

OUR MULE'S BIG SHARE IN THE TRANSVAAL WAR.

Their Importance in the Makeup of a British Mountain Battery.

Every time one of the British mountain batteries goes into action in the South African war attention is directed to a humble warrior from the United States, the mule, that is doing far more important work than he gets credit for, and without which the English would find it exceedingly difficult to make the contemplated changes on the map.

The Marquis of Lansdowne, Secretary of State for War, says that the Government has bought 15,000 mules, to carry troops and supplies from the coast to the scene of war. Of these 8000 or 9000 were bought in the United States and several thousand of them are already in active service. The remainder came from Italy and from Spain, and thus we see the Spanish and American mule laboring side by side against a common foe.

On general principles we may suppose that it was the Spanish variety of mule which was directly responsible for the great calamity at Nicholson's Nek, causing the capture of 1500

as members of mounted batteries, either, for there are two mule companies that have been accustomed for years to act as flesh-and-blood gun carriers at the Cape. These last animals served their apprenticeship at the Government barracks at Newport and have become used to the smell of powder, and are entirely blasé about having small cannons on their backs.

The composition of a mountain battery and the accoutrements of a mule on a march may prove of interest.

There are six guns in a mountain battery called screw guns. They fire a projectile weighing about eight pounds and of various descriptions, viz., ring shell, shrapnel, star and case shot. The charge is one pound and ten ounces of powder.

Batteries are composed of British gunners and are commanded by a Major of the Royal Artillery. They are divided into three sections, called right, centre and left, each commanded by a subaltern, and containing two divisions commanded by a sergeant.

A sub-division is a gun with all its attendant men, mules and equipment.

second ammunition mules, carrying sixteen rounds each, and an average load of about 370 pounds. These loads



MULES AS AMMUNITION CARRIERS.

are given in round numbers, and include every strap.

The mules to carry these loads are necessarily fine animals, and cost about \$150 each. They are of various breeds, country bred chiefly, but Italian, Persian, Afghan and Cape mules are found in nearly every battery. They should be about thirteen hands high, or a little over, and their girth must always be good; this is far more important than height for a battery mule. The big mules are often not so useful, and always cause more

JUDAS THE BETRAYER.

The Decoy Steer of the Chicago Stock Yards and His Work.

One of the sights of the great cattle yards of Chicago is an old white ox named Judas. An ox may rise to eminence by his cunning and wisdom as well as a man, and Judas has risen. He came to the yards a good many years ago, while he was yet a frisky steer and he was immediately purchased by one of the great packing houses and driven from the train which brought him from his Iowa home to a distant yard.

The life of most animals at the cattle yards is very short—a week at the very most. A few days after the arrival of Judas the herd of cattle which occupied the pen with him was selected for killing. The way to the packing house led down a long alleyway with high fences on each side, then up a narrow chute and into the building. For some reason the cattle seem to know what is coming, for they always object to being driven up the chute. Judas was no exception. He plunged madly about among the herd and the cattlemen had more trouble with him than with any other



JUDAS IN ACTION.

animal. At last, however, he seemed to realize that sooner or later he must go, and he made a virtue of a necessity, trotted quietly up the chute and the other cattle followed rapidly after him. Thus he ran until he had just reached the door of the packing house. Then, quick as a wink, he turned and galloped down a side passage and escaped, while the other cattle went onward into the building.

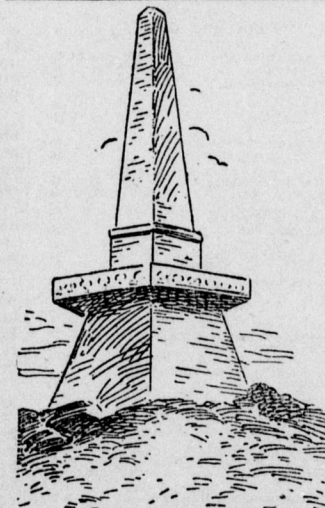
Judas had been so very clever that the good-natured cattlemen let him go for that day, for genius is to be appreciated in a steer as well as in a man. The next day, however, they drove him up again with another herd. This time he made not the slightest objection, but trotted forward quietly, and the other steers, having a confident leader, behaved admirably. But just as Judas reached the door of the building he dodged again, so suddenly that the men couldn't turn him, and escaped, as he had done before, while the herd behind him went careering into the killing room.

