

AGAINST GREAT ODDS.

SINGLE HOUSES THAT HAVE DEFEATED BATTALIONS.

The Strategic Importance of Small Fortified Buildings in Warfare, and the Part They Have Formerly Played in South Africa, Zululand, Indian Hunting, and at Waterloo.

One of the most indispensable qualifications for the making of a successful general is to be able to perceive and take advantage of every available protection, either natural or artificial in order to afford cover for his men, or to strengthen his defences. Reckless charges in the face of a heavy rifle and artillery fire certainly serve to show the

METTLE AND DASHING COURAGE of the men engaged, but they do not often win battles. "It is magnificent, but it is not war." A skilful officer, with good opportunities for protection, will lead his men from cover to cover in such a manner as to bring them within a hundred yards of the enemy, with but very little loss. In the last rush, of course, men must drop; but if the leader knows his business the danger is reduced to a minimum.

In the present Transvaal War we are fighting against men whose country presents many natural facilities for protection, and whatever may be said against them, the Boers have hitherto displayed great skill and judgment in taking advantage of such protection. In the recent action at Modder River an hotel and some outlying farms, with their surrounding walls, were utilised by the Boers as cover for their marksmen; and it took many hours of severe fighting to drive them from their position.

The history of England's wars abounds in examples of this description. Private residences, farmhouses, barns, and sheds have been fortified, and in many cases have stood lengthened sieges against overwhelming odds.

Conspicuous among these is the siege of Fort Mary, Lydenburg, which occurred during the Boer War of 1880-81. On December 5th, 1880, the 94th, under Colonel Anstruther, removed headquarters to Pretoria, leaving seventy men at Lydenburg, for the protection of the stores. At this time no one dreamt of war, but on the 23rd of the same month news came that the 94th had been attacked at a place called

BRONKHORST SPRUIT.

Little more than forty miles from Pretoria, and more than half of them killed. Lieutenant Long, who was in command, immediately fortified a couple of huts which had formed the officers' quarters, and christened them Fort Mary, after Mrs. Long, who was with her husband all through the siege. Before his operations were complete a force of about 700 Boers appeared, and beleaguered the frail structure.

The story of how the little garrison repelled the determined assaults of the enemy for eighty-four days, hardly needs repeating. It was one of the most brilliant episodes of the war. The spring supplying the fort was cut off—they sunk two wells, and obtained sufficient water for their needs. The thatches were ignited by means of Greek fire—a few daring spirits crawled on the roof, plucked them out, and threw water on the flames. The enemy brought guns against them—the garrison constructed a cannon out of an old Abyssinian pump, and answered their shells with home-made solid shot.

In fact, they held their own at every point; and when peace was declared and they emerged from their riddled fort, the Union Jack floated as bravely above it as when they entered. The defence of Fort Mary, during the Zululand campaign, although not of long duration, affords an example of splendid heroism.

without parallel. On this occasion two houses, which had formerly belonged to a Swedish missionary, were garrisoned by 139 men of the 24th regiment, in command of Lieutenants Chard and Bromhead. Having received news that they were to be attacked, they took every precaution of menialings and biscuit-boxes was thrown up. Little more than an hour elapsed after the receipt of the news, when a body of about 1,000 Zulus appeared, and, with their characteristic ferocity, hurled themselves against the defences.

Flushed with their recent success at Isandlwana, and doming repulse by so small a band impossible, the savages charged again and again with indomitable pertinacity; but the men of the 24th held their own magnificently, and did deadly work with bullet and bayonet.

One of the buildings, which was used as a hospital, was eventually carried, and in a few minutes was in flames; but the wounded were dragged through a window, and transferred to the other house, where the defence was as vigorous as ever. From four in the afternoon all through the night the fight raged, and at daybreak the Zulus retreated, leaving hundreds of their number dead on the field.

