STRAITS OF LADYSMITH.

BOER ARTILLERY MUCH BETTER THAN THE BRITISH.

The Mausers Also Better Than the British Infantry Arm—Alarm of the People of Ladysmith—Pen Pictures of the Boer Soldiers by a Prisoner at Elandslaagte.

LONDON, Dec. 22.—The South African censorship is now pretty rigorously applied to the mail as well as to the cable despatches, and it seems that we shall have to wait upon the pleasure of the authorities before we can get full, true and detailed accounts of important happenings. Buller's defeat at Colenso is still wrapped in mystery. We know that the loss was 1,097 killed, wounded and missing, in addition to eleven guns, but of the battle itself we have only the most meagre and contradictory accounts. It is more than likely that returning convalescents will bring on the first detailed story. Meanwhile, a mail letter from the *Times'* correspondent, giving a fuller account of the condition of the town when the siege began, is of interest. On Nov. 1 the town was practically in a state of siege. The correspondent says:

"The situation in which Sir George White found himself was this. He found at his disposal to defend Ladysmith a force of 9,000 men, 36 field guns and a naval contingent with two heavy position guns. Of foodstuffs and small arm ammunition he possessed a supply which would not, under ordinary circumstances, become exhausted in three months. But the artillery were not so well placed. The supply of shell worked out to a little over 300 rounds per gun for the field batteries, and, even with the naval guns, it was evident that expenditure would have to be made with a sparing hand. Ladysmith does not lend itself readily to defence. Roughly, the town lies in the bend of a horseshoe. But the hills which make this formation are disconnected, and the ranges and spurs straggle over a large area. Not only are they uneven, but their continuations stretch away in every direction, and form positions which in the majority of cases actually command the town. With the force at his disposal it was, of course, absolutely impossible to hold every hill, and, even contracting his front so as to hold the majority of strategical points, Sir George White found his 9,000 men, of which only 5,000 odd were infantry, holding a line of posts extending over eleven miles. Against this the enemy have brought at least 20,000 men, this being the very lowest figure at which the estimate can be placed, there being every reason to believe the combined force under Joubert, now occupying Natal, to be between 25,000 and 30,000 men.

"But this is not all; the experience of the last three weeks has shown the enemy to be not only numerically superior, but also possessed of arms which outrange anything that we can bring against them. If it had not been for the timely arrival of the naval guns it is impossible to conjecture what the consequences would have been. Take, for instance, the most important arm—the artillery. We have thirty-six guns of the best-manned artillery in the world, but at the very outside, however well served our guns may be, they have not an effective range above 4,500 yards. Against this the Boers have brought into the field, guns fitted with the latest telescopic sights, and having a range of 6,000 to 8,000 yards. However devotedly our gunners may manoeuvre their weapons, they cannot dislodge an enemy in action against them whom they cannot see. This of the field artillery; and while I write a 9-inch position gun is shelling the town and defences from about 8,000 yards. If the naval guns had not arrived, if the Boers had cut the communication three days earlier, we should have been powerless to reply. As it is we have been forced to take most of their bombardment sitting. With regard to the infantry arm, the discrepancy is not so great. But the Mauser rifle with which the Boers are armed is the better weapon, and has a greater range. With a good pair of glasses and a Mauser it is possible to make tolerable practice at 3,000 yards. No British infantry is trained to these ranges. Our men know nothing of glasses; yet the farmer-soldier, our enemy, would not think of taking the field unless one man in four possessed powerful binoculars.

"Thus, at first sight, the task set Sir George White and his little force seemed stupendous. But there are saving contingencies, the first being the dislike which the Boer has ever shown to take the offensive. He will defend a position stoutly, but until he is absolutely certain of the success of a forward move he is loath to undertake it. Moreover, the South African Republic has been served badly by its agents, for if their ammunition had been as serviceable as their guns our casualties would have been three times as heavy as they have been. Their shrapnel is poor. On Monday, when the Forty-second Field Battery moved up to within 3,000 yards of the enemy's position, well-fused shrapnel burst in front of the battery time after time. If these missiles had been from our own arsenals it would have been impossible for the men to have faced them and worked their guns. As it was, though they lost severely, they were able to make the enemy's position untenable. Since the bombardment shells have been picked up filled with extraneous matter, proving the duplicity of the contractors who supplied the material."

