

**HOW THE BOERS FIGHT.**

**THEIR MOTIVE ACCORDING TO JOUBERT.**

IN *Harper's Magazine* for June, Mr. E. E. Easton publishes the second instalment of his description of the war from "Inside the Boer Lines." The article is rather more interesting than the first instalment. Mr. Easton quotes the following notice issued by the late General Joubert on the outbreak of the war:—

Be it known to the inhabitants of the colonies of Natal and Cape Colony that the Government and people of the South African Republic have been forced into war by evil-disposed capitalists and warlike British Ministers, and they must now stand up and fight in the true interest of their independence, and for the welfare and interest of the whole of the South African people, irrespective of place or origin.

It is not the intention of the officers and burghers to molest or injure any individual, or the private property of those who are friendly disposed towards us and desist from all hostilities against us.

If it should happen—which is not desired—that any inhabitant is harmed by circumstances or any casualties, the officers and the War Office will be prepared to lend a willing ear to all complaints or objections reasonably brought before them.

No person is allowed to commit any culpable act, under penalty of severe punishment.

We fight for our existence as a nation, and we are bound to risk our lives and give our blood. Therefore we hope to carry on the war forced upon us according to civilised and humane laws, and under the guidance of all-seeing God in heaven.

We seek and desire peace.

May it come soon.

(Signed) P. J. JOUBERT,  
Commandant-General, S.A.R.

**THEIR METHODS OF ATTACK.**

Mr. Thomas F. Millard in *Scribner's Magazine* writes very ably upon his experiences with the Boer armies, and his opinions of the reasons for the successes of the burghers make very interesting reading. Mr. Millard considers that "the strength of the Boer, as a fighting man, is due to his own original—in the sense of being inherently derived—methods developed through individual processes." He also has seen that "the Boer fights men just as he would stalk the shy antelope, or lie in wait for the stealthy tiger," and that "his secret of strength lies in a reduction to individualism of nearly all tactical qualifications."

According to this writer the idea that the Boer excels only on the defensive is erroneous, and he states that "his attack is as effective as his defence." This statement he supports by the engagements of Spion Kop, Nicholson's Nek and the Platrand. At Spion Kop four hundred and fifty Boers assaulted the British positions containing from 2,500 to 3,000 men, causing the abandonment of the Kop after the British had lost 1,700 men to the Boers 173! At Nicholson's Nek 600 Boers captured a force of 1,200 British, while at the Platrand, where the defensive position was carefully prepared, 600 Boers attacked, suffering a loss of 230 men. Mr. Millard gives the percentage of British losses for the first two engagements as 88 per cent. and 72 per cent. respectively, while the Boer losses were 38 per cent. and 10 per cent. respectively (at Platrand they were 39 per cent.).

As to the Boer method of attack we are told that "a Boer attack moves slowly. To say it crawls, expresses its progress better, for at times it loses all momentum." In fact the Boer attack is most deadly when it appears to stop entirely, because then the Mauser fire becomes most overwhelming. Taking advantage of every scrap of cover, running crouched down, always covered by sharpshooters, the Boers when attacking do not trouble about

alignment or regular intervals, their sole object is to reach a point about 300 yards distant, whence a murderous Mauser fire may be kept up.

The Boers do not build trenches, each man constructs a "schanze" for himself. A "schanze" is in a great many cases simply a suitable piece of natural shelter which the Boer so masks with the assistance of bushes or grass that he can lie quite invisible and safe. The "schanzes" offer no such a target for shells as does a trench; besides, it takes hours to construct good trenches, and a Boer will make a splendid "schanze" anywhere in five minutes.

**HOW THEY TOOK THE GUNS AT COLENSO.**

The Boers hold their fire until the British approach very near; one of the most striking examples of this was furnished by the first battle of Colenso, when the British were allowed to march to within 300 yards of the "schanzes" before a shot was fired.

Mr. Millard was close beside General Botha at Colenso, and his description of the attempts to save the guns is most vivid. He says:—

Teams of six horses hitched two together, directed by three mounted drivers, essayed the impossible task. They came at a full gallop, with a huge iron hook ready to attach to a gun and haul it off. In the "schanzes" the Boers waited. Nearer and nearer came the galloping teams, the ground shaking under the thunder of hoofs. General Botha's powerful voice could be heard admonishing his men.