In such a crisis as the Indian Mutiny, where insurrection started into life in one night, it is only natural that dozens of cases occurred where English residents and soldiers were besieged in their homes. Most of those were stormed and taken in a very short time; but doubtless there was many a gallant defence which history has been unable to chronicle. At the first sign of the outbreak, Sir Hugh Wheeler at Cawnpore, provisioned and fortified two barracks formerly used as hospitals of the European regiment. He had with him

and 330 women and children. For many weeks, in spite of the furious assaults of the sepoys, and the terrible priva-

tions they had to undergo, they held their own against the besiegers; but eventually starvation compelled them to accept the terms offered by Nana Sahib. How Nana kept his word is known to all the world. Of the whole garrison, four men escaped; the rest, including the women and children, were barbarously massacred.

In the meantime, Sir Henry Lawrence, at Lucknow, was more fortunate. That which is commonly referred to as the "Siege of Lucknow," was in reality the siege of the Residency, and therefore comes within the limits of this article. The building was garrisoned with 750 British troops, and on July 1st the sepoys, in overwhelming numbers besieged it. The courage displayed by the garrison, the hardships they underwent, and the many devices they employed, to counteract the manoeuvres of the enemy, form the subject of several books, and are enshrined in splendid verse by the poet Tennyson. Although partly retold by Havelock and Outram in September, it was not until March of the following year that the siege was finally raised.

As a last-aid, in some respects, a lesson to be drawn from the history of the field of that decisive battle, his experienced eye immediately singled out two farmhouses as positions which would be defended. They were called Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte—two names which, at that time, were probably unknown at a distance of a few miles, but which now hold a hallowed niche in the rolls of

ENGLISH GLORY.

Napoleon was not slow to recognize the importance of these two posts, and throughout the day his fiercest attacks were directed against them. La Haye Sainte was taken between six and seven in the evening, but at Hougoumont the British Guards resisted all comers. In vain Napoleon hurled column after column at the position; amid shot and shell and fire the terrific conflict continued all day, and when the retreated hundreds of the Emperor's best and bravest lay dead around the farm.

Both commanders recognised the great importance of this building. If it had fallen there is every probability that the result of the battle would have been different. Had the worthy Flemish gentleman, who formerly occupied Hougoumont been told that his farm was to be the means of changing the history of the civilised world, he would probably have smiled. But such a fate was reserved for it—or, at least, contributed to a very great degree to the general result.

THE TELEPHOTOGRAPH IN WAR.

Among the many appliances now being tried in warfare for the first time—that is to say, in warfare between white men—the telephotographic camera is not the least important.

Telephotography was first used in actual warfare in the Sino-Japanese war—needless to say, on the side of the Japanese. It may, perhaps, be well to explain briefly what telephotography is.

The tele- or far-photographic action is not brought about by a telescope proper, but by a specially designed lens being used in combination with various ordinary forms of lenses according to the work to be done. Telephotographic lenses can be used with any good camera; but, as great rigidity of apparatus and extremely accurate focusing are essential, the inventor of this lens has also designed a special form of camera particularly useful for naturalists and others wishing to photograph living or inanimate objects at great distances.

Its advantages for military purposes are great, and particularly in Italy, much work has been done on this direction. An idea of its value will be given by the photographs printed. It will be seen that it is possible to take accurate pictures, clearly showing the enemy's position, numbers, the character of the defences, position of guns, etc., and this should be noted, at a distance of two or three miles if the atmosphere and other circumstances are favourable.

For balloon work it is especially suitable, as drawing a plan anything like accurate in a swaying balloon is beyond the power of the clearest draughtsman, while even the best tele-eyes cannot retain the exact details of a position hastily viewed. In addition, the camera will often reveal points quite overlooked by the eye, a good instance of which was seen the other day. A cinematographic view had been taken of the rapids at Niagara; when, in the evening this was being shown, a man in the audience, who was surprised to see a body being tossed about in the waters, which had not been noticed at the time of taking the photograph. On a subsequent search being made, the body was duly found. The twentieth part of a second will suffice to secure an accurate picture of what it would take an artist with the pencil an hour to draw.

SMALL WONDER.

The editor was sitting in his office one day when a man whose brow was clothed with thunder entered. Piercingly seizing a chair, he slammed his hat on the table, hurled his umbrella on the floor and sat down.

Are you the editor? he asked.

Yes.

