

round on every side, and, as a ship gradually works her way through intricate waters on some dark night, by taking continual soundings, so the army has to feel every single step of its hindering way through this dense fog of war by means of *Scouting* and *Reconnaissance*. The *Cavalry Screen* is pushed well out in advance to cover the front and flanks, and individual scouting is boldly carried on at every possible point in it. The general importance of scouting can hardly be exaggerated in these days of long-range fire and smokeless powder, which both tend to conceal a position so much that a force might blunder into sudden destruction, unless well enough forewarned. Even a single man may supply priceless information—like the Prussian scout who found the whole Austrian army in an unexpected position the day before Sadowa. The following particular instance of a smart bit of work by Colonel Baden-Powell, of Mafeking fame, is of exceptional interest just now. "I was riding one day across an open grass plain, in Matabeleland, with one native, scouting. Suddenly we noticed the grass had been recently trodden down; following up the track for a short distance it got to a patch of sandy ground and we then saw it was the spoor of several women and boys walking toward some hills about five miles distant, where we believed the enemy to be hiding. Then we saw a leaf lying about ten yards off the track—there were no trees for miles, but there were, we knew, trees of this kind at a village 15 miles distant, in the direction from which the tracks led. Probably, then, these women had come from that village, bringing the leaf with them, and had gone to the hills. On picking up the leaf it was damp and smelled of native beer, so we guessed that, according to the custom of these people (remember, as I said before, to study the habits and customs of your enemy), they had been carrying pots of native beer on their heads, the mouths of the pots being stopped with bunches of leaves. One of these leaves had fallen out;

but we found it ten yards off the track, which showed that at the time it fell a wind had been blowing. There was no wind now, but there had been about 5 a.m., and it was now nearly 7. So we read from these signs that a party of women had brought beer during the night from the village 15 miles distant, and had taken it to the enemy on the hills, arriving there about six o'clock. The men would probably start to drink the beer at once (as it goes sour if kept for long) and would, by the time we could get there, be getting sleepy from it, so we should have a favourable chance of reconnoitring their position. We accordingly followed the women's tracks, found the enemy, made our observations, and got away with our information without any difficulty."

But a correct estimate cannot always be formed from scouting alone; and then a force of all arms, varying in strength according to circumstances, is pushed forward into whatever part of the screen most requires its assistance in finding out the enemy's dispositions. By this *reconnaissance* the enemy is forced either to show his whereabouts, or else to allow his lines to be penetrated.

Finally, when the Commander-in-Chief thinks he can overcome the opposing forces as they are, he advances the army in order of battle. First go the Cavalry, Mounted Infantry and Horse Artillery, playing their second rôle—that of a battle-screen behind which the main body of Field Artillery and Infantry can come up within striking distance. Preliminary combats of mounted troops will generally open future battles, each side trying to penetrate and roll up the other's screen in order to uncover his front before he is ready. As the action develops, the screen clears the front and withdraws to guard the flanks of its own side, while at the same time watching its chance to fall upon the enemy's. And here, in command of a battle-screen, either in its first position in front, or later on in its second on the flanks, is the Cavalry General's golden oppor-