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SCOUTING IN DESERTS

AUSTRALIANS TELL OF WORK AGAINST THE SENUSSI.

Water is Brought to Egyptian Coast by Trainers, Which Were Formerly Used as Mine Sweepers—Arabs Kill the Wounded Soldiers Who Fall Into Their Hands—Scout Must Not Be Seen.

PERSONAL accounts — which are therefore more or less graphic—are beginning to filter into Australia from the Senussi country into Egypt, where, under General Wallace, Commonwealth and other British troops are engaged in a guerrilla campaign in waterless deserts against Arabs who have been armed by Germans.

Lance-Corporal Clifford Brown says in a letter to his father at Inverell, under date of Dec. 14: "We are fighting the Arab and Dervish tribes on the western frontier of Egypt armed with swords, and the first time we charge we will have the honor of being in the first cavalry charge by Australians. (The Australian cavalrymen who went to the Gallipoli Peninsula, I will be remembered, were obliged to go as infantrymen, it being too rough a country for the employment of mounted troops.) We are picked men, and hope to give a good account of ourselves. The Arabs are great scouts. Dressed like the sands, and their horses are wonderfully trained. I am taken off despatch riding, and have done well scouting. It is terribly risky work.

"A scout has to see and not be seen, and with these Arabs out here you have to be mighty careful, because you are depending on your work. My horse, as well as several others, has been trained to lie down, and it's a great help, but all Australian horses have a bad fault for this game—that is, they whinny at the sound or smell of horses, and, of course, that is a 'put-away.' But to get over that we tie a strip tightly around their noses. If you are 'put away' or seen it's a case of go for your life, but never in the direction of the main body. You have to play the game of bluff and slip away in another direction. Scouting is wonderfully interesting and exciting, but the strain is terrible.

"I wish you could organize some fund to send us scouts' field glasses. (This fund had been started in Sydney and other cities in the Commonwealth before young Brown wrote, and many racing enthusiasts had contributed field glasses in answer to a general appeal.) They would be a great help against such an enemy. This country is all sand, no timber, and very hilly. It is quite cold at night and a bit warm in the day."

Brown says in an addendum to this, evidently at a later date: "We have retreated now back to Matruh to take up a better position. We were afraid the Arabs would cut us off on the retreat. We expected them to shell our camp all night, but they did not. I think they are afraid to come out of the hills. It was lively yesterday, heavy shells from our warships screaming over our heads on their way to the enemy. Their shrapnel was bursting pretty close to us, but did not reach us. It is the first time they have used it on us, and they must have got it the night before with reinforcements.

"The enemy are treacherous brutes. Any of our wounded they get they kill. Some of our chaps have been found with heads all bashed in and all cut about."

Trooper Norman Berry, of North Sydney, writes to his home from Matruh, obviously about the middle of December, relating what he calls "a bit of a scrap" with the Senussi. He says: "It was very pleasant to hear the warship guns speak. The balls went whistling over our heads and we could see them bursting among the enemy a mile away. One of our artillery guns helped us well. We have a good many big guns here, and some cruisers. The enemy appear to be very poorly equipped, and they have only one big gun, which they don't seem able to work properly, as it has done no damage yet. They appear very frightened of us and keep well in the hills in caves and dug-outs. We have aeroplanes which do great work reconnoitering every day. At present it seems as if we are surrounded, but we are well prepared for anything, and the sooner they come the sooner we will finish them, as this place is like a huge fortress."

GRAVITY OVERCOME

Objects Dropped Deviate Toward the North.

Along the southern edge of the Himalaya Mountains a curious natural phenomenon has been noticed by engineers. The plumb line which they use, instead of falling vertically and forming two right-angles with the surface of the ground, is deflected nearly five degrees to the north. The explanation which has been advanced for this queer freak of gravity is that the deflection is due to the influence of the mountains. The amount of attraction masses exert for each other is in direct proportion to the relative weights of equally sized portions of each body, and in this case the weight of a cubic foot of the earth below the plumb line is much less than the weight of a cubic foot of rock from the mountains. It is probable that at one time all of Northern Hindustan south of the Himalayas was an immense depression, and that through the ages it has been filled up by alluvial silt washed down from the mountains. This loose silt, being under no such pressure as the billions of tons of solid rock in the mountain ranges, has a much smaller density, and accordingly a much lighter gravity "pull" than exercised by the huge mass of the Himalaya mountains. It is conceivable that in this place if a person stands "erect" he really leans a little towards the south to make up for the "pull" of the northern range, while, theoretically, it is really harder for him to walk away from the mountains than towards them. Objects, of course, do not fall directly to earth, but deviate a little to the north.—John P. Caldwell, in Technical World.

Dried Flowers.

Florists are anxious to obtain British dried flowers to take the place of the German products. An enormous trade has been done for many seasons past in beech branches and oak-leaves, which are bought largely by the florists to help them through the winter months when flowers are scarce.

"Speaking just for my own firm," said a well-known Court florist, "I am open to place a fairly big order for dyed beech branches if any are to be had at anything like the old German prices." These beech branches, sterilized, bleached, and dyed in brilliant autumnal colors in the German flower factories, are explained a favorite winter foliage in great demand with chrysanthemums and other late-flowering plants. Although the industry, so far as the supplies used in this country are concerned, has been entirely a Continental one, fully three-quarters of the total supplies coming from Germany and Austria, there is no reason why British enterprise should not take it in hand. The capital required is small, and the work could be done by women.