Can you read writing?

Of course.

Read that, then, he said, thrusting at the editor an envelope with an inscription on it.

Read that, said the editor, trying to spell it.

That's not a B, it'd an S, said the man.

—oh, yes, I see. Well, it looks like "Salt for dinner" or "Souls of sinners."

No, sir, replied the man, nothing of the kind. This is my name—Samuel H. Brunner. I knew you couldn't read. Called to see you about that poem of mine you printed the other day on the "Success of Sorrow."

Don't remember it.

Of course you don't, because it went into the paper under the infamous title of "Smearcase Tomorrow."

The editor fled.

SCIENCE IN SLAUGHTER.

Awful Powers of Modern Bullets.—Triumph of Science and Mechanical Skill.

During the last few weeks, probably no subject has appealed more vividly to the majority of readers than the terrible execution done by Boer and Briton alike, in their present struggle. That no small proportion of the losses is primarily due to the dogged nature of the combatants, one may safely take for granted. There is, however, another factor which cannot be overlooked; the terrible strides which, under scientific direction, have been recently made in the engines of war. Here are a few facts which speak for themselves.

One of the most effective weapons against both civilised and uncivilised foes is undoubtedly the shell fired by the common field-gun. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the average burst into some 25 pieces. Today the modern "shrapnel" is frequently made to contain as many as 500 bullets, each of which must find a billet, human or otherwise, when the shell bursts. This, too, is irrespective of the vast number of pieces into which the shell itself is resolved by the explosion.

The peculiar deadliness of this projectile, however, lies in the fact that its burst can be timed to a nicety. In this way, it is possible for the expert artilleryman to shell an entrenched army at several thousand yards' range, successfully bursting each shell at the crucial moment, when it is immediately above the heads of his opponents.

Needless to say, a very small error of judgment will result either in a premature burst, or an even more harmless burial of the whole projectile in the ground at the rear of the entrenched. The terrible execution done by the American shrapnel in the various engagements of the Cuban and Philippine wars, when

WHOLE TRENCHFULS OF DEAD.

Spanish soldiers were discovered beneath the scene of successful shrapnel bursts, has added not a little to the high reputation in which this missile has always been held by military officers.

Against fortifications or thinly armed vessels, the favorite weapon is the terrible, high-explosive shell. Most of the high explosives are composed of some product of picric acid, and their fearful power is, at least, twofold in its action. Not only is the actual explosion many times more violent than that of gunpowder; but the fumes from it are so poisonous that in a confined space, as in a roofed-over battery, they would infallibly suffocate such of the unfortunate as were exposed, as in the heat of battle, might be left momentarily unattended.

A typical instance of the "have" wrought by a shell of this description occurred at the battle of Yalu, on September 17th, 1894, when a 12-inch shell from the Chinese Chen Yuen penetrated the Japanese flagship Matsushima. The damage done was simply appalling, and completely demoralized the stricken crew. In addition to exploding a pile of ammunition with fearful effect, it struck the mainmast, set fire to every inflammable article within reach, and killed and wounded no fewer than 30 officers and men.

The favorite French high-explosive is known as "mellite," and has been extensively adopted for use in the French Navy. Our own edition of this explosive, which differs somewhat from the present one, is known as "lyddite," from the camp at Lydd, Kent, which was its birthplace, and was first used on active service during Lord Kitchener's recent campaign in the Sudan. It is of more particular interest, owing to the celebrated letter of protest against its use indited by

GEN. JOUBERT TO GEN. WHITE.

The simplicity of its ingredients is to brilliant minds at any rate, extremely curious, bearing in mind the fearful energy with which it can be exploded. A quantity of carbolic acid, the well-known domestic disinfectant, combined with an equal proportion of oil of vitriol, beloved of the Parisian gambler. To the boiling mixture is added some aqua fortis, then cool the mixture, and pour it into a tin can, lined with yellow crystals, which will give a judicious course of washing and filtering, form what is known as pure picric acid.