After the first bombardment, small though it was, the civilian inhabitants became thoroughly unnerved. They appealed to Sir George White, who asked Joubert to allow trains of wounded and non-combatants to go south unmolested. Joubert refused, but offered them a camp in a place of safety in the plain of M'Bulwana. The *Times's* correspondent says:

"On the receipt of this news the Mayor convened a meeting of residents at the town hall. It was a strange crowd which attended. Every denomination of South African white man was represented. The Church sent a heavy contingent; half a score of women with blanched faces swelled the gathering. Respectable merchants, casual loafers, trembling natives of India, all jostled each other to hear the words of wisdom which dropped from the lips of his Worship, the Mayor. Never before have I seen a crowd into the hearts of which terror seemed so firmly struck—terror bred of modern explosives. The most piteous face in the throng was that of a Maritzburg barrister, who had visited Ladysmith with the view of seeing war as one attends a picnic. A bursting shell unnerved him, and to complete his misery the enemy cut communication. The Mayor opened the meeting; men roused to a patriotic fervor hurled heroics to the crowd. The only dignified speaker was Archdeacon Barker, who closed his address with the peroration, 'that if he was to die he would die under the Union Jack in preference to the white flag.' The crowd applauded; some one suggested the national anthem. It was sung in chorus over and over again. Not a man would flinch from his post, the townsfolk of Ladysmith were of one mind. The meeting closed with a bar of 'Rule Britannia,' and then every one dispersed to pack his bag and to accept Boer magnanimity. Thus it was resolved, and on the following morning Col. Ward arranged for a camp at Intombi, about four miles south of the town on the railway. Trains were run down to a convenient point, hospital tents pitched, and during Sunday and Monday the majority of wounded were transferred from the town. Men with families carried their homes out in wagons, and, I regret to say it, dozens of men accompanied these caravans who might have borne arms in the defence of the town.

"Although a number of the residents of Ladysmith sought the protection of the neutral flag, yet there were quite a number who remained. These people spent the three days of armistice in discovering situations which promised to secure them against shell fire. The Klip River, which encircles the town with many bends, commended itself to most, and by Sunday night its shelving banks presented a pathetic, yet almost amusing, spectacle. Every civilian adult, white and black, capable of wielding pick or shovel had bent his back in honest toil, and the gravel cliffs of the streamlet will remain a lasting testimony to what man can do when moved by a sense of physical danger. The majority of delvers were able to secure some mining talent to aid them in their work. Others with longer purses enlisted the services of soldiers, who brought the rudiments of military fortification to bear upon their labors. Others, imbued only with the instinct of self-preservation, burrowed shafts perpendicular to the bank, so that the cliff face bore the appearance of a nesting home of mammoth sand martins. On every hand were gabions, sandbags and sangars. But the greatest defence of all was that of the Imperial Light Horse. The majority of these men are Johannesburg miners, and they at once began to undermine their camp with shafts and galleries. Commandeering every colored man that ventured near their camp, they cut ten shafts in the river cliff, and, working night and day for forty-eight hours, constructed an underground gallery capable of holding half the garrison. The sequel to their industry was amusing, for as soon as the last barrowful of earth had been thrown to the surface, down came a staff officer, and the regiment was sent to support the Manchester Regiment on the most exposed crest line of the defences. But there was a pathetic side to all this labor. The poor women and children were terrified out of their lives. Exposed to the most erratic climate in the world, old dames, young mothers, and delicate women left their homes to grub out an existence in damp holes and dirty subterranean passages; conscious of the din of arms above them, their anxiety for the safety of fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands was intensified by the lying reports which reached and circulated even in the level of the river bed. Such is the history of a beleaguered town."

Now that the Government has sanctioned the use of a certain number of militia and volunteers for service outside the United Kingdom, the following account of these forces will be of interest:

"The strength of the militia—not merely a numerical strength, but an actual trained fighting strength—has been revealed in recent autumn manœuvres, and those who know the militiaman best prophesy great things of him. He is only Tommy Atkins understudy but he is in good trim as a rule, and his name, considering the limited population from which he is drawn, is legion. The only sad fact that assails one in reviewing the strength of the militia is that it is nearly 20,000 below strength, and there is a great need for officers. The recent system of giving army commissions to young militia officers has been an easy mode of strengthening the commissioned ranks of the army, but it has left many militia battalions weak in officers. According to the latest official return of the army the following was the strength of the army reserve, militia, yeomanry and volunteers.

	Total Enrolled.	Establishment.	Wanting to complete.
Army Reserve	78,889	83,050	4,211
Militia (including reserve)	113,409	132,493	19,084
Yeomanry	10,207	11,891	1,684
Volunteers	230,778	262,680	31,902
Totals	433,163	490,014	56,851

"A portion of the army reserve has already been called upon for service. They have been used to stiffen the backs of battalions ordered to the front. The War Office announcement calling out practically all the remainder of the army reserve thus places at the disposal of the authorities a total of fully 70,000 men, allowing for those who do not come forward. Nearly the whole of these men are in the very prime of life—between 25 and 35 years of age. It is not fully appreciated that the army reserve man is not a worn-out soldier, but a comparatively young man who has done several years' service in the regular army, and, under the short service system, has passed out into the reserve while still young, with his health unimpaired, in the full vigor of manhood, and with a soldier's training in marching and shooting. He is the finished article of the short service system, and a man who will give a good account of himself wherever he may be employed, and under whatever conditions, however hard, he may have to serve. Nearly 50,000 of these men are infantrymen, while nearly 11,000 belong to the Royal Artillery—a force so badly needed at the seat of war—6,000 to the cavalry of the line, over 5,000 to the Foot Guards, and over 3,000 to the Royal Engineers. The present intention of the War Office is to call out twelve additional battalions of the militia for home service, to take the place of the twelve battalions, which have been already embodied, and will be sent to the front. The militia is in a healthy state, so far as the ranks are concerned, but the problem will probably be to find efficient officers."