"Hold your fire. Let them get closer. Wait—Wait. Steady. Steady. Steady. Not yet—not yet—not yet—Now!" Crack. A leader is down. Crack. Crack. A wheeler topples over. Cr-r-r-r-ash! Down they go in a heap, an indescribable tangle of men and animals, many of the drivers being crushed, or kicked to death by the maddened brutes; some of the horses perhaps unhit, and struggling wildly to break their traces, only to meet death a little farther along. Such was the fate of every team sent to bring back those guns, fully a hundred horses and half as many men being killed before the attempt was abandoned.

In this battle the Boers only lost 6 men killed and 14 wounded, compared to a British loss of 1,100 men!

**BRITISH EULOGY OF CRONJE.**

A tragic interest attaches to the article entitled "The Cavalry Rush to Kimberley," which takes the third place among the articles in the *Nineteenth Century* for June. It was written shortly before his death by the late Captain Boyle of the Imperial Yeomanry, who was killed during the engagement at Boshof on April 4th when Colonel Villebois de Mareuil was also killed. The article is a description of the operations of General French's dash to the relief of Kimberley, and ends with the surrender of General Cronje at Paardeberg. It gives an excellent account of the operations, and mentions an incident of the defence at Paardeberg which I have not seen elsewhere:—

All that day, without intermission, till 7 p.m. the guns threw shrapnel and lyddite into the laager and the river bed. Waggon after waggon of ammunition exploded like a terrific fusillade for over an hour, and meanwhile the infantry began their attack across the open and up the river bed. It seemed as if no living man could ever come out of that laager. Shell after shell, the livelong day, dropped into their very centre, yet no surrender, no white flag was shown. One prisoner, who walked quietly up to Roberts Hill with his rifle slung, raised his hat and gave himself up. On being questioned he said Cronje was still there, sitting disconsolate but defiant, "holding Mrs. Cronje's hand and comforting her in the river bed," for there were about sixty women and girls in the laager throughout that Sunday and all those successive terrible days.

Like all really brave men, Captain Boyle was able to

admire what was admirable in his enemies, and his judgment as to the Paardeberg defence might put to shame our little mud-fingers at home :—

Thus was the beleaguered from Magersfontein in turn beleaguered, and the reverse of the glass must have offered but a sorry picture. Day after day, and during the night time, the shells kept pouring into his laager, but day after day he sullenly refused to give in; and a lesson of the most heroic endurance, of splendid battling against the most hopeless circumstances, a defence which will be remembered when this young century has grown old, was offered to all Englishmen alike.

#### A CONFEDERATE PARALLEL.

Mr. Spenser Wilkinson writes in the *Contemporary* on "The War in South Africa and the American Civil War." His parallel is both political and military, and is in some respects very close and instructive. Both were in essence a conflict of ideals and traditions. As to the military problem Mr. Wilkinson says :—

The Boers, like the Confederate States, were ready first and, fighting in country familiar to them, of great extent and with poor communications, have made a stubborn resistance. But, like the Confederates, they have under-estimated the determination of the adversary with whom they have to deal. They have failed to grasp that the British cause is as vital to Great Britain as their own cause to themselves, and that, therefore, the energy and the resources of the British Empire will be placed without stint at the disposal of its generals until the war has been finished. At the commencement of the war, the British statesmen who had charge of it were no better qualified for the conduct of military operations on a great scale than was Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet when he took office, and it may be doubted whether the British Ministry contains any man so capable of learning as he goes along as was the American statesman. But the whole British nation, which term includes the population of the great colonies, is practically resolved and united, at least as much so as were the Northern States in 1861.

Mr. Wilkinson has no faith in the capacity of the Boers to postpone submission by means of guerilla warfare, which could only be effective if accompanied by regular defensive operations.

#### THE FALL OF LIBERALISM.

MR. H. W. MASSINGHAM contributes to the *National Review* for June a very interesting analysis of the prospects of the Liberal Party, and the causes which have led to the decay of Liberalism in this country.

##### THE SOCIALIST ENEMY.

Firstly, Liberalism, especially abroad, has suffered from Socialism. Socialism is not only a philosophical political creed, but it is more elastic, being consistent with everything from Fabianism to physical force. Since John Stuart Mill, Liberalism has had no philosophic teacher of the first distinction, and at the present day only Mr. Morley, and perhaps Mr. Courtney, can claim any descent from philosophic Liberalism.

