

TOMMY TALKS OF THE WAR

HE CRITICIZES THE CONDUCT OF THE COMMANDING OFFICERS.

Men Always Being Led Into Death Traps—Officers Fared the Best—Atkins Knows All About It, Too.

Tommy Atkins is a silent fellow. He fights, he marches, and he bears all the hardships of a long campaign and says nothing about it. Even in his private letters home he seldom gives expression to more than an occasional grumble at the privations he is compelled to endure. His opinion, however, upon the actual conduct of the war, apart from strategy, is more valuable than that of any other man, for it is the men in the ranks who feel the pinch. They pay for blunders and mismanagement in privations and hardships. If food is short, it is Tommy who goes without; if the transport breaks down, it is Tommy who sleeps in the mud, in the pouring rain, without any shelter to protect him; if there is a hitch in sending up new clothing, it is Tommy who goes in rags and marches with bootless feet. March and fight he must, no matter what blunders are committed. If his officer is young and ignorant and leads his men into a death-trap, it is Tommy who pays for that ignorance with his life. If the hospitals are mismanaged and overcrowded, it is Tommy who dies in the filthy wards. He bears the brunt of the campaign without a murmur. At its close he surely has a right to express his opinion upon its management.

FIGHTING—AND PLENTY OF IT.

The other day, writes a representative, I had an interesting talk with a non-commissioned officer who recently returned from the fighting line. He had been in a dozen battles, and has had personal experience of both field and base hospitals as an enteric patient. He has served his time, and is no longer in the army. He was a non-commissioned officer in the Guards, and is an educated man, who made careful notes of his experiences in a diary which he kept from day to day.

"Were you in all the fights in which the Guards took part?"

"Fighting? Yes, we had plenty of it. Most of us had never been under fire before. You feel pretty bad the first time, but you soon get used to it. After the first fight or two we thought no more of a battle than of a parade day in England. It was all in the day's work. Sometimes we really looked forward to a fight with pleasure, as a break in the dreadful monotony of the continuous marching day after day. As soon as we landed we joined Lord Methuen's column. Our first bit of fighting was at Belmont. Modder River fight was by far the worst battle I was in, and I went through a good many. None of us thought we should have to fight that day. But from early morning till late at night we had to lie flat on the veldt in a blazing sun, hardly daring to lift our heads. We could see nothing of the enemy. We aimed at the puffs of white smoke in the river bed. If the Boer shells had only burst there would have been very few of us left alive and unwounded; but they seldom exploded. I often saw a shell bury itself immediately in front of a man, so close that it raised him off the earth, but he would not be injured, for it failed to explode."

NAVAL AND MILITARY OFFICERS.

"Did the officers fare as badly as the men?"

"No fear. They always looked out for themselves. They could always find a flask of whiskey. Although there was not sufficient transport for the needs of the army, many officers were allowed a hundred or two hundred pounds of baggage in place of the thirty pounds to which they were entitled. They expected everything to be the same as at home. Some of them were too fine gentlemen to speak to a non-commissioned officer. They would smoke their cigarettes and keep to themselves. The officers of the Naval Brigade were very different. They were with us at Modder River with the 4.7 guns. They worked and talked with their men, and even messed with them. You had to be very careful how you spoke to your officer, or it was the worse for you. Here is a little thing which happened at Modder River, which will show you what I mean. A non-commissioned officer had been the round of the outposts one night. He was making his report to the commanding officer, who had asked him where such and such a picket was. "Over there, sir," the man replied. In answer to another question, he said,

"Over there." Simply because he had omitted to repeat the word "sir," that man was court-martialled, and lost his stripes.

TOMMY ON HIS OFFICER.
"What did Tommy think of his officer as a leader?"

