AN ENGLISH WAR CORRESPONDENT.

"Archibald Forbes once a private soldier? Then his origin must have been very humble and his education self-acquired." Not so fast, good readers. There are those who have poverty thrust upon them, and others who thrust poverty upon themselves. I am afraid Archibald Forbes belonged to the latter class. His father, Lewis Forbes, was a Presbyterian Doctor of Divinity, while his mother belonged to the old family of Leslie. Living in the north of Scotland, Forbes studied first at school, then with a tutor, and finally at the Aberdeen university. Though excelling in classics, he had such an aversion to mathematics that when the senatus academicus recently proposed to confer upon him the degree of LL. D., an irate professor exclaimed:

"I can never consent to such a mockery. As a student Mr. Forbes was 'ploughed' in mathematics. I shall never consent that a man should receive an honorary degree from this university who has failed to pass his examinations."

Fortunately for Forbes, success on the battle field does not depend upon the appendix of LL. D.

During Forbes' second collegiate year, his father dropped dead in his pulpit. There being nice children and little fortune, Archibald left Aberdeen for Edinburgh, with designs first upon the law, and secondly upon the church. While endeavouring to decide upon a career, he spent all his money, and fell in love with a young lady, with whom he arranged to elope in a gig on a certain Sunday when the obdurate father was to be at church. Alas, "the best-laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft a-gley!" The obdurate father waylaid our hero, remonstrated with practical determination, and turned the love-corn youth into a ditch, whence he arose sadder and wetter.

Attaining his majority in 1850, Forbes became possessed of $2 500, and determined to join a cousin in Canada who owned a large tract of land near Lake Huron. On reaching Quebec, he lingered in the old town, heedless of the beaming eyes of his landlord's daughter. At the end of three months, the wily Scotchman had exhausted his resources, confessed his poverty to the landlord's daughter, and abandoned the idea of joining his cousin. With eight shillings in his pocket, he shipped for home as a sailor, and endured twelve hours a day for weeks, when his vessel became water-logged. No timber ship can sink, otherwise Forbes would have gone to the bottom. There was no cooking for a week, life being maintained on biscuits and salt meat. After several sailors had been washed overboard, the crew took to the boat, which was picked up by the cotton ship Moses Taylor, from New Orleans. Finding that the crew were sadly diseased, Forbes, who had studied medicine *en amateur*, got out the medicine chest, killed one patient and cured the rest. Of course his susceptible heart fell a prey to the captain's daughter, upon whom, when bidding her farewell in Liverpool, after three months' taste of salt water, he squandered his last eight shillings in grapes.

What was to be done? Never without resource, Forbes sold a time field glass, and, with the money, went to London, where he was recruited in the Royal Dragoons. Despite his tendency to "larks," he made rapid headway. In addition to his appointment as school-teacher to his company, Forbes was made acting-quartermaster-sergeant, without the rank of sergeant, is he happened to be the only man of his company who could solve the following stupendous problem in mental arithmetic,—"If one man is allowed one thirty-seventh part of an ounce of peppercorns per day, what is the amount to be drawn for two hundred men per week?" Having composed this, Forbes was let off from punishment drills, and became an object of admiration to his companions. Already articles by him had been accepted for "Household Words" and the "Cornhill Magazine." Shortly after, he competed for a prize essay of fifteen guineas, to be written by a working-man, "On the advantages of the military service, and the benefits derived from her colonies." He was then stationed at Weedon, where libraries are conspicuously absent, and as he was writing about the colonies, how could he obtain dates? Discovering an old encyclopedia, he collected his material in it, wrote his essay, and secured the prize!

Owing to literary earnings, Forbes had more money than his fellows, and consequently got into frequent trouble. His colonel, an old General Wardlaw—was a strict disciplinarian, and meted out punishment accordingly. Toward the end of his military career, which ended five years, Forbes became a very good character—a happy change, which would probably have led to promotion had not his health given way and caused him to be invalided. After enduring ignorant army hospital treatment for eighteen months, he went to London, got well in six weeks, and was then sent to Aldershot to show the military surgeons how easy had been his cure.

