

The Rifle.

A NEW SOUTH WALES MEETING.

The Australian mails bring news of a very successful six days prize meeting, held under the auspices of the New South Wales Rifle Association, at the Randwick range. General public interest was taken in the gathering. The official functionaries of the colony, including Lord Jersey (Governor), Admiral Lord Charles Scott, General Richardson (commanding military forces), and other leading officers of the services, and members of both houses of the legislature, evinced much active interest in the success of the meeting.

The Governor at a luncheon given by the association on the range, under the presidency of Sir William MacLellan, said he was pleased to learn that the targets in use were of colonial invention. He looked upon the association as an institution working for the public good. While the military commander said the association exercised an immense influence of a beneficial kind over that branch of the public service which he had the honour to command, he knew of nothing which exercised a more powerful effect. Whatever system might be inaugurated to draw men to the colours in the colonies, he believed the association would have as great, if not greater, effect than any other.

Among the more important events of the meeting, as having an interest beyond the limits of the colony, was the international team match. In this contest Australia, England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales were represented by teams of eight, who fired ten shots at 500 and 600 yards. To the honour of the native team be it said, they came out top by 34 points from the Irish, who were eight points in front of the Scots. The eight representing England were 48 points behind the winners, and Wales whipped in the quintette of teams. The objectives of the match are the international challenge cup, and gold medals to the captain and members of the successful eight.

In the match open to regimental teams of ten, firing fifteen shots at 600 yards, for prizes of £25, £15, and three of £10 each, the R.N.A.V. team beat the whole of the land service teams, making 600 points out of a possible 750. The other four prizes fell to the 4th Regiment, Naval Brigade, 2nd Regiment Reserves, and the Engineers. For the championship of the meeting, which carries the gold medal of the association, and the sum of £100, three competitors tied with a grand aggregate of 375 points, counting the scores in four qualifying competitions. The trio shot off by firing three rounds at 700 yards, with the result that Private Francis (Gerrigong) was the victor, scoring eleven points, as against Lieutenant Honey (Kiama) nine points, and Sergeant Kennedy (Kingston College Cadets) six points.

MODERN WEAPONS.

The British Intelligence Department has been preparing a list of modern rifles and carbines. Of 22 European nations only Greece, Roumania, Egypt, Servia, and Spain still have single-loaders. Belgium has the lightest rifle and Portugal the heaviest. In Belgium and Turkey is found the smallest calibre, it being .301 in., while the largest of the magazine rifles are those of Holland and China. The farthest sighted of all is the Lee-Metford, which is sighted at 3500 yards. This carries 8 rounds in its magazines, but in the latter point is exceeded by Switzerland with 12 and Portugal with 9, and equaled by France and Japan. The Mannlicher is adopted by only three nations, while the Lee finds favor in six, besides France, which has adopted what is substantially the Lee, without the complications it was necessary to introduce into it to secure its adoption by England. An English contemporary says: "The temptations of officialism to admire what is apparently irresistible. Our authorities are still unable to make up their minds on the subject of the best gun and are much in the position of the man who spent his life in seeking the unknowable and striving after the unattainable. We shall never reach this point until we are informed by divine revelation as to which is the gun of the future. We must, perforce, devote our fallible human judgments to the selection of the best obtainable gun of the present."

THE GERMAN RIFLE.

The correspondent of the London *Times* at the German autumn manoeuvres thinks that the German rifle is "the simplest and most practical military weapon yet put into the hands of any soldier. There is no "cut off" to convert the magazine rifle to a single-loader, liable to jam from various causes, no necessity for recharging the magazine, and no possibility of finding it empty at a critical moment. The soldier simply opens the breech, thrusts in a little metal case containing five cartridges, and fires them in succession. The fifth time he draws back the block the empty case is ejected and another put in, so that no time is wasted in fumbling for single cartridges. Further, the arrangement of the expense pouch offers practically the advantage of a magazine. The pouch on the right hand side is kept constantly full from the others, and its lid when open falls outwardly, possessing herein a great advantage over all others. "As a practical arrangement," we are assured, "this gave to the old Mauser single loader all the advantages of a magazine rifle, and enabled it to fire within the minute a greater number of rounds without the many disadvantages of the latter—such as empty magazine at the critical moment, etc. Another practical point I noticed is the packing of these cartridges." Each little case of five cartridges is packed with two others in a card-

board packet closed by a strip of tape, which is pulled off by a jerk, and uncovers not only the cases, but holes cut out for the fingers and thumb to grasp them by. The advantages of this simple arrangement are obvious; no time is lost in stowing away the separate cartridges; they can be thrown down in the shooting line without dust and grit sticking to the lubricant; the distribution of ammunition is rendered more easy, and also its collection from the wounded. Fifteen of these packets go into a larger and stronger millboard box, which is closed in the same manner, and to which is further attached a piece of strong webbing, by which it can be readily lifted out of the ammunition wagons, and two of them knotted together can be conveniently carried over the shoulders or by any sort of a stick, their joint weight being about 32 lbs. and their contents 550 pounds, or 225 each. Five more of these boxes go into a regular ammunition box, which can be readily opened and the contents tumbled out. The weight of the new cartridges is about three to two of the old ones, hence for the 100 rounds formerly carried the man now carries 150, which are distributed in the following manner: 30 rounds in each of the front pouches, and 90 rounds in a separate pouch behind. With the new Italian rifle 160 of its smokeless powder cartridges can be carried. It is four feet long (12 metres) and of 85 millimetres (.358) calibre. It has an initial velocity of 720 metres (2,382 feet) per second and it is said that the ball will pierce two mattresses and two planks 12 centimetres (5 inches) thick at a distance of 1,200 metres, or 4,000 feet. Loading is effected by means of magazines containing five cartridges, so arranged that a repeating fire may be maintained until the magazine is exhausted. The muzzle velocity of the French Berthier is 2,071 feet per second."

We are delighted to hear that ex King Milan late of Servia, is about to proceed to Persia as General-in-chief of the Shah's cavalry. The latter when it has been duly reorganised by its new chief, will become the wonder of the civilised world. We believe we are correct in supposing that General Milan will pay particular attention to the morals of the officers and men under his command, and that gambling and offences calculated to bring the holy tie of matrimony into contempt, will be dealt with most severely under his régime. There is, we may, add no foundation for the report that simultaneously with the ex-King of Servia's deputation to Teheran, Queen Nathalie will proceed to Dinohney for the purpose of reorganising the local Amazons. But several decayed and more or less dissolute princelings are, we understand, in active negotiation with the Amir of Cabul and other oriental despots anxious to have their troops instructed according to the most approved European models—*Broad Arrow*.