

SIDELIGHTS OF THE WAR.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF THE SOLDIERS AT THE FRONT.

Touching Little Story—He Refused to Surrender—Heart-Sickening Sight—How Ambulance Men Work.

BEER TWO SHILLINGS A PINT.

One soldier writing from Estcourt, makes a complaint concerning the price of beer in that town. He says: "We went into the town, and were paying two bob for a pint of beer; but there is not any to be got now. Had a hal-holiday yesterday, and went out into the town again, but could not get anything to drink—only ginger-beer at a tanner a bottle, and lags on the same price. What ho! Roll on the time when we can get them cheaper."

TOUCHING LITTLE STORY.

I went into one house, writes a corporal with the Northhamptons at Modder River, and found a nice, comfortable house completely shattered. Evidently well-to-do people had lived here. One room in particular took my eye, and that was what had evidently been a little child's room. There were a lot of toys and small cups and saucers, dolls, etc., and I found an envelope with this on it—"This is my dear grandmamma's hair," and inside there was a lock of hair, now trodden under foot. All these things, I thought, were a trifle touching. In the front room was a dead Boer stretched out on the table.

"A PARADISE FOR WASHERWOMEN."

Sergt. Wilson, of the Howitzer Battery, writes from Modder River to his parents at Northampton: "We bathe now every day and wash our own clothes. Like the poor lodger Dickens wrote about, we go half naked while we swill our shirts. This would be a paradise for washerwomen with the sun shining and wind blowing nearly every day. Our things are dry to put on a few minutes after they are washed. That is the one remarkable thing about the climate. You may get soaked to the skin and go to sleep in the open air all night, but in the morning you may wake up as fresh as a daisy."

HE REFUSED TO SURRENDER.

Corpl. S. Miller, 2nd Devons, writing to friends in the Isle of Wight after the Tugela battle, says: "Our regiment went down close to the river, but it was impossible to get across under such a heavy fire. The bullets were falling around us like a hailstorm, and it is miraculous how a man of us lived to tell the tale. There was a battery of artillery on our right, and I believe nearly every man and horse were shot. They had to leave the guns to which we were the support. Our colonel, Col. Bullock, a major, and about 20 of our men were made prisoners, and the Boers hit the colonel down with a rifle because he refused to surrender. We did not get the order to retire too soon, as our men were falling fast. Our casualties in killed, wounded and missing number 113, and there were some other regiments with heavier losses, especially the Dublins."

PLAYING 'POSSUM WITH THE BOERS.

Surgeon-Lieut. Briscoe, describing his experience at the battle of Colenso, when attached to a mounted regiment formed of Imperial Light Horse, Natal Carbiniers, King's Royal Rifles, and Natal Police, says: "We were told off to take a kopje held by the Boers on this side of the river, a mile or two below Colenso. I had no business in the firing line, but I thought I could drop back at any time, if necessary. We got a heavy volley from a rise to the right, and another immediately from the top 500 yards off, and from the slopes. We all dropped flat. Well, no one gave us orders, and we lay on. By-and-by Capt. Bottomley, I. L. H., passed the word, 'How are Thorneycroft's getting on on the right?' I tried to pass it along, but could get no answer. I didn't realize for the moment why; I hadn't heard groans. Then a man in the rear said, 'Doc, you're wanted. There's a man hit on your right.' I rose up to move and looked around; but whizz, whizz!—now by my head, now all round, one almost grazing my left calf and plunging into the ground—and I saw I could do nothing. So I lunged myself forward, and 'played possum,' so successfully that the Boers left me alone, and some of our own men reported me hit."

BOERS DON'T LIKE LANCES.

One of the 12th Lancers, writing from Modder River, says: "The Boers won't give us a chance to get a proper scrape with them; directly they see us they get on their horses. We caught some the other day, and one said: 'It is not fair to fight with long sticks with steel on the end!'"

"HEART-SICKENING SIGHT."

"It was a heart-sickening sight," continues Miller, "to see them carrying away the wounded, some minus arms, others legs; and the Boers even fired shells at our ambulance and wounded some of the poor fellows a second time. Our naval guns blew up the Tugela bridge, so that the enemy cannot get away those guns we were obliged to leave on the field on Friday."