"They were always leading you into death traps, unless you kept your eyes very wide open. They did not know what to do. I will give you a case that happened at Magersfontein. We were supporting the Highlanders. When they were shot down by scores we held the ground, and formed the first firing line. There was a great deal of barbed wire fencing about. Crouching on all fours, we managed to get past one fence. The next could not be passed, as the wires were too close together. The Boers were firing in front and on our flank. We were protecting a battery of guns by firing volleys at the enemy. That's the only thing that will keep them quiet. The lieutenant in command of my section lost his head completely. Really, he kept on saying, 'really, I don't know what to do. I think we shall be cut off if we stay here. Really, I believe we had better retire.' 'I think, sir,' I ventured to suggest—they don't like you to interfere, so you must be careful—we had better remain here.' He thought better of it, and there we stayed. If we had retired, we should have lost some more guns. Some of the officers cared very little for their men. They would speak to them as if they were dogs. At Magersfontein one of my men was wounded in the arm. We bound it up as well as we could. He had to lie out in the open all day long, for the Boers fired at the stretcher-bearers. At night, when we were about to retire, I asked the officer in command of my company what we should do with the wounded man. 'Do,' he said, 'we must leave him behind. He will have to stay out all night.' I knew that would mean certain death, for he had lost a terrible amount of blood, and I knew also that he had a wife and two children at home in England. I therefore got four of my men to make a stretcher out of a blanket and two rifles. While the others were firing volleys at the Boers, we got him safe into camp. Of course, you got no credit for it. But the man's life was saved."

AN ARMLESS ARTIST.

Having Lost His Arms, He Uses the Brush With His Mouth.

Bartram Hiles, an armless artist, of London, England, is attracting much attention by his paintings in water colors. When eight years of age, he lost both arms, but having already made a beginning in the study of art and having a strong natural taste for painting even this calamity did not close his career as an artist. He determined to learn to draw and paint by holding the brush in his mouth.

He acquired such control over the muscles of his mouth that in two years after he began his work in this way his work took a prize at a local exhibition.

When he was 16 Mr. Hiles exhibited a water color at the British Fine Arts Academy which elicited much admiration though the fact that the painter was without hands was not known by those who saw the picture. So far as his present work goes the technique is in every way equal to that of men who work with two hands.

In fact Mr. Hiles in no way acknowledges that he is handicapped by his physical misfortunes. He is wrapped up in his work and is bright, cheerful and happy—neither expecting nor even admitting that his case calls for sympathy. He seems absolutely to have found a substitute for his hands in working with the brush mixing the colors skillfully and laying them on deftly.

Among the latest exhibits of Mr. Hiles work have been pictures at the exhibitions of the Royal Society of Bristol artists and at the Dudley Gallery. Mr. Hiles evidently looks forward to seeing one of his works hung at the Royal Academy, for he made a smiling remark to that effect not long ago when talking of his work.

He works in a little alcove in the south nave of the Crystal Palace, London, where he is surrounded by sketches, designs and artistic drawings, all products of his own art. His best effects, where tints have been employed, have been secured by the use of water colors. It is doubtful whether he will ever excel in oil, the heavy pressure of that sort of work being perhaps too much for one compelled to secure results by such means as Mr. Hiles is forced to adopt.

HINTS FOR THE FARMER.

CLOVER AS A SEED CROP.

The value of clover as a fertilizer or for hay is a sufficient reason for growing it. But aside from this, it has another value as a seed crop, which is of no inconsiderable amount in the income of the farm. The yield of clover seed may be placed at from two to six bushels per acre.

To secure a good crop from the common red clover, the first crop should be cut near the middle of June, although it may be cut earlier or later with success, if the season is favorable. Should there be bumble bees' nests in the field, tell the boys not to disturb them, as the seed crop will depend largely on their work later on in fertilization. A bountiful seed crop is certainly abundant compensation for a few bee stings. The popular belief that the first crop does not produce seed is erroneous. There will be a small amount of seed because of the imperfect pollination from the lack of bees and other insects so early in the season. The second crop is cut for seed when all the heads have turned brown or black. Perhaps the old self-rake reaper would be the best implement for this work, but as that has now gone with the sickle and the cradle, the mower or binder will have to be substituted. If the mower is used the clover should be cut and raked when damp, to avoid shattering as much as possible. Nevertheless there will be considerable loss of seed in this way.

Mammoth clover produces but one crop in a season, consequently cannot be grown for both hay and seed. When a seed crop is desired it should be mowed or pastured in May. Otherwise it will be difficult to handle, and serves no useful purpose. If it more certain of a good seed crop than the common red, because of the greater number of insects in midsummer and therefore the perfect pollination, Mammoth clover is less liable to injury from insects which prey upon the common red, and in localities where much injury is done from this cause, it is preferred.

TO PROTECT THE HOOF.