##### MATERIALISTIC TORYISM.

The new Conservatism founded on wealth has been the second assailant of Liberalism. 1870 began an Imperial movement, materialistic in essence, and worshipping force. Germany, Imperialist America, and the extension of the British power are the chief products of this spirit. The commercial bases of Imperialism mean rivalry, rivalry means war, and a Liberal Government does not conduct war well. Hence the people distrust it. Mr. Massingham generously does not say anything as to the manner in which Conservative Governments carry on war.

##### LORD ROSEBERY'S FAILURE.

There are also accidental causes for the decline of Liberalism. It was a chance that the Liberals failed to obtain in Mr. Chamberlain that recuperating force which

Lord Randolph Churchill supplied to the Tories. Then Mr. Gladstone died, and his mantle fell on the puny shoulders of Lord Rosebery, who lacked both courage and strenuousness. Opportunism—shouting with the largest crowd, after watching carefully the attitude of the crowd—may carry a man far, but it will not recuperate a fallen Party. So Lord Rosebery as a force has proved a failure.

##### HIS NATURAL DESTINATION.

Mr. Massingham proceeds to consider the position of the Liberal Party. If Lord Rosebery were to return to power at its head, he would require a following of 370 votes to make him secure—for a Rosebery Party could not count on the Irish. In other words, the Roseberyites would have to win from Toryism, Liberal Unionism, Gladstonian Liberalism, and Radicalism from 100 to 150 seats. Mr. Morley and Sir William Harcourt would be openly hostile. So would the Labour Party. It is doubtful whether Lord Spencer, Mr. Bryce, or Sir Robert Reid would serve it. It would have no continuity with Gladstonianism. So violent a wrench is unknown in our politics. But the alternative—the departure of Lord Rosebery from the Liberalism which he does not profess—would be nothing uncommon. Pitt, Burke, and Gladstone all slipped their anchors in the same way. So Mr. Massingham thinks Lord Rosebery should go where he can serve his country. After Lord Salisbury's retirement he will be wanted.

##### THE FUTURE OF LIBERALISM.

Lord Rosebery's departure would relieve the Liberal Party of an embarrassment. The fact that it would mean a further loss of material strength is not altogether to be regretted. The Liberal Party no longer fulfils its natural function, which is to provide an alternative Government, and as all real Liberal criticism comes from other sources than the Front Bench, the nominal leader performs no useful function. There is no longer even a small body of men in Parliament who devote themselves to detailed, day by day criticism of the Government, with a view to building up public opinion in opposition. For Liberalism, as at present organised, there is indeed no hope. But in the Colonies, especially in Australia, it is an active force; it displays its energy in social and industrial organisation; and it is in such determined efforts to raise the condition of the people that English Liberalism must find a controlling force.

#### The Soldier's Day's Diet.

"FEEDING the Fighting Man" is the title of a very instructive paper, by Marcus Tindal, in *Pearson's* for May. The writer quotes in full the special South African scale of rations, which all experts agree could hardly be improved upon as a fighting man's food :—

Every soldier is allowed daily :—

1lb. of fresh, salt, or preserved meat. 1½lb. of bread, or 1lb. of biscuit, or 1lb. of flour. ½oz. of tea. ½oz. of coffee. 3oz. of sugar. 4oz. of jam. ½oz. of salt. ⅜oz. of pepper. ½lb. of fresh vegetables when procurable, or 1lb. of compressed vegetables. ⅓gal. of lime juice, with ½oz. of sugar on days when fresh vegetables are not issued. ¼ gill of rum—at the discretion of the general officer commanding, on the recommendation of the medical officer. Beer is not issued to the troops on service, but tobacco is provided on payment.

Careful calculations, given the writer by a high official in the War Office, reveal that the 200,000 men, who are being fed at the time of writing on home provisions, consume in six months as follows :—16,000 tons of preserved meat. 16,000 tons of biscuit. 170 tons of tea. 3,000 tons of sugar. 340 tons of coffee. 4,000 tons of jam. 500 tons of salt. 30 tons of pepper. 8,000 tons of vegetables. The 80,000 horses and mules at the front have also to be supplied daily with their corn and hay.