

in connection with our volunteers for South Africa already exceeding a quarter of a million of dollars.

Of course, much of this money has been used in the purchase of supplies, but a large amount must have been paid out for labour and material required in transforming ordinary passenger and freight steamers into thoroughly equipped military transports.

"A steady, trusty well conditioned, well conducted set of men, with no misgiving about looking you full in the face, and with a quiet, thorough going way of passing along to their duty."—*Dickens*.

**The British Tars.**

Such was a gifted novelist's description of the British tars of the early sixties, and their successors are men of the same courage and character. In Montreal, as in every port visited by Her Majesty's ships, we all love Jack, and can picture to ourselves the zest with which he would train one of his ship's guns at the enemies of his Queen.

Knowing him as we do, it is delightful to read the following bit of testimony to his worth from the late Mr. G. W. Steevens, whose recent death from fever at Ladysmith is a sad incident of a particularly saddening war. He says of the men of ships well known on the North American station:—

"This handful of sailors have been the saving of Ladysmith. You don't know till you have tried it what a worm you feel when the enemy is plugging shell into you and you can't possibly plug back. Even though they spared their shell, it made all the world of difference to know that the sailors could reach the big guns if they ever became unbearable. It makes all the difference to the Boers, too, I suspect; for as sure as Lady Ann or Bloody Mary gets on to them they shut up in a round or two. To have the very men among you makes the difference between rain water and brine.

"The other day they sent a 12-ponnder up to Caesar's Camp, under a boy who, if he were not commanding big men round a big gun in a big war, might with luck be in the fifth form."

"There's a 94 pnder up there," said a high officer, who might have been his grandfather.

"All right, sir," said the child, serenely, "we'll knock him out."

"He hasn't knocked him out yet, but he is going to next shot, which, in a siege, is the next best thing.

"But the sailors have not seen home for two years, which is two less than their usual spell. This is their holiday.

"Of course, we enjoy it," they say, almost apologizing for saying us, "we so seldom get a chance."

"The Royal Navy is the salt of the sea, and the salt of the earth also."

And every man, woman, and child in Canada who knows aught of Jack will admit that the dead correspondent did not extol him too highly when he described him as "the salt of the sea, and the salt of the earth also."

We hold British sailors in our love and honour, and are tender of the fame they well deserve.

**A Racy Rejoinder.**

The diversity of opinions held by those who have studied the causes which led to the present war in South Africa have been fully illustrated during the debate in the British House of Commons. Mr. Chamberlain, in his speech of last week, is reported as saying that the issues between Briton and Boer do not stand upon "the trivialities of debate," are not to be considered as if we were "trying a civil case in a civil court," and that they ex-

isted long before 1895, and even before 1881. He states that the whole history of our relations with the South African Republics reveals a continual effort on their side to evade obligations, and that these obligations were conditions of the magnanimity of Mr. Gladstone.

While the parliament is thus engaged in discussing the war and its causes, the press are busy with the foreign critics of Great Britain. It was to one of these that the following racy rejoinder of Mr. Austin, the clever writer of "Our Note Book" in the Illustrated London "News" was lately made. A Breslau correspondent having complained of the flippancy and arrogance of the Lord Mayor of London in describing the Boer ultimatum as "confounded cheek," Mr. Austin in replying laments that his utter depravity makes this expression utterly inadequate, and then says: "When Mr. Kruger ordered the Queen to withdraw her troops from her own colony, and gave her forty-eight hours to consider his sovereign mandate, he was guilty of wanton insolence deliberately intended to make peace impossible."

However, Mr. Kruger's knavish tricks are being frustrated, and the Queen's troops have not withdrawn even from Ladysmith.

**A Believer in Fire-Proof Wood.**

"Faith's solitary pyre."

—Trench.

To smother any faint shadow of a remaining doubt as to the possibility of wood being rendered absolutely fire-proof, the vice-president of the Electric Fire Proofing Company of New York will submit to the ordeal of being shut up in a building erected at the company's works, at 19th Street East River, N.Y., and to be publicly burned to-day. We hope to record his fate, and that of the building, in our next issue.

In the meantime, we find, upon enquiry and examination, that his faith in the materials used in the construction of his house of refuge is not based upon the evidence of things not seen. The wood treated by this company has been thoroughly tested upon many previous occasions, and in many places, and the exhibition to be given to-day is merely for the purpose of enabling fire-underwriters and other interested parties to see for themselves. The company express a conviction that such a test as this exhibition will bring converts to the belief of vice-president Bachert in the safety of any one found like himself uninsured in a house constructed of electric fire-proof wood.

We have had the pleasure of seeing a picture of the building in which Mr. Bachert purposes playing the part of a widow of Hindostan performing the ceremony of self-immolation, and we sincerely hope he may descend from the funeral pyre and emerge from the flames in safety to add his final bit of testimony to the virtues of material already highly extolled by the British Admiralty and the United States Navy. The