

claims them to be the most unserviceable, useless and foolish contrivances of the whole 'outfit.' I won't hurt your feelings by insinuations as to the knowledge of the inventor, for he might possibly be a relation of your's. We all agree in the fact that a most important consideration is the marching powers of troops, especially when they are out against Indians, or any of our likely North-west agitators. This can only be brought about by easing the girths as it were, of the clothing, by making it more suitable to the work of a campaign, and reducing to a minimum the weight of the remainder of the soldier's load.

"If you will kindly follow me through this letter, and spare me any contradictions till I finish, my hopes are that I will succeed in convincing you that the important weight of 4 lbs. 15 oz. can be removed from the backs and hands of a marching soldier. As a successful way of grasping my notions, let me ask you to get into 'marching order,' go into some quiet country road and walk for a week through all weathers, and about midday try the plan of removing the articles I mention, which will lighten your load to the extent named. If you find it no relief, why I am willing to give in as beaten.

"Most people know what six or seven pounds will do with a horse in a handicap race. Every day we see a winner of a former race beaten by the addition of weight representing that of the useless things carried by our soldiers. If this trivial addition makes such a difference at the finish on a thoroughbred, we can surmise what will be the effect, clinging and dangling, as unfortunately happens, distributed about the person of our warriors. The whole make-up is constructed on theoretical grounds that fail completely on service.

"A marching order parade is delightful to gaze on, as the men emerge from their barrack rooms, fall in, are inspected, and dismissed. But give them a little real work, and they are quite as helpless as an ancient 'crusader' would prove if required to saw wood.

"No one can dispute the fact that any fine body of men, well equipped in the present style, are a stirring sight to behold, and we are lost in admiration while contemplating the numerous straps, buckles, &c., that display such care and neatness on the part of well trained men.

"But practice proves that after all our delight should be similar to that we would experience, in viewing the delicate texture and ingenious mouldings of the armour of "Ivanhoe," or some other hero of the past, who would find 'scoutin' for Middleton' in the garb of the middle ages uncomfortable work. I believe that there was a time when all these fixings and fine clothing had a beneficial effect on the savage, by inspiring him with awe, and for a period the poor 'Injun' imagined it foolish in the extreme to dream of opposing such perfect warriors. But this is now completely altered. The red man (no fool at any time) has grasped the fact that in his bluffs and swamps he has us at an advantage, and all our glitter of strappings, pipe clay, and steel, is harmless when the actual fighting begins. Those who, from long residence on the plains, were fully alive to the facts so apparent now to the returned troops, arrayed themselves in appointments appropriate for the service required; consequently they were by far the most serviceable men that Sir Frederick Middleton had with him, being unhampered with trappings and instructed in the two requisites for Indian combat: 'How to shoot,' and 'how to take care of themselves.'

"Now let me suggest the removal first of an article that involves the greatest number of binders on a man's body. Just pick up the 'valise,' empty, and notice the straps, dangling from it, the weight of which or its attachments are not included in the figures mentioned above. Now this pretty affair is entirely out of place, as part of the soldier's kit. I know quite well you won't credit that. I earnestly advocate putting the thing in the fire. On no campaign, as far as I can make out, is it ever used; with us it simply remained in the wagons, and afforded exercise and amusement to the tired men, after a day's work, by getting hopelessly mixed, and often delayed the owners for hours in fruitless search for their own. In spite of all this the thing is carefully kept at home in barracks, where it is polished, and petted, and inspected. Men are compelled to carry it stuffed full for a march, just to get up a perspiration, or as many officers say, to 'teach the men to march.' All I can say is, 'Heaven help the men who have to march in such a condition, in active warfare.' No; if troops are going a distance they must have some kind of transport, or carts, and into these good waterproof squad bags can always be put, the proper and only necessary thing for them.

"If not going a distance, and transport is not required, they don't require anything. Fancy a civilian in England, at any railway station, selecting his trunk from five hundred other trunks all the same in appearance.

