SOUTH AFRICA'S LESSONS.

MODERN WEAPONS DO NOT LESSEN THE VALUE OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

Some of the Mistakes Which Have Been So Costly for the British in the Struggle With the Boers—Lord Wolseley's Awakening—British Waste of Men and Means as Compared the Careful and Successful Tactics of the Boers—Soldiering and Fighting.

From THE SUN'S Correspondent With the British Troops.

LONDON, Aug. 18.—A civilian witness of Gen. Lord Methuen's battles around Modder River and Magersfontein and of practically all the work done by his main column from the invasion of the Orange Free State in February until the capture of Pretoria early in July, is satisfied that at least one general good lesson has come out of the South African war. It is that the use of the most modern weapons by skilled antagonists on both sides makes the individual more, and not less, important than of old. One might have said that a large equipment of heavy ordnance covering most effectively a range from 5,000 yards to 7,000 yards—supported by siege guns of yet longer range and quick-firing light guns at their best between 2,000 yards and 2,500 yards—cooperating with rifle fire from either Mauser or Lee-Metford, was bound to make the individual practically a nonentity so far as his own initiative is concerned when working either with or against a great collective body. Quite a number of casualties have been sustained in all the big engagements from rifle fire at a range of over 2,000 yards. Moreover, the man wielding the weapon that can strike at this distance has the additional protection and nerve-steadier of knowing that he has a reserve of cartridges in his magazine to draw upon without laying down his rifle and recharging from his bandolier, and also that he is firing smokeless powder.

With both sides so equipped the question arose, had modern mechanical inventiveness reduced the handlers of these weapons to something little short of automata or had it given an additional advantage to the man well equipped with intelligence and nerve over the less capable? From what I have seen I believe that the individual has more scope for showing his worth with the new weapons than he had with the old, when, of course, he had to come nearer to his enemy before he could strike him. In all the other operations that go to making up the sum total of a war the same conclusion that a very great deal depends on the individual is driven into one by repeated experience.

There is already a great outcry in England that the British system is all wrong, and that it is to blame for the not very creditable tale of half-successes and occasional whole reverses that so far make up the record of the war. Should those justly angered at such a series of rude disillusionments keep up their feelings beyond the war and insist on explanations, they will have missed the vital defect if they devote themselves to pulling the War Office system to pieces, in the belief that another could be devised that would make such an army as now represents England in Africa victorious in a reasonably short time against a Boer force such as has opposed it since last October. I say again that it is not the system, but the individual resource, self-reliance, initiative, and keen interest in the actual momentary business on hand that should be looked to rather than any new ready-made system for bolstering up the idea that the most perfect officials and most model War Office in the world would have made a brilliant army out of the present personnel. Possibly that may be the conclusion of those who will read some description of events, no longer yesterday's news, but still clearer from this distance by having fuller knowledge than a mere first glance.

FAILURES DURING ROBERTS'S ADVANCE.

On the day that Lord Roberts's force crossed the Vaal River, May 27, the first steps were taken that have led the British troops into the series of troubles against which is only to be set the bare occupation of Johannesburg and Pretoria and—though not always—of the line from Pretoria to the river. Gen. Ian Hamilton had left Kroonstad on May 16 for Lindley and Heilbron—to destroy, it was understood, President Steyn's provisional seats of government, and to detach as many as possible of his burghers. Gen. Hamilton's division was accounted the best composite force that could be collected from Lord Roberts's main column. It should be explained that the main column consisted of the Seventh (Gen. Tucker's), the Ninth (Gen. Colville's), and the Eleventh (Gen. Pole-Carew's) Infantry divisions; Gen. French's Cavalry Division, comprising Col. Porter's, Col. Broadwood's, Col. Gordon's and Col. Barton's Cavalry brigades; Gen. Hutton's Mounted Infantry Division of Australians, Canadian, Ceylon, and other mounted volunteers enlisted outside Africa; and Ian Hamilton's Mounted Infantry Division, built around the comparatively small mounted infantry force raised in Cape Colony. The best African colonist volunteers, such as the Imperial Light Horse, had gone round from Natal to the Kimberley-Mafeking line with Gens. Hunter and Mahon, and were not up to the Field Marshal's force. Lord Roberts had to cover 130 miles from Kroonstad to Johannesburg without a town to rest at. He wished to do it in the least possible time while still making his advance thorough enough to clear his flanks of any hostile force that might cut off his supplies from the rear. On the west of the line from Kroonstad up there is little cover or water or supplies, and the Boers did not show themselves from that side. While we were still in Kroonstad, from May 12 to May 22, Lord Methuen, with his reduced division, was brought from Warrenton, thirty miles from Kimberley, where he had been dawdling for nearly three months, to Bloemhof, and thence across the Vaal east-southeast into the Free State to Hoopstad. Col. Pilcher, with a picked force of Australian and Canadian mounted volunteers, had been thrown out west from Kroonstad to Bothaville, and the country west of the line was reported clear.

It was from the east that trouble was to be expected and Gen. Ian Hamilton was equipped with the best force obtainable effectively to clear the country. Lord Roberts gave him two infantry brigades—Gen. Smith-Dorrien's and Gen. Bruce-Hamilton's, the former being reckoned one of the best Brigadiers with probably the best British infantry brigade now in the field. Moreover, Gen. Broadwood's cavalry brigade was detached from Gen. French as advance guard to Gen. Hamilton, who had of course still his mounted infantry, under De Lisle and Ridley. This force, numbering about twelve thousand men, moved about six miles out of Kroonstad on May 14. There they waited twenty-four hours because it was discovered that they had not four days' supplies with them. The arid, crusty roads of Kroonstad were ground a foot deep into floury dust by heavy eight-span mule and ox wagons taking out the necessary supplies. At last Gen. Hamilton's army got started and in two days we learned that Lindley had been occupied; then that the British were in Heilbron, and finally, on May 24, Gen. Hamilton rejoined Lord Roberts at Vredefort road, a junction on the railway line, along which the Field Marshal had always moved. Gen. Hamilton had fought the rear of Gen. De Wet's force, numbering then perhaps 1,200 or 1,500 men, for two days; then lost his enemy for a day, and on the fourth day had himself to fight a rear-guard action against the nimble Boer.

