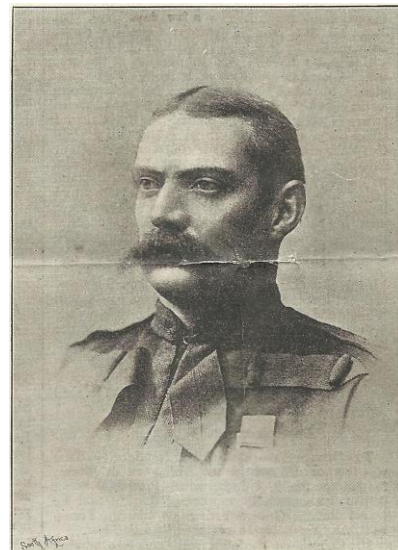


WILLIAM HENRY BOOTHBY PHILLIPS (1873-75)

We were contacted by his great granddaughter, Fritha Davidson. Sadly we had little information on his time at the College but she had a fascinating letter he wrote to his father when starting in September 1873. It gives a real insight into life at the College over 140 years ago and within 10 years of the College opening.

As well as the photo of him, Fritha has provided below a transcript of the letter, followed by information on his early life and then scans of the original letter.



Albert College
Framlingham
Sept 17th 1873

Dear Papa

I arrived safe at a quarter to nine. Mr Bird was down at the station. I gave him the letter. I walked up to the school with hi. Those boys which were in the train with me did not go to Fram. But got out at Witham where three brothers got in who were going to the College. At Ipswich I did not have to get my box out of the train because they took the luggage van off the excursion train and shunted it on to the Framlingham one. We had to change at another station about half way from Fram. Where I got my box out all right without any trouble. At the Fram. Station we had nothing to do but to get out of the train. The luggage was sent up by the Company next morning so I had to borrow a piece of soap & flannel & a towel off the housemaid. I got the box and unpacked this morning. There are no tall hats worn here so I put mine in the big box and gave it to the housemaid. There are 16 maids & 14 men & boys to look after the place. We are only allowed to go down the town on Mondays & Thursdays. I slept very well but it was rather cold. Most boys bring travelling rugs with them & put them on the bed. There are 22 boys in the dormitory with me. Some have 50 but our one was only opened yesterday. I had a pretty good breakfast of cold beef & coffee. We had hot roast beef soup & potatoes for dinner. We need not have any thing we don't like if we prefer going without. The monitors serve it out. There are two windmills in sight which are always at work. I passed them while I was in the train. It is half holiday today but we go to work at 7 till 8 when we have supper. We did not get up until ¼ to eight this morning. Other times we are to get up at ½ past 6. We do not march out all together but go out in two or threes. It is a very nice county Suffolk, plenty of fields & lanes. There is to be harvest thanksgiving next Sunday & I think we are going. I must conclude as the roll is just going to be called & hoping your leg is better & love to all the family.

*I remain
Your affectionate son*

WHB Phillips

Fritha has also provided the following information on his early life :-

William joined the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police in 1876, and served in the Gaika-Galeka War in 1877-9, including the final attack on Moirosi's Mountain, and the capture of the Stronghold (medal with clasp); the Basuto Rebellion in 1880-1, including the siege of Mafeteng; was promoted to Lieutenant to the Cape Mounted Riflemen (CMR) in 1881; served with the Pondoland Field Force in 1894-5, and in the Boer War in 1899-1900; present at the operations in the Orange Free State and the defence of Wepener, the operations in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, including the actions at Wittebergen (Queen's South Africa Medal with four clasps, and the King's South Africa Medal with two clasps). He also holds the Diamond Jubilee medal as he led a group of CMR troops to attend Queen Victoria's Celebrations in 1897. There is an account of this in the attached transcript of an article from the South Africa journal.

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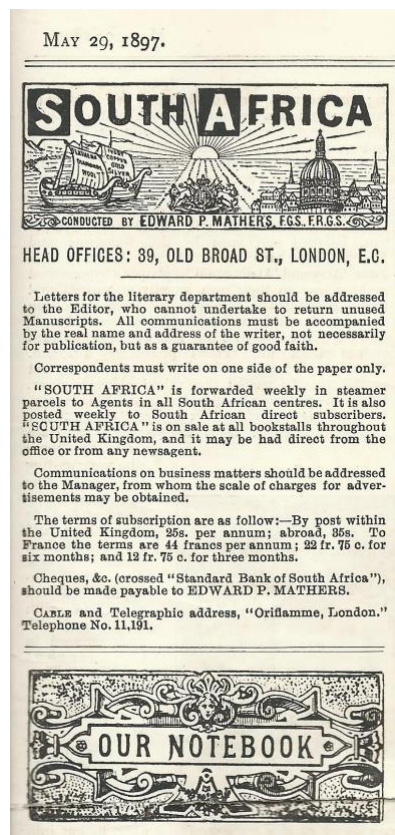
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Your affectionate son

W. B. Phillips.

Appendix : Excerpt from the magazine, SOUTH AFRICA - MAY 29, 1897



EDUCATION IN THE CAPE COLONY.