At the annual training in 1898 the percentage of which there are any official records, the following figures were made up:

	Officers.	Staff.	Sgts.	Other Ranks.	Total.
Present at training	2,734	4,158	2,095	89,017	98,012
Absent with leave	814	85	157	8,238	9,240
Abs. without leave	5	1	40	8,106	8,157
Num. enrolled	3,607	4,189	2,252	103,361	113,439

Most of this force of nearly 100,000 men who were present at the annual training belonged to the infantry line, but there were 14,751 artillery and 1,261 mounted troops, so that altogether the War Office can depend upon getting at least 16,000 men of the two scientific branches. Only 14,000 are over 35 years of age, and there are nearly the same number between 30 and 35 years of age, while the remainder, in round figures 70,000 men, are under 30 years of age. These are strong, well-built men, all of them. Over 32,000 are agricultural laborers, 20,000 are mechanical laborers, nearly 13,000 are miners, 10,000 are artisans and 3,500 are fishermen. The volunteer force is a growing force, though in the past few years its progress has been checked possibly by continual official neglect. The following table indicates the strength of this valuable citizen arm of her Majesty's services.

	Artillery.	Engineers.	Rifles.	Total.
Number enrolled	42,022	12,492	174,615	230,678

This total also includes 206 light horse and 1,343 Medical Staff Corps. Of all ranks, 224,300 are returned as efficients, while over 20,000 officers and sergeants earned special grants for proficiency, and nearly 2,000 officers earned special grants for tactics and artillery. All the foregoing figures apply to last year.

The following particulars of a visit to the Wynberg Hospital were written from Cape Town under date Nov. 29:

"After seeing the wounds of the patients, nearly all caused by gunshot, the onlooker is struck by the clean, well-defined, small, circular entrance and exit the Mauser bullet makes. It produces a canal not much, if anything, larger than a good-sized goose quill, and cuts its way through flesh and bone as neatly as an Archimedean drill would, leaving no ragged edges. It produces little local disturbance or bad after-effects. Hence shock to the system and subsequent septicæmia are, owing to the lessened destruction of soft parts, and splintering of bone, minimized considerably. By careful antiseptic treatment the wounds heal in about twenty to thirty days. The course which some of these Mauser bullets take without rupturing important vessels or producing dangerous effects is simply marvellous. To cut through soft parts and follow the track made by these missiles without doing irreparable injury would tax the dexterity of the most skilful and delicate anatomist that ever handled a scalpel.

"One of the wounded at Wynberg is a typical example. The Mauser bullet entering at the lower part of the abdomen, evidently taking its course in a backward and upward and oblique direction, must have cut its way just below, and between the bifurcation of the large descending aorta (the great artery), then perforating the soft parts, pierced the bone and made its exit through the skin in the centre of the right buttock. No important vessels seem to have been wounded, and the man is now convalescent. Another extraordinary case is that of a private who was shot completely through the head, the Mauser bullet entering the cranium on one side and emerging on the other. Not only is he living, but his wounds have healed without a check—a slightly restricted jaw movement due to muscular paralysis, alone retarding his discharge. In this instance the bullet entered just in front of the left ear, escaping the temporal artery, took a forward and somewhat downward course along the floor of the skull, pierced the right maxillary (cheek) bone, and emerged below the eye on that side. There results some facial disfigurement, but he sees, eats and sleeps well. One may consider him a lucky fellow in having exchanged the experience of cranial perforation by an old Brown Bess for that of a Mauser bullet.

"Another private had been shot through his right foot and left arm; all the four wounds of entrance and exit, clean cut by the same kind of bullet, were healed. He was standing 'to attention' at the foot of his bed when the doctor approached him and, carefully surveying, inquired of him how he was.

"'Quite well. Nothing wrong with me now, sir,' replied he. Then remarked his doctor, in his most kindly and considerate manner:

"'Good! And now, my lad, I shall send you down to the convalescent camp at Green Point, where you will get more freedom and fresher air.

"'Oh, no, sir, don't do that, please. I don't care for them convalescing homes. I wants to get back to the front to join my chums and give them 'ere Boers fits for serving me in this 'ere way.'

"Astonishing to Sir William MacCormac was the nature of a case that occurred in the surgical wards. A private had been shot through the leg. The Mauser bullet entered his right leg about one-third down from the knee cap, bored a singularly well defined round hole through the tibia (leg) bone, and emerged at the back (thickest part) of the thigh. The doctor is able to define the direction by probing and removing a drainage tube. No shattering of this bone has occurred, and little inflammation and suppuration followed on so dangerous a gunshot puncture."