"This is precisely what occurs with soldiers. A cartload of valises when it gets to camp will be turned over by each man in search of his own, just about as many times as there are valises in the cart. What

a world of trouble it would save if squad bags were made, round, divided in the centre, open at each end, and each man's number marked on the ends. If men could leave for foreign parts without other receptacles for their kits the valise might answer, but they can't, as the foolish affair holds only a few trivial articles crushed into it and when crowded it bursts. It is invariably necessary to carry bags, thus adding to the number of articles for which a man is held responsible.

"Observe a number of men moving by railway in our days. They arrive at a station, and turn out of the cars with packs, and worm through the crowd, so stuck out before and behind, that their way must be taken by open spaces and broad doorways—to the spot where they fall in. Then it becomes necessary to get at their stuff, whatever it may be, from some baggage room, and while removing this dunnage the crowd stand about and admire the soldiers, strapped and packed, perspiring, and miserable, trying to work under circumstances that would bring on apoplexy with ordinary mortals. If their kits were in the bags, instead of on their backs, how much more happy, serviceable, and cool the men would be. If it is worth while retaining the valise or knapsack to a torn the barrack room, or for the ignorant to say: 'how fine,' 'how workmanlike,' why, well and good, but if men are expected to be suitably equipped for the field, as I suggested before with the tunics, serve them out to the 'reserve.'

"In this letter I find no space to take up the subject of those articles which make up the five pounds proposed reduction. The valise being over and above this, and as we never carried it, the principal fault to be found with it was the space it occupied in our wagons, and the wonderful faculty it possessed of losing itself when wanted."

MOUNTED INFANTRY.

BY COL. J. F. MACANDREW, BENGAL STAFF CORPS.

But if full use is to be made of mounted infantry, it must be specially trained for its purpose. Hitherto this has not been done, except in the case of Sir Charles Napier's camel corps, which was abolished to save money alone and because its value was not understood at headquarters. We are in a position to state positively, on the very best authority, that it was disbanded, not because it was ever found inefficient, for it was quite efficient, but because its efficiency had removed the cause which called it into existence, and as it cost more, of course, than the same number of ordinary infantry, it was deemed a suitable object on which to exercise the temporary pressure for reduction of expenditure. Except in this instance mounted infantry has only been organized in the British service when war has actually broken out, and always by officers who had not themselves been trained to the arm or even carefully studied the theory of it. The latest instance is the camel corps of the Soudan, and it is not to be denied that the result was disappointing. The corps had no fair play. It was composed of detachments from different cavalry regiments, with only such infantry training as cavalry get. These men were mounted singly on inefficient and untrained camels, and were sent to the front under officers unacquainted with the men as one body, and wholly inexperienced in the kind of duty on which they were to be employed, or in the management of the animal that was to form their mount. The Soudan camel is, by all accounts, a small, underfed, weak creature, quite unfit for the work, and any camel requires the care of a man acquainted with its habits and requirements. Some better animals were obtained from Aden, but generally their quality and condition have been described to us as indifferent. Further, to make matters more difficult, the beast was turned over to the care of a totally inexperienced British private soldier, usually not the most patient, judicious, and careful person in the world, and who, when he got down to fight, had to leave his wretched camel to take care of itself, without his having any idea when he might get back to it. Left in a desert, without forage or water, and most probably tied by the leg to prevent their wandering away, is it any marvel or at all contrary to what was to be expected that the camels should die by the hundred and the men become dismounted and inefficient for the purpose for which they were embodied? It is thus that, in all our wars, we unnecessarily spend enormous sums because the politically active section of our people, in spite of all experience, refuse to believe in war as a thing to be prepared for. When it comes, and all are agreed on the necessity for exertion, we have to meet the exigency, not only without preparation, but without the knowledge of how to set about it, because our politicians set their faces in time of peace against any such considerations, and the waste and loss is incalculable, for transcending any annual expenditure that would be necessary for adequate preparation, let alone for the mere acquisition of the necessary knowledge. Hence we are obliged to rely solely on the courage and conduct of our officers and men, unnecessarily handicapped, to save us from serious