FALLING ASLEEP UNDER FIRE.

Writing home from Modder River, a private in the 2nd Coldstream Guards says: "I have been through three battles up to now without a scratch."

Nobody has any idea of a battlefield, only those who go through it. It is something awful to see the dead and wounded. You might not credit it, but it's as true as I'm alive that at Modder River I saw men fall asleep in the firing line, fairly worn out. We were lying in the hot sand for twelve hours without drink or food and the heat was unbearable. My company got lost at night, and we had to sleep in laager among rocks and stones, and amongst the dead till morning. I often thought of home and the children."

HOW AMBULANCE MEN WORK.

Mr. Charles Boson Caple, late of Cardiff, now of the Volunteer Ambulance Corps, serving in Natal, writes to his brother of Tugela and after. He says: "The hospital tents were soon up ready for the wounded. By this time the battle of Tugela had commenced. It was not long before the ambulance wagons started, and in two and a half or three hours they returned loaded with wounded, followed by men who were able to come in by themselves, as they were wounded only slightly. Other wounded were brought in on stretchers, and more were carried in on the clasped hands and arms of two comrades. These bearers were done up, but they kept on, bravely; they were helping their comrades. After a while about a dozen of us started out and went to the top of the hill. The Boers opened a terrible rifle fire upon them then, and the men began falling by the dozen. In the midst of this my section was called upon. We started to go forward, and soon came across lots of wounded. Some who were so badly hit that they could hardly stand were helping others, and when we offered to help, replied, 'No, no, my lads. Lower down you'll find hundreds who cannot move.'"

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

The desire to make the best appearance possible does not always come from an undue amount of pride, but often because it pays financially to appear prosperous. It is the way of the world that nothing succeeds like success. For instance, a young doctor, lawyer or merchant is more likely to be successful if he lives in good style, than if every one knows that he finds it hard to meet his bills. His house must be a good one, elegantly furnished, while he and his wife are dressed nicely at all times, and how to do this without going in debt becomes an important question. The strictest economy must be exercised in every department. It is necessary while providing the table with good food to see that nothing is wasted. The furniture and carpets must have the best care in order to make them look like new and prolong their usefulness.

There is no part of the housework, however, where so much can be accomplished by good management, as in buying and making the family wardrobe. The remnant counters and special sales at the large dry goods houses give one an excellent opportunity to lay in a supply of the best material at greatly reduced prices. There has never been a time when so many women were dispensing with the help of the dressmaker and learning to make their dresses themselves, which saves many dollars every year. The excellent paper patterns which we can buy so cheaply, are a great help, and women succeed wonderfully well in producing costumes which in fit and general appearance are equal to those made by the best modistes.

Fashions change so quickly that it is impossible to wear a dress out before it becomes a "back number," hence it becomes necessary to make them over. Even in the best regulated households, there are always some cast-off garments, which may be used in this way. In these days of combinations and varieties there are few things that cannot be made serviceable as trimmings or to assist in composing costumes which handy women now develop out of two or three different materials. If it cannot be used in its present guise, one or two packages of dye will change it to any color you wish, and it will begin a new era of usefulness. The dye should be dissolved in soft water and a porcelain kettle used in doing the work, which if given time and attention, cannot fail to be satisfactory. Get a good quality of lining, new stiffening and binding, and pay as much attention to the details of the work as if the goods were new. Making a skirt over was a difficult problem a few years ago, but it has become comparatively simple now, although they are worn much longer than formerly. Fortunately flounces and ruffles are popular, for with their aid, the skirt may be made the regulation length. A very handsome skirt of cadet blue cloth was lengthened by piecing out the lining and the outside material and neatly pressing the seams. Black braid was put on the bottom in a pretty pattern, with two straight rows above it. This made a handsome finish, and effectually covered all the piecing. The tunic or overskirt is the latest style, and one of the best for made-over skirts. They are usually made with very little if any fulness in the back, and pointed or scalloped at the bottom, which falls over a skirt of velvet, satin or heavy woolen material, quite plain, or over one or more silk or woolen flounces. Handsome effects are often produced by using the best parts of two old skirts which harmonize in color.

STRANGE INDEED.

