

Pen Pictures of the War.

WILLS MADE ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

The Law Times calls attention to the fact that the operation of the Wills Act of 1837 is suspended in the case of soldiers serving on the field. In consequence of this it is open to a soldier to make his will on the battle-field by word of mouth. His will is also valid even though he be a minor when he makes it. Witnesses are unnecessary, and a subsequent marriage does not annul a will so made, as would ordinarily be the case.

LECTURES ABOUT BOERS.

A set of instructions has been issued to officers commanding battalions on their way to the Cape, to deliver lectures on board on the geography of the country, the lessons to be learnt from the war, a study of Boer tactics and how they are best met, precautions to prevent the stampeding of animals, Boer organization, mobility, armaments, and their appearance on the field as compared with British troops. This ought, while giving the men a better idea of the foe they have to contend with, help to dispel the vague inseparability from a transport voyage.

WHERE GUNNERS COME FROM.

Reader's correspondent says there is reason to believe that many skilled Belgian and Dutch artillerymen have been engaged and imported into the Transvaal from April, 1896, in regular batches up to the eve of war. They received £20 in cash, the same amount on arrival at Pretoria, 10s. a day pay, and grants of land. Specialists also accompanied the new guns.

BRITISH SCOTS.

One of the officers of the Salvation Army sent to South Africa writes: "I spent the whole of yesterday afternoon with the soldiers at Fort Napier. The sergeant of the Queen was telling me how the Gordon Highlanders acted at the storming of Dundee, just as they were nearing the Boers a number of men in the Boer lines held up their guns and yelled, 'For God's sake, don't shoot us! We are Scotch, and haven't fired a shot at you!' It appears they stayed too long in the Transvaal, and were commiserated, and compelled to fight."

HUMOR AT MODDER RIVER.

The light-heartedness and the humor of Mafeking have inspired those at Modder River to not unworthy efforts. A very pleasing reading is the result. The 2nd Colustrans find themselves in a despatching throes, just as they and evidently envy their friends at home. The 1st Scot Guards have their hands fixed on the Paris Exhibition. "Look at our tickets," is their genial and hopeful request. The 9th Lancs, however, eclipse all their comrades. "Our stay in this charming watering-place," they say, "is most pleasing to the ladies and we are Scotch, and haven't fired a shot at you! It appears they stayed too long in the Transvaal, and were commiserated, and compelled to fight."

KIND BOERS.

"So many stories are current, many unfortunately true, with regard to transgressions of the ordinary rules of civilized warfare by the Boers, that I am very glad," says the Times correspondent, "to be able to give some instances in their favor. From what I have told me by several of the men who were with me at the Modder River, I doubt that a number of Boers came out of the trenches on the night after the battle and gave water to wounded soldiers lying on the field. The fact is that the better-class Boers—and the Free Staters are largely of the better class—are personally kindly and hospitable. The commandant, too, is usually eager to carry on war in a civilized way as possible, resting, etc. But the discipline is insisted on to restrain the inferior back-country Boers, many of whom are almost half-savages, or the miscellaneous crew of ruffians, 'meat whites' swept into the commandoes."

WAR AND CHARITY.

The expectation that the flow of contributions to deserving charities would be checked this Christmas by the diversion of public generosity to the War Relief Funds is being fulfilled. An official of the Charitable Organization Society says that the religious and philanthropic institutions which depend largely on the results of Christmas appeals are feeling the pinch sorely. He is inclined to think that ordinary charities will suffer to the extent of 33-1/3 per cent. A like story is told by the officials of the societies. From London, Congregational Union, two pressing appeals have been sent out, but have met with scarcely any response. Not only is money not forthcoming, but even gifts of clothing are likely to be had. The explanation probably is that London's "old clo' " is wanted for the adornment of the Transvaal refugees.

HIS SECOND SHOW.

General French, whose bustling of the Boers round Colesberg is the best news we have had from the war for many a weary day, has now scored two off his own bat. It was to him that General Buller generously left the active direction of operations at the battle of Elandslaagte, remarking, "Go on, French, this is your show." He afterwards left Ladysmith by the

last train which got away from the town before its complete investment, and was sent to command the cavalry division on General Gatacre's line, which may be described as the middle line of advance, leading directly to Bloemfontein. General French, who is in his forty-eighth year, is an ex-militia officer, who joined the 8th Hussars in 1874. He served with the Cavalry Brigade on the Nile in 1884-85, and was present at the battle of Abu Klea. A dashing horseman, an expert swordsman, he has now shown that he is also a tactician, and that he can beat the Boers at their own game.