Strange to say, this compound would be absolutely innocuous in the hands of the amateur. He might boil, fry, burn or hammer it without causing the slightest accident, occurring either to himself or to his neighbors. None the less, in the hands of the expert, this apparently harmless compound can be made to yield an explosion nearly fifty times as destructive as that produced by the same quantity of gunpowder. The history of the "discovery" of its remarkable powers reads like a fairy tale.

For upwards of a century, picric acid has been known and used as a dye for silk, wool and leather, without the slightest accident occurring. A few years back, however, a fire broke out at a North of England chemical works, in which a large quantity of picric acid had been stored near a heap of lead oxide. The fire melted the acid and caused it to stream across the floor until it met the lead oxide with which it united to form lead picrate. Instantly there was a terrific explosion and, in this way was discovered the most awful explosive of modern times.

At the present time, lyddite shells are formed by pouring the liquid picric acid into the empty cases and leaving it to cool. As soon as it cools it solidifies, and whilst in this state can be transported all over the world without the slightest fear of accident. Just before it is placed in the gun, a small detonating charge of the accidentally discovered lead picrate is inserted in the shell. The enormous energy ex-

erted by the explosion of this compound, which occurs immediately the shell strikes its mark, has the effect of simultaneously bursting the lyddite charge.

For details of results, apply to General Joubert.

Another triumph of scientific and mechanical skill is afforded by that wonderful little weapon known as the Mauser pistol, which so many British officers have lately taken with them to the front in preference to the cumbersome "service revolver." As everybody knows, the Mauser rifle, with which the Boers are supplied, is about equal in offensive power to the Lee-Enfield of our own forces; but because our service revolver and that of the clever German gunmaker

THEIR CAN BE NO COMPARISON.

Briefly, its chief advantages are as follows: It loads its entire charge of ten cartridges in one operation. These cartridges are supplied to the marksman in neat little rows of ten. They are held together by a thin metal slide which can be readily withdrawn, as the marksman pushes into the working chamber, withdrawing this slide locks the mechanism, and cocks the pistol ready for the following shot.

The result of this ingenious arrangement is that the whole ten shots can be readily fired in the brief space of two seconds, whilst, so speedily simple is the process of reloading, that an expert has been known to fire more than eighty aimed shots per minute, each of which would penetrate seventeen inches of pinewood at the muzzle. This is not all.

The holster for this remarkable marksmen's revolver. By ingenious slot arrangement, the butt of the pistol may be instantly attached to the narrow end of the empty holster. The result is that the marksman can carry his little carbine imaginable; a weapon which, although weighing considerable under 5 lbs., will nevertheless just as readily be reconverted in an ordinary pistol, so soon as it is required.

FOR USE AT CLOSE QUARTERS.

Finally, no topical article upon scientific slaughter would be complete which omitted mention of the splendid little carbine named "Powerful," which is now being shelled the Boer positions around Lydenburg. As most people are aware, the average naval gun, being carried on a ship, is not only a large affair, but is no plaything. Indeed, the particular guns under notice, weighing as they do some 7 tons 8 cwt., and measuring upwards of twenty feet in length, afforded no little amusement to the jolly jacks who had to get them into position upon strange runways at such short notice.

Their actual weight, however, is not what must have soon proved well worth the labor expended upon their movement, as will be seen from the following details: When the carriage of an old naval gunner:

"The six-inch 'Vickers' wire-wound gun," said he, "is the finest quick-firer on earth. It requires only the comparatively small charge of twenty-five pounds of cordite to throw its 10-lb. projectile to the enormous distance of ten miles. The tremendous energy imparted to the projectile in the air is so great that it is not infrequently to be seen crashing through close-upon two feet of wrought iron at the muzzle, whilst at 1,000 yards' range it is travelling fast enough to perforate a brick-work of eighteen inches of the same metal.

"So rapid is the rate of fire, that it is actually possible to have four or five hundred projectiles in the air at once, and no fewer than ten of them, or a total weight of 1,000 lbs. of metal can be discharged in a minute."

The degree of precision, too, with which our modern sea and land marine gunners can drop these "whopping" projectiles amongst an enemy, is always a revelation to the stay-at-home landsman.

WAR TIT-BITS.