It is a matter of opinion whether any explanation can be satisfactory that seeks to account for a force selected from all branches of the British Army, and outnumbering its opponent by about ten to one, still allowing a force that had certainly as much hardship and heavy marching as itself to double back after a two days' fight and harry its recent pursuer's rear. The accounts of Gen. Hamilton's doings that reached the main column during his absence were meagre. The field wire had been burnt up by veldt fires. They were fires kindled before the departure of the British force from its night's bivouac, left alight after the early morning coffee to lick across the parched grass from one to another until the advancing troops would look back to a good-sized veldt fire which made easy havoc of the rubber insulated ground wire, the all-important means of signalling back to the main column. A hundred men could easily have beat the fires out in ten minutes, but it was no special duty of any particular officer to suppress veldt fires, so they were left to spread wide over the country until at one time or another every column was isolated by the wanton carelessness of men belonging to it. At Vredefort road on the morning of May 25 Gen. Hamilton's entire division crossed the railway just in front of Lord Roberts's column and moved toward Pary's Drift on the Vaal River, where Gen. French had crossed the frontier a day before.

Thus the entire mission round Lindley and Heilbron was utterly fruitless. Proclamations were read, submissions received, officials removed, but all for what purpose? The only active enemy in the whole area was there and more active than ever. It is said that Gen. Hamilton had, according to the plan of operations, to be on the banks of the Vaal River by a certain date, no matter what amount of success his eastern march secured. So much the worse for the plan, for it merely culminated in an empty record of places occupied and evacuated by a peaceful crossing of the Vaal a day after Gen. French had, with trifling loss, already invaded the northern republic.

To what cause is DeWet's easy evasion of a big division of picked arms to be ascribed? It happened nearly three months ago and the question is still unanswered. Gen. Hamilton is still one of the most favored of Lord Roberts's divisional commanders, and his command is still, comparatively speaking, the envy of his colleagues. But it proved that in point of actual accomplishment this "flying column" was no faster than its slowest wagon. Until these wagons arrived at the end of the day's march the men were lying around, dog-tired, passively waiting for the arrival of the meal which it was somebody else's duty to prepare for them. Among the cavalry it was little different. The prevalent idea of a hard day's work was to be in the saddle about 3 o'clock in the morning and scarcely out of it for a minute until dark, the saddle girths scarcely ever loosened, the entire kit weighing down the beast's back whether a Boer was within miles or not. About the third day of this mode of seeking the enemy came the periodical announcement that so-and-so's cavalry had stopped and were waiting for remounts. Until the beginning of July, at least, this state of things had not improved. It was so much more important than everything else that Lord Kitchener was finally sent down to Kroonstad to mount a force of 6,000 or 8,000 cavalry, the best riders on the best horses. He, if anybody, should make the best of the material he has to work upon, although it is known well enough he has no exalted idea of its quality. It is a safe guess to say that his available mounted force must already be reduced by nearly a half if he has chased DeWet from Kroonstad to near Rustenburg, and has not overtaken him yet.

This radical defect is not to be accounted for by ascribing supernatural qualities to the Boer. What the burgher almost invariably knows is the difference between a tired horse and a done horse, the way out of a position before he goes into it, a formation in the country that will enable him to see a good deal more readily than he can be seen, and not to exhaust his food, water and forage before knowing where to get a fresh supply. And in what do these qualities differ from the groping carelessness which has again and again ended in ignominious surrenders, explained away by "exhausted ammunition," "taking the wrong route," or "suddenly surrounded by superior numbers"? I am assured it is a fact that the capture of the Derbyshire Militia early in June followed on their pitching their tents at the bottom of a hill actually held at the time by Boers. No British patrols or pickets were thrown out and the Boers simply made sure of their own way off with a certain haul and waited for dawn to make their work easier. Before the Derbys were up they had some shot and were a beaten force from the start—spread out in the open among their baggage below a useful hillside holding some wakeful, resolute Boers. The stories of other surrenders of detached forces is scarcely different.

LETTING THE BOERS ESCAPE FROM PRETORIA.

Having already failed to secure De Wet's force concurrently with the first British advance on the Vaal River, the next development assured the escape of all the other commandos then around Johannesburg and Pretoria under Botha, Delarey, Grobelaar and Viljoen. French, Hamilton and Tucker were all thrown on the west side of the railway—over 20,000 men—to make the feint attack on the Uliprivers-berg Mountain range, while the headquarters column with Gen. Pole-Carew and mounted infantry under Cols. Ross and Henry turned east and seized the railway at Elandsfontein Junction. The safety of the mines was assured, but so also was the escape of the main Boer force. Certainly the three consecutive columns which moved up west of the railway were never needed for the work that had to be done there, and it is hard to believe that such opposition as would have called them all into action was expected. On the other hand, had either French or Hamilton never been taken across to the west one or the other might have been in Middelburg within two days of the infantry entering Pretoria, which surely should have put a different complexion on the war many weeks before now. If a mounted force could not reach Middelburg soon enough to bar the retreat from the capital of its defenders against the great forces of infantry that were there, one would like to know what the British leaders understand by a mobile force or by cavalry at all. Lord Roberts himself must certainly have pondered these things, and, resist as he may, the explanation must again and again have forced itself on him that, with every equipment of food, ammunition, forage, and horses, he has not got the sort of men who can spare and store their resources so as to be of striking use when, if ever, they got within visible chasing distance of their enemy.

By retaining the entire British force for the advance on Pretoria itself what was effected? On June 3 Botha came down from the north to Pretoria and called for volunteers to defend the town. On June 4 Delarey took out 1,500 Boers to Six Mile Spruit, south of the capital, and kept more than 20,000 troops so busy all day that he got every one of his cannon away, and his fighting men, too, with probably small loss. His adversaries were too unwieldy to overwhelm him; they could only press him back for a stage and then regather themselves in case they should lose sight of their neighboring columns and get lost on the veldt.