HOW LADYSMITH AMUSES ITSELF.

The Daily Telegraph has some interesting details of the state of Ladysmith from Mr. Thorold, a butcher, who has just arrived in Frere Camp. It is, he says, only during the last two weeks that the places of business have been closed. The military authorities have commandeered all the eatables, but have arranged that meat and bread shall be sold at prices fixed for the purpose. The only drinkables for purchase. The last tin of milk fetched three shillings. Eggs are six shillings a dozen, but plain food, such as meat, biscuits, and army bread are procurable. The only drawbacks are the indifferent water, which is causing a little sickness, and the unclean state of parts of the town. Mineral waters are procurable at the hotels, though the bars have all been closed for two weeks. The Frere electric lights are easily seen at Ladysmith, but the Boers endeavor to spoil the reading of the signals by turning on their electric searchlights. Squib periodicals, such as the Bombshell, the Lyre, with cartoons and camp yarns, appear regularly. Kruger and Steyn go to St. Helena is the latest approved cartoon.

BOER DESCRIPTION OF BATTLES.

As an example of the war news purveyed for Free State consumption, the following extract from the Bloemfontein Express of December 5th is sent by the Cape Town correspondent of the Exchange Telegraph Company. It refers to the battles of Graspan, Belmont, and Modder. "We heard bugle calls, and suddenly found Indian troops amongst us raising their war cry. They were armed with knives and swords. We shot them down like wild animals, but they climbed over dead and wounded with such determination that we were compelled to retreat. This terrible fight lasted until noon, when the British drew off, leaving 2,000 killed and wounded. Our loss was about nine killed and sixty wounded. "That the Ghoerks stormed the Boer position. The Boers fought like lions, but could not stand the terrible fire of the British canonade, so we fled. Our best way is to charge them. They cannot stand the charge of the Boers. "The English lost in three battles 4,000."

A WAUCHOPE REMINISCENCE.

A writer in To-Day, in the course of an appreciative article on "Fighting Wauchope," says: One night Wauchope was endeavoring to address a very stormy audience at Gilmerston, a rough mining village near Edingburgh, but only his flashing eyes and vehement gestures gave the slightest indication of the nature of his oratory. When the noise was at its loudest, and men were popping up here and there throughout the meeting to move votes of no-confidence, a rough Gilmerston carter climbed upon the platform, and the admirable quack to hear the fun. Even Wauchope stopped to observe the chances of the situation. "Am'n goen to say he kens anything o' politics," he began to the carter, jerking his shoulder towards Wauchope, "but I can tell ye, when I was lying wounded at Tel-el-Kebrin an' dyin' wi' thir'd the Colonel made over to me an' pulled me out of the road. That's enough for me, an' I'm goin' to vote for him." The man climbed off the platform and the audience remained quiet. Another minute and they were singing, "For he's a jolly good fellow," and five minutes later, were carrying "Fighting Wauchope" shoulder high. He had won, and, but for a change in the political wind four days before the election, he would have carried the constituency, too, in the face of his great opponent.

A CHAMBERLAIN STORY.

Many good stories with reference to the present Colonial Secretary's favorite flower have been told. Here is one. Some visitors had passed through Mr. Chamberlain's orchid-houses at Highbury one morning, when a very valuable plant was discovered broken. Mr. Chamberlain, it is said, almost lost his temper, and declared that sight-seers should no longer be welcomed. Then he interrogated the gardener in charge of the houses. The man appeared confused, but protested that he did not do the damage. "I was very sorry when I saw it done, sir." "You saw it done? Then, of course, the visitors did it?" "No, sir, the visitors didn't either," said the man. "Speak out, man!" cried Mr. Chamberlain. "I am resolved to discover the culprit." Then the gardener spoke: "You did it yourself, please, sir; for I saw you. You were walking up an' down an' rehearsing something. I heard Lord Salisbury's name, an' Mr. Gladstone's, an' then you struck out with your right arm sudden-like, and down went the orchid." The Colonial-Secretary smiled, and sight-seers were not forbidden the orchid-houses.

CLEVER CHAP!

Boardman: "Don't you think Footlight is a clever actor?" ? Haskley: "Clever? Well, I should say so. He hasn't paid his landlady any money for six weeks."

TEMPORARY EXCHANGE.