The industry is a profitable one. The British demands alone were sufficient before the war to justify the presence of six or eight German travelers, who put up at the big hotels, and succeeded in selling hundreds of tons of dried products.

Riled the Scots. At a rest camp "somewhere in France" the men of a certain famous Scotch regiment were having an impromptu concert.

Presently there drifted into the tent, lured there by the sound of revelry, a sturdy country fellow. For some time he listened appreciatively to the music; then he suggested that he could oblige with a Scotch song. He was conducted promptly to the platform.

Great was the applause when the pianist, after a whispered consultation, commenced to play a well-known tune. Advancing to the edge of the "stage," the camp cook, with an inimitable cockney accent, sang:

"Scots wha hae on porridge fed, Scots wha hae awfu' red heads, Scots wha suffer frae awelled head—Gang and wash yer knees!"

He made his escape in good time, and so far has not been caught. But a whole regiment of kilted men, with rage, are still on his trail.—London Answers.

Giant and Dwarf Honey Bees. In some of the East Indian Islands and on the mainland of Hindustan are to be found the smallest species of honey bees in the world. These dwarf honey collectors are known to entomologists as Apis florea. Their honeycombs are no longer than a child's hand and the cells are about the size of a small pin head.

This honey is excellent, as is the wax. The little creatures build the comb on the branch of a low tree, and as they have not to provide for winter they work all the year through, raising broods like themselves.

In the same land there is a species of giant bees, Apis dorsata, as large as a field cricket. These monsters of the bee world build honeycombs that are from six to seven feet in length, four or more in width, and weigh from 300 to 400 pounds each.

Ancient Portent Solved. The "Woe Water" at Cropton, Surrey, otherwise known as the Bourne Flow, is for the fifth successive year running down the Caterham Valley between Whyteale and Purley. The history of these visitations, extending over 600 years, gives an average interval of about five years between them. In ancient days the Flow was regarded as a mysterious portent of "death or pestilence, or great battle," to quote a chronicler of 1473. The prosaic explanation is the flooding of underground water channels.

Grand Duke a Sportsman. The Grand Duke Nicholas is famous as a sportsman. Coursing wolves with borzois may be regarded as a national sport in Russia, and it is one which the Grand Duke has made his own.

Letters To The Editor

Solution of Bridge Trouble.

Kingston, May 12.—(To the Editor): Some days since, the Whig published the opinion of a citizen suggesting the using of the new causeway across Cataract river for foot passengers, and thus relieving the temporary bridge traffic congestion. The suggestion is a good one, but the erection of a high level bridge across the span to be occupied by the swing bridge seems to me to be more feasible than filling the space with a pontoon or scow.

First, the traffic of the low level would interfere with the workmen building the buttresses. Secondly, it would be expensive, keeping a tug with steam up ready to remove and replace the pontoon or scow every time a boat had to be let through. Thirdly, it would be a great inconvenience to pedestrians who happened along while boats were being let through.

A high level bridge would admit of an interrupted traffic while boats were passing and work progressing. The bridge with long, easy inclines would be much less expensive, and timber and lumber could be disposed of after it had served its purpose.

Traffic on the present temporary bridge should certainly be relieved, and this seems to be a solution of the problem. —R. E. SPARKS.

Defence of Denbigh's Enlistment.

Denbigh, May 11.—(To the Editor): In your issue of the 8th inst., under "Many Military Matters," you mention Denbigh as "a little village of 200 inhabitants, that, according to officers at Kingston, has not yet given one man to the cause of the country, due, it is said, to the pro-German feelings of the natives." In justification of our village I submit the following statistics:

As assessed the population of our village is exactly 49 souls; nineteen of this number are females. Of the male population of 30, only three are of military age (18 to 35). These are the minister, the school teacher and the gristmiller. Within a radius of two miles of the village there are 173 persons, 84 being females. Of the male population of 89, only 17 are of military age (18 to 35), eight of these being unmarried.

So much for the size of our village. Five out of pro-German sympathies: Five young men, some born here in the village, all brought up here, and nine others from the municipality of Denbigh, have enlisted and are at the front or in training; two of these are of German descent. One of these was Oswald Koller, has, according to recent reports, given his life on the battlefield for his adopted country. One other young German enlisted last spring, and after three months' training, was discharged. As most of our young men leave home, their enlistment has taken place elsewhere, but seven have enlisted from their homes and were stationed at Plevna.

That, I think, corrects your information as to what has been done by his village and community for the cause of the country, and I trust that your sense of justice to the citizens of this community will impel you to print this letter and correct false impressions. I thank you in advance for your kindness and space in your paper. Respectfully yours, (REV.) C. F. CHRISTIANSEN.

P. S.—The names of the enlisted village boys are: Art. Ready, Art. Wilde, Walt. Wilde, Sid. Kerr, Henry Dood. From the municipality: Phil. Vines, Howard Hicks, Lyford Wilton, John Ball, Charles Grigg, Roy Beber, Charles Rosenblath (these seven are stationed at Plevna), George Thompson and Oswald Koller.

The Whig is glad to publish the above letter and to know that Denbigh is doing so well. The accusation against that district was made by military officers, not by the Whig. It might be pointed out that military officers are not infrequently wrong.

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