

## THE SNIDER AT MAGDALA.

The Abyssinian correspondent of the *London Times* writes: There is perhaps no human being more sensitive to public opinion at home; more keenly desirous of obtaining or apprehensive of losing what he considers his share of praise, than the British soldier on foreign service after a fight. The feeling is as useful as it is honorable; and that will be a bad day indeed for England when it begins to lose its strength. But still, like much else that is indubitably chivalrous and heroic, it occasionally presents a comic side; and in this Expedition it is impossible not to be amused at finding that the British soldier's grievance is that the Abyssinians did not kill, or, at the very least, severely wound him. He is morbidly afraid that, merely for want of what, with grim playfulness, he styles a good "butcher's bill," his fellow-countrymen at home won't believe that he has really endured or achieved anything deserving their gratitude or admiration. It is rather difficult exactly to condole with a man upon not having been killed or even severely wounded, but still the British soldier ought, perhaps, to derive some consolation under his misfortunes from the reflexion that he did his best to attain his object, and that the Snider alone is responsible for his failure. Gallantly as the Abyssinians came on in the action at Arogee, and obstinately as many of them held their ground even under the crushing and wholly unexpected onset made upon them, they were as helpless as children against this extraordinary weapon. They were at first paralyzed and stupefied by the rapidity of its fire, so unlike anything that half savage mountaineers with the muzzle-loaders could have ever dreamt of, and were then mowed down in crowds, without power of resistance or retaliation. And at the storming of Magdala even the desperate men who had abandoned all hope of flight or pardon, and thought of nothing but how to sell their lives most dearly, could not stand for a moment under the storm of bullets falling thick and fast as hail upon every inch of the ground from which they had hoped to be able to pour down volleys upon the invaders thronged in the narrow path below. It is clearly the Snider that was at fault, and the British soldier could only get rid of his distressing invulnerability of throwing his rifle away, or, as the 4th at Arogee were with some difficulty prevented by their officers from doing, by taking refuge in the bayonet, and thus getting within easy killing and wounding reach of the weapons of their enemy. However, in an evil hour, they, alas! neglected this golden opportunity, and, as a just punishment, have now no "butcher's bill" to present to their admiring fellow-countrymen. So they are obliged to fall back upon their hardships and privations, and trust that though they may get no credit for the way in which they fought, they will at least get some for all that they have endured.

Commenting on the recent brilliant and successful campaign in Abyssinia, the *N. Y. Albion* says: "There is the assurance to Europe in Napier's achievements, that, while England no longer cares to be concerned in regulating the minor political divisions of the continent, or embroiling herself in disputes which do not touch the integrity of

her dominion, she is not unprepared for action when the time for action comes. She has shown that there are officers and men at her call to-day, who will revive the memories and recall the victories of the most glorious epochs in her military annals. She has shown, that if, under the entanglements of an embarrassing alliance she may be dragged into a weary and unremunerative campaign—as in the Crimean Peninsula—alone and untrammelled she can take the field with all the freshness and fire of youth, and make the spheres resound with the echoes of her triumph. Napier has informed mankind everywhere, that quick work can be done without the Prussian needle-gun and that other campaigns than that which ended at Sudowa, may be conducted with vigor and closed with promptitude. He has given the first practical response to the Russian into Central Asia. He has given new courage to the Turk to hold his own against the stealthy approach of his northern enemy. He has restored the prestige which we lost when the Malakoff opened to the Braves of Neil, and the French claimed the victory at Sebastopol. For such an expedition—followed by such results—the nation must expect to pay, otherwise its pride and its glory must be alike on the wane."

## A MEDAL FOR ABYSSINIA

A correspondent writing from Antalo, suggests that the Abyssinian medal should be somewhat different in design and appearance from an ordinary half crown; and we fully agree with him. Old fashions live long in the army, and the Peninsular and Waterloo medals have, with one exception, been taken the correct precedents to follow whenever a new distinction of the kind was to be granted to officers and men for service in the field. From an artistic point of view it would be just as great an anachronism now to issue one of the old-fashioned medals in honor of the Abyssinian campaign as it would be to substitute the old flint-lock musket for the breech-loading Snider rifle. If the Gwalior campaign in Lord Ellenborough's time, was signalized by a bronze star, it would be not altogether inappropriate that the rescue of the Abyssinian prisoners, the defeat of Theodore, the capture of his capital, and the downfall of his empire should be made memorable throughout the English and Indian armies by a silver representative of the British lion. One word as to the extra batta. If it was ever well deserved by the Indian troops it is on the present occasion. Moreover if it were ever granted for politic and wise considerations alone, it ought to be for the Abyssinian expedition. And still further, even if it were to cost ten times the sum it would, although India has been hardly dealt with in the proportion which her finances have been made to bear of the expenses of the expedition, she can well afford to be generous on such an occasion. It is impossible to overestimate the influence which the successful termination of the campaign will have upon the minds of the people in all parts of India.

The native troops came from every quarter—Sikhs from the Punjab, Beloches from Scinde, and Sepoys from the three presidencies. Let every one of these men return to

their homes with a year's extra pay, and a silver lion shining on their breasts, to talk over their exploits at Magdala, to tell their friends how the *Sahib logues* marched over 300 miles of mountains and ravines to rescue a few of their own countrymen from imprisonment—how the dreaded Emperor was slain and his Empire subverted—and the effect, even from a political point of view, would be worth incomparably more, a thousand fold over, than any amount of extra batta.—*Naval and Military Gazette.*

## A KRUPP GUN.

The *Journal des Sciences Militaires* for May gives the particulars of some experiments made in November last at Esen with a nine inch breech loading Krupp gun of cast steel. The experiments were carried on under the superintendence of two Russian officers of artillery. The gun measured 15 feet in length, was rifled with 32 grooves, and weighed 13½ tons. The object was to find the charge of powder required to impart to a projectile weighing 275 pounds an initial velocity of 400 to 433 a second, and to ascertain whether the cannon would bear a sufficient number of such rounds to enable it to be pronounced a serviceable arm. The number of rounds was fixed beforehand at 700, to be fired rapidly as possible. Four sorts of powder were tried, one being powder manufactured in Prussia to match a sample of large grained rifled cannon powder obtained from England. At first the Navez-Leurs ballastic apparatus was used, being subsequently replaced by the chronograph invented by Captain Lehoulange of the Belgian artillery, who assisted at the experiments. This chronograph by a simple mechanism estimates initial velocity by the difference between the respective times of falling of two weights. After 117 rounds the most effective charge of powder was proved to be 43 pounds of fine-grained Prussian, which gave an average velocity of 417 yards per second. The results obtained with the imitation English or Armstrong powder were pronounced unsatisfactory. The 583 rounds remaining to complete the test were spread over nine days, and in all of them, with the exception of 46, in which "tubular prismatic" charges of 45 pounds were fired, the standard charge of 43 pounds of Prussian powder was adhered to. The report upon the gun at the close of the experiments may be summed up as follows: Initial velocity unimpaired by the 700 rounds. The enlargement of the chamber practically reached its maximum after the sixteenth round, and did not alter generally afterwards, but the greatest increase in vertical diameter (0.017 inch) was reached in one particular direction after the 100th round while the maximum horizontal enlargement (0.022 inch) was attained at the 50th. Striae showed faintly at the base of the grooves after the 107th round, and although they increased in size to the end of the experiments, they did not assume a character of gravity. The breech-loading mechanism worked with great facility throughout. All its parts were found in order and perfectly intact after the 100th round, and this portion of the gun was pronounced to answer all the requirements of artillery service.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*