It was eight o'clock of a Saturday morning in February, when Mr. and Mrs. Stone drove out of their farmyard and took the road northward. The crisp snow of the highway, packed and polished by weeks of good sleighing, cracked under the runners of their "cutter," and the sun was shining gloriously over the wooded hills to the eastward. The Stones were going to spend Sunday with "Cousin Maria," Stone's second cousin, and the object of Mrs. Stone's admiration and envy. She declared that there was no house like Cousin Maria's, and no domestic conveniences and advantages like those she enjoyed; that nobody wore such beautiful clothes, or had such good things to eat, or commanded such resources as "do with" as Cousin Maria. In short, Mrs. Amasa Stone, who had not been a great while married, and who had one of the most delightful farmhouses in the county as well as one of the best and most devoted husbands in the world, was somewhat a victim of that most disagreeable and distressing malady, envious discontent; and the immediate occasion of it was—Cousin Maria. If she could only exchange places, perhaps not husbands, but everything else, with Cousin Maria, how happy she would be! Curiously enough—but that strange irony of fate which we often see cropping out in human life—Cousin Maria felt the same way toward Mrs. Stone. She secretly, but sincerely, envied the little woman with the big, devoted, lovable husband and the model farmhouse overlooking one of the most beautiful and productive valley farms in New England. "If I could only keep house like Cousin Ella!" she would sometimes say to her husband; and then she would add, to herself,—"Perhaps I might, if I had as nice a house, and the things to do with that she has."

HOW SHE BECAME HAPPY.

Doctor Axel Munthe, in his little book called "Vagaries," says that he first realized the responsibilities of authorship through publishing an article on "Toys." One day, not long afterward, he received a visit from a fashionable young lady, who sat in the consulting-room with a huge parcel on her knees. She began telling him a story of woe, relating to her own life, which had been passed in luxury, and yet afforded her no satisfaction. In consequence of perennial boredom she broke down, and her parents ended by dragging her from one physician to another.

One prescribed Egypt, the patient, with her father and mother, then spent a whole winter; another Cannes where they bought a villa; and a third, India and Japan, which they visited in their yacht. "But," said she, "you are the only one who has done me any good. I have felt more happiness during this past week than for years. I owe it to you, and I have come to thank you for it." She unfastened her parcel and produced from it one doll after another. There were twelve in all and you never saw such dolls. Some were dressed in well-fitting tailor-made jackets and skirts; some were evidently off for a yachting trip, in blue serge suits and sailor hats; some wore smart silk dresses, covered with lace and fringe, and had trimmed with huge ostrich feathers; and some looked as if they had only just returned from the circus's drawing-room. "You see," she said, "I wish with a certain voice, 'I never thought I could be of any service to anybody. I used to send money to charities, but all I did was to buy a week's paper, and I cannot say that I ever felt the slightest satisfaction in doing it. "The other day I happened to come across your article on 'Toys,' and since then I have been working from morning till evening to dress these dolls for the poor children you spoke about. I have done it all by myself, and I have felt so strangely happy the whole time."

I looked at the sweet face smiling through its tears, and then at the long row of dolls who stared approvingly at the sky, and my medical paraphernalia on the writing-table. Then I asked her to send away her smart carriage waiting at the door; I put her and the dolls into a cab and told the driver to drive to my poor little patients. I introduced her to the suffering children, and she introduced the dolls. She busied herself with delight at the children's pleasure and the mothers' "God bless you!" I could see by her shyness that it was the first time she had entered the homes of the poor. "How is a week passed before she brought me another dozen dolls, and twelve more sick and destitute children, forgot all about their misery. She kept on bringing more and more, and there came a time when I had more dolls than patients. Indeed, in self-defense, I was at last obliged to send her to St. Moritz for a change of air."

THE WISE WEATHER CLERK.

The Funnyland clerk of the weather doesn't waste his time finding out whether it is going to be sunny or snowy. To-morrow'll be blowy. Or sunny, or snowy. Oh! he's wiser than that altogether. He carefully studies the past. And runs up a flag on the mast. So that people can see. If there's going to be a thunderstorm week before last. And when yesterday promises fair. When the sun will be hot and glare. People hitch balloons. To the edge of the moon. And dive off and swim round in the air. For the Colonel never get drowned in the air. Albert W. Smith, in the January Ladies' Home Journal. Sir Rodgers Butler used to be a great smoker, but is said to now limit himself to one pipe a day. During a fight it was always his habit to retire into solitude and smoke a pipe out.