METHUEN'S COSTLY MISTAKES.

Why is there so little damage to show for the huge numbers turned against the Boers? First, the units of the attacking force are too large, and, second, they are huddled too close together. Putting all question of mobility over distances aside, and assuming that the Boers mean to defend, there is no doubt that too many men are put into action in too small an area. It was first evident to me at the battle of Modder River last November, where resistance was stubborn and the contested area and passage of the river remained the same from 6 o'clock in the morning until darkness set in, and the crossing was not really assured until the next morning. The advance was contested by about three thousand Boers, while Lord Methuen had about eight thousand troops. The disproportion was very much less than subsequent battles showed to be necessary to insure a British victory; but to the lay mind there seemed something radically wrong in the mode of attack. Setting aside the question of whether a frontal attack was necessary, there remains the fact that the attacking force was contained within a front of well within five miles, perhaps within three. It would have suffered less and certainly injured the enemy more if it had been spread over ten miles. The first regulation objection to that would be that it would move many of the men too far from their supplies. The unit—a battalion of nearly a thousand men—would take too long to spread over the increased area at the commencement and again at the end of the day, to contract back into the one household where the food was. The arrangements, in short, for keeping the men fit to fight were too unwieldy, but there was nothing to prevent smaller sections from having necessaries nearer them, except the ingrained habit of the individual not being able to shift for himself. He expected to have distributed the necessary things at the beginning of the day and to return to his regimental transport and get a fresh supply of the necessary things at the end of the day. It was a hopelessly cumbersome process, but it was nobody's business to alter it. On that day at Modder River it was apparently nobody's business to have drinking water near the night's camp in case, as the event proved, the river was still disputed at nightfall. The men were around the engines at the nearest siding in crowds waiting to catch the drip of hot, greasy water from below the locomotives, which were kept with their fires up. Orders came around to the drivers, who were all Royal Engineers, that they would be court-martialed if they gave water to the men. In the morning the majority could scarcely have gone through another day's fight had it been necessary.

A word regarding the General in command, Lord Methuen. A correspondent who was seeking the shelter of an ant hill from some Mauser fire had the General in a similar attitude about fifty yards on his right. As the fire eased off the General and the correspondent rose to move to another part of the field. The former, seeing the stranger, shouted with a gesture of impatience: "Don't talk to me unless you have something very important to say!" The correspondent certainly had made no sign of any such intention and to him the General's demeanor scarcely seemed consistent with a firm and cool control of his force. After his slight wound the battle seemed left to take care of itself, for part of the Ninth Brigade, which got across the river on the left, had the experience of being shelled by the artillery of their own side.

The story of the Magersfontein disaster has been told again and again, but, as indicating the unwieldiness of the troops under their present control, it should be recalled that the Highland Brigade had suffered 800 casualties before the sun rose, that its General and three Colonels of kilted regiments fell before the sun rose, and yet the day was left to drag on hopelessly and miserably without any direction until evening.

GOOD WORK BY GEN. MACDONALD.

How different was it at Koodoesberg two months later with the same brigade handled by Gen. Macdonald! The purpose of the operations there and particularly of the return to Modder River was not made known to any one but the General at the time. It proved to be the very important one of making a vigorous feint as though to relieve Kimberley from the west and so keep the Boers occupied from their chief laager at Scholtz's Nek, behind Magersfontein, during the critical week when 40,000 men were brought up by Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener and Gen. French prior to the invasion of the Orange Free State and the cavalry's relief of Kimberley. The holding of Koodoesberg drift served the additional purpose of preventing the Boers from raiding the railway from the west and seizing Lord Robert's train, as was thought possible.

The culminating fight at Koodoesberg was on Feb. 7. There had been a two hours' struggle on the afternoon of Feb. 5, when the British had only one man killed, so effectively were they concealed, and yet were not dislodged from any of the positions taken. But the Wednesday's battle, two days later, remains to my mind the most satisfactory performance by a detached force of infantry that I have seen during the war. Gen. Macdonald's force numbered barely 3,000 men. He had the four battalions of the Highland Brigade—two of them the Black Watch and the Seaforths—not much more than half their complement since the night attack on Magersfontein. His only mounted troops were two squadrons of the Ninth Lancers and he had one battery of field artillery. On the morning of the fight they held the west of the long Koodoesberg hill, about three miles from the eastern extremity, and the drift held by the British. The Boers had a Krupp 7-pound gun on their end of the hill, which was reached by a gradual incline from northwest. At the east the kopje was much too steep to get a field gun up. Rifle fire from the attacking Boers began about 6 o'clock in the morning and was answered by some of the Seaforth Highlanders scattered among the breast-high protections they had raised since being sent on the previous day to occupy the British end of the kopje. "Pack-pock! Pack-pock!" came the whip-crack echo report of Mauser fire in quicker and quicker succession. It became a busy attack when the Krupp gun opened soon after 8 o'clock with vigorous shrapnel across the kopje, dropping it where the British shelters were thought to be. Still Macdonald held his hand. Some of his staff—restive on restive horses—bit their lips and scanned their leader, who still refused to give them any orders. A Methuen would have had his battalions marching across the flat and through river beds toward the Boer firing zone, and that would have been the beginning and end of his day's plan of operations. Meanwhile the Boer fire crackled closer up to the enemy. Only three companies of the Seaforths were on the kopje and their fire was light, for there was nothing but their ears and the direction of the whistling bullets to guide their own aim. After about an hour of this a message came down from the kopje that reenforcements were needed, the defenders were being hard pressed.

"Oh! no!" said Macdonald, "they don't need that. Send them up plenty of water, plenty to eat. Tell them to sit tight and hold it." Then aside, as though thinking aloud: "They've got to hold it. They can't get away."

