

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1899.

"Tommy Atkins" in Field and Hospital.

Perhaps, of all the institutions provided by Her Majesty's Government, for the benefit of her soldiers, the Military Hospital ranks first; for there, the soldier may on the "least" sickness or ailment, find a refuge, and also, a welcome release from the barrack square.

Admittance commences in the first instance (except in case of emergency) by the man reporting himself as "sick" to the Orderly Sergeant, who visits each barrack room at Reville, the man simply giving his Regimental name, and number, which is duly recorded in a form provided for that purpose. The soldier having reported "sick," is under no circumstance to be detailed for any duty whatever, but simply awaits the bugle sound of "sick call," to go at 8.50 a. m. when he is paraded with the other intended patients, to be marched to the Medical Inspection room, (of which there is one situated in every barrack) there to be examined by the medical officer, who is generally half an hour, or so, late in arriving, in preference, of being too early. It is now the sick soldier is questioned, as to "where's the pain," "how long have you had it," "put out your tongue," and other stereotyped questions. Should the medical officer here think the man only requires a slight attention, he treats him on the spot, generally excusing him from duty for that day, but Tommy Atkins' ailments, being chiefly of a constitutional character generally, the result of an over-night brawl, or the result of playing "a bit rough," on the football ground, suffering in a great many cases, disfigurement of the face, bruised shins, and oftentimes dislocated ankles, necessitates "Tommy" being sent to the hospital. Here again, he has to face the stereotyped expressions used by the Medical Fraternity, when he is delegated to a ward in that part of the hospital, in which injuries or illness of the same nature as his own are located. Should a case of emergency however happen in barracks, or otherwise, he is hastily borne on a stretcher, by his comrades to the hospital, the "red tape" documents following in due course. Except, in cases like the latter, the soldier is still furnished with the usual rations, which are sent from his barrack-room on the day of admittance. Next day, he finds his commissariat rations altered, for, instead of his usual basin of "Sergeant's tea" (a regular army expression for good tea) butter, and other delicacies, he is furnished, with one pint of milk, and half an ounce of dry bread (the latter, his only supply for the day) rice-milk, furnishing his dinner, and the usual pint of milk his supper; not infrequently, "Tommy" is only suffering from some slight ailment, and invariably finds his stomach, like Oliver Twist, "asking for more." Besides, until he satisfies the medical officer as to his ability, to help clean the hospital, and other light duties, he is marked "bed," and woe betide him, if he is caught exercising his limbs, whilst under orders for "bed." In serious cases, however, great attention is paid to the wants of the sickman. Special men, and in some military hospitals nursing sisters, are told off for special duty over him, administering nourishment, medicine, and other treatment, prescribed for by one of the medical officers, doing duty in the hospital. Perhaps it may be said with truth, that a sick soldier, is better cared for in time of pain and sickness, than a civilian, for not only, has he no difficulty in obtaining advice and admission to hospitals, but is given the best of attention, in fact, far more than could be expected of him in a similar civilian institution. not only in time, but in money, for, by the regulation laid down, each person, may, at the discretion of the medical officer, be supplied with nourishment, etc., up to the equivalent of 10s. 6d. each day (\$1.84) which, it must be admitted is a very liberal allowance. Change in diet, is directed by the medical officer on his morning visit round the wards, varying in weight, and consisting of either flesh, or fowl, with other delicacies, according to the needs of the patient. Amongst the rules to be observed by "Tommy," in Hospital, none, affects him so much, as the "Prohibition of Smoking" in the wards, or passages adjoining, and many are the curious methods he will often adopt, to have a

"pull" at his favorite pipe, even when confined to his bed. The following instance was told me by one of the men; I will not vouch for its truth. The man was suffering from a dislocated ankle, and naturally, often beguiled away the time, by having a quiet smoke in bed; when one day, in walked, the "Hospital Serjt.-Major," who immediately, detected the patient with the pipe in his hand, (though almost covered) and up to his mouth,—he proceeded, towards the offending "Tommy" asking him, what he meant by smoking,—"Tommy" immediately denied "that he was smoking at all, only having had the pipe in his hand." The bombastic official, not to be out-done, demanded the pipe, which request, was at once complied with, but not, to the satisfaction of the interrogator, who commenced feeling the bowl of the pipe, only, to find it quite cold, and apparently empty, feeling convinced, that he had made a mistake he retired from the ward, when the cute "Tommy" immediately commenced smoking again, having out-witted the superior, by having two pipes, one well alight, and the other empty, at his command in case of an emergency. Should however, a patient misconduct himself, and be reported, by any of the Hospital staff, his crime is at once furnished to the Officer commanding his Regiment, there to await his return, when he is "told off," generally, resulting in confinement to Barracks, and Delaulters drill, for a few days.