McJigger—That's a funny thing. Thingumbob—What is it?
McJigger—Miss Passey was an old maid before she married, and now that her husband is dead she has become a young widow.

LADYSMITH'S GRIP AT DAY.

SCENES AND INCIDENTS WHEN THE RELIEF CAME.

Correspondent Tells About the Great Excitement in the Town When the British Force Arrived.

Joseph H. Dunn, in a cable to the New York Journal, gives the following account of the relief of Ladysmith:—The relief of Ladysmith was virtually accomplished on Wednesday, February 28, when we knew that Gen. Buller had driven the enemy from Pieter's Hill. Amid scenes of tumultuous enthusiasm General White prepared for what we all felt would be the final attack. Half-starved, fever-stricken though we were, every bodily ill was forgotten in the almost certainty of immediate relief. Hundreds climbed Observation Hill to watch for the first sight of the men in khaki. The advance posts reported that the Boers were making active preparations to remove their "Long Tom" from Bulwana Hill.

TUGGING AT "LONG TOM."

A derrick erected became plainly visible, and quick the open fire of every gun was in order. In a moment the big naval guns in the Cove redoubt and at Caesar's Camp got to work. Fast as they could be served they rained projectiles on Bulwana, and in five minutes the derrick was smashed by a well directed shell. How we cheered! Then the Boers dodged along the ridge, trying to drag their "Long Tom," but the naval gunners followed them, planting their shells with deadly precision. Our guns worked with almost ceaseless roar while we watched and cheered every shot.

Suddenly, the dazzling sun, was obscured by heavy black clouds, which broke loose in a tremendous thunder storm. Torrents of rain, volleys of thunder and vivid lightning broke over the whole region, checking the operation of our guns. Half an hour later the storm passed and our navy guns broke out again, sweeping the ridge between Bulwana and Caesar's Camp, where the Boers were still struggling with their Long Tom.

TEN ANXIOUS MINUTES.

By this time our cavalry scouts brought in the news that the Boers were in full retreat in all directions. Buller also heliographed the news, with the first glint of sunlight after the storm, that they were retreating north along the Colenso road, passing behind Bulwana, where great numbers of waggons were seen, some conveying their cannon. Long columns were also visible on the other side of the town, moving rapidly over the plain toward the Drakensberg passes as the afternoon waned.

Then we knew we were free at last. But wait a moment! A cry comes from Caesar's Camp: "Cavalry is coming from the south!"

IS IT FRIEND OR FOE?

At once the town is in a terrific hubbub. Troops hastily gather; guns trunn to fight till the last man drops, if it proves to be the enemy. It is an anxious ten minutes.

As the column gallops nearer over the flats, straight toward the fort at Caesar's Hill, every field glass is strained to make them out. They reach the river. Our guns are ready, infantry, and cavalry waiting, too. They plunge into the river, and in a couple of minutes are up the bank on this side. Now we see the khaki. They are ours! Saved at last, thank God!

SAVED AT LAST.

Out of the trenches, over, the plain we rush, soldiers, sailors, correspondents, citizens, women and children to welcome our deliverers. Cheering, crying, waving their hats, guns and swords, on came the men in khaki, galloping their foaming horses at full speed. On they rushed toward us, covered with dust and tired with their dashing ride, but the hoofs of their horses beat the plain like a reveille of victory.

The Natal Carbiniers were in the lead, with Major Gough at their head, next some Natal Mounted Police. They are only 300, but they seemed thousands to us. They slackened the pace of their tired horses, while crowds of the besieged ran alongside, cheering, shaking hands indiscriminately and singing. Thus the motley procession marched into town.

GOUGH'S DASH INTO TOWN.

On the way Major Gough told us he had been scouting ahead of Buller's army, and finding no opposition they made a dash toward Ladysmith and had come through without getting a single shot.

In the main street General White and staff awaited the approach of the cheering crowd which led the horses of the rescuers by their bridles, to where the brave general stood. Gough and McKenzie jumped out of their saddles and saluted and then wrung the hands of White, Hunter, and others of the staff, while the throng cheered itself hoarse. White raised his hand, implored silence and made

a brief speech in a voice full of emotion. He thanked all in Ladysmith, civilians as well as military, for the fortitude they had displayed during the prolonged siege, also for the support afforded him in bearing their privations without a murmur, never thinking of surrender.