It was not the most tender way of regarding one's men. But mark the result. At the end of the day the British had but seven killed and something over thirty wounded. If one estimated from the position, the amount of fire directed on them, and the precedents of Modder River and Magersfontein, the British casualties should have been more than five times what they were. But Macdonald was not to be shaken into displaying his men, nor had he huddled them together in battalions. There was a company here, another there, always in touch with each other, and always under Macdonald's own vigilant control. He was able not only to hold the drift and his position across it all day, but on the following morning, the purpose of the diversion having been accomplished, he got his men away and back to Modder River without a single further casualty. There were no exceptional circumstances in the Koodoesberg operations that they should have been completed without a prisoner being taken and with as little loss. But the General's example breathed some spirit and alertness into a brigade which is neither much better nor worse than the average British infantry. And he had really no hide-bound system to struggle against. It was a mere case of personal capacity in the leader forcing individual usefulness from his officers.

KITCHENER AND THE CAPTURE OF CRONJE.

The operations around Cronje's laager at Paardeberg presented the same spectacle of enormous numbers present yet not doing more damage to the enemy than one would have expected from quarter the number. An entire battalion would not show more force in an attack than a hundred resolute men display. An inefficient Captain means a whole company useless, perhaps worse than useless. At Koodoesberg every one had to fill a place—even the chaplain dispensed with his white armlet and red cross and acted willingly as galloper to his General. At Paardeberg, with 40,000 British troops, it cannot be said that they did more than sit there. Big guns were hurried up from De Aar until nearly 150 of them had their noses turned to the pestilential ratpit from which after ten days seven Boer guns were extracted. And British artillery officers were frank enough to say that these latter were not superior weapons, in fact that they were very second class. It must have been the men handling them that made them weapons to be respected. Apart from the lack of sustained force intelligently directed there was a great deal to be admired in the troops. The days were wet and hot; the nights wet and cold. Everybody had to go through the strict exercise of going without. Of course there were no tents. A soldier carried his baggage on his back. He lived in his clothes day and night. His one blanket, when soaking wet, was worse than none at all. Over 200 wagons of supplies, intended to meet some of the requirements of a siege of Cronje which was always forseen, were captured by the Boers the previous week at Watervaal Drift, outside Jacobsdal. They could have been rescued, even retaken. But that would have disturbed the calculations of Lord Kitchener made weeks before at Cape Town. He would have a certain number of men, traversing a certain number of converging routes to reach a certain place at a certain time. And the loss of a few hundred thousand pounds worth of stuff, more or less, was not going to make him alter his factors in his problem. It would seem that he, like the others, suffers from lack of adaptability. Yet certainly the achievement of encircling Cronje was his and no other's, although the enormous resources he required to accomplish it must detract from its glory as a military achievement. Except the hard-worked Highland Brigade, who had only crossed back from Koodoesberg the previous week and had forced marches of over twenty miles a day on their route to Paardeberg, all the other troops were comparatively fresh. How other than to lack of individual value as fighting men can one ascribe the fact that it took nearly 40,000 of them ten days to reduce about 5,000 Boers who had trekked without a stoppage from Magersfontein and were finally held up in a position not of their own choosing, the British having all the while an overwhelming preponderance in artillery?

There seems no sense in the artillery formation in batteries. Why should gunners be trained in the idea that their battery is to consist of six guns under a Major and that that is to be their unit. In the latter part of the campaign, it is true, they have been split up into sections when thought necessary, but not very often. Yet I have never seen a battle yet where the regular battery formation seemed to serve any useful purpose. Good work recognized as done by one gun is an incentive to do better and for others to do their best, but turning a battery loose on a position means a day of perfunctory performance. The individual gun can accomplish vastly more when worked by itself than when in battery formation. Moreover, shrapnel has proved to be more deadly ammunition than either common shells or high explosives of the Lyddite class. The last named must be very destructive among masonry or rocks. The Boers know this and do not remain in house-built places to be besieged or among masonry and rocks to afford object lessons in the terrible power of Lyddite. This disconcerts very many British officers, who call the Boers "damned skulking fellows" or at least very unconsiderate for not conforming to the staff college examination text books.

THE TALK OF "WHITE FLAG TREACHERY."

It is a custom to talk of "treachery" when minor disasters are reported. A mounted party goes out—frequently with proclamations asking farmers to disarm and promising protection. It returns with some men shot; possibly it does not return. In either case "abuse of the white flag" is the stock explanation. Doubtless it has been ignored, whether deliberately abused or not I cannot say. And it generally comes to be ignored in this way. A proclamation party goes its rounds and gets a certain number of submissions. Protection, of course is promised; it is not afforded, although the farmer on parting with his arms hoists a white flag on his house, thinking it a protection. A Boer patrol comes down, finds a burgher who has given up his arms to the English. The patrol says: "Oh, you are a burgher who have deserted and given the enemy your arms. Come along with us. You will have to be tried." He is deported and his farm is left deserted. Possibly a British patrol encounters the Boers removing their prisoner. There is a fight, the luckless white flag hanging helplessly near by. Is that an abuse of the white flag, or is the white flag only to be used properly in tendering a surrender while actually engaged in fighting? It is not altogether a simple question to answer. I am certain that the white flag business altogether should be cut down by nine-tenths. An individual or group wishes to surrender and up goes the white flag. Many of their comrades—be they either British or Boers—mean to fight on. Yet if the white flag is to be properly respected, all firing should cease within the zone in which it is shown, probably for a mile around. We do not hear of actual commanding officers showing the white flag, and who other is entitled to authorize it or have it respected over an area which will insure that no one will be shot who has shown himself or allowed himself to be approached on account of it? There is a striking illustration of the readiness to believe the cry of "white flag treachery" in a fiasco known as the Crabbe reconnoissance at Bishop's Glen, about twelve miles north of Bloemfontein last April. The parties concerned were Col. Crabbe of the Grenadier Guards, Col. Codrington of the Coldstream Guards and Lieuts. Trotter and Lygon, aides to their respective Colonels. The news came that all four had been treacherously shot by the Boers. As a matter of fact Lygon was killed, Trotter had his arm badly shot and amputated, Crabbe and Codrington were wounded. But how did it happen? Col. Crabbe wished to go buck shooting; Col. Codrington was willing, and the two juniors simply had to go. They were not successful in sport, but Col. Crabbe saw some horsemen in the distance. He called out: "Why! Here are some Boers! Let's round them up!" Two of them had sporting rifles, the others revolvers. Thus equipped they proceeded to round up a dozen mounted Johannesburg police. They pursued to a kopje, where the Boers dismounted and turned upon their pursuers with the result I have mentioned. They laid the dead officer out at a farmhouse, dressed the wounded officers and sent a message to Bloemfontein telling what happened and advising British surgeons to come out. The shooting was nowhere near a white flag, and there was no treachery whatever.