CHURCH WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA.

EMIGRATION TO THE CAPE COLONY.

"A BECHUANALAND MORNING."

WHY CAPE TOWN PROSPERS.

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE JUBILEE.

ARRIVAL OF CAPE MOUNTED RIFLEMEN.

A HEARTY SEND-OFF FROM SIR G. SPRIGG'

AND A WARM WELCOME AT LONDON,

THEIR QUARTERS AT CHELSEA

The *Arundel Castle*, carrying the detachment of Cape Mounted Riflemen who are to take part in the Diamond Jubilee procession, arrived off Plymouth last Saturday forenoon. By the courtesy of the Castle Company, writes a *South Africa* representative, I was enabled to board the vessel and enjoy the tail end of the voyage round to London. The weather was perfect, and this, combined with the kind attentions of the *Arundel's* popular commander, Captain Winder, made the trip an exceedingly pleasant one. Most of the passengers went ashore at Plymouth, but the Cape Mounted Riflemen preferred to stick to the vessel till the last. From the cordiality of the leave-takings with their fellow-voyagers, it was evident that they had made themselves general favourites during the passage from the Cape. This was not surprising, for their bearing to all was that of thorough gentlemen. Although not then in uniform, they were readily distinguished by their smart and soldierly appearance, and the easy athletic grace of all their movements. Most of them were "lazing around" the deck in cricket jackets and polo caps, absorbing as much of the sunshine as is possible on the shore of England. They are commanded by Lieutenant Phillips, who is justly proud of his men. Their names are Sergeant Whally, Corporal Brown, Corporal Clowes, and Privates Kelly, Cooke, Hodgson, St. Lo Malet, Grobrien, Hobson, Douglas, Davies, Howard, Noel Nesbitt, Judd, and Barrett. Mr.

Noel Nesbitt is a brother of Captain Nesbitt, who lately received the Victoria Cross for his gallant services in Rhodesia.

THE "TREK" FROM UMTATA.

From the youngest to the oldest, the troopers are a set of fine-looking fellows – stalwart, broad-backed, muscular, and well-trained in gymnastic exercise. Their average height is 5 ft. 11 ½ ins., and four or five of them stand 6 ft. and over. They showed the stuff they are made of by "trekking" from Umtata down to Kingwilliamstown, a distance of about 160 miles, at the rate of something like 40 miles a day, and that under a blazing sun that would peel Tommy Atkins's¹ skin in two hours. The main road from Umtata is a fairly good one, but it runs up and down hill all the way, so that 40 miles a day must be considered a very good average, creditable alike to the men and to their horses. The horses, by the way, were left behind, the intention being to supply the men with cavalry horses on this side. South African horses are tough and wiry, and capable of an amount of work that would stagger the most energetic of home-bred steeds, but they would hardly make so imposing a spectacle in the midst of a "swell" procession. Unlike the English charger, they are not accustomed to "showing off," and their stature is about two hands beneath the standard of the latter. Moreover, had they been brought across, it is the opinion of the men that the prolonged inactivity would have been almost fatal to animals

¹ Tommy Atkins (often just Tommy) is [slang](#) for a common [soldier](#) in the [British Army](#). "Tommy Atkins" was chosen as a [generic name](#) by the [War Office](#) in 1815, in the sample infantry form in the [Soldiers Account Book](#).

accustomed to such unlimited freedom as they enjoy on the veld. It is certain, at all events, that they would have reached this country in a hopelessly crippled condition, which would have made them useless for weeks to come. All things considered, therefore, the men were wise to leave them behind.

PREMIERS IN SPORT.