In losing an obstreperous soldier, England gained a new species of correspondence. Forbes's first contribution to journalism was published in 1865, in the "Evening Star." He became a casual writer on the "Morning Advertiser," and once received eighteen pence for a paragraph accepted by the "Daily News." On this promising income he married; after publishing an article in the "Cornhill" on "Army Reform," and another in the "St. Paul," entitled "Soldiers' Wives," both of which were well received, Forbes started a paper called the "London Scotsman," intended like every other newspaper, to fill an aching void. It provided Scotchmen with embalmed news from their own country, but as they either failed to see its necessity, or expected to get it for nothing, the editor did not amass a fortune. He chewed out a precarious existence by occasional dramatic and musical criticism contributed to the "Morning Advertiser."

Unfortunately for art, Forbes is not the only example of the wrong man in the wrong place. When asked to pronounce upon the merits of a performer on the pedal pianoforte, the cassock erred and the artist from a gamut point of view and praised him as an actor!

On the breaking out of the Franco-German war, Forbes was engaged in writing a novel for his paper, while cherishing the idea that nature had designed him for war correspondence, an idea he communicated to James Grant, editor of the "Morning Advertiser," who soon after said to him:

"I've concluded to offer you a position as war correspondent. Choose whichever side you prefer."

Having studied German tactics, acquired a slight knowledge of the German language, and feeling sure that the German eagle would win, the ex soldier-editor went direct to Saarbruck, and witnessed the "baptism by fire," on August 2, 1870. It is strange that he should have beheld the defeat at Sedan, seen Louis Napoleon dead at Chiselhurst, and his son dead in Africa.

At Saarbruck, Forbes helped to save the life of Major Battye, who belonged to the celebrated Indian Guides, and has since been killed in Afghanistan. Following the Germans as a spectator, Major Battye lost his temper on seeing a soldier killed beside him. Seizing the dead man's needle-gun, he opened upon the French, and promptly received a chassepot bullet in the ribs. Forbes picked up the impetuous major, carried him to a place of safety, and temporarily repaired him by sewing him in brown paper plastered over with paste.

Present at the battles of Courcelles, Vionville, and Gravelotte, Forbes advanced with the Germans to Paris. He and his companions were so far forward as to be ignorant of the flank movement to the right which ended in the battle of Sedan, and held on their way alone through Chalons until actually warned by the French in the street to be careful or they would fall into the hands of the Germans, who had been seen in the neighbourhood. Recovering touch of the Germans, Forbes was under fire the entire day, and the next morning witnessed Napoleon's surrender to Bismarck. He and his young Dutch companion, De Liefde, were the only civilians who witnessed the historic event.

On the night of the day Napoleon left for Wilhelmshoho, Forbes and De Liefde, being unable to find quarters elsewhere, asked for lodging in the Chateau Bellevue, which had been the ex-emperor's temporary residence. Their request was granted, but without food. While Forbes was writing his despatch on the table on which the capitulation had been signed, De Liefde sat gnawing a ham-bone taken from their own stores. Failing by this means to appease a ravenous appetite, he threw the bone in disgust upon the table, and upset Forbes's ink. On returning to the Chateau, three months later, Forbes was gravely shown the stain of his own ink as a souvenir of the capitulation! The French commander had upset the bottle in his rage at Moltke's exorbitant demands! It was then that De Liefde and Forbes tossed for the right to sleep in the ex-Emperor's bed. The ever lucky Forbes won. On a little table by the bed, with leaf turned cook, was the book which Napoleon had read before going to sleep,—Bulwer's "Last of the Barons!"

Forbes was the first non-combatant to ride round Paris before the city was entirely invested, and while waiting at Meaux for the progress of the environment, he received orders to return home. The "Morning Advertiser" no longer required his services, for the quaint reason that this journal already had a correspondent inside of a city which was about to be besieged! Forbes reached London in three days, sole possessor of information concerning French plans. As his essay in war correspondence had abruptly ended in recall, he concluded to return to his miserable "London Scotsman." However, he determined, if possible, to sell his knowledge. As "The Times" turned a deaf ear to his application, Forbes stood in Fleet street, and tossed "odd man out," to which of three papers—"Daily News," "Standard," and "Telegraph"—he should go with his copy. The "Daily News" won the toss. He found favour at last, and was told to write three columns. On returning to the office to state that the subject was not yet exhausted, the editor replied:

"Write on, then, until it is. We'll take as much as you like of *this* kind of copy."