Before concluding, it would be unfair, not to speak of the branch of the service, known as the Royal Army Medical Corps, whose duties, both in Hospital, or on the field, are frequently, of a most arduous nature, requiring skill, and tact in looking after the various ailments of their comrades, in which, they are sometimes assisted, by the Army nursing staff of Sisters, whose devotion, and care, to those who come under their charge is beyond compare.

THE BOER AND HIS RIFLE.

Differences Between the Weapon Used Now and That of Twenty Years Ago.

In the war of 1879-80 the Boers displayed deadly accuracy with this rifle, but their weapon then was very different from the arm used last week at Dundee. The rifle of twenty years ago was built on the lines of the British Martini. It was a hammerless arm of about nine pounds weight, with a 30 inch half-octagon barrel and a shotgun butt stock. The calibre was 45 with a bullet weighing from 405 to 450 grains. The powder charge was 90 grains in a brass drawn cartridge case. The rifle was sighted up to 2,000 yards. Besides the usual stationary sight it had a reversible iron—that is, a sight capable of being used as an ordinary front sight, and by a single motion, it was changed into a fine pinhead sight covered with a ring to keep it from being knocked off. On an occasion where particularly fine shooting was demanded this front globe was further covered with a thimble-shaped hood, shading it perfectly. The usual standing rear or fixed sights were on the barrel, while on the gun's grip was turned down a peep that was regulated by a side screw to an elevation of 2,000 yards. The peep and globe were never used under 700 or 800 yards.

"I was very much interested in the Boer rifleman and his weapons," said Archibald Forbes, who was with Sir Evelyn Wood's column in South Africa in 1879-80. "They are marvellous rifle shots. They shoot their antelope and other game from the saddle, not apparently caring to get nearer to their quarry than 600 or 700 yards. Then they understand the currents of air, their effect upon the drift of a bullet and can judge distance as accurately as it could be measured by a skilled engineer. They can hit an officer as far as they can discern his insignia of rank. Sir George W. Colley, the commander in South Africa was killed at a distance of 1,400 yards at Majuba Hill. We lost terribly in officers at the fight mentioned, and also at Laings Nek and Rorke's Drift from the deadly rifles of the sharpshooting Boer."

It is easy enough to see how the Boer became so expert with the rifle. History of one hundred and more years ago in the Southwest and the West of this country, is repeating itself on the South African veldts. Every old State of the American

Union, except Louisiana, was won from its owners by the pioneer and his deadly rifle. For 240 years the Hollander who went to far-off South Africa and his descendants have fought wild beasts and wild men for the country they wanted. The Boer region of South Africa, producing fine wheat and corn crops, is very fertile. It has a native grass that live stock thrives on, with a climate very much like that of the country from southwestern Kansas to New Mexico. But to obtain this country the Boer had first to conquer it. This made him a sharpshooter. One hundred and fifty years ago the Dutch farmer with his five-foot-barrel roer, a smooth bore gun, was a dead shot within the limitations of the weapon. Every Boer is a hunter. He had to be. His farm is large anywhere from 15,000 to 25,000 acres. The country is sparsely settled. The lion and other smaller cats and the hyena were the natural enemies of his flocks and herds. They had to be kept down by the roer and later by the rifle. Kruger is himself said to have killed 250 lions, not to speak of panthers and hyenas. Then the ever-present danger of a native outbreak caused the solitary farmer or Boer to see to it that he had the best arms available for defence and offence.