CHEERING AND SINGING.

Then, with a touch of that humour which had often served to keep up our spirits, White added that he had been obliged to cut down our rations in the past, but he promised not to do so any more. Then raising his hat in his hand, the general called for three cheers for the Queen, and the lungs of all Ladysmith roared three as heartfelt cheers for her Gracious Majesty as ever Britons uttered. Then we cheered Wales, Buller, White, Lady White, the garrison, not forgetting the sick and wounded in our rejoicing. During all this brave White, worn and weary with days and nights of ceaseless vigilance, joined with us. When he spoke he was much moved by emotion, and though there was a smile on his face his voice was broken, and tears glistened in his eyes, as we gave him cheer after cheer. Then, following his lead with every head uncovered, we sang "God Save the Queen." To close we sang "He's a Jolly Good Fellow," to which White laughingly acknowledged his thanks.

THEN ENTER DUNDONALD.

It was then 7 o'clock in the evening. The sky was rapidly overcast and another thunderstorm with terrific rain broke, lasting half the night. In the midst of this Lord Dundonald with a large force of cavalry entered the town.

The whole night was spent in rejoicing. Our limited stores were opened freely and we ate our fill, while our rescuers divided flasks and tobacco generously. The recreating Boers must have suffered much during that terrific night, dragging their guns and waggons toward the mountain passes.

Early on Thursday morning 4,000 men of all arms started in pursuit to the northward. A detachment of Imperial Light Horse occupied Bulwana, but then "Long Tom" was gone, and all the sick and wounded in Ndomba Camp were brought into town.

Major Crawford arrived during the morning with a wagon train of supplies, including Lady White's Christmas presents to the troops. By noon General Buller rode in with his staff and was given a rousing reception.

And thus ended the great siege of Ladysmith.

WIRING TO VICTORIA NYANZA.

The Second of the African Great Lakes to Be Joined to Europe by Telegraph.

The completion of the telegraph from the Indian Ocean to Victoria Nyanza puts the world in communication with the sources of the Nile. The telegraph has been completed to Ripon Falls, which is the exact point where the White Nile leaves the lake. One of the most useful results of this enterprise will be that the people of lower Egypt will be able to tell what the water conditions of the lower Nile will be for months in advance. This information will give most desirable guidance in regulating the quantity to be taken from the Nile for irrigation purposes. Many occasions have arisen when information as to the stage of the water in the upper Nile would have been worth millions of dollars to lower Egypt.

The cable does not yet touch at Mombasa, which is the sea end of this land line. Despatches from Victoria Nyanza must therefore be sent by steamer, to be put on the cable at Zanzibar, which will delay forwarding messages for several days. Thus it happens that the news of the completion of the line to the lake was not received in this city for a week after it occurred. Five years ago, when the building of this line and the railroad alongside of it was begun, the shortest time in which news from the lake could reach Europe was about four months.

The report of Sir Guilford Molesworth, the consulting engineer, published in July last, showed that the survey of the route finally adopted for the railroad had been completed clear to the lake. The railroad was built and in operation from the sea to Kiu, a distance of 270 miles inland, and between that point and Angata-el-geik, 360 miles in the interior, the road was in course of construction. The railroad is to terminate at Port Florence, at the extreme northeast corner of Victoria Nyanza instead of being extended about sixty miles farther west to Port Victoria, as was at first contemplated. Probably three years will yet elapse before the completion of the railroad.

The first telegraph completed to the Central African lakes was that to Blantyre, in the Nyassa highlands, and as it is connected with the cable on the Portuguese coast communications between Lake Nyassa and Europe are promptly delivered except when the land line is out of order, as occasionally happens.

MEMORY GONE.

Wife—What do you mean by coming home in this condition? Have you any excuse to offer?

Husband—I had one, Maria a blame good one, too, but I can't remember it now.

EXTREMES MEET.

Johnny—I was next to the head of my class to-day.

Father—Good. How did it happen?
Johnny—We were standing in a circle.

KIMBERLEY DIAMONDS.

