I wish my mother could see me now, with
a fence-post under my arm,
And a knife and a spoon in my putties
that I found on a Boer farm;
Atop of a sore-backed Argentine with a
thirst that you couldn't buy—
I used to be in the Hampshires once,
(Glosters, Lincoln's, and Rifles once),
Sussex, Scottish, and Yorkshires once!
(ad lib.)
But now I am M. I.!

That is what we are known as—that is the
name you must call
If you want officers' servants, pickets an'
'orse-guards an' all—
Details for buryin'-parties, company-cooks or
supply—
Turn out the chronic Ikonas! Roll up the
——† M. I.

* Mounted Infantry.
† Number from First to Sixth, according to taste and service of audience.

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My 'ands are spotty with veldt-sores—my shirt is a button an' frill—
An' the things I've used my bay'nit for would make a tinker ill!
An' I don't know whose dam' column I'm in, nor where we're trekkin' nor why;
I've trekked to the Vaal from the Orange once—
From the Vaal to the greasy Pongolo once—
(Or else it was called the Zambesi once)—
For now I am M. I.!
That is what we are known as—that is the crowd you require
For outposts all night under freezin', an' rear-guard all day under fire.
Anything 'ot or unwholesome? Anything dusty or dry?
Borrow a bunch of Ikonas! Trot out the — M. I.

Our Sergeant-major's a subaltern; our Captain's a Fusilier;
Our Adjutant's 'late of Somebody's 'Orse,' and a Melbourne auctioneer;
But you couldn't spot us at 'arf a mile from the crackest caval-ry—
They used to talk about Lancers once, Hussars, Dragoons, an' Lancers once,
'Elmets, pistols, an' carbines once,
But now we are M. I.!
That is what we are known as—we are the orphans they blame
For beggin' the loan of an 'ead-stall an' fittin' a mount to the same:
Can't even look at their 'orse-lines but some-one starts bellerin' "Hi!
Hook it, you burglin' Ikonas! Footsack, you — M. I.!!"

We're trekkin' our twenty mile a day, an' bein' loved by the Dutch,
But we don't hold on by the Dutch no more, nor lose our stirrups—much.
An' we scout with a senior man in charge, where the 'oly white flags fly—
We used to think they were friendly once, Didn't take any precautions once
(Once, my ducky, an' only once!),
But now we are M. I.!
That is what we are known as—we are the beggars that got
Three days "to learn equitation," an' six months o' bloomin' well trot!
Cow-guns, an' cattle, an' convoys—an' Mister de Wet on the fly
We are the rollin' Ikonas, we are the — M. I.!
The new fat regiments come from 'ome— I wish my mother could see me now,
imassin' vain V.C.'s a-gatherin' news on my own,
(The same as our talky-fighty men which When I ride like a General up to the scrub
are always Number Threes*); an' ride back like Tod Sloan—
But our words o' command are "Scatter" Remarkably small on my 'orse's neck to let
an' "Close" an' "Let your wounded lie." the shots go by.
We used to rescue 'em noble once— We used to fancy it risky once
Givin' the range as we raised 'em once, (Called it a reconnaissance once),
Gettin' 'em killed as we saved 'em once, Under the charge of an orf'cer once,
But now we are M. I.! But now we are M. I.!
That is what we are known as—we are the That is what we are known as—that is the
lanterns you view word you must say
After a fight round the kopjes, looking for When you want men to be Mausered for one
men that we knew. and a penny a day,
Whistlin' and callin' together—'altin' to We are no dollar Colonials—we are the
catch the reply— 'ome-made supply:
"'Elp me! 'Elp me! Ikonas! This way Write to the London Ikonas! Ask for the
the —— M. I.!! —— M. I.

* Horse-holders when in action, and therefore generally out of range or under cover.
I wish myself could talk to myself as I left 'im a year ago.
I could tell 'im a lot that would save 'im a lot on the things that 'e ought to know!
When I think o' that ignorant barrack-bird, it almost makes me cry.
I used to belong in an Army once (Gawd! what a rum little Army once),
Red little, dead little Army once!
But now I am M. I.!

That is what we are known as—we are the men that have been
Over a year at the business—smelt it an' felt it an' seen,
We 'ave got 'old of the needful—you will be told by and by;
Wait till you've 'card the Ikonas—spoke to the old M. I.!

Mount—march, Ikonas! Stand to your 'orses again!
Mop off the frost on the saddles—mop up the miles on the plain.
Out go the stars in the dawnin'—up goes our dust to the sky,
Walk—trot, Ikonas! Trek jou,* the old M. I.!

* Get ahead.