The Boer weapon that did such execution the other day is the sporting model of the Mannlicher, a German Arm, perhaps the most powerful weapon of its calibre and weight in the world. The military Mannlicher is used in the armies of Austria, Holland, Greece, Brazil, Chili, Peru and Roumania. The ideal Mannlicher is a sporting rifle known as the Haenel model. It is a beautifully finished arm, weighing about eight pounds, and costing in South Africa 200 German marks. The rifle barrel is 30 inches long, the carbine 24. It has a pistol grip and sling straps, and is hair triggered. Its calibre is 30. This rifle has an extreme range of 4,500 yards, and a killing range of 5,000. At that distance, the bullet will go through two inches of solid ash, and nearly three of pine, quite enough force to kill, if the bullet struck a vital part. At twenty yards it will shoot through 50 inches of pine. The bullet for war is full-mantled, with a fine outer skin of copper or nickel. That for game shooting is only half mantled, leaving the lead point exposed so that it opens like a mushroom when it strikes. For deer and bears there can be no better arm. Though the bullet makes a small orifice where it enters, the expansion causes it to tear a hole as large as a man's finger when it makes its exit. Travelling at the rate of 2,000 feet a second the force of this bullet's blow is tremendous. There has been much discussion over the Dum Dum bullet. It is a soft-pointed missile, but by no means so deadly or destructive as is this Haenel Mannlicher bullet which the Boers are using. If it strikes at close range, or 1,000 yards or under, and does not flatten, the Mannlicher bullet bores a hole right through a bone without splintering. But when it upsets the shock is terrible. The bullet literally smashes the flesh and bone into fragments. It has been charged that the Boers are using the soft-pointed bullet in their deadly Haenel-Mannlichers.

THE BOERS AND THE GIRAFFES.

Tens of Thousands of the Harmless Animals Slain for their Hides.

The Boers are credited with being great hunters, and chief of them in his younger days was President Kruger, whose daring in attacking a lion single handed, with a hunting knife, has many times been told. When the Boers migrated from Cape Colony to the Transvaal they were forced to clear the way by killing 6,000 lions, many of which were killed by Kruger. For years the South African Boers have been hunters, and their skill with the knife is due to this daily practice in the fields and woods. But with them the killing of game has been either a matter of dollars and cents or self protection.

Their creditable work of freeing South Africa of the dreaded lions, which roamed in such numbers that life was rendered unsafe anywhere in the country, is offset by their ruthless destruction of the giraffe from Cape Colony to the Botletti river. If they killed 6,000 lions in the Transvaal before existence was made safe, they may have killed 60,000 of the innocent graceful giraffes. In the early days of South African history the giraffe was the most abundant game in the Transvaal, Matabeleland and Orange Free State, but the creature has been killed off like our American buffalo, and the few remaining representatives of a

noble race gradually driven north. For years past the giraffe has been a profitable quarry for the Boer hunters, and the animal was valued by them only because the hides were articles of commercial use. They were pothunted, shot down in droves and destroyed in the greatest number possible in every direction.

A good giraffe skin is worth from \$10 to \$20 in South Africa to-day, and much more in Europe. On their hunting trips ten and fifteen years ago it was a common matter for one hunter to kill forty or fifty of these graceful animals in one day. The reason for this is that the giraffe is the most innocent of animals and is easily hunted. It is absolutely defenceless, and there is hardly a case on record where a wounded giraffe turned upon the hunter. It is true giraffes have great power of speed, and they can dodge rapidly from tree to tree in the woods, but they offer such a fair mark that these tactics hardly ever save them.

The hide of the animal is its chief article of value. No wonder that the bullets often fail to penetrate this skin, for it is from three quarters to an inch thick, and as tough as it is thick. The skin, when cured and tanned, makes excellent leather for certain purposes. The Boers make riding whips and sandals out of the skins they do not send to Europe. The bones of the giraffe have also a commercial value. The leg bones are solid instead of hollow, and in Europe they are in great demand for manufacturing buttons and other bone articles. The tendons of the giraffe are so strong that they will sustain an enormous dead weight, which gives to them pecuniary value.

IS PURE WATER WHOLESOME.

Comments on the Assertion of a German Physician That It is Poisonous.

The recent announcement of a German physician, Dr. Koppe, that distilled water—that is chemically pure water—is poisonous, has aroused much comment, chiefly adverse. The National Druggist announces that it has been quite overwhelmed with letters on the subject, most of them in refutation of Dr. Koppe's views. One of these from Dr. Homer Wakefield, of Bloomington, Ill., it gives in full as "containing in a condensed form all the arguments advanced in the other articles." Says Dr. Wakefield:

"This remarkable article deduces that distilled water is a dangerous protoplasmic poison, because of the absence of organic contaminations. It should be added here that rain-water, as it falls from the clouds, is aerated distilled water; it is the most healthful known. . . . Physicians know it is the best solvent of inorganic concretions in the body, and engineers know it is the best boiler compound, following the use of hard water and the consequent formation of hard incrustations. While it is true that stagnant rain-water, contained in foul cisterns, full of all kinds of contamination, is unfit for drinking or cooking, it is also true that there is nothing more wholesome than pure distilled water, tightly corked in clean bottles, protected from contamination of even impure air. Pure water, well corked, never gets stale.