NOTES OF THE WAR.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

A pathetic incident at Elandslaagte is described in a letter from one of the bearers company: We were out looking after the wounded at night when the fight was over, when I came across an old, white-bearded Boer. He was lying behind a bit of rock, supporting himself on his elbows. I was a bit wary of the old fellow at first. Some of these wounded Boers, we've found, are snakes in the grass. You go up to them with the best intentions, and the next thing you know is that the man you were going to succor is blazing at you with his gun. So I kept my eye on the old chap. But when I got nearer I saw that he was too far gone to raise his rifle. He was gasping hard for breath, and I saw he was not long for this world. He motioned to me that he wanted to speak, and I bent over him. He asked me to go and find his son, a boy of thirteen, who had been fighting by his side when he fell. Well, I did as he asked me, and under a heap of wounded, I found the poor lad, stone dead, and I carried him back to his father. Well, you know I'm not a chicken-hearted sort of a fellow. I have seen a bit of fighting in my time, and that sort of thing knocks all the soft out of a chap. But I had to turn away when that old Boer saw his dead lad. He hugged the body to him and moaned over it, and carried on in a way that fetched a big lump in my throat. Until that very moment I never thought how horrible war is. I never wanted to see another shot fired. And when I looked round again, the old Boer was dead, clasp the cold hand of his dead boy.

Many records of love and loyalty have been made and among them this deserves a place: A young officer of the Manchester, wounded in one of the first engagements, lay on the hillside, expecting to die through the night, which had already fallen, bleeding from a bad wound in the thigh, and shivering with cold, when there stumbled over him a "Tommy" of his company, named Rodgers. This "Tommy" quickly whipped off his own overcoat, and placed it around the boy officer, and lying down put his arms around him, and for the rest of that long, cold night kept him "beautifully warm." And there are now being told many such incidents. Courage of the highest has cheerfulness, too, in the most trying situations: The character of the Dublins, Private Kavanaugh—that day one of the stretcher-bearers—chaffed and encouraged his comrades, telling them the Boer shells could hit nothing. He was who, at Dundee, after the long day's battle, being asked if he was hungry and did not wish for something to eat, said: "No. How can I with my mouth full?" "Full," said the officer. "What do you mean?" "Why, my nair's been in it all day, sir," replied Kavanaugh, with a grin. And so the "hard case" of his battalion shouted and joked, walked about amid a tempest of bullets, and stirred the gallant, glorious Dublins to shoot well and true. Matters have been pretty lively, also at Mafeking, though with little loss: Colonel Baden-Powell has been keeping the Boers on the move day and night, and has taken every precaution, not only to prevent the town being rushed by the Boers, but also to render as small as possible any damage resulting from the Boer bombardment. The night attacks of the British appear to have worried the Boers considerably. Although the latter have shelled the town day by day, but little casualties having been done. Commandant Cronje has brought all his shells to bear on the town, and hailed shells in his direction for hours. His shells, however, appear to have been light field guns, and have proved singularly ineffective. The humor of it is that Commandant Cronje, at a loss what next to do, wrote to Colonel Baden-Powell requesting him to surrender Mafeking, to "save further bloodshed." In reply, Baden-Powell asked when the blood-hed was to commence, and Cronje, greatly annoyed, sent to Pretoria in haste for heavy field-guns, keeping up a light bombardment in the meantime just to show that he was in the neighborhood. Bennett Burleigh, writing from Estcourt, agrees with many critics at home and abroad, that Natal is "the least suitable of countries for armored trains," and proceeds to say: Besides, those we have are poorly equipped affairs, though the best, perhaps, that could be done in a hurry. Imagine a few five-eighths inch boiler-plates placed round the engine, and flat bogie trucks boxed round seven feet high with similar sheets of iron or steel, and roughly loop-holed—the whole painted khaki—and you have the armored train. These being no doorways, to get inside one of those oblong iron boxes, which are quite uncovered at the top, you have to clamber up as best you can, gripping the loop-holes and exterior fastenings. Egress has to be made in the same manner. They are all right against rifle-fire, except when in a

cutting or passing under a hill, when an enemy might have you at his mercy by firing down into you from steeply trucks. It is a well known lesson, also, that an armored train, except in an absolutely flat country, is unsuited for scouting or attack, unless backed and flanked by a friendly force of cavalry and guns. Our armored trains here are unprovided with Maxims or cannon.