The main object of the shoe is to protect the hoof, and the higher it can be made and serve its purpose the better it is for the horse. A good part of the year horses on the farm would be better off without shoes, and they can do plowing and similar work in soft fields without in any way injuring the feet. In winter, when the ground is frozen, it is quite different, and shoes seem necessary at these times. A horse weighing 1,100 pounds should generally be shod with shoes not weighing more than 12 to 15 ounces each. If four ounces are added to each shoe the total difference in the animal's shoes is 16 ounces. In plowing, cultivating, mowing and reaping a farm horse will walk from 10 to 20 miles a day. If it takes about four feet each step the horse will lift half a pound extra on its two feet or 600 pounds in every mile. If we make the average day's work 15 miles, the horse will lift 9,000 pounds extra a day, or nearly five tons. The energy required to lift this amount is wasted and serves no useful purpose. If it could be expended in doing extra work that would pay, it would nearly pay the animal's keep. Leg-weary horses are common on the farm, and leg-weary horses are apt to break down in time and have crooked and ailing limbs. It is not only a matter of humanity but one of profit to lighten the horse's burden all we can, and this is one good way.

HUMUS.

Humus is a source of plant food. It is rich in nitrogen if derived from the decay of stable manure or nitrogenous plants. It is also directly, and perhaps still more indirectly, by its action on the mineral matter of the soil—an important source of phosphoric acid of a form available for the immediate use of the plant. This service, important as they are, could be rendered by commercial fertilizers, though at greater expense. Most important of the functions of vegetable matter, and especially of humus, is its effect in improving the waterholding power and texture of the soil. The presence of decomposed vegetable matter in large amounts enables even a loose, sandy soil to satisfactorily sustain crops through a long period of drought, which, if vegetable matter were absent, would practically ruin the crop.

YOUNG PIGS.

After weaning, the pigs should be

given bran, ground oats, and peas, together with cut clover if it is in winter, or they should be allowed an outside run if it is in summer. If cut clover is not available for winter feed then roots may take the place of the clover, and mangels are the best form of roots. In the beginning the mangels should be pulped, but in a short time the little ones may be left to do their own pulping. They can do it as well as you can, and they have more time to do it in.

ON A JAPANESE RAILWAY.

Much Eating and Smoking Mark the Journeys of the Natives.

The second and third class railroad carriages give the foreigner an opportunity to study the life of the Japanese people. On entering the first thing one notices is that white lines are drawn across the glass windows and upon inquiry the information is elicited that some of the people who travel in the cars are unused to glass, which, perhaps, they have never seen before, and that they are apt to put their heads through if there is nothing to indicate that a substance bars the way.

In cold weather all Japanese travellers carry rugs, for the cars are heated merely by long steel cylinders filled with hot water and laid on the floor. Since the passengers are always pulling open the windows Japanese cars in midwinter are a nuisance to the health of every individual who has become used to an even temperature within doors.

The smallest incident of travel is enough to break the ice, and if a person has a wrong ticket or has lost anything it is a matter of interest and solicitude for everybody else. Many of the passengers are apt to behave with the same unrestrained freedom as in their own homes. If they are starting on a long journey they at once proceed to make themselves as comfortable as possible. A rug is spread out on the seat, for they are very particular never to sit on anything that is not perfectly clean. Then they shake off their geta, or wooden clogs, and curl their feet up underneath. The next thing is a smoke in which both men and women indulge, lighting cigarette after cigarette, but more often they use the tiny pipe, which never contains more tobacco than a wisp the size of a pea, and affords, sometimes, two puffs to the smoker. The ash is then knocked out on the floor, and another wisp stuffed in and lighted from the smoldering ash which has just been thrown away. This is kept up, off and on, for hours.

When not smoking, eating is going on. At every station there are vendors of the little mandarin oranges. Every passenger buys a dozen or more and eats them in a short time, throwing the skins about the floor. Boys pass by with tea in tiny earthen pots, a cup placed over the top and this may be purchased, the three sen, a cent

PEARLS OF TRUTH.

Victory belongs to the most persevering.—Napoleon.

Be wisely worldly; but not worldly wise.—Francis Quarles.

Poverty is the test of civility and the touchstone of friendship.—Hazlitt.

Wisdom is oftentimes nearer when we stoop than when we soar.—Wordsworth.

Persecution is not wrong because it is cruel, but cruel because it is wrong.—Whately.

A duty is no sooner divined than from that very moment it becomes binding upon us.—Amiel.

The most delicate, the most sensible of all pleasures consists in promoting the pleasure of others.—Bruyere.

