

immediately before they are let loose. A rather amusing incident occurred on this occasion to point this moral. A cavalry subaltern and two men were sent out to get through the enemy's outposts, and with the aid of four pigeons to send back his dispositions at dawn. Thomas Atkins, as you know, is the most kind-hearted of men, and in spite of all orders, these pigeons were stuffed with corn during the greater part of the night. The subaltern did his work very well, located the enemy's forces, and about dawn was held up by some of the hostile cavalry. He, however, had his report already written and attached to the pigeon, so he felt quite happy. Unfortunately, when the psychological moment arrived to let the pigeon loose, it was so bursting with food that instead of flying home like an arrow from the bow, it with great difficulty fluttered up into the lowest branch of the nearest tree, from which no persuasion nor any number of stones could dislodge it. That particular message took 24 hours to reach home. As far as I remember, the other pigeons were pretty satisfactory, the messages averaging about two hours from the time they were sent to the time they were delivered to the General. The system on these occasions is for the pigeon to fly home; as it enters the pigeon loft it causes a bell to ring. The owner then takes the message and telegraphs it to some pre-arranged point, or else gives it to a motor-cycle orderly who takes it direct to Headquarters. These devices are very good fun, and I think they afford a considerable amount of instruction in making an Intelligence officer polish up his ingenuity, but one must be careful to keep one's efforts within reasonable bounds and not to do things which would be entirely impossible in war.

One young officer made a considerable name for himself during two successive manoeuvres in England some years ago. On one occasion he cut a hole in the tent of a well-known General and stole his despatch box. The General was of a somewhat irascible temperament and the loss of his orders and notes really affected him considerably and may have had quite an appreciable effect on the next day's operations.

On another occasion this young officer desired to obtain a trophy from the enemy. He located one of the enemy's camps and hid himself with some cyclist scouts in a wood near-by. He then got hold of one of those itinerant vendors of drinks that one sees at English Manoeuvres and took him into his