The brewers of Johannesburg were the first to be commandeered for horses.

A Cape pony has been ridden 100 miles over rough country in twenty-seven hours.

In the Sino-Japanese War all the Japanese soldiers were supplied with binocular glasses.

The Netherlands Railway, connecting Pretoria, the capital of the South African Republic, and Johannesburg, has one of the finest railways to be found anywhere, and possesses a modern up-to-date equipment.

The Mauser bullet makes a clean perforation of bone and muscle. Soldiers shot through both cheek-bones have lost the sense of smell and taste, but are otherwise quite well. Most of the wounds are in the hands and arms.

It is curious to reflect that Southampton, the great port which now sees a great English army embarking to fight in South Africa, witnessed the embarkation of a great English army to fight at Crecy, and later at Poitiers, five and a half centuries ago.

The baled hay that is being shipped from New York for the use of the British army in South Africa and the American army in the Philippines is being compressed by a new process. The hay is put up in bales, cylindrical in form, about the size and shape of the old-fashioned nail-key, or eighteen inches high and of the same diameter. The bales weigh about 145 lbs.

HE KEPT HIS WORD.

The doctor said he'd put me on my feet again in two weeks.

Well, didn't he do it?

He did, indeed. I had to sell my bicycle to pay his bill.

A mathematician has estimated that a man sixty years old has spent three years of his life buttoning his collar.

DOGS IN BATTLE.

Regimental Pets Have Often Taken a Prominent Part in the Fighting.

The regimental pet is in many cases a companion to Tommy Atkins in war, as well as in peace, especially if he be a member of the canine race; and it is remarkable what contempt some animals have for the perils of warfare.

After the Battle of Vittoria, the Guards captured a poodle from the defeated Frenchmen, and—as the regiment happened to be lacking a pet at the time—the dog was promptly invited to fill that position. It served with the battalion throughout the remainder of the campaign, but at the assault of Bridart was struck by a bullet, which broke one of its legs. The fault, however, lay entirely with the dog; for it was not content to remain in the rear in charge of two men, but as soon as the charge sounded broke away, and, dashing to the front took up its position at the head of the regiment. When the men returned to England the dog came with them, and lived for many years on three legs at Chelsea Barracks.

Among the wounded at the Battle of Inkermann was Sandy, the regimental dog of the Royal Engineers. It went out early with a detachment of the regiment in '54, but did not take part in any active service until the battle above named. Here it became conspicuous by trying its teeth on the legs of one or two burly Russians, until, thinking that

it was quite unnecessary, one of the enemy placed Sandy loose-decombat by running his bayonet through the dog's body. Nevertheless, under the careful nursing of the men, it lived to return home when peace was proclaimed; and in order to commemorate the event the colonel had a silver medal struck, with which Sandy was adorned until his death.

CANINE ALLIES.

It was not long ago that a young man, who was in a similar predicament, and the proprietor of a young and flourishing business, hit upon the idea of advertising in a large daily for a "young and good-looking (yew)erter," Juskeus of repute, and was anxious to do this, and here again the meeting process was repeated, but unfortunately did not turn out as happily as in the former instance, for, after becoming engaged to a girl typical of her class, he broke the engagement, and for a while was threatened with a breach of promise action, until he settled it with the outraged girl's family.

A young Dutchman anxious to obtain a pretty wife, being unable to find such a commodity among his acquaintances, inserted an advertisement in an Amsterdam paper asking for beautiful young ladies to take part in a beauty show. All sorts and conditions of girls responded, sent in their names and photographs to the editor of the paper. Fair girls, dark girls and medium girls of all degrees of beauty applied. The beauty show never came off, but 12 of the handsomest received notes requesting a meeting, and some three months after the initial advertisement appeared an elaborate wedding was announced and one of the fair applicants was the bride.

Another young man in Kensington was unable to find a congenial spouse among his acquaintances, so he hid himself in front of the various big department stores, and some three months after the initial advertisement appeared an elaborate wedding was announced and one of the fair applicants was the bride.