Forbes wrote six columns and arranged for another article to appear the day after, but when he presented his second manuscript the manager said:

"I don't think we want it."

The tone greatly irritated the already jaundiced Forbes, who politely requested Mr. Robinson "to go to the devil," and then proceeded to go elsewhere himself. Chasing the correspondent up the street, the manager finally overtook and calmed him by the magic announcement:

"I want you to go to Metz to-night for us."

It was four o'clock in the afternoon: Forbes left three hours later. This was his first engagement upon a journal with which he has been connected ever since."

At Metz Forbes began to revolutionize war correspondence by living on forepaws, writing every fight, and substituting for curt telegrams of bare facts, long descriptive letters telegraphed in full. According to Forbes, successful war correspondence depends upon three attributes:—facility of organization, capacity of physical endurance, and the gift of lucid writing, resulting from studiously acquired military knowledge. From a journalistic as well as from a military point of view, the base of a campaign must be secure; open communication and presence in the right place are indispensable. Forbes seems to sniff a battle afar off, and is ready to live in squalor, as he did for six weeks within easy range of French cannon before Metz capitulated. It was the wettest autumn on record, and typhoid fever and dysentery were his constant companions. During a sortie, Forbes received a flesh wound in the leg which continued open for months, but which did not force him to leave the front. For these six weeks he did not sleep in a bed except on occasional visits to the telegraphic base at Saarbruck. Before the capitulation was effected, he was the first to enter Metz, and informally joining the sanitary volunteers, he devoted himself to the removal of sick and wounded, 2000 of whom were in a state of semi-putrefaction. As the most infectious disorders reigned, including the rare type of fleury typhus, Forbes's leg was attacked with gangrene, which had to be burned out with nitric acid. By constant smoking, never removing his boots, and carrying in his mouth a sponge saturated with vinegar, he managed to keep on his legs, but was finally ordered to England, lest, by a longer stay in so foul an atmosphere, amputation should become necessary.

On reaching London, Forbes showed his disabled leg to Mr. Robinson, who remarked with a shudder:

"As a fellow-man, I say you ought to lay up for six months; as a newspaper manager, I wish you would start for the seige of Paris to-night."

Forbes started immediately, and his leg got well, probably owing partly to his ruse of giving a rectitude seven days out of twenty-one. Attached to the head-quarters of the army commanded by the Crown Prince of Saxony, Forbes witnessed the hardest fighting of the siege. After the final bombardment of St. Denis, he contrived to get inside the walls, which had been reduced to a most dilapidated condition, and was offered food by a Protestant pastor. The meat consisted of part of a young gray horse that had been killed by a shell.

During the siege, Forbes wrote letters in full, which were sent to an agent on the frontier, who telegraphed them to London. This feat excited great surprise among the Germans, who knew that Forbes had permission from the Crown Prince to telegraph only short messages from the offices within his army. One day a Forbes telegram appeared dated at a place where there was no telegraph office. It was reported to Prince George of Saxony's staff by a jealous correspondent.

That same night, Forbes dined with this staff, and was asked to explain the incomprehensible.

"Why," he replied, jestingly, "I have my own private wire, and shall telegraph from here directly."

Knowing that orders had been given at Prince George's office to receive no telegram that night from him, Forbes quietly wrote a letter directed to his frontier agent, and put it in the post. The next day, it was telegraphed to London, and copies of the "Daily News" were sent to Prince George with Mr. Forbes' compliments.

Pending the capitulation of Paris in February, 1871, some fifty journalists waited hungrily to enter on the side of Versailles. Forbes arranged to enter by the north, through St. Denis, and accomplished his purpose on horseback, dressed as a Prussian, and was, in consequence, very nearly killed by a drunken National Guard. Having little knowledge of French and no knowledge whatever of Paris, he had great difficulty in finding Mr. Washburne's bureau, where sat Colonel Hoffman, who gazed with surprise upon the first man he had seen from the exterior world. He sent the stranger to Urbank's English Hotel, in the Faubourg St. Honore, the only hotel open during the siege. Forbes brought forth from his valise five pounds of sliced ham, which Urbank's people put on a large covered plate and exhibited in the Faubourg at ten centimes a peep, as the first outside marketing to enter Paris.