The railway telegraph operator at Elandslaagte, who was for some little time a prisoner in the hands of the Boers, till the battle of Elandslaagte set him free, writes an interesting account of his experiences as a captive. Field Cornet Pienaar was in charge of the Boer troop that took possession of the station; and as Atkinson, the operator in question, refused to stop a train which was just able to get off before the Boers could hold it up, Pienaar threatened to have him shot. But after he had handed over his keys and cash, for which he received a receipt, Pienaar, he writes, "addressed me in the following terms, much to the surprise of the one or two Englishmen present: 'I'm very sorry, old man, that I said to you what I did when I first came. I said too much. You can understand my feelings. Seeing the train escape was bad enough, because you could have stopped it, and did not. As I rode up I saw one of my poor men fall, wounded by a shot from the train, and this made my blood boil. I spoke in the heat of passion. However, it is all over now. Here's my hand. We will have a drink.'

"As the evening approached more Boers rode in, so that by sunset six hundred or seven hundred of them were in the vicinity. That night about twenty of us were herded in a small tent by ten sitting-room under armed guards, and our discomfort was added to by a constant stream of Boers coming in and out of the room in half-dozens just to amuse themselves at our expense. Fortunately the bar was under the control of the Field Cornet, and the inevitable drunkenness was thus to a certain extent limited. One or two of the rougher youths amused themselves by pointing carbines at us, and, although checked by their leaders, there was always a doubt whether one of the crowd might not try his Mauser first and be punished after the mischief was over. Altogether the night was a miserable experience, and few slept in the heated atmosphere of that small room reeking as it did of stale tobacco and gin guarded at its only exit, and constantly disturbed by fresh arrivals anxious to gape at the prisoners."

Other portions of this letter incidentally throw a vivid light on the kind of men the Boer commandos are made up of. The following passage shows how quickly they get to work when their scouts bring news: "This morning, Oct. 20, Commandant Ben Viljoen and his men arrived early and took up a strong position among the stony kopjes a mile to the east of Elandslaagte. About 9 A. M. the scouts brought in word of an English force approaching. In a remarkably short time hundreds of Boers were in the saddle, and directed first by a rather melancholy per ormance on a bugle, and subsequently by numerous whistles, such as are used by English police, were off in small parties of tens or twenties in the direction of Ladysmith. After a couple of hours' anxious wait for results, the Boers returned, having had no engagement, as we concluded the Boer scouts had come into touch with some reconnoitring force which had returned to camp after ascertaining their locale."

In this passage there is a picture of the stern old Gen. Koch: "When noon arrived I went to F. C. Pienaar and reminded him of his promise of permits. He shrugged his shoulders, told me he had no further authority, and referred me to Gen. Koch, who had arrived about 10 P. M. the previous evening. Choosing a favorable moment, therefore, I got the General alone. His bearing was very resolute, and, for a man of his advanced age and venerable appearance, wonderfully firm; but a single glance at his cold, expressionless eyes enabled me to anticipate his answer. He apparently did not speak English with ease, and called up one who I was afterward informed was his son, Judge Koch, and very deliberately told him to inform me as follows: 'You will stay here at least an other two days, until the arrival of another commando, when a council will be held, and a decision taken as to what to do with you. If you remain here you will be protected, but if any of you are found in the veld you will be shot indiscriminately. We mean absolute business this time.' Evidently we are fixed for a time.

"A couple of hours after this I was sent for by Gen. Koch. Could I, he asked, find a said (beat for tarpaulin), as a sagmid (ammunition) had been taken from him some two miles inland, and the night promised to be wet. I promised, seeing in the commission an opportunity to see what was afoot, and knowing, moreover, that his own men could have got a sail anyhow if I had declined to find one. An escort was found me, and I went first to the station, where I new a spare tarpaulin had lain. It was gone; but, in searching for it, I found a case of dynamite, which had evidently been brought from the colliery magazine, distant about half a mile. A tremendous hammering was going on in the office, and on entering I found an officer using a hammer, and apparently opening by force an iron safe in the office. I at once connected the case of explosives with the hammering, and suspected that the building was being mined. Before there was time to see what was being done I was peremptorily ordered outside, and when I replied that Gen. Koch had sent me for a sail he said, 'Go back and tell Gen. Koch I don't know him.'

"But the officers maintain discipline of a sort, as witnesses the following story of an attempt seeming particularly acute among Kaffirs and border criminals. Stores were rapidly disappearing, and our usual eating habits were following suit. Those who did not care to snatch a piece of half-cooked mutton from the top of the kitchener and eat it Kaffir fashion stood a good chance of going hungry. By chance, however, I had a dinner of roast duck that night. Passing a couple of officers at the place where they asked me to join them and passed me out as he called a 'duck with a history' to help myself before he and his brother officer began. The duck, according to his tale, had belonged to the proprietor of the hotel, and one of the rough birds, seeing it had cut off its head with his jack-knife, and was making off with its prize when he stumbled into the arms of a field cornet, who demanded particulars of the way in which the duck came into his possession. No satisfactory explanation being forthcoming, he was deprived of his duck and sentenced there and then to twelve holes in petto. The sentence was duly carried home, and cooked for the officer, and, together with a dential supply of potatoes, proved an appetizing dish.