AFTER CRONJE'S SURRENDER THE SUPPLY IS AGAIN SAFE.

The Star of South Africa—Vastness of the Precious Stone Pits Which Cecil Rhodes Controls.

With Kimberley relieved, Cronje surrendered, and Cecil Rhodes once more at liberty, the resumption of the industry of diamond digging in South Africa is likely to be even now under way. For Kimberley has the greatest known diamond deposit of the world, and its hidden wealth is too precious to be allowed to remain long unexploited.

Up to the beginning of the present century nearly all diamonds came from India. Then great numbers were found in Brazil, but not until after the discovery of diamonds in South Africa, in 1837, were the stones found in vast quantities. That year a Dutch farmer, who lived near what are now known as the great diamond fields, got from a native a bright stone that his children were using as a plaything. The stone was sent to Cape Town and was there recognized as a diamond of exceptional value. It was forwarded to the Paris Exposition and there sold for \$2,500. From that time on the diamond fever swept through South Africa. Two years later a beautiful stone was found which weighed eighty-three carats. It was called the "Star of South Africa," and sold for \$55,000.

Up to this time the diamonds had been found in the sand near the Orange and Vaal rivers. In 1870, however, it was suddenly reported that great pockets of hard earth filled with diamonds had been found on a plateau north of the Orange river. The diamond hunters looked to the new fields and found that in that region of the plateau, under its layer of red sand, were great "pans" or tunnels through which, at some ancient time, boiling lava flowed from the heart of the earth. These pans were filled with a hard bluish deposit, called "blue ground," that evidently had been eroded to the surface by volcanic action and from a great depth. In other words, these pans were craters of extinct volcanoes.

THE FAMOUS GEM PITS.

The vast diamond pits at Kimberley are in the largest and most valuable of the craters. The larger of these pits is probably the greatest hole ever dug by man. It is 300 feet deep and has an area of thirteen acres. Numbers of diagonal shafts lead from the surface to the bottom of the pit, and up and down these shafts are passing continually tram-cars. The business of these cars is to carry the blue ground up to the "floors," where it is dumped and left to soften in the sun and rain, for the blue ground is almost as hard as sandstone when taken out. By the combined effect of water and sunlight it gradually softens.

The floors are nothing more than great tracts of land that have been cleared of vegetation and have been then rolled to make them as hard and smooth as possible. Each of these floors is 600 acres in extent. After one of them has been covered to a depth of a foot with blue ground.

Now the diamonds have become gems that may be exposed for sale, so they are taken into the salesroom and spread out on sheets of white paper, heaps and heaps of them, of all sizes, colors and shapes. The diamonds are all carefully valued, according to weight and purity and are sold. Next they go to the diamond cutters, who work on them for days and days, cutting various sides on them and polishing them until they look like stars. In this cutting process it often happens that a diamond will be reduced to half its original weight.

In the diamond mines proper all possible precautions are taken to keep the workmen from stealing the gems. The laborers are constantly watched by trustworthy overseers, and at night they are stripped of their clothes and

THEIR BODIES SEARCHED.

Then they are sent naked to their sleeping rooms, where blankets are allowed them. Of course this applies to the natives, as the only white men employed in handling the blue ground are in the assorting room.

It is said that some fifteen tons of precious stones have been taken from the Kimberley district since 1870. In conducting the business of the Kimberley mine 1,300 Europeans and 5,700 natives are employed. The workmen are paid high wages and every laborer on the "floors" is paid a percentage on all the diamonds he finds while harvesting the blue ground.

Diamond cutting and polishing is a very difficult process, which is done almost entirely by hand. The stones are polished by rubbing two, each on the other, or by rubbing them with a polishing wheel that is covered with diamond powder; it is a case of "diamond cut diamond." When it is necessary to cut a valuable piece from a stone, iron wires covered with diamond powder are used. The facets, or different sides are formed by this rubbing process, which is a very slow and laborious one. A stone weighing, say, twenty carats, will require at least four or five months of constant work to reduce it to the proper form. A diamond about the size of a small pea will weigh over a carat.

DEFINED.

Teacher—Lewis, can you define politics?

Lewis, at eleven—Yes, m'am. Politics is the art of spendin' tax.