Julian Ralph, of the London Mail, writing from Orange River on November 16, recurs to the subject of khaki color:

South Africa looks now as if it were the dust-bin of creation. Its ground is loose dust. Its air is flying dust. Its vegetation, animals and insects are nearly all of different shades of dust-color. As I write, the men are dissolving mud in their palms and dipping brushes in it to paint their white straps and colour. Every pouch, and strap, and cloth-covered water-bottle would show white or dark is undergoing this treatment. And the drummers are doing the same with their drums—painting the white tightening cords with mud, muddying over the golden lions and unicorns, and the gaudy regimental mottoes, so that everything shall look like the veldt—so that we shall be as dusty as the country. While "Tommy" is wholly and entirely earth like, "Tommy's" officers differ from him in wearing shiny buttons, stars, crowns, and sword-hits, and pip-clayed belts and straps. In this difference has lain the danger of all in battle in the past, and from it has come the death of far too many. All alike recognize this, yet how differently they discuss the proposal to have the officers dress like the men. The "Tommys" are all in favor of the change, though it would greatly increase their own danger and losses. They are enthusiastic for having the officers off swords, carry light carbines and do away with their ornaments. They discuss the mortality above the ranks with bated breath as a thing altogether awful. With the officers the subject is differently treated. Some discuss the prospect of disguising themselves as if it were a thing to be considered only for the sake of receiving an unfair foe and gaining a point that way. Others indignantly spurn the idea as unindicated and unworthy.

Since this was written Lord Methuen settled the question in the common-sense way, and now his officers are no longer glittering targets for the Boers, even their swords being replaced by carbines.

LOVE AND GENIUS.

Some men of genius have undoubtedly been loved with Thackeray, that it is better to love foolishly than not at all; that they have practised this philosophy is proved by their memoirs and biographies. Leigh Hunt loved a good girl whose spelling was unconventional, and whose chirography could not be called her chief accomplishment. Keats was wildly, madly in love with a commonplace girl named Fanny Browne. He married her, but she was incapable of appreciating him. Hazlitt, the brilliant essayist, loved the pert, coarse daughter of his landlady. He wrote her a letter which she never answered, and he said that "the rolling years of eternity would not fill up the blank that her failure to answer that letter caused." A practical Scotch girl, Charlotte Carpenter, won Walter Scott's love. She not only hated literature, but objected to writing to him. He wrote her, saying, "You must write me once a week." She replied, "You are quite out of your senses, and you need not put in so many 'musts' in letters. It is beginning too early." Walter was foolishly in love with Lady Dorothea Sydney, who was his "Saccharissa." She liked his love-making in poetry, but when he proposed marriage in prose the idea did not appeal to her. Alfred de Musset's love for the Irish poetess, George Sands gave his thoughts such an extraordinary elevation that he wrote many brilliant poems in consequence. Thomson had his Amanda, Littleton his Nanette. Chaucer sang the praises of many queens, but his one great love was Philippa Picard de Rouet, the lady-in-waiting to Queen Anne of Bohemia. He waited nine years to marry her, but made it matter of complaint in several poems. Moore lived up to his theory that love's young dream is the sweetest thing in life. He never let one love get old before he supplanted it with a new one. Carey had his Sally of "Sally in Our Alley" fame. Surrey loved Geraldine from the time she was a child in short dresses. Corneille, the astute lawyer, fell in love and became the brilliant dramatic poet. Thus it seems that love, whether successful or otherwise, for a time inspires its votaries.

THE ORGANIST AN ATOCRAFT.

"If there ever is any trouble in the congregation about the music, and if the minister ever worries himself, it is admitted at once that the congregation and the minister are alone to blame," writes Ian MacLaren in the January Ladies' Home Journal. "But there are other difficulties, and they may be mentioned in a spirit of becoming humility. For one thing, the organist is an artist, and every artist has a nature of special refinement which cannot bear the rough-and-tumble of ordinary methods of life. With a man of common clay you deal in a practical, straightforward and even brutal fashion, arguing with him, complaining to him, and putting him right when he is wrong. But no man must handle precious porcelain in such fashion, or the artist will be instantly wounded and will resign and carry his pathetic story to every quarter, for, as a rule, the organist thinks that he is lifted above criticism and public opinion. It is impossible to teach him anything; it is an insult to suppose that anything could be better than the music he provides."