On reaching Kingwilliamstown, the men were quartered in the barracks of the corps, where they awaited instructions as to the date of their departure. Thence they took train to East London, and there embarked on the *Arundel Castle*. At East London, Port Elizabeth, and Cape Town they were accorded a very hearty reception, large crowds assembling to cheer them on their departure. At Cape Town, Sir Gordon Sprigg went on board, and inspected the men on parade, complimenting them highly on their exceedingly smart appearance, and expressing the hope that they would acquit themselves with credit to the Colony. The Premier was accompanied by Colonel Ffolliott. In the course of the voyage the troopers engaged in a tug-of war with the first, second, and third-class passengers, and come off victorious on each occasion, but they were beaten in a similar struggle with the crew. In all other sports, such as cock-fighting, long jump, high jump, cricket, football, &c., they took a prominent part, generally carrying off the chief prizes.

THE TRIP FROM PLYMOUTH.

Between Plymouth and London the time of the troopers was fully and pleasantly occupied in watching for the many landmarks along the coast, once familiar and now by

many of them half-forgotten. About noon on Sunday we turned into the Thames and as the sun was shining brightly, a splendid view was obtained along both banks. Sheerness, Shoeburyness, and Southend pier looked very pretty in the distance, and were eagerly scanned by the troopers. From time to time a trim little yacht shot through the water, with sails gleaming white in the sun, followed perchance by the Ramsgate and Margate leviathans, on which, with the help of a glass, 'Arry and 'Arriet² could be plainly distinguished making love in their own sweetly unconventional way. Passing the *Warspite* the boys were seen manning the yards, and as Sunday is regarded as an "off-day", they inference was that they had swarmed aloft to have a squint at the Cape Mounted Riflemen. The rigging of the vessel was alive with them, and as the *Arundel* passed they raised a hearty cheer. Up to this point the troopers had been taking it easy and strolling around in their *negligé* attire; but now they began to bustle about and prepare to captivate the hearts of those who were waiting on shore. One by one they descended to their cabins, and after a mysterious absence of some duration reappeared on deck glorified with Khaki, and with limbs encased in the elegant "putties." They were quite aware of the impression they made. About four in the afternoon we arrived at Blackwall, but it was not till an hour later that we were able to put into dock. Meanwhile the papas and mammas and pretty cousins had to wait on shore with what patience they could command, and wave handkerchiefs and blow kisses to the "dear boys," who, of course, were not slow blow

them back again. One old gentleman, with a benevolent smile and a pair of tartan trousers, declared that is seemed like four hours, not four years, since he had seen his youngster off. At last a gangway was let down to the "dummy," which enabled friends to come aboard. Amongst the first arrivals was Mr. Williams, Secretary to the Agent-General for Cape Colony, who came to apprise the troopers of the arrangements that had been made for their comfort. He brought them also the sad tidings of the fate of their comrades in Bechuanaland, which for a moment chilled the joy of meeting old friends. The troopers were especially moved by the death of Price, who appeared to have been a general favourite amongst them. Lieutenant Grant, an officer of the Cape Mounted riflemen, who has been in England for some time, was also among those who met the detachment. Then the papas and mammas and pretty cousins and sisters – and other fellows' sisters – came crowding on deck, and were lost in admiration of their heroes. Captain R.G. Mathew, of the army Service Corps, representing Lieutenant – Colonel E.W.D. Ward, D.A.A.G.³ Home District, met the troopers at the dockside, whence they marched to Blackwall Station, taking train thence to Fenchurch Street. Outside Fenchurch Street Station, their appearance attracted considerable attention, and many and curious were the speculations as to "who the blokes were, and w'ere they came from." From Mark Lane they proceeded by the underground railway to Sloan Square, and marched thence to Chelsea Barracks, where they

² Generic Cockney man or woman

³ Deputy Assistant Adjutant General

very soon made themselves at home.

FUN ON THE "UNDERGROUND."

Pleasant as the voyage had been, the novelty of its charms had been somewhat exhausted by the time the troopers reached land. The sports that filled the long sunny hours during the first two weeks or so had been abandoned, and during the last few hours on board *ennui* was only averted by excited expectations of the good time they were to have at home. They were therefore in the highest spirits during the somewhat depressing journey between Blackwall and Chelsea. The hideous nightmare of the East End sat but lightly on their 34 ½-inch chests, and even the horrors of the underground third-class carriage failed to appal them. Their animal spirits, which had been decorously bottled up for the traditional observance of Sunday at sea, now burst the stopper and effervesced in innocent merriment. The odour of sanctity was frankly dissipated in the fumes of the "underground." A harmless jest was indulged at the expense of the not too elegant "Metropolitan" carriages, and a pious hope was expressed that John Bull⁴ would not spoil their fighting fibre with too many soft cushions. At each stoppage the puzzled railway officials were politely requested to "inspan the bullocks and go ahead." One of the Colonials, accustomed only to the half-Oriental architecture of the Cape, evoked a burst of laughter by remarking, with a look of assumed innocence, that the roofs of the houses seemed to be a bit bent. In

such lively fashion was the gloom of underground London relieved, but on lining up at Sloan Square the men showed what thorough soldiers they were by the rapidity with which they "squared up" and once more slid into their sockets like well-oiled joints in their own particular section of the huge military machine which is at once the protection and the pride of the British Empire.

Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, V.C., G.C.B.⁵, has been appointed Colonel-in-Chief, and Colonel Ivor Herbert, C.B.⁶, Grenadier Guards, Colonel of the contingents of the Colonial Forces for the period of their stay in this country.

A TROOPER'S LIFE IN PONDOLAND.

The Cape Mounted Riflemen number about 850 men, the great majority of whom have gone out from England, the proportion of Colonists in the ranks being very small. The Jubilee contingent consists entirely of Englishmen, with the exception of Nesbitt and Hobson, both of whom were born and bred in the Colony. Each trooper of the contingent has been equipped with carbine, revolver, sword and bandolier, and 42 rounds of ammunition. Most of them express themselves as highly delighted with the rough and adventurous life they lead at the Cape. Not only is it healthful and invigorating, but it is well adapted to develop that quick, calm, and resourceful courage which is distinctive of the English character. Indeed, the great grievance with most of these men seems to be that their life at the Cape of late has not been sufficiently exciting. The important, though somewhat inglorious, duties of keeping the

Pondos and the rinderpest in check, they are apt to speak of as the "dirty work" of their trade, and it must be confessed that they look with a certain amount of amiable jealousy upon the "lucky dogs" of the D.E.O.V.R. and other volunteer corps who are always sent to the front to "enjoy the fun." There is no compensating glory for the deadly dullness of watching the rinderpest, neither is there any medal to be won for correcting a "cheeky" Pondo. So that the present life of most of the troopers of the Cape Mounted Riflemen is, for the most part, a painfully uneventful one, and the chosen fifteen are likely to regard a procession through London as more diverting than a "trek" through Pondoland. True, about 250 of the corps are at present having what their comrades consider a "high old time" in Bechuanaland, under Colonel Dalgety, but these are only an insignificant fraction of the whole, and they are the envy of all the rest.

THE LIEUTENANT.

Lieutenant Phillips went out to South Africa about 21 years ago, entering the service of the old Frontier Armed Mounted Police. Those were exciting times on the frontier, and Mr. Phillips had his fair share of the fighting. He went through the whole of the Gaika and Geleka Campaigns, winning the medal for the years 1877-79. Luck followed him, however, for he came out of the hottest encounters without a single scratch. After this the corps was re-organised under its present name of the Cape Mounted Riflemen, Lieutenant Phillips still remaining a member. He had the pleasure of serving in the Basuto War, under Colonel Carrington, then better known in South Africa as "Fighting Fred." Lieutenant

⁴ John Bull is a national personification of the United Kingdom in general and England in particular, especially in political cartoons and similar graphic works. He is usually depicted as a stout, middle-aged, country dwelling, jolly, matter-of-fact man.

⁵ Victoria Cross, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath

⁶ Companion of the Order of the Bath

Phillips is a prime favourite with all his men. He comes of a fighting stock, his father and all his ancestors, for several generations, having been soldiers before him.

MATABELE MEDALLISTS.

Messrs. Brown and Grobien were members of the party that escorted Mr. Rhodes from Tati to Shangani in the first Matabele War, and are among the 35 of the Cape Mounted Riflemen who get the Matabele War Medal. On that memorable occasion they were in the saddle day after day, almost continuously, for about six months, the intervals for rest being of brief duration. From Bulawayo they rode to Inyati, thence to the Shangani, and then back to Inyati. While there they were told that disturbances had occurred in Pondoland, and once more they had to "trek". The climax of their troubles was reached when their horses died, and they were obliged to cover a distance of some 500 miles on foot.

CRACK SHOTS OF THE CORPS.

The detachment can boast of a few crack shots, Privates Kelly and Cooke having very good records. The latter has been in the winning team for the Government Cup twice in succession, and the former three times in succession. Sergeant Whally has also done some good work at the ranges. For length of service he ranks next to Lieutenant Phillips, his record being 17 years. The men have been engaged, for the most part, in garrison work in Pondoland. Private Kelly is an old army man, having served through the Egyptian campaign, and seen some hot fighting at Tel-el-Kebir.