Since then Judas has been a regular employe of the cattle yards. Every day he leads up a herd of cattle and every day he dodges just at the door of the building. He has saved the cattlemen no end of trouble and delay with riotous herds since he began his service. He has grown fat and sleek on the good living of the yards, and so highly are his services regarded that the cattlemen provide him with a white blanket on cold days to keep him comfortable.

And thus he is living to a green old age, but he bears the disrespectful name of Judas—the betrayer.

Boers' Monument of Independence.

The sturdy Dutchmen of the Transvaal have erected in the environs of Johannesburg this pillar of stone and dedicated it as the fetish of their free life. If the British army succeeds in reaching Johannesburg the first thing they will do will be to demolish this monument, for the effect on the superstitious Boers will be as bad as the loss of an important battle in the open field.



PILLAR OF FREEDOM AT JOHANNESBURG

In the Transvaal a superstition exists that the liberties of the people are assured as long as this pillar of stone endures. It may be that the British will regard it as a wise act to commit an act of vandalism, just as they were forced to become barbarous in India and blow Sepoys from the guns to destroy their caste.

Paris Preparing For the Influx.

The omnibus company of Paris, on the occasion of the Exposition, will have ninety-two lines and 1500 vehicles, performing 25,000 journeys a day, and capable of transporting 1,082,000 passengers.

Overworked There.

The only place where a tramp was ever known to be overworked is in the funny papers.—St. Louis Republic.

There are 4200 species of plants used for commercial purposes. Of these, 420 are used for perfume.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

Mother Goose to Date.

Sing a song of Christmas, Stockings full of toys— Jumping-jacks and dollies For the girls and boys; When they all were opened The dolls began to sing, The jumping-jacks were jumping— Oh, what a funny thing!

Papa in the bedroom, Sleeping very sound; Mamma up and dressing, Hurrying around; Pussie running down the stairs Buttoning his clothes— When up jumped a jumping-jack And snapped off his nose. —Chicago Record.

He Sings to the Fish.

An eccentric hermit named William Schueller, who lives at Franklin, Mich., is said to be one of the most successful fishermen in his part of the country, and he claims to call the fish to him by singing "Old Hundred." He goes out in his boat and takes a station in fairly deep water. Then he sings, at the same time keeping his eyes on the water in search of fish. Gradually the fish crowd about his boat, he claims, and when enough are gathered together the wily fisherman casts a net and catches dozens at a single haul. The old gentleman has a famous voice, and his neighbors are inclined to believe his strange story.

Giving Pussy a Bath.

Most pussies wash themselves so much that they very seldom need other people to wash them. But most of them want a bath occasionally. The best plan is to have some one to talk to and pet pussy while another does the actual washing.

Make a nice lather with water of about 98 degrees and soap and stand very gently in this. Wash her in this, using your hand instead of a sponge. When her fur is quite clean, rinse her in clean water of the same temperature, lifting her from one to the other very gently, so as not to frighten her.

Then wrap her in a blanket or a nice warm towel and dry her before the fire with well warmed towels, and don't let her run off on her own account till she is thoroughly dry, or the chances are that she will make herself as dirty in ten minutes as she was before, and your labor will be thrown away, because her fur, when damp, will catch the dirt more quickly than when dry.

You must remember to be very gentle always. Pussy won't enjoy her tubbing, probably, but don't make her hate it.—Trenton (N. J.) American.

An Acorn.

Norna had been sick a long while, and she was so tired of lying in bed that all the family tried to amuse her. Papa brought her a little musical box, and mamma gave her picture books; Tom bought a new game for her, and Dotty a bunch of grapes; even baby offered her an acorn which he picked up under the great oak-tree.