"We then left the station premises, and went to one of the colliery sidings, where a train of military stores was being loaded. My mission and my escort therefore enabled me to go over the entire train, and watch the proceedings without interference. In one wagon saddles of new military saddles were found, and this enabled the Boers to make use of the numerous horses they had captured on their way down. Another truck contained artillery, which was destroyed as soon as our count was over, thinking it indivisable to allow whisky to get among their followers by the case. Further along the train were found meal, flour, bread, clothing, officers' baggage, bandsmen's uniforms and instruments, what was useful was of course immediately appropriated, the rest of goods were thrown out of the trucks and pieced in heaps, scores of Indians and natives who were enjoying the spectacle. Some queer results were seen as the Boers found the officers' baggage and the bandsmen's uniforms. One of the roughest managed to squeeze his fat body into a pair of bandsmen's breeches, and exchanging his coarse jacket for a scarlet bandsman's tunic. So attired he walked off with earnest in one hand and a boot-tree in the other, no doubt intent on ascertaining what the latter was used for. Another sat for some time making vicious attempts to blow a note on a big tenor horn which was minus its mouthpiece, and when he found it unavailable he threw it down and trampled the shape out of it. Among other finds the Boers got a number of polo sticks, tennis rackets, chess boards, folding coats (each bearing some officer's name), and many similar things, and these were the cause of much an amusement on the part of the Boer officers, who failed to see the need of them. However, the folding chairs, at least, were useful, although it did not seem to be quite in the fitness of things to see Gen. Koch or Field Cornet Potgieter sit at ease in a chair which bore in large letters on its back, 'Capt.——, R.F.F.,' or 'Lieut.——, R.F.F.'

"The Boers, too, seem to be able to sing songs other than hymns and psalms, for on the second night they had a smoking concert. As our stay seemed likely to prove a long one, and the hours dragged wearily on, a smoking concert was mooted, whether by our men or by the Boers, I cannot say, but whoever gets the credit of the initiative, it was duly arranged, and Field Cornet Pienaar was ready and willing to take the chair. Duly at 8 P. M. he appeared, and at once had some choice whiskey and cigars placed on the table, and he filled up and handed round to Briton and Boer impartially. The whiskey was consigned to some of our British officers at Dundee, and Pienaar peculiarly admired their choice of whiskey, and, indeed, as the night advanced, he quite warmed up to the officers, who, as he put it, were not so bad as he thought, as evidenced by their good inside. Foot Pienaar had a right royal time, and probably never had a jollier night in his life. It was his last on earth, for ere another sun had set he was stretched dead on the battlefield within a mile of the scene I have just mentioned, after, from all accounts, fighting like a Trojan.

"The smoking concert proceeded merrily, despite the extraordinary circumstances under which it was held. It was opened by a comic song, rendered by a refugee from Newcastle, who sang about billiards, proved of great service. He and I then rendered the old duet, 'All's Well,' and on being encored responded with the 'Army and Navy' duet. A Transvaal burgher sang an Irish song, as only an Irishman can. He told us afterward that this was his eighth campaign, but he did not know then that it was his last. Next day he was dead. A German sergeant then sat down to the piano. Sir Joseph Barnby's glee, 'Sweet and Low,' was sung to his accompaniment, and when I say that it was a success, vocally and instrumentally, and add that we all had to trust to memory, it goes to show how wide is the popularity the little composition enjoys. The Boer sergeant then played a series of national anthems, including both 'God Save the Queen' and the Transvaal Volkslied. They were all played with great taste, and I certainly never expect to hear our national anthem played or sung again under such apparently impossible conditions. While we, the English prisoners, sang our national anthem, the Dutch prisoners sang our national anthem, the Dutch version, and in, but as they sang in the taal I could not make out what they were singing, but they were well acquainted with the air and sang it freely. 'God Bless the Prince of Wales' was also played by the German, both English and Dutch singing in their respective tongues. Whether the Dutch version had any relation to ours I cannot say, but the tune was evidently familiar."

Next morning came the battle and the escape of the prisoners. When the latter returned to Ladysmith they were surprised to find so much interest taken in them. The veracious native was the recipient, and in the last paragraph of this letter Mr. Atkinson gives a specimen of his trusting the great amount of news the native had to tell, for which is a native's story. They found on getting to Ladysmith that "natives had, during our enforced stay with the Boers, reported seeing us roped and bound to posts, others again had seen me tied up and shot, another had seen us flogged, &c., all of which efforts of the imagination I only mention now as an intimation that little or no reliance can be placed in the various reports which appear from time to time 'from reliable native sources.'"

WAY TO CHOOSE A SUBURBAN HOME.

Mr. and Mrs. Harlem Will Make Their Next Inspection in Midwinter.