After walking about dark streets all night, Forbes, who had stabled his horse without leave, rode to Vincennes, where he passed the Prussian lines. He then galloped fifteen miles to Lagny, the terminus of the German railroad system, which he reached in time to catch the train for Germany, but killed his poor horse in the effort. On went the war correspondent for twenty-two hours, without stopping. Reaching Carlsruhe at two o'clock in the morning, he made his way to the telegraph-office, where the two girls in charge refused to take a long telegram until day set in. Coaxing and bribery, however, accomplished their purpose. At eight o'clock the despatch was finished which gave the first details of the interior of Paris that had reached England for a week. Taking the next train to Paris, Forbes entered the Hotel Chatham on the morning of the third day after his departure, and was roundly chaffed for his delay by two journalists who had just got in. Fancy their feelings on reading the "Daily News"! Correspondents were untrustworthy that it was not unusual for Forbes to carry news to England twice a week. He was often the only passenger, and nearly died from fatigue.

After witnessing the great parade at Longchamps, Forbes on the same day accompanied the German troops into Paris. Leaving the German cordon and entering that part of the town still in French hands, he was assailed by the mob as a German spy. A fight ensued, in which Forbes's clothes were torn off. "Let us drown him!" shouted the mob, who threw him on the ground and proceeded to drag him over the stone streets. Rescued by a National Guard picket, the supposed spy was taken to a police-station, and brought before a magistrate whose sister spoke English, and who testified her belief in Forbes's representations. On being released, Forbes borrowed apparel from the brother of his benefactor, who accompanied him to his hotel. "How can I repay you for all that you have done for me?" asked the correspondent. "More easily than you think," replied the Frenchwoman. "My brother and I are literally starving. He has received no salary for six months, and, as gentlefolk, we cannot stand in the queue with the populace to receive alms. Doubtless you know persons connected with the distribution of England's gift. Any food will be a godsend." As one of the English Almoners happened to be staying at Forbes' hotel, a hamper was dispatched to the Frenchwoman, who went away sobbing like a child. That same night, Forbes started for England, and wrote his account of the entrance into Paris before he had washed the blood-stains from his head and hands. This account appeared in a special edition of the "Daily News," and the next morning Mr. Robinson found his correspondent asleep on the floor with the London Directory for a pillow.

On returning to Paris, just as the Commune was collapsing, Forbes entered by La Chappelle gate, and the same afternoon watched Dombrowski in Chateau La Muette. While dining, the report came that the Versailleits had forced the Porte de la Muette. Desperate fighting ensued, during which Dombrowski, who had mounted a wall, was wounded, and fell into Forbes's arms. All then ran away. The next morning, Forbes was "requisitioned" by the Communists to aid in erecting a barricade across the Rue Rivoli, and again, later in the day, to defend an indefensible position, the defenders of which promptly disappeared. Some hours after, Forbes stood behind shelter in Rue Lafayette and watched the Versailleits take the Grand Opera House. There followed a pandemonium of indiscriminate slaughter. Unable to communicate with England, Forbes got out of Paris with great difficulty, and brought to London the news that Paris was in flames. He returned to the disturbed city in time to witness the final down all of the Communards in the slums of Bellevue and in Pere la Chaise.

On the abdication of King Amadeus, Forbes visited Spain to watch the new republic, the difficulty of directing which was materially enhanced by the purity of its leaders. They would neither bribe nor be bribed, and without bribery no government can live in Spain. Castelar is a dreamer whose aspirations are too good for this workaday world. Figueras resigned because, by his own confession, he had not iron enough in his system to be a leader of men. Finding the republic a myth, Forbes, in 1872, went in search of the civil war in Catalonia, and found Contreras in command of the Republican troops at Barcelona. This rat scoundrel, who in a carriage looked as broad as he was long, afterward conducted the communistic insurrection in Carthagena, when a penny post-man and a shoe-maker were joint presidents. Forbes tried to induce Contreras to march against the Carlists, and finally the fat commander succeeded in getting his army one day's march out of Barcelona, on the conclusion of which ten the army triumphantly mutinied, and were gloriously marched back. Disgusted with Contreras, Forbes underwent four months of bushwhacking with the Carlists, whom he found personally pleasanter than the royalists. They had little fighting capacity, but died like gentlemen.