What a beautiful little thing it was, sitting neatly in its tiny saucer, and what a dainty saucer, too, with row after row of wee brown scales folded so prettily over each other.

Mamma tied a string around the acorn, hung it over a glass of water, and told Norna that now she could see it grow.

"But how can it find its way to the water, mamma?" asked Norna.

"Watch and see," said mamma, smiling.

The next day Norna thought the acorn looked a little larger, but soon after that, oh, dear! there was a dreadful crack all along its side.

"It is spoiled, mamma," sighed Norna. "It will never grow now."

"Watch and see," said mamma again.

Norna did watch. At last she saw something white and something green coming out of the crack. The white shoot grew down into the water and made a root, but the green shoot grew upward and made two little leaves. And so the acorn turned into a baby oak.

And Norna so enjoyed watching it all that she forgot she was sick, and was almost as happy as if she had been outdoors in the sunshine.

"Your little girl is much better," said the doctor to mamma. "She is well enough to play in the yard. This new medicine has helped her."

And nobody knew that the little acorn had helped her as much as the medicine.—Youth's Companion.

A Long Nap.

Behind Helen's house there stood some beautiful tall pines, and in among them there was an old gravel hole.

No gravel was taken from it now, and the bottom of it was covered with thick soft moss and trailing plants; but in one place there was a nice bank of sand where Helen liked to play.

One cold day in November she was out in the gravel hole. She had been picking checkerberries, and had put some of them in the pocket of her dress to carry home to her mamma.

She was walking by the sand bank when she caught sight of something that made her stop and look more closely.

"Why, I wonder what made that little hole in the sand?" she said. She poked the sand away with her finger and found that the hole went in and in. So then she found a little stick and dug into the bank, following the hole carefully.

At last she came to something dark and soft. She took it out and found that it was a little ball of oak leaves and pine needles.

"What can it be?" she said. She picked it open, and then she

said "Oh!" and almost dropped it, she was so surprised.

Inside was a little mouse!

He was larger than a common mouse and had very long hind legs. He lay quite still in Helen's hand, and she ran to the house to show him to her mamma.

"It is a jumping-mouse," her mamma said, "and he had rolled himself up in that nest to sleep through the winter. See how tired and sleepy he is!"

The mouse was stirring a little. He moved his legs very slowly, and said as plainly as a mouse could say to a little girl:

"Do please let me alone. I'm so sleepy. It isn't time to get up yet."

So Helen tucked him up in his nest again, and carried him back to the sand bank, and tried to fix him just as she had found him.

Through the cold winter, when the wind blew among the pine tree tops, and the snow lay upon the ground, Helen often thought of the little mouse asleep in the sand bank, and hoped he was comfortable.

Then when it came warm again, how she wished she could see him when he awoke, stretched himself, and perhaps rubbed his eyes; then crept out of his bed and went jumping about with his long hind legs, hunting for something to eat.

Helen thought he must feel a little lame and stiff after such a very long nap, and she wondered if he would tell his friends about a dream he had, of being taken out of bed by a little girl and carried to see the little girl's mamma, then put carefully back in the sand bank again.—The Favorite.

The Rescue of Pit-a-Pat and Peterkin.

Pit-a-Pat opened one round blue eye, and yawned a round pink yawn. Then she opened the other eye, and yawned again. Then she blinked vigorously with both of them, and stretched out one dainty forepaw, then the other. Then she arose, performed several Delsartean exercises, gave her little gray sock a few settling touches with her pink tongue, and administered to Brother Peterkin a gentle and gingerly cuff.

When upon Peterkin went through precisely the same motions. But the paws he stretched out were as black as Mistress Mary's shoes; and so were his other paws, and his whole suit, in fact.

Then they glanced toward the window.

Oh, joy!