Mr. and Mrs. Harlem are waiting patiently for a big snowstorm so that they may begin their search for a home in the country, having decided to try suburban life a second time. After Mr. Harlem had read the weather report and cast a sailor's glance at the sky, out of the window of his office on the top floor of the highest downtown building, he said to his partner:

"If I had only tried my theory of selecting a suburban home five years ago I know that we never would have moved back to New York. Mrs. Harlem and I do not like flats but by comparison our flat is heaven when sized up with the suburban town where we spent one wretched year. Mrs. Harlem began to think of moving to the country early in the summer and we spent a week investigating the advantages of suburban towns around New York. Unless you have done that sort of thing you don't know how seductive the country is at that time of the year particularly to people who have spent the winter in a flat.

"'We must find a neighborhood where the women are at peace,' said my wife, 'and we want a house that is easily heated. Now when we find the house which suits us we will make some inquiries about our neighbors, and if each one speaks well of the others I am sure that we will be satisfied.'

"But you must remember, Mrs. Harlem,' said I, 'that at this time of the year, when all nature is glorious with budding life, even neighborhood feuds slumber.

"'Bosh and rubbish!' said my wife, and I knew that settled it. You should have seen the house we rented as we saw it. The rose bushes around it gave promise of beautiful flowers later. The lawn was ready for the first touch of the lawn mower and it was simply ideal. It was a little larger house than we wanted, and when I found that it had forty-three windows I was alarmed at the prospect of heating it in cold weather. Mrs. Harlem and I were credulous then and we decided to ask the real estate man about the heating.

"'Heating this house?' he said. 'Why, bless my soul! I remember that the party who had it last year used to open his windows on the coldest days just to cool off. It has a Double Warmer furnace, and you know what they will do.'

"'Certainly,' said I, for I didn't want to expose my ignorance. The heating question was settled and the house rented. We called on several families in the neighborhood just to find what sort of a colony it was. They were a cheerful lot of people, bubbling over with good humor, and every one just doted on every one else.

"'I didn't suppose such a happy colony existed so near New York, and I think we had better take the house,' said Mrs. Harlem, and take it we did.

"It was plain sailing until the cold weather and the snow came. When we started that famous double-warmer furnace it first filled the house with coal gas and then it seemed to me to consume its own heat. It burned coal by the ton, with no other appreciable result than ashes and clinkers. We shivered around the open fire for a week, and then we moved into the flat. When the wind blew it came right through our house and kept the hangings swaying back and forth as if they were wig wagging.

"'Perhaps there is something the matter with the furnace,' suggested Mrs. Harlem, as we talked our troubles over the kitchen range.

"'I am positive that the real estate man was a pretty good liar,' said I, 'but to give him the benefit of the doubt I'll call in a plumber.'

"The well-known plumbing firm of Tin, Lead & Co., who did work only for the best people, assured me that they could fix my furnace. Mr. Tin came himself to look it over and then he sent back for his assistant, and they both looked it over. The services of a third man seemed necessary, and to make sure that he would come they both went for him. The three men put out my furnace fire and raised a great dust. Curiously enough I was not able to get any more heat from that furnace after they had fixed it.

"'We owe a lot of calls in this neighborhood,' said Mrs. Harlem when we found we couldn't heat the house, and now is a good time to pay them up and keep warm evenings. I have no doubt but that our neighbors' homes will be warm.

"'We made our first call on the Baptists who had moved in the house next to the parsonage, we were looking for a house. Their house was not much warmer than ours and we came in just as Mr. Baptist was saying things about his coal bill. We sympathized with him and then we began to discuss the country. Mrs. Baptist turned out to be our neighbors. When we came home Mrs. Harlem and I agreed that Mrs. Baptist had not directly said one unkind thing about our neighbors. But for, hinting and getting evidence before the court that she was not willing to be responsible for she was a wonder. She did this by telling what Mrs. A said about Mrs. B and what Mrs. C's nurse girl said and so on, without limit, winding up each malicious story with the assertion that she didn't believe it at all and that it was awful for people to talk so. When we left her our minds were filled with suspicion of all our neighbors.

"'The next evening we called on another family and the result was the same. We finished out that week's calls and we decided either that we lived in a colony of cranks or that they were all malicious scoops. As a matter of fact the incompleteness of that particular place in winter made every one cross and after a year of it we moved back to town.

"'Mrs. Harlem and I think that we would like to live in a suburban place if we could only find the right one and this winter we are going to make our search in the coldest, most disagreeable weather. You see the advantage of my theory. During the coldest weather we can tell whether they are easily heated. People who rent houses and who are going to leave will usually tell the truth about them. Then we can call on the neighbors when if they know nasty things to say, they are likely to say them in a way that is easily up very fairly. Of course it will be necessary to endure a slight inconvenience made in midwinter. If we find a place that suits us at that season I'll guarantee that we will be satisfied during the rest of the year.'"