"As to the inorganic constituents of ordinary 'hard' drinking waters much might be said, but suffice it to say that time and other minerals, in quantities in drinking water, often prove injurious to the imbiber, by the formation in the system of insoluble compounds, in the gall-bladder, kidneys, bladder, &c. Nature's demands for bone-forming material is much better satisfied from food than from water, hard or soft.

"The assertion that pure water taken into the stomach causes complaints of 'weak stomach,' belching, &c., is the purest rot; it is evident that if belching was excited by a drink of water, it was caused either by motor nerve stimulation, from its temperature or an alkaline (hard) water was taken into an acid-containing stomach, which resulted in effervescence. Mountain streams, when not drinkable, are not pure, as contended, but generally heavily laden with lime and other powerful alkalies. It must not be inferred from the above that I am opposed to all alkaline waters—not at all; but pure, not impure, water is the thing to drink, except when in certain cases certain alkalies are demanded by the system; then they may be added to pure water, or otherwise pure water containing them may be used. Extreme purity is a virtue, not a fault, of water. Beware of

an author who contends that contaminated water is conducive to health."

Comments on Dr. Koppe's paper are not all adverse, however, as witnesses the following from the American Kitchen Garden, the writer of which contends that while distilled water may be very well when taken medicinally, it is not a good beverage except for those who are overeating. He says:

"Distilled water taken on an empty stomach would tend to leach out the cells with which it came in contact, and we know that the life of the cell depends upon the maintenance of its contents at a certain standard. This is a well-established fact, and not, as one advertisement implies, a vision of a mad microscopist. The testimony of physicians that the prolonged use of distilled water has a tendency to decrease the body weight shows a lessening of nutritive power in the tissues. Most persons eat enough salt on their food to bring up to the average, and many persons in middle life, and after, eat too much of all kinds of food and drink too little fluid, so that for them a course of distilled water may be most beneficial, carrying away an excess which would be harmful. If an individual over forty is living on potatoes pared before cooking, white bread unsalted butter, cream, fruit and sugar, then distilled water would be superfluous if not harmful; but if the diet is rich in meat, in cereals, in milk, and abundant at that, it is very probable that distilled water would remove more of the excess than would a hard water taken as a beverage."

THE ELECTRIC CAT.

A New Instrument of Correction in use in France and Her Colonies.

Some of the French newspapers have been telling about the new method of whipping men which has just been introduced experimentally into some of the penitentiaries and colonies of France. The instrument bears the pleasing name of 'The Electric Cat,' and the Electrician expresses the scientific opinion that it is a great improvement upon the Russian knout and the cat o' nine tails which it says 'still unfortunately figure in many penal colonies and in the penitentiaries of so called civilized states.'

The method of this new whipping machine is very simple and business like. The culprit who has been sentenced to undergo the lash is tied to a post in the usual manner. Behind him is a wheel, driven by an electric motor, which goes round and round with a velocity that is unpleasant for the victim. The velocity may be regulated, however, according to the severity of the trouncing to be administered. Attached to one of the spokes is a whip which swings around the circle and the culprit is placed at such an angle with reference to the instrument of flagellation that every time it comes around it nips him squarely on the back.

It is claimed for the new invention that it dispenses justice impartially and equably. It has no animus against the prisoner, its blows are given with equal intensity and it better fulfills the idea of even handed justice than manual flogging, which is likely to distribute penalties very unevenly.

Robert Louis Stevenson on Kipling. From Scribner's Magazine.

VAILIMA, Apia, Samoa, Dec. 22, 1890.
MY DEAR HENRY JAMES: * * * Kipling is by far the most promising young man who has appeared since—ahem—I appeared. He amazes me by his precocity and various endowment. But he alarms me by his copiousness and haste. He should shield his fire with both hands 'and draw up all his strength and sweetness in one ball.' (Draw all his strength and all his sweetness up into one ball? I cannot remember Marvel's words.) So the critics have been saying to me: but I was never capable of—and surely never guilty of—such a debauch of production. At this rate his works will soon fill the habitable globe and surely he was armed for better conflicts than these succinct sketches and flying leaves of verse?

I look on, I admire, I rejoice for myself but in a kind of ambition we all have for our tongue and literature I am wounded. If I had this man's fertility and courage, it seems to me I could heave a pyramid.

Well, we begin to be the old fogies now; and it was high time something rose to take our places. Certainly Kipling has the gifts; the fairy godmothers were all tip-top at his christening; what will he do with them? * * * Yours affectionately R. L. S.