What they had been longing for ever since Mistress Mary adopted them was a chance to get on that window sill, and see what they could see. But was Mistress Mary had perceived their thoughts, or else she had great wisdom concerning kittens in general. (I forgot to tell you that Pit-a-Pat and Peterkin are kittens. Did you guess?) So she kept the curtains tucked up beyond their reach, and they were too wee to climb up the wall or spring to the sill.

But now! One curtain had been loosened by the brisk breeze, and was sweeping the carpet; while the other fluttered airy forth from the window.

"Mip!" quoth the two little kits in unison, and started toward the window (also in unison). Which reached it first I cannot say. Neither can I tell you which proposed swinging on the curtain outside.

I only know that Mistress Mary, hearing her homeward, with a bottle of cream (to make them purr, and purr and purr!), glanced upward to her window, and saw a little coal-black kit clinging desperately to the end of the curtain, while a little Quaker-gray kit was clasping her little white mate tightly around the little black kit's waist (if kits have waists), while her fuzzy gray tail waved wildly and her luzzy little "back legs" (as Polly calls them) dangled forlornly in space—all from a third-story window!

"Meoww!" "Meoww!" quoth they. At least, it sounded so to me. But Mistress Mary states that Peter was saying, "Hold on tight to your big brother, Patty!" while Patty gasped back, "Yes, Brother Peter, I will."

Mistress Mary flew up the stairs, and in a twinkling those frightened little explorers were safe on her shoulder, where they clung, trembling and poking their cold little noses into the soft folds of her newest and most fetching necktie, while she poured out a brimming saucer of cream, by way of discipline. But, whether they promised ever to do so any more or whether they ever will do so any more, I cannot say, for Mistress Mary has not yet given them another chance.—Christian Register.

She "Sassed" Her Well.

Some visitors to East Gloucester last summer paid a special call upon the woman said to be the original of Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward's famous story, "A Madonna of the Tubs." Mrs. Phelps Ward's summer home, be it known, is in East Gloucester. The visitors found a typical New Englander with a self-evident capacity of taking care of herself.

"So you are the Madonna of the Tubs?" said the visitors. "I am," said the New Englander. "And Mrs. Phelps Ward wrote a beautiful story about you."

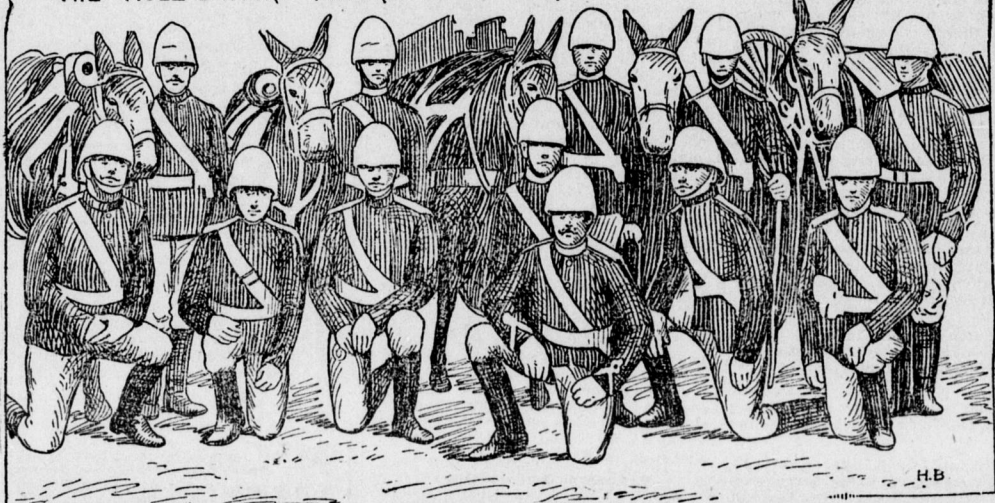
"She did."

"Did you ever meet Mrs. Ward?" "I have. After she'd wrote that story she came round here one day and hunted me up. She said as how she wanted to see me for herself."

"How interesting!" murmured the visitors, "and what did you do?"