POLICE FORCES OF VARIOUS PLACES.

Their Numerical Strength and Cost—The Test of Efficiency.

There are 6,400 New York policemen, a larger number than the force of any other city in the country, and a larger number by several hundred than the various divisions of the Greater New York had collectively before consolidation. There are 6,500 policemen in the city of Paris, the proportion of police to inhabitants being larger than it is in the city of London. There are 60,000 policemen in Great Britain. Of these England has 41,332, Scotland, 4,744; Ireland, 12,105; Wales, 1,283; the Isle of Man, 52. Liverpool has 1,805; Glasgow, 1,320; Dublin, 1,295 and Manchester, 1,028.

The number of policemen in the city of London is 16,44 according to the last official report, but the police district of London includes a large amount of outlying rural and suburban territory with a population of 1,400,000, exclusive of the population of London proper which is 4,400,000. The London police district covers an area 12 miles by 15, with 7,000 miles of streets or roads and the duty of patrolling these accounts very largely for the extensive membership of the force when compared with that of most American cities.

Chicago has 3,750 policemen and the average number of arrests in a year amounts to 75,000 though during the period of the World's Fair it was considerably higher. Boston has 1,200 policemen; Baltimore, 900; St. Louis, 1,100; Philadelphia, 2,200; Cincinnati, 600; Cleveland, 4 0; Detroit, 550; Washington, 400; San Francisco, 300; Pittsburg, 500 and New Orleans, 330.

Among foreign cities Paris stands first in the number of policemen compared with the whole population; and Palermo, Italy, stands lowest with the smallest and least expensive police force. Capital crimes, as a rule, require more police protection than other cities even of a larger population, for as the number of transients in a city increases, the demand for police service advances and the expenses of maintenance increase correspondingly. The test of efficiency in a police department is not the number of men engaged, but their capacity for making arrests of the right persons, at the right time, and under conditions which will be most favorable to their discharge if innocent or their conviction if guilty. A recent report of the Chicago Chief of Police showed the number of arrests in that city for the crime of homicide to have been 122 within the period covered. Of those arrested, 3 were executed, 20 were sentenced to terms of imprisonment, 9 were sent to the reformatory at Joliet, 17 were acquitted and 46 cases were still pending at the time of the report.

In New York the number of arrests in a year for felony amounts to about 1,000 by the detective bureau, and the number of convictions from such arrests is about 400. The number of arrests for homicide in a year—homicide or murder—is about 400, and the proportion of convictions is decidedly larger than it is in the city of Chicago, which expends for its Police Department in a year about one-third of the sum paid by New York.

The expense of the Philadelphia Police Department is $3,000,000 a year, and the expense of the Boston Police Department is $1,550,000, or one-half the expense of the Philadelphia department. The present population of Boston is estimated at 550,000, and that of Philadelphia 1,400,000. Relatively, therefore, the Boston Police Department is the more expensive of the two, and this apparent discrepancy is due to the fact that the number of transient visitors to Boston is proportionately larger than the number into Philadelphia, regarded usually as a "home city," the duties of the Police Department of which are chiefly in the line of maintaining order. The expense of the New York Police Department for 1898 is $12,000,000, approximately, of which $10,700,000 is for police salaries, $300,000 for supplies and the balance for rentals and contingencies.

DOBLEY MIXES A PUNCH.

HIS RUSSIAN RECIPE LOADED WITH HIGH EXPLOSIVES.

Has a New Year's Party and Entertains His Guests by Mixing a Drink Known Only to a Few Epicureans—The Concoction Goes Off Before the Guests Drink It.

"I think," said Mr. Dobley thoughtfully, "that the custom of seeing the old year out is a very charming one. It is typical of a parting as with an old friend for we cannot deny that whatever the old year has brought us we at least know the extent of his kindness and unkindness. The new year, on the contrary, is an unknown quantity; and while we rejoice at his coming there must always be a certain misgiving mingled with our joy."

"But the very coming of the New Year signifies a hope for better things," said Mrs. Dobley; "we are always building Spanish castles with the materials which he is to pour into our laps."

"Which are sometimes likely to be gold bricks," said Mr. Dobley.

"And making resolutions," went on Mrs. Dobley.

"Which are only made to be broken," said Mr. Dobley; "If there is one person more objectionable and generally disagreeable to meet, it is the man with one of those new-born resolutions. He goes about thrusting it in everybody's face while it is new and making you realize what a magnificently strong-minded chap he is and all the time you long to tell him that it will last him just a few days and it will then form another block in the pavement of Hades."

"A much prettier custom," said Mrs. Dobley, "is one which I recollect we put in practice every New Years eve when I was a girl. Just as the clock was striking 12 we drank a toast to the New Year and each one made a resolution—silently—without expressing the particular pet delinquency we intended to avoid in the future. I don't mean to say that we kept the resolutions any more than if they were the other sort that folks shout from the roof tops, but it was more fun. But then everything is fun when one is a girl! When people settle down to the hopeless monotony of domestic existence without one ray of sunshine"——

"Where do I come in?" asked Mr. Dobley; "I think that as a ray of sunshine I might be considered."