Cultivate forbearance till your heart yields a fine crop of it. Pray for a short memory to all unkindness.—Spurgeon.

They never taste who always drink. They always talk who never think.—Matthew Prior.

Hearts may be attracted by assumed qualities, but the affections are not to be fixed but by those that are real.—De Moy.

There was such an outcry early in the season over the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, that it comes rather as a surprise to have a record given of a return valued at £100 per acre. This crop was grown at Tynan Abbey, county Armagh. The variety grown was the "Up-to-date," and the yield was at the rate of 27 tons per Irish acre of sound table potatoes. In years gone by, before the first failure of the potato in Ireland, 20 tons per acre, Irish, was no unusual return; but the price was very low.

FROM ERIN'S GREEN ISLE.

INTERESTING NEWS FROM THE LAND OF THE SHAMROCK.

Busy People of the Emerald Isle—Occurrences That Will Interest Irish-Canadians.

William Woods, 60, was sentenced to death, at Ulster assizes for the murder of Bridget McGivern, at Bushmills, county Antrim.

A customer of the Provincial Bank, Cork, when making a deposit, had his attention diverted and £50 in notes were stolen. The thief got clear away.

Mr. T. W. Russell says Scotch Tory M. P.'s are sound on temperance. Mr. Russell says if he had not left the Government about land he would about drink.

Patrick Wolfe, convicted at Munster assizes of having fired at and wounded in the breast Mrs. Irons, county Clare, was sent to penal servitude for life.

"I see men walking the streets without their limbs," said Mr. Healy, in the South African debate, meaning to be impressive. The House laughed uproariously.

Considerable damage is being caused in County Tyrone by a bog slide. It is advancing towards the small town of Castlefinn, and as the moving slime covers an area of forty acres, and is believed in places to be 30 or 40 feet deep, the inhabitants have removed their goods in a panic.

In County Clare there are 120 evicted farms, 47 of which are derelict which means abandoned by landlord and tenant, the former being unable to stock them. In County Limerick there are 90 evicted farms, 14 being derelict. In County Kerry there are 241 evicted farms, 25 being derelict.

The condition of the Province of Connaught is very serious. Judge Kenny, in opening the winter assizes in Sligo, spoke strongly with regard to the amount of intimidation which goes on there. Over forty cases of intimidation with regard to the letting of grazing and meadowing lands had been reported in the past six months.

The massive gold cup presented to the city of Dublin by Queen Victoria, in commemoration of her recent visit, is of gold throughout, weighs 160 ounces, and stands two feet three inches in height. The pedestal is of black marble, inlaid with gold. The depth of the cup itself is 18 inches, and the circumference of the rim three feet.

By a fire at a dwelling house in Belfast two women lost their lives. One of the women was burned to death within the house, and the other died in the hospital from injuries received by falling from a window. Several persons were much injured by leaping from windows, and others in attempting to escape by means of a ladder, which broke.

A remarkable birthday was celebrated when the Dowager Lady Carew entered her 103rd year. She is the grandmother of Lord Carew, and lives at Woodstown, County Waterford, leading of late a very retired life, though her health is tolerably good. It is noteworthy that on Jan. 1st the Dowager Lady Carew had lived in three centuries.

Michael Davitt, relates the following story of General DeWet, with whom he discussed the campaign: DeWet spoke well of the British soldiers, yet not so well of the generals and officers. But one compliment he did pay. After hearing many caustic opinions, Mr. Davitt asked him what he thought of General French. "Ah," said DeWet, with a change of tone, "he is the one Boer general in the British army."

Lord Magheramorne, who was lately adjudged a bankrupt, seems to have mispent his "talents." His father—the first Lord Magheramorne better known as Sir James McGarel Hogg, chairman for many years of the Metropolitan Board of Works—left close upon £250,000 at his death in 1890. The present peer, who was born in 1861, was formerly a captain in the 1st Life Guards, and married a daughter of the Earl of Shaftesbury.

Lord O'Brien, Chief Justice, opened the Munster assizes of Clare, Limerick, Kerry, Tipperary, and Cork. He found 561 evicted farms, 127 being wholly abandoned by landlord and tenant. There are 171 persons under police protection. Indictable offences, which include incendiary fires, malicious maiming of animals, and firing into dwellings, number 173, compared with 180 last year. Except in Tipperary the statistics indicated no improvement in the country.