THE RIG-OUT

The standard height for the corps is 5 ft. 9 ins., and the chest measurement 34 ½ ins. The rate of pay for a private, on first joining the service, is 5s. per day, increasing by 1s. per day after the first badge is gained, and another 1s. at the end of the five years' term, after which the rate of increase is 6d. per day at the end of each period of three years. Out of this, however, has to be found the private's own rations and the cost of his horse's keep, besides a sum of about £37, which is advanced for purchase of horse and kit, and has to be repaid at the rate of £2 per month.

The field service uniform of the Cape Mounted Riflemen is a very smart and serviceable one. It consists of the familiar "smasher" hat with puggaree⁷, turned up at the left side, khaki tunic, Bedford cord breeches, and putties, with brown boots and spurs. On parade the men wear white helmets with black fittings, dark tunic and breeches, with jack boots. When "walking out" the helmet is replaced by a jaunty Austrian cap.

THE CAPE TEAM FOR BISLEY

Lieutenant-Colonel Harris, commanding the Griqualand West Brigade, stated, at a recent meeting of the Kimberley Rifles, that four members of that corps were proceeding Home with the Bisley Colonial team. They had reason, he added, to be proud of that, for whilst the Kimberley Rifles only represented 10 per cent. of the volunteers of Cape Colony, they would represent 40 per cent. of the team going Home.

The team, which left Cape Town on May 19, is due to arrive in England about June 5.

A COMPLIMENT FROM GENERAL SIR F. GRENFELL.

On Monday night Lieutenant Phillips was among the guests of the Queen's Westminster Volunteers, who celebrated Her Majesty's 78th birthday by a dinner at the Holborn Restaurant. General Sir Francis Grenfell, in replying to the toast of "The Land and Sea Defences of the Empire," paid a high tribute to the regiment represented by Lieutenant Phillips, claiming it as an honour that he had served with it in the Kafir war. Colonel Lassetter, of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles, also spoke in complimentary terms of the Cape Mounted Riflemen.

BARRACK LIFE AT CHELSEA.

In the course of the week I paid several visits to Chelsea Barracks, and found that the men were thoroughly enjoying the novelty of their surroundings, and that they appreciated the excellent arrangements made for their comfort. The various Colonial forces now at the barracks, along with the Cape Mounted Riflemen, are being organised under command of Colonel Ivor Herbert, of the Grenadier Guards. Lieutenant-Colonel E.W.D. Ward, D.A.A.G., has been appointed Staff Officer for the various Colonial forces on the staff of the General Officer commanding the Home district, and Captain Wasp, Army Service Corps, has been detailed to act as Quartermaster, whilst Captain Davidson-Henston, of the Hausa force, acts as Adjutant to the mixed Colonial forces. The troops parade each morning at ten o'clock, and present a striking appearance in the

⁷a A thin muslin scarf tied round a sun helmet so as to hang down over the wearer's neck and shield it from the sun

picturesque variety of their uniforms. Black, yellow, and white, they include a large number of well-groomed fellows of splendid physique; but by the men of the Scots Guards, the ordinary occupants of the barracks, the Cape Mounted Riflemen seem generally to be voted "the smartest and neatest set of the lot." This was the opinion I heard freely and frequently expressed by those on sentry duty and others busied about the barracks square. But it is not alone the trimness of their appearance that appeals to the critical eye of the Scots Guardsman. It is evident that they have the advantage of some of the other forces in combining equal strength with superior agility of movement. In this respect, they contrast very favourably with the Zaptiehs from Cyprus, who are well-sized, powerful-looking men, but give one the impression of lumbering heaviness very different from the swiftness and precision of motion that characterise the Cape men even when off parade. They have a business-like air even in the pursuit of their pleasures, which are as well ordered as their parades. Not that they take the former sadly – far from it. But they seem so thoroughly accustomed to discipline that they can never quite shake it off. They never "lounge." Strict military discipline is enforced at barracks amongst them and the other Colonial troops, just as amongst the Guardsmen stationed there, the Colonials having to turn out and take their share in the ordinary barrack fatigue duties.

AT THE HORSE GUARDS.

On Wednesday morning the Cape Mounted Riflemen, under Lieutenant Phillips, paraded on the barrack square, and proceeded by train to the Horse

Guards, where, in common with the other Colonial contingents, they witnessed the ceremony of Trooping the Colour in honour of Her Majesty's birthday. The men were exceedingly gratified with the imposing spectacle, and spoke admiringly of the steadiness displayed by the troops in marching past the Prince of Wales in slow and quick time.