"Oh, you know what I mean," sighed Mrs. Dobley. "There's such a sameness. One day is like the other! Sometimes I positively wish, like Mr. Freshington, that I was Bohemian and lived in a studio with a chafing dish!"

"I think, Mrs. Dobley," said Mr. Dobley, "that in view of these somewhat alarming statements it would be a wise idea for us to arrange some little festivity for New Year's Eve. Not a pink tea or a musicale, but a sort of social watch meeting of friends, limiting the party, say, to a dozen. Let us see the old year out with a harmonious gathering of kindred souls equipped around a hospitable bowl of——"

"Eggnog?" suggested Mrs. Dobley, "in that beautiful silver bowl that the Uplate Club presented to you; that, I think, will be a charming idea!"

"All but the eggnog," said Mr. Dobley. "Eggnog is really commonplace and behind the times."

"But then, we do know how to make it," said Mrs. Dobley; "and one has to consider that."

"There is a Russian punch," said Mr. Dobley, "the recipe for which is known only to a few persons in this country. It really is a state secret, and I have a translation of it in the safe at the office. It is said to be a most wonderful concoction."

"But you have never made it, have you?" asked Mrs. Dobley. "I shouldn't like to experiment with our guests."

"If you will leave it all to me, Mrs. Dobley," said her husband, "you can depend that everything will be all right. Have no misgivings whatever. I shall get out the recipe to-day, and will order home the ingredients. Then if you will have them prepared in the proper fashion I will, myself, mix the punch in the presence of our friends. That you know, is the Russian custom. In that land of Nihilism there is always a hint of assassination in the air. Hence the custom of preparing the bowl in view of the guests."

"Well, I shall send out the cards," said Mrs. Dobley, "and will leave the question of the punch entirely to you; but remember, I wash my hands of all responsibility in the matter. I distinctly recollect a Welsh rabbit that you once made which resulted in an explosion which nearly set the house on fire!"

"Because of Mr. Freshington's thoughtlessness in handing me a bottle of naphtha instead of alcohol," said Mr. Dobley, "pray, remember, my dear, that I was in no way to blame for his stupid mistake!"

Mr. Dobley brought the recipe home from the office that evening and read parts of it to his wife. He said that he was bound by a solemn promise not to let any eye rest on it but his own and that he regarded a matter of the sort as sacred.

"But the list of ingredients which he repeated to his wife so alarmed her that she begged Mr. Dobley to give up the idea of the famous Russian bowl and to prepare some simpler and more familiar mixture. Mr. Dobley, however, was set upon this particular recipe and explained to his wife that Russians were a nation of epicures and as such were centuries ahead of America.

"'I know absolutely nothing,' he declared "on the subject of champagne or of cigars when we compare ourselves to the Russians. They are way in advance of every other country in these matters. That is why this recipe is so unique—so subtle and so seductive in its component parts. For instance, listen to this bit of history.

"'The foundation of the Russian punch is kvass—the national beverage. It is manufactured from ten pounds of rye flour, one pound of malt, and one pound of buckwheat flour stirred in a tub with three quarts of warm water. Over this mixture three quarts of boiling water is poured and after half an hour six quarts of boiling water is added, this treatment being repeated at half hourly intervals three times more. Stir the flour and the water well together, let it cool, cover and stand in a rather warm place. The following day you skim the liquid with cold water put in a cool place and let it thoroughly sour; then bottle.'

"'You don't mean that we have to do all that with that horrid mess?' asked Mrs. Dobley. 'I never heard anything in my life that sounded quite so disagreeable. Oh, do please have some thing else! I am sure we would rather to have something simpler and less mysterious!'

"'That is only one of the parts which we obtain direct from Russia, Mrs. Dobley,' explained her husband. 'Besides that, we have champagne, lemons, oranges, sugar, arrack, Jamaica rum, tea, curaçoa, Rhine wine, brandy, seltzer and Hippocras.'

"'Hippocras!' said Mrs. Dobley. "I never heard of anything so queer in my life. It will surely make us all ill!'

"'Is it possible, my dear, that you do not know what Hippocras is? Hippocras is a spiced wine of the mediæval age—that is, the original Hippocras was. The recipe of Tallevant, the head cook of Charles VII., King of France, reads in this way:

"'A quart of wine; a third of an ounce of cinnamon, one-thirtieth of an ounce of ginger; twice as much of cloves; as much of nutmeg; six ounces of sugar and honey; grind the spices, put them in a muslin bag, bring the wine to the fire for ten or twelve hours and filter several times.'"

"I hardly think, Mr. Dobley, that it is necessary that we should go back to the middle ages for such a simple matter as a bowl of punch!"

"That is the original Hippocras; nowadays it is made up of apples, sugar, peppers, lemon rind, cinnamon, peeled almonds and Rhine wine. It is an admiral's substitute for the