
One cannot but admire
With how sublime a courage
You face the clubroom fire ;
With what prophetic wisdom
You speak the warning word,
Choosing the happy moment
When things have just occurred !

There runs to ancient proverb,
Good for the swollen head,
How fools rush in serenly
Where angels fear to tread ;
But here the common mortal,
The stroller down the street,
Knows better than to follow
Your rash, intruding feet.

Is not our task enough, Sirs,
To bear the present hurt,
That you on wounded honour
Must dump your little dirt ?
You, from your padded armchair,
Safe in a sea-locked land,
While those you snirch are holding
Their lives within their hand.

When we are short of critics
To sum the final blame,
We'll ask a fighter's verdict
Upon a fighter's game ;
But you who pass opinions
On work but half begun,
Please give us your credentials
Show something you have done.

—Punch.

Cross Country Locomotives.

When the Boers sent their ultimatum to the British Government, the British War Office was confronted with this great problem : Given, a magnificent army at rail-head, in or near the enemy's country, supplied with every conceivable necessity with which to crush its enemies. Question, how to transport the supplies to the army when it sets out beyond rail-head into the enemy's territory, where horse-transports cannot be relied on safely owing to the plague of rinderpest and to the ravages of the deadly tsetse-fly.

This question the British War Office met with the prompt answer : "Traction-engines."

Not a moment was lost in organizing what may be called "The Traction-Engine Brigade." All the Government steam sappers that could be spared were at once overhauled ; in all parts of the country road-engines were sought out that would be suitable for the Transport Company's purpose ; one or two of the engines were armored ; suitable trucks and waggons were made ready ; engine-drivers, stokers and mechanics were enlisted, being drawn largely from railway reserve men ; and roomy road-cars, resembling gypsy caravans, for the use of officers in charge of trains, were built and fitted.

As at present arranged, the Transport Company in charge of the engines consist of a total strength of 130 men, with a captain and subaltern, six sergeants, four corporals, and a competent staff of mechanics, drivers, stokers, and smiths.

THE TYPE OF WAGGON.

The February number of Pearson's Magazine will contain a description of the new engine and couches by Mr. J. M. Woodward. The steam sappers are all of one pattern, fitted with interchangeable parts, so that one driver would be at home with any engine, and in case of accident repairs could be easily made. Each engine cost upward of $5,000 ; the road-cars for the officers upward of $500.

One type of waggon has been designed with the special purpose of transporting compressed forage for the horses ; it will carry sufficiently compressed forage to last 3,000 horses for three days—an incalculable advantage in a land of barren veldts and sparse pasturage, consisting often only of "sour grass," poisonous to horses. A special type of engine is fitted in front with a crane attachment for the object of lifting heavy weights. Suppose, for instance, a laden train upsets and falls into a ravine. The crane-engine would be brought up, a wire hawser would be run out from the crane, and one after another the overturned engine and trucks would be quickly and easily hauled out, and set on their wheels again.

There is no comparison between steam and horse transport. Supposing, for example, a load of twenty tons is to be carried to the front. With horses, twenty general service waggons would be required, ninety horses, and forty-eight men ; 1,800 pounds of forage would be necessary for the horses, 5,400 pounds of water. The average daily length of march would be fifteen miles.

To move twenty tons fifteen miles, a traction engine requires of coal 500 pounds, and of water 400 pounds. In place of forty-eight men, only a driver and a stoker are necessary, and perhaps an escort of ten men.

At the halt the horses require forage and water in the same quantity as when marching. The engine, not eating when not working, costs nothing. The horses would soon break down under heavy, continuous daily marching ; the engine can easily perform on good roads fifty miles per day month after month.

Each engine can be used as a "winding engine," being fitted with a winding drum and seventy-five yards of steel rope. When guns or baggage fall into heavy, boggy ground, from which no horses could pull them, an engine would soon extricate them ; or it could draw guns over marshy ground where horses would be unable to gain a foothold.

Suppose, again, that an engine drawing a heavy load up a hill breaks down midway, so that no persuasion will induce it to proceed. Another engine comes to the rescue. It takes up its position at about thirty yards ahead ; its wire hawser is unwound and attached to the unwilling hill-climber. Then the winding drum is set in motion—the engine remaining stationary ; the wire is wound in, and the engine is drawn up until it is again able to forge ahead unaided.

By unwinding its rope, and attaching it to some distant, stationary object, an engine could wind itself through almost any impediment that is likely to arise. It can perform a useful service in sawing wood and pumping water for the use of troops encamped. By an attachment of pumps, each engine can deliver 2,000 gallons per hour to an altitude of 300 feet, and can send the troops water at this rate through a portable main half a mile long, thus alone saving a camp of say 10,000 men seventy-one pairs of water-cart horses.