

attack, in future wars. The British private has, however, probably lost none of his old grit or endurance. And circumstances have proved that a fighting machine of the highest order has been found in the colonial volunteer. Nevertheless Captain GAMBIER—a British officer—in an eye-opening article in the *Fortnightly Review* for October, declares that it is folly to blink the fact that 2,200 men, 'in broad daylight, only a few miles from their camp,' surrendered to an enemy 'not having made that enemy pay dearly for their temerity.' So far as the evidence goes, the blame of such surrenders lay, in practically every case, with the admitted ineptitude of officers rather than with any lack of pluck or endurance or determination among the men.

The total number of deaths on the British side from hostile lead up to the end of September was only 3,960 in a force of over 200,000 men—a wonderfully moderate butcher's bill after twelve months of powder-blazing. The losses in individual battles or skirmishes were usually counted by units or tens—in singular but happy contrast to the days of the muzzle-loading and single-fire breech-loading rifles when a single hour's short-range firing or brief bayonet-mêlée would pile more dead upon the field or in the deadly imminent breach than have been stretched out on the red veldt of South Africa after twelve months' uproar with the more destructive weapons of modern war. Of the 10,000 men whom WELLINGTON flung at Badajos, 3,000 went down before the British flag was planted on the battered walls. At the Redoubt d'Eu LIGONIER lost at least 4,000 men in 900 paces out of his column of 14,000. The force that held Mount Inkermann in the Crimea numbered 7,464 officers and men. The dogged fellows still held their ground, victors, after 2,487 men—one-third of their whole number—had fallen. They understood fire-discipline in those shoulder-to-shoulder days and took their punishment like gluttons. In the one battle of Gettysburg the Confederates lost 18,000 men out of 68,000 engaged. But they were so full of fight that General MEADE did not dare to interfere with their orderly retreat.

In the Franco-German War General von ALVENSLEBEN left 7000 of his 18,000 infantry across the track of the French army on the heights of Mass-la-Tour. They stood their ground, and forty-eight hours later were up to the eyebrows in the sanguinary battle of Gravelotte. KRUDENER and SCHAHOFSKOY marched 28,000 men to the attack of Plevna on July 30-31, 1877. They returned battered, but in good order, but not 'annihilated,' with only 21,000. One regiment under SCHAHOFSKOY's command lost 75 per cent of its whole number. 'In the September attack on Plevna,' says ARCHIBALD FORBES, in his *Barracks, Bivouacs, and Battles*, 'of 74,000 Russo-Roumanian infantry engaged, the losses reached 18,000. SKOBELEFF commanded 18,000 men, and at the end of two days' desperate fighting, not 10,000 of these were left standing. The survivors who had fought on the 11th and 12th September were ready at the word to go in again on the 18th; and how they marched across the Balkans later is one of the marvels of modern military history.'

The charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava is a familiar instance, out of many that might be given from British military history, of the capacity of even a small command for mischief after its ranks have been ploughed and cross-furrowed with artillery and rifle-fire. A still more signal instance—though it has as yet found no TENNYSON—was BREDOW's charge with the Seventh Cuirassiers and the Sixteenth Lancers at Mars-la-Tour. They went into action 800 strong. They left upon the field 363 of their number. Sixteen officers were among the gallant men that fell. But nobody had blundered there. BREDOW had a purpose. It was achieved, though at a mighty relative sacrifice. But that charge of cuirassier and lancer decided the fate of the war. It led to the fall of Metz and wrecked the fortunes and the hopes of France. It had one unintended counterpart—so far as mere slaughter went—in the present campaign in South Africa. It was among the ranks of the naval brigade at Belmont and Graspan. Experienced and well-led troops advanced to the attack five paces apart. But owing to the blundering or ineptitude of their officers the men in blue marched up the kopjes almost shoulder to

shoulder—as in the days of the old 'Brown Bess.' Fifty per cent. of them were speedily down. But the rest, with magnificent bravery, still kept plodding along over the bullet-splashed rocks, with their faces to the foe. On the part of the officers it was about the most sublime blunder of the whole campaign. But none of them was courtmartialled or shot. On the part of the rank and file it was about the most gallant thing in the war. It was likewise, in the matter of casualties, the most exceptional.

The worst thing about the South African skirmishes is the war correspondents' descriptions of them. It is the old story: sounding the loud timbrel over the noisy tubes that kill their thousands, but little or no word about the terrors of camp disease that slays its tens of thousands. There is something of the spirit of the old Coliseum audience among us still. Death has its attractions—when it is theatrical, as in the fall of soldier or gladiator in mortal combat. Little notice is taken of his fitting if his parting spirit gets its wings from typhoid or dysentery. Ten idle men will assemble to see a healthy ox drop under the pole-axe for the one that will pause on the roadside to see him die quietly of lock-jaw. The war correspondent knows his public.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

In consequence of the Christmas holidays it will be necessary for us to go to press on Monday, December 24, instead of December 26, and therefore correspondents' letters should reach this office on the previous Saturday, or at latest on Monday morning. The same course will have to be adopted with regard to the issue of the following week, and our correspondents will do well to make their arrangements to suit these alterations.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

Subscribers are entreated to forward the amounts due by them at the earliest possible moment. The amounts due by individual subscribers are not considerable, but taken together they amount to a very large sum. The many calls that we have to meet make it imperative on us to greatly reduce the amount of indebtedness of our subscribers. We therefore ask those who have received accounts to wipe off their indebtedness to us before the close of the dying century. This will be a suitable mode of celebrating the parting of the nineteenth, and the beginning of the twentieth century.

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN.

The midsummer holidays begin at the Provincial Seminary, Holy Cross College, Moeraki, on Saturday next, the 15th inst.

The contractors have commenced operations in connection with the building of the new convent for the Sisters of Mercy, South Dunedin.

It has been found necessary to postpone the drawing of the art union in aid of the Dominican Convent, Oamaru, for a few weeks. The date of the drawing will be notified in due time.

The Sisters of Mercy, South Dunedin, desire to return their sincere thanks to the Catholic Literary Society's Dramatic Club and all others who assisted in making the recent dramatic performance so great a success.

The distribution of prizes to the pupils of the Christian Brothers, Dunedin, will take place in St. Joseph's Hall on Friday evening, December 21. His Lordship the Bishop will preside. The programme includes a parliamentary debate, musical items, and gymnastic competitions.

Our readers are reminded of the entertainment which is to be given to-morrow (Friday) evening in the Agricultural Hall by the pupils of the Dominican Nuns. A high-class programme has been prepared for the occasion, and considering the reputation of the performers an excellent entertainment may be anticipated.

It is not at all unlikely that the Catholic Literary Society's Dramatic Club will be induced to perform 'The Shaughraun' in Oamaru on behalf of some deserving object. Considering the very great success which attended the production in Dunedin the people of Oamaru may be sure of a capital evening's amusement should the Dramatic Club find it convenient to visit that town.

The foundation-stone of the new chapel to be erected in connection with the Dominican Priory, Dunedin, was laid by his Lordship the Bishop on Saturday morning, the Feast of Mary of the Immaculate Conception to whom the new building is dedicated. The ceremony was performed by his Lordship the Bishop, assisted by Fathers Murphy and Cleary. A copy of the current issue of the N.Z. TABLET, together with several coins of the realm, were placed in the foundation-stone. The work is progressing rapidly, the concrete foundations being already complete.

On Saturday last Father Coffey returned from the collecting tour which he undertook on behalf of that deserving charity, the St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage, South Dunedin. The Rev Father

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