Take another white flag case. When Gen. Pole-Carew marched his division from Bloemfontein to Dewetsdorp in April he burned a farmhouse belonging to a Free State burgher named Richter. It was a punishment for a "white flag outrage." A British officer had been killed near the house. It is true that the farmer himself, an old man, was met some miles away on the road. But he was said to be a party to the shooting of the officer. The house stood under the shelter of a hillside, and whether the fatal shot was from the house or the hill beyond must certainly have been an open question when the house was burned.

TREATMENT OF "REBELS."

Even more frequent than the cry of "treachery" is the stigma of "rebel." It is an epithet applied not to rebellious British subjects of Dutch extraction in Cape Colony, but to any and every resident in South Africa who is against the war. The antecedents of those who take the oath of neutrality or allegiance is referred to certain South Africans attached to the Intelligence department of the field force. And who are those experts in morality? Some of them are known to be among the vilest scoundrels of Johannesburg, which is saying a good deal. One of them has been turned off the turf and out of the sports clubs of Johannesburg, and in his capacity of a betting man's dishonest tout has had to appear in the local police court. Another is a blackmailer and professional bully. The third makes his living in times of peace by card sharping and doing the dirtiest of certain Jewish financial houses' dirty work. To one or other of these creatures was frequently referred the question of deciding whether or not a man's word was to be accepted. The regular military members of the Police and Intelligence departments meant to do their work honestly, but made the excuse that they must set a thief to catch a thief—the latter being simply a man who had been fighting, exercising the heroic calling that the soldier exists for. Nobody can exaggerate the undying bitterness and heartburnings and disgust that these military star chambers have left behind them wherever Lord Roberts's column has passed by the official employment of low-class rogues in asserting British authority over the residents of conquered territory. Failure to defeat men with the weapons of war is not a sufficient excuse for brutal injustice to them by the torments known to peace. These adjuncts to the Intelligence department of the army, to whom I have referred, never by any chance do any of the rough work or fighting.

They appear when a place is occupied and are assiduous in letting the well-to-do inhabitants know that by their official positions they are persons to be feared; that by speaking ill or well of their victim they can settle his fate. Perhaps the well-to-do inhabitant sometimes reads his inquisitor's mind and, opening his coffers, shows that he can take a hint.

LEARNING THE LESSONS AT HOME.

It is worse by far to contemplate the spectacle of the British officer trying to institute a rule tolerable to self-respecting civilians than to dwell on his shortcomings in military capacity. In the matter of fighting skill the arguments deducible from the earlier part of this article would seem, indeed, to have prevailed already with the Commander-in-Chief in England. It is to be regretted that it should be within a few weeks of the end of his five years' tenure of office before Lord Wolseley should have made known his startling discoveries. As most of the divisional Generals at the front are his own personal appointments and their exploits are by now sufficiently familiar, one may take his criticisms uttered at Aldershot on Thursday last as marking what he considers the vital faults of the British Army's field performances. He spoke to the officers commanding the troops of the Home district, who are responsible for the defence of London. They had gone through some operations and a sham fight in his presence to exhibit their skill.

After visiting all the principal positions in the schemes he ordered the "Cease fire" to sound at 10 o'clock, and when the commanding officers had assembled, and both sides had explained their object and work, he said he had refrained from coming down to Aldershot before so as to allow commanders time to give the troops under them as much instruction as possible, and so afford a better opportunity of showing what they had learned since they had been at Aldershot. He had ordered the field day to take place that day so as to see for himself what the troops had learned in the last two months. He had not been favorably struck with the manner in which the operations had been conducted. Perhaps he had expected too much, and had found that the troops had got to be taught like children to walk before they could run, although all concerned had done their utmost in trying to make the operations a success. He considered, however, that for the present no larger operations than brigade field days should be undertaken by the troops, for what they needed to learn was company drill and small work before engaging in operations on a large scale.

A deal of time had recently been devoted to musketry, which was very proper, as it was one of the most important parts of the soldier's training; but he would like to impress on the battalion commanding officers present that they could not go down too low in the scale of instruction in fitting the soldier for his work. He hoped that as time went on they would work up to larger operations, but at the present moment the troops were not in a condition to move in larger formation than brigades. Battalion commanding officers must teach their captains, and the captains the men, the early instruction of soldier's work, and that would form a solid foundation on which to build more extensive work. He knew Gen. Montgomery Moore and his staff were doing all that was possible in this direction, and great difficulties had to be overcome, by reason of the great and frequent changes that had continually taken place in the staff and troops; yet he was compelled to say, without disparagement to the officers he was addressing, that the army corps that was engaged in the operations that day—some 30,000 men—was not in a condition which would warrant it being sent abroad as fit to take the field.