Returning to England, Forbes suggested the Ashantee war in a letter to the "Daily News," his propositions being carried out immediately, and their utility being unofficially acknowledged by military magnates. Bad health prevented the inventor of this war from reporting it.

In the beginning of 1874, a famine desolated Tirbout, a densely populated district of Bengal, where the people swarm like flies. Forbes passed the summer among these miserable people, numbers of whom died, though $15 000,000 were expended in mitigation. The horrors of the situation. One difficulty in preventing starvation arose from the existence of caste. No food cooked by one caste could be eaten by another. Forbes saw a woman come to a trough for food who, on observing that the people handling the food were of inferior caste to herself, lay down and died with her infant in her arms!

After receiving a sunstroke from which he lay insensible for two days, Forbes returned home after eight months' absence. He became cognizant of the intrigue for the restoration of Prince Alfonso of Spain, who was then a boy school fellow, and a fine rider, with a certain dignity, and a certain amount of ready brains. According Alfonso to Madrid, Forbes assisted at the coronation and followed the king to Navarre in pursuit of Carlists, who were finally paid to give up a lost cause.

Gladly leaving the land of hidalgos, in August, 1875, Forbes went with the Prince of Wales through India, where life was made up of pageants that unrolled themselves like gorgeous panoramas, and displayed the jealousies of native princes who quarrelled about precedence, scowled, sulked, and even went away altogether. But, though these princes hated each other, they learned to esteem the Prince of Wales, whose manners toward them were irreproachable. He combined tact with dignity, and always did the right thing at the right time. According to Forbes, England's hold on India would not be worth a month's purchase but for military rule. All save traitors, detest the English, and they are only friendly through interest. British military rule is a semi-despotism, not always wisely directed.

April, 1876, found Forbes again in England, but the breaking out of the Servian war caused him to join Genera Tchernayeff, a Russian Schlavophil who undertook to organize the Servian militia, and accomplished wonders. By presenting a bold front and throwing up earth-works, he so impressed the Turks with a belief in Servian strength that a war which should have ended in a fortnight was prolonged four months. More than one narrow escape from capture and death served to keep Forbes on the alert, while life in camp was curious enough. On the approach of winter, officers and men were quartered in holes excavated in the ground and covered over with sod. Piled up in the centre of each subterranean camp was a huge fire round which all slept. Most nibbled hair and whiskers were frequent companions,—but it mention less agreeable vermin. Forbes brought to Belgrade the tidings of the Servian collapse, having on this occasion seen a battle that lasted nine hours, travelled by post 150 miles, and telegraphed four columns to the "Daily News" in thirty-four hours.

In the spring of 1877, Forbes joined the Russian army in the campaign against the Turks, and, owing to Russian secretiveness, was sorely puzzled to learn where the Danube would be crossed. Thanks to Prince Mirsky, who gave him a hint, he was the only English correspondent who solved the problem, and hurrying to Bucharest with the news, again did his journal great credit. Sole English correspondent present at the murderous and disastrous Russian assault on Plevna, in July, 1877, Forbes was decorated with the order of St Stanislaus for personal intrepidity in rescuing the Russian wounded. By desperately riding his horse to death, Forbes reached Bucharest—a distance of 100 miles—the day after the battle, and telegraphed eight columns of description, which appeared in the "Daily News" of the following morning. For sixty hours he underwent continuous physical and mental exertion, almost without food and entirely without sleep. The narrative telegraphed to London bore so hard on the Russians that all anticipated the writer's expulsion from the Muscovite army. Recognizing the truth, however, of the English account, the Russian military leaders instructed their press to accept it as accurate.

Again, having witnessed the fight at Shipka Pass, and being convinced that the Russians could hold their position, Forbes quitted the scene of combat at six o'clock in the evening, on the return journey to Bucharest, and riding all night reached the imperial head-quarters the next morning, having outstripped the Russian couriers. Taken before the Emperor, who was anxious and careworn, and very shabbily dressed, Forbes gave him all the information at his command, and was warmly thanked for his promptitude. Radetsky had exclaimed at Shipka Pass: "I've got this place, and, please God, I'll keep it as long as I'm alive." Forbes was assured by a tr