INSPECTION BY THE AGENT-GENERAL.

On Thursday morning, the detachment paraded on the barrack square for the purpose of being inspected, on behalf of the Cape Government, by Sir David Tennant, Agent-General of the Cape Colony. Prior to Sir David's arrival, the men, who were in full dress, were photographed by a representative of Messrs. Elliott and Fry, of Baker Street. About half-past ten, Sir David Tennant, accompanied by his Acting Secretary, Mr. W. Henry Wilson, drove up in a carriage. Walking along the line, he minutely examined the accoutrements of the troopers, indicating his satisfaction as he did so.

Sir DAVID then, addressing the men, complimented them highly on their appearance generally, and expressed the pleasure it afforded him to meet them, especially in consideration of the occasion which induced the Imperial Government to request the Cape Government to send them over to this country. He trusted that they would return to the Cape with reputation increased and discipline unimpaired by their visit. He added that he was specially gratified to observe the marks of good conduct worn by so many of them, which signified the efficiency of the men, as well as their obedience and conformity to the discipline so necessary in a force like the Cape Mounted

Riflemen. He hoped before long to see a considerable addition to the force. The recruiting system was being gradually carried on in this country, and he ventured to believe that the selections made from time to time by the Cape Agency would add to the fame of the regiment here and elsewhere. It was proposed to raise the numbers of the force to 1000 men. This, of course, considering the extended area of the Colony, with its recent addition of Bechuanaland, would add very materially to the strength and position which the force would maintain in South Africa. Addressing Lieutenant Phillips, Sir David complimented him on the creditable appearance of the men, and said he felt assured that both they and Lieutenant Phillips would be well received in the country, and would aid in giving new prominence to the display of loyalty incident to the celebration of the sixtieth year of Her Majesty's reign.

Sir David afterwards inspected the quarters of the men, and expressed his great satisfaction at the arrangements made by the Imperial authorities, and the pleasure he would feel in reporting this to the Cape Government.

The detachment was then dismissed. At one o'clock the men marched to the Agricultural Hall, Islington, where, in conjunction with other forces, they acted as a guard of honour to receive the Prince of Wales at the inauguration of the Royal Military Tournament.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR HORSING.

Arrangements are being made by the War Office for horsing the Cape Mounted Riflemen, as well as the Indian and Colonial Cavalrymen, who have to join in the Queen's

Procession on the 22nd prox., from the Cavalry and other Military Establishments at home. A large number of horses have already been demanded from Aldershot and Woolwich, and returns are being made from these and other centres as to the number of horses which can be supplied for the use of the visiting detachments. Arrangements are being made for all the Colonial troops in England – cavalry and infantry – to take part in the grand review before the Queen at Aldershot on July 1, when the Duke of Connaught will be in command.

THE CAPE MEN'S NEIGHBOURS.

Among the neighbours of the Cape men at Chelsea is a detachment of New South Wales Lancers, which arrived at Charing Cross Station this week, having disembarked at Brindisi from the P. and O. steamer *Ballaarat*, and travelled overland in order to take part in the celebrations of the Queen's reign. They share quarters in the barracks with the Cape Mounted Riflemen, and will be furnished with horses drafted from Aldershot, Woolwich, or other military stations. Detachments of native troops from Jamaica, British Guiana, and Trinidad are expected to arrive at Southampton this week, and further representatives from Colonial forces in Australia are due on June 4. They will be followed by contingents from Natal and New Zealand on or about the 7th prox. The "State Guides" and Malay Police from Singapore, as also the Cingalese troops, should reach London a few days later. On June 15, 164 men of various Canadian corps, accompanied by the large proportion of 39 officers, will probably have arrived in quarters at Chelsea, where a large temporary iron

building affords completely furnished accommodation for such officers as may prefer to live in barracks and avail themselves of the hospitality offered by the Colonial Office at a comfortable mess established in the Guards' gymnasium. In the course of a week or two, therefore, the Cape Mounted Riflemen, who were at first wedged in between bodies of black and yellow troops, alien to them both in customs and language, will be able to enjoy the companionship of men of their own stamp from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and many other parts of the Empire.

I should add that the men have spoken most cordially of the consideration shown them by Captain Winder and his officers, and, indeed, by everyone with whom they came in contact while on board the *Arundel*.

AFFAIRS IN THE FREE STATE.

ABORIGINES' PROTECTION SOCIETY.

MR. LABOUCHERE'S OVERTHROW