Lord Wolseley's remarks, it should be kept in mind, were addressed to those to whom most of the responsible appointments on Generals' staffs go. Lord Methuen had the Home district as his command before he went to South Africa, and it is to Aldershot that officers from all over the country go to see the nearest approach to the work of war in times of peace. Gen. Montgomery Moore, who now commands the Home district, was even more outspoken a week ago after the Aldershot field day, which was a dress rehearsal for the performance Lord Wolseley attended. Gen. Moore said that the first thing that struck him was that both sides would have suffered most terrible slaughter had it been actual warfare. He did not think the severe lessons of the South African campaign that had been lately drummed into them were receiving the attention they ought. He had seen that day the volunteers in close formation under a hill held by the enemy's infantry, who were well concealed, and firing at less than 800 yards, which must have resulted in terrible holes knocked into their ranks. They must remember that when they were within striking distance of the enemy's position, their first duty was to get into extended order—and that at once. He had seen the battery at work at Bastion Hill, and could not understand why the teams of horses and men were left exposed to the enemy while the battery was in action, instead of taking cover behind the hill. The lessons of the barrack-yard must be respected in operations and war, else the time taken in learning them was utterly wasted. Both sides had shown utter disregard for the enemy's fire. That sort of thing would not do; they must play the game in all earnestness. He had seen the guns retired along the front of the enemy's line, presenting good targets to their skirmishers. He had also noticed the laxity with which the volunteers had taken up their positions, strolling gayly along, quite calmly in face of rifle and artillery fire. That was bad. There were only two things to do in attacking; one was to lie down and take advantage of all available cover, and the other was to double from position to position. Surely no man could sum up more proofs of absolute incompetence than Gen. Moore does in addressing men for whose training he is himself in some measure responsible.

SOLDIERING AND FIGHTING.

There is a vast difference between soldiering and fighting. The former is in England a pastime—not even a profession—certainly an end in itself. The latter to the Boers in Africa is a means to an end, and everything is subordinated to making the means the most effective. By economizing exertion they keep fresh and they economize by ruthlessly shedding everything that is not essential to the business in hand of fighting. Two of the advantages their leaders possess is that their armies have never been reviewed by royalty and their officers find other things to talk about besides athletics, sports and society. Lord Roberts says De Wet escaped by splitting his force into sections. None of these sections has been captured. They must each have been led by somebody. De Wet, therefore, had the confidence of knowing that he had plenty of intelligence to draw upon and that on emergency he could pick out men to take independent commands. It is always the ability of the individual that saves the situation.

Making His Word Good.

From the Boston Courier.

First Camper—Here, what's become of all our whiskey?

Second Camper—I've drunk it.

First Camper—Why did you do that?

Second Camper—Had to, old chap. I was writing home, telling the folks what a good time we're having.

Board as at Home

is difficult to find in a large city. Such places, though, are to be found advertised in THE SUN under "Select Board."—Adv.

CAVIARE'S RISING PRICE.

The Catch of Sturgeon, Especially in the Delaware, Is Growing Less Yearly.

The great decline in the catch of sturgeon in American waters is one of the reasons for the large increase in the value of caviare, which sold as low as $9 a keg in 1885 and as high as $105 a keg last year. Caviare is the most valuable by-product obtained from the sturgeon. Until recently nearly all of the caviare obtained in this country was sent to Germany. John N. Cobb, an agent of the United States Fish Commission, has been investigating for the Government the sturgeon fishery of Delaware River and Bay. This is the largest sturgeon fishing ground in this country. Years ago the Delaware River and Bay swarmed with these huge fish. They were a nuisance in the river because of the damage which they did to the fish nets. Since 1870, however, sturgeon fishing has been pushed so energetically that unless the fish are protected they are threatened with extermination.

There has been a continuous decrease in the number of sturgeon taken by fishermen for the past ten years. The Delaware fishermen use gill nets to capture the sturgeon and their season begins early in April and closes about the middle of June. The fishermen live during the season on small vessels or immense scows fitted with a cabin at either end if their camp is near a swampy shore. Mr. Cobb explains the use of the gill nets, which average about 250 fathoms in length and twenty-one feet in depth:

"The nets are always drifted. The fishermen generally go out about two or three hours before slack water and put their nets overboard. As the fish feed near the bottom, the nets must be arranged so as to reach close to the bottom. This is done by sinking the corkline the necessary distance below the surface by means of extra heavy leads on the lower line, and the net is kept track of by attaching to it wooden buoys, called 'dabs,' by means of ropes. The fishermen drift along behind their net, usually about the middle of it. Should a buoy indicate that anything had been captured in the net, the fishermen at once take in that section, and if a fish has been gilled it is hauled into the boat and the net is reset. The sturgeon are taken aboard by means of long-handled hooks of round iron. Although from six to ten feet in length, they struggle very little when gilled. When being hauled into the boat they seem to lose all heart, and are generally rolled in like a log. They make a rather difficult object, however, to get into a boat, owing to their great bulk and weight. The two men forming the crew have all they can conveniently handle when a big female sturgeon is taken. A fisherman at Bayside has been known to handle a seven-foot female single-handed, but this was a very unusual occurrence. The net is usually fished but once a day. It is taken in at slack water and the fishermen come back to camp with the ebb tide."

The cowfish which have hard roe of the kind used in preparing caviar are the most valuable, being worth from $10 to $65 each, the latter price having been paid for an extra large one last year. Female fish which have spawned, or with soft spawn which cannot be used for caviar, and bucks, or male fish, are valuable only for their flesh. The females average about 350 pounds each when taken from the water and the males only sixty-five pounds each. Fertilizer and oil are made from the refuse of the sturgeon. The caviar is prepared in this way:

"After the eggs have been removed from the fish, they are placed in large chunks upon a stand, the top of which is formed of a small-meshed screen. On the under side is arranged a zinc-lined trough, about eighteen inches deep, two feet wide, and four feet long. The operator gently rubs the mass of eggs back and forth over the screen. The mesh is just large enough to let the eggs drop through, and as they are separated from the membrane by the rubbing, they fall through into the trough and are thence drawn off into tubs by means of a sliding door at the end of the trough. After all the roe has been separated, the tub is removed and a certain proportion of the best Lüneburg (Germany) salt added to the roe, after which the operator carefully stirs and mixes the mass with his hands. The most delicate part of the whole operation is in the manner of mixing. No direct rule can be given for doing this portion of the work, as the condition of the roe regulates the time consumed and the manner of handling. It requires practical experience to become proficient.