The cavalry charge at the Battle of Sankin in the Sudanese War of 1885, was led, not by an officer, but by a dog—a large terrier, Paddy, by name. It evinced the greatest contempt for the Mahdi's forces, and, although stabbed at by those it attacked, came out unscathed after having passed through the enemy's lines and back.

AROUND THE MODDER RIVER.

The scene of Lord Methuen's heavy fighting is twenty-five miles south of Kimberley and about four miles west of the Orange Free State border line. There is no village nor town, but simply a settlement, with a few stock farms scattered about, a general store for supplying the farmers and Kaffirs, and a couple of hotels and farms combined, where some of the residents of Kimberley go for a change of air or for the shooting.

Where the rivers Modder and Riet meet is the so-called "island." It is not in reality an island, but a V-shaped piece of land formed by the two rivers. It is here that the Boers made their best stand, for the position was favorable. The steep banks of the river on the south side, the point of attack, are well wooded and covered with dense brush, affording excellent cover for riflemen. The north side is quite open, and by keeping along the banks of the Modder River, which is on the north side, the Boers can screen themselves from view for two miles or more. Here the river takes a more northerly course, and to gain the Orange Free State the Boers would have to come into more open country.

CONCERNING IVORIES.

Silver for toilet table articles will always hold its own, but ivory to-day is the most distinguished material of which brushes, combs, powder boxes, hand mirrors and the like can be made. It is better for a person who is collecting the furniture for a dressing-table to put money gradually into fine pieces of ivory rather than silver. Ivory of the best quality is steadily increasing in value. Every year the number of elephants decreases. The time is almost here when the ivory-bearing elephants of Central Africa will be extinct. Collections of ivory now fetch large prices. It is not surprising, therefore, that ivory toilet articles should be eagerly sought.

Public libraries are now to be found in almost every town in Natal.

How Wives Are Obtained.

With the advance of civilization the male portion of the human race seems to grow more shy and reserved when it comes to taking unto themselves wives, notwithstanding the fact that the number of women in the world greatly exceeds the number of men.

In the days of our barbarian forefathers, if they saw a fair, comely young maiden they forcibly carried her off to be their willing or unwilling bride. But nowadays many and not curious are the devices of modern man to similarly endow himself with a better half. It may be that with civilization comes a timidity or want of society causes a very great difficulty in meeting suitable life partners, but be that as it may, the fact remains that many curious expedients are hit upon by ingenious youths for obtaining wives.

Not long ago a young engineer of somewhat unattractive appearance and retiring nature desired to enter the matrimonial condition, but, alas, society included no ladies, and he was in despair as to how to discover an eligible helpmate. At length he conceived the extraordinary notion of writing a letter to each of the ladies advertising in a certain daily paper for situations, asking the same damsels to change their situation in life by taking unto themselves the holy step of matrimony with himself as life's partner. Out of 27 letters written five only elicited replies. Five appointments were accordingly made, and on the ladies presenting themselves, each, of course, at different times and places, the eccentric engineer made his choice; and, as the girl was amiable, comely and a good housekeeper, a marriage was celebrated some afterwards was hoped may prove as happy in its outcome as its origin was unique and unusual.

Another young gentleman in Philadelphia, who was in a similar predicament, and the proprietor of a young and flourishing business, hit upon the idea of advertising in a large daily for a "young and good-looking (yew)erter," Juskeus of repute, and was anxious to do this, and here again the meeting process was repeated, but unfortunately did not turn out as happily as in the former instance, for, after becoming engaged to a girl typical of her class, he broke the engagement, and for a while was threatened with a breach of promise action, until he settled it with the outraged girl's family.

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COLLEGES FOUNDED BY WOMEN.

In an article on the admission of women to the Cambridge College degrees, Miss Helen Gladstone refers to the fact that no less than six Cambridge colleges were founded by women for the benefit of men—Christ's and St. John's, by Margaret, Countess of Richmond; Sidney Sussex, by Lady Frances Sidney, Countess of Sussex; Clare, by Elizabeth de Burgh, Countess of Clare; Pembroke, by Marie de St. Paul, Countess of Pembroke, and Queen's, by Queen Margaret of Anjou.

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Jenkins—I wonder

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