"After adding the salt, the mass of eggs first dries up, but in ten or fifteen minutes the strength of the salt draws from the eggs their watery constituents and a copious brine is formed which can be poured off when the tub becomes too full. The salted eggs are poured into very fine-meshed sieves which hold about ten pounds each. In the caviar house are usually arranged long, sloping boards, with narrow strips nailed on each side. On these the sieves are placed and are left there from eight to twenty hours in order to drain thoroughly. The eggs have now become the caviar of commerce and are transferred to small casks of either oak or pine, which have been steamed in order to prevent any possible leakage; the casks are covered and allowed to stand until the gas escapes and the eggs settle. The vacant space caused by the settling is then filled and the cask headed up and put in a cool place until ready for shipment. The casks cost about $1 each and hold about 135 pounds net. It requires about eleven quarts of salt to prepare a keg of caviar.

"Formerly only the hard roe was used in making caviar, but some of the fishermen have become so expert that they can handle roe which is medium soft and still prepare a fair grade of caviar."

Mr. Cobb estimates that 1,948 kegs of caviar were prepared in 1897 from sturgeon caught in the Delaware River and Bay and these were sold for $90,738. During the season of 1899 only 700 kegs of caviar were obtained from this same district.

GOING BACK TO CANADA.

Improved Agricultural Conditions Bringing About the Repatriation of Many Citizens.

QUEBEC, Aug. 31.—The tide of travel between the New England States and the French-Canadian districts of the province of Quebec has changed very materially of late. For many years there was a large emigration every summer from French Canada to the manufacturing centres of New England, many hundreds of young men and young women leaving their Canadian farm homes to seek employment in the factories or brickyards of New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts. Now all this is changed. Not only is there scarcely any emigration to-day from the farming districts of the province of Quebec to the manufacturing towns of the Eastern States, but there is actually a current of emigration running the other way. The railway people report that it has long been customary about this season of the year for many residents of the New England States of French-Canadian extraction to come up to Canada for a trip and for a visit to the old folks at home. But this summer the nature of this travel has considerably changed, and instead of one or two members of a family at a time making this trip, whole families are returning to Canada together, bag and baggage, again to take up their residence in their own country. Many of these people are returning with the united savings of the families to redeem their old farms or to buy new ones in their old parishes or in some of the new and fertile districts opened up for colonization by new lines of railway.

This new movement of French-Canadian repatriation is due to a variety of causes, chief among which, perhaps, are the new and unusual prosperity that has attended the last year or two of agricultural operations in Canada and the growing belief of the French-Canadian people, wherever dispersed, in the approaching control of the destinies, if not of the whole Dominion of Canada, at least of its entire eastern part, by a New World nation of French origin, perpetuating the language, the traditions, the religion and the laws of the old France whence their fathers came, in that new France which it is their firm determination to reconquer, by peaceful means, from the domain of Anglo-Saxon influence and control.

The increased agricultural prosperity of Lower Canada has been very marked within the last few years. Successive Canadian governments have about tired of the idle dream so long indulged, of reciprocity in natural products with the United States, and have opened new markets for Canadian dairy products in England and France, established refrigerator service on board the steamships carrying such produce to Europe, and opened butter and cheese factories with a proper system of government supervision and inspection. The prosperity that has followed these efforts has enriched those Canadian farmers who remained at home, and is doing more to bring back French-Canadian settlers from the United States than all the money spent in the past by the governments at Ottawa and Quebec for the purpose of sending repatriation agents to the United States to induce the French-Canadians settled there to return to their own land. This expenditure was so much money thrown away for mere sentiment, because those who were the objects of it knew full well that they could not then be afforded in the Province of Quebec the comfort and prosperity which they enjoyed as factory operatives in the manufacturing towns of New England.

Not only is there a large return of former Canadians from their late American homes this year, but there is a reduction of at least 50 per cent. in the volume of Canadian emigration to the United States. In fact, there is a very small proportion of agriculturists among Canadian emigrants to the United States at present, the great bulk of those who now leave their Canadian homes to tempt fortune on the other side of the international boundary being either day laborers or young men of talent and education who can find no field for their ambition in the contracted surroundings of their native land.

CAME TO CHAFFEE'S RESCUE

THE BATTLE OF THE "BIG DRY WASH" IN A WESTERN CANYON.

An Inkstand Made From a Human Skull Recalls a Stirring Incident in a Bitter Fight—Wallace Arrived Just in Time to Save Chaffee and Put the Apaches to Flight.

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz., Aug. 20.—On a writing desk in the Minneapolis home of a retired army officer of gallant record, is a peculiar inkstand. Close scrutiny develops the fact that the receptacle for ink is a section of human vertebra, white from exposure to the weather, made to serve its purpose through mounting in silver upon a polished wooden base. It is highly valued by its owner, for it is a memento of a fight wherein he participated—a fight such as soldiers rarely know, one of the hottest in the history of southwestern Indian warfare. It brings up memories of Chaffee, the heroic, now fighting in China.

The fight was the battle of the "Big Dry Wash." Though the action has but little fame with the general public, its memory is cherished by cavalrymen as one of the most gallant known to their arm of the service. Particularly did it demonstrate the effectiveness of the American horse soldier and his ability to beat even the Apache on the trail and in the fray. When grass time came in the summer of 1882, about 150 Apaches, three-fourths of them mature bucks, left the White Mountain reservation, on the Gila River in Arizona. They started off immediately after ration day, well supplied with food and ammunition. It was in the days of civilian Indian agents. The godly man in charge at the San Carlos agency, when advised that some of his wards had decamped, only expressed his sorrow that such lies could gain currency to the discredit of a peaceful and long-suffering tribe.

The Indians passed the populous copper mining camp of Globe at a distance of only a few miles, gathering in about all the horse herds of the neighborhood. A platoon of the local home guard, the Globe Rangers, was hastily mobilized and was started off to head the Apaches, recover the horses and warn the settlers in Tonto Basin. The warning was given, for the Rangers, by hard riding, managed to beat the Indians into the Basin. But next day they were penned, twenty-five of them, in a cabin on Middleton's ranch, to fight a long-range fight in which no one was killed and to watch the Indians stampede their horse herd. But the Rangers did good work in that they delayed the Indians a day. Leaving the Rangers to return, crestfallen, on foot, the Apaches passed on up Cherry Creek.

The settlers had been alarmed and had fled in time save on one ranch. The two Sigsby brothers had about 100 valuable horses and had taken time to gather them up from the range. The band was being held in front of the ranch house, ready to be driven away, when down the valley came the thud of horses' feet. Driven by a few daring bucks, the Indian herd of loose ponies dashed into the Sigsby band and stampeded the horses up a side cañon. One of the Sigsby brothers and a French cowboy, named Houdon, mounted and started after. At the top of the cañon they met death, though not till they had exhausted their ammunition and sent five Indians to the happy hunting grounds. The Indians then turned their undivided attention toward the second Sigsby, who had been "creased" across the chest by a rifle bullet as he ran for the log house.

Sigsby's defence of the cabin was glorious. Though painfully wounded, for forty hours, single-handed, sleepless, he stood off at least 100 Apaches, thirsting for his blood, enraged at his continued resistence. The cabin walls and door were perforated by hundreds of bullets, but to no avail. But the Indians could not tarry longer. The troops were on their trail and the smoke signals on the peaks showed impending danger. In the night they gathered up the bodies of several warriors whom Sigsby had shot and hurried away northward. Sigsby had done even better than the Rangers. The cavalry was close behind.

At that time, Chaffee, a Sixth Cavalry Major, was in command of the little three troop post of McDowell, thirty-five miles northeast of Phœnix, then a village. Getting wind of the outbreak he joyously sounded "boots and saddle" and with half his garrison, cut across the high Mazatzal range, past deserted Fort Reno, through Tonto Creek Valley and over the Sierra Anchas. He arrived at Sigsby's only a few hours after the last Indian had departed and it was his hand that first shook that of the brave frontiersman. But there was work for him ahead. Leaving Sigsby to bury his dead, he pushed on at a killing pace. Thirty-two miles were covered in five hours over the roughest of mountain paths. Soon the trail was lined with worn out and discarded troop horses. But Chaffee, shrewd campaigner, had brough with him from McDowell fifty extra mounts.

Indian videttes on mountain tops telegraphed ahead by fire and smoke and blanket signals the coming of the galloping troopers. The Indians turned aside into one of the great cañons that indent the cliffs of the "rim" of the Mogollon plateau. They had found the outnumbered Chaffee's exhausted men, and determined to make a stand. In the middle of the "Big Dry Wash" was a rocky hill, several hundred feet high, that absolutely commanded the entrance to the gorge. Chaffee's eye was too keen for success to attend the anticipated ambush. He dismounted his men under cover and, leaving one-fourth of his little command with the horses, stormed the hill with the remainder. His reception was warm. The battle, from rock to rock, had raged for two hours. The Indians were still on the summit. Chaffee, with a score of disabled men, was in hard straits. Retreat was practically impossible and the enemy was beginning to flank. The fire of the Apaches was becoming truer. They were mainly armed with the old-fashioned 50-caliber "Long Tom" Springfield rifle, an excellent weapon. The cavalrymen had the lighter 45-caliber Springfield carbine. The advantage was with the Apaches and the men were beginning to think their end would be that of their comrades of the Seventh in the memorable fight on the Little Big Horn.

Suddenly, as joyful a sound as the pipes at Lucknow, a cavalry trumpet sounded at the foot of the gorge. No other troops were known to be within fifty miles of the spot, yet, to the rear a squadron was dismounting and forming to fight on foot. Up the gulch came three swallow-tailed guidons of the Third Cavalry, in a howling running line, led by the familiar figure of stalwart old Capt. Wallace. The Indians, overmatched, yet unwilling to lose what they had thought their prey, sullenly and slowly retreated, firing from behind every boulder. The end of the hill passed, the vantage ground was with the whites. The Apaches broke and ran for cover in the rocks at the side of the gorge. But the fire of the advancing force was too heavy and too accurate. Leaving horses and supplies, the Apaches wildly fled, each for himself, scaling the steep sides of the cañon. They climbed the cliffs like flies, to be picked off by scores by the relentless riflemen below. A few escaped, but most of the survivors about dark dropped their rifles, came out of the holes they had scooped in the hillside and surrendered.

Not till then did the officers and men of the different commands hammer one another on the backs and demand explanations. They were simple, though the combination at that point seemed nothing short of miraculous. Wallace in command at Fort Verde, about ninety miles to the west, had been informed of the route of the hostiles and had been despatched to head them off. He lost some time by a false trail near Fossil Creek, but later swung eastward through Green and Pleasant valleys and struck Chaffee's trail and his scores of discarded chargers. He was soon joined by a scouting force from Fort Apache from the east, comprising a company of White Mountain Apache scouts and some cavalrymen, officered by Lieuts. Morgan and Converse. And the combined force pushed on at top speed to arrive in the nick of time. The Apache scouts belonged to an antagonistic division of the tribe and rendered the best of service in the fray. One of the scouts incidentally, was "the Kid," the Apache who later went on the warpath alone and to whom are charged more than twenty murders.

Lieut. Morgan came out of the fight with a severe wound below the shoulder. Armed with a repeating rifle, an express, shooting expanding bullets, he crouched behind a boulder and sniped away at the black spots that bobbed around the edges of the great rocks across the gulch. He noticed that an Apache almost opposite him was doing some very good shooting in his direction. Exposing himself a little more than he should, he waited for Mr. Apache to raise his head. The moment came; the edge of the Apache's red turban came into view, and Morgan fired. As his finger pressed the trigger, a flanking or ricochet shot, from the rifle of some unreckoned warrior, struck him and he dropped.

It was in '91 that Morgan returned to the scene of the fight in the "Big Dry Wash." With him was Jack Hicks, who had been with Wallace as a scout, but who is now an affluent cattleowner. They searched the battlefield over, noting the cartridge shells and broken accoutrements that still littered the points where the memorable day had been the warmest. They found the boulder where Morgan had fought and bled.

"When I was hit," the officer explained, "I had just shot at an Indian behind that big rock across the gulch. Let's go over there."

"Over there" they went. Behind the big rock was a crevice and in that was wedged a bleached skeleton. The top of the skull was missing. The express rifle and steady eye had been true.

And that is where the inkstand came from.