"Do?" repeated the Madonna of the Tubs, "what did I do? I sassed her well for writin' such a story as that about me. Such a pack o' lies I never read. Why, there wasn't one-half of it true. An' she had the face to come and see me afterward! Oh, I sassed her well, I did!"—New York Evening Sun.

THE MULE BATTERY CAPTURED BY THE BOERS



H.B.

British troops and the death of several gallant officers. The thing never would have happened if the mules had not stampeded and run away with the ammunition. In a private letter an infantry officer wrote from Ladysmith some days previous to this disaster that a lot of unbroken mules had just been received, and he predicted that they would stampede the first time they got into action.

Up to date the British War Office has bought and paid for mules worth



AMERICAN MULES FOR THE TRANSVAAL. (Loading mules at New Orleans on the Atlantic transport train for shipment to Cape Colony and the Transvaal.)

about \$1,500,000. The latest mule quotation is \$100 a beast. The market is firm and no difficulty whatever has been found by the Government in getting all the mule help they want.

In buying the American mules the British officers have been careful, as far as possible, to get those that have been trained. This word "trained" suggests a possible mule curriculum, but it means merely those who have

A medical officer of the Imperial Medical Service is attached to each battery.

The gunner establishment consists of one sergeant major, one quartermaster sergeant, six gun sergeants, six corporals and eighty-eight gunners, with two trumpeters. In the driver establishment there are three driver sergeants, six driver corporals, one hundred and thirty-eight drivers (with twelve extra men enlisted for service), one farrier and one shoeing smith. There are five ponies for officers and trumpeters and one hundred and thirty-eight gun mules—that is, twenty-three for each sub-division—five to carry the gun and five to relieve them; one pioneer in right subdivisions and one artificer's mule in the left section; six ammunition mules with one relief; one wheel and axle mule, and the remaining four spare, or barebacks, as they are called. They are generally young mules and are to replace the sick or killed, and they have no harness of their own. The first line consists of the pioneers, first gun line and first and second ammunition mules; the remainder are the relief line.

Besides these, there are seventy-two baggage mules always with the battery (made up to one hundred and thirty-eight for service), with an establishment of three minor officers and twenty-six muleteers, and, in addition to all, the usual followers of a corps, with carpenters, smiths and saddlers thrown in.

The pioneer mule generally leads the battery over difficult ground, accompanied by any spare gunners there may be, who clear any obstacles which would impede the progress of the battery. His load is about 220 pounds. The wheel follows him,

work for the gunners to load, especially on a hillside.

The mule has many advantages over the horse in the present campaign in South Africa especially, because he has the reputation of being able to hang on to a precipitous pathway by his ears where a horse could not be made to venture with any amount of urging. Except in mountain climbing, he carries ordinarily about 160 pounds, although, if well fed, he sometimes can take 300 pounds. He not only is much freer from disease than the horse, but his skin is so much thicker that the pestiferous tropical bug cannot make life so much of a burden for him. Besides, he isn't half so fussy as a horse about what he eats or drinks. His usual rations in South Africa are ten pounds of grain or twenty pounds of oat hay, with half an ounce of rock-salt; that, however, is when times are good, and if he has to work along on short rations he is as cheerful and contented about it as possible. Put blinkers on him, and have a white mare to lead the procession, and he will go anywhere.

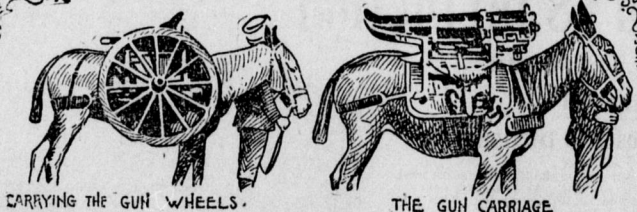
Parcel Trick Revived.

The old trick of calling for a package just delivered has made its annual appearance in the residence districts of New York City. A well-known firm has been informed that after one of its wagons had delivered a parcel at the house of a patron yesterday, a man came hurriedly up to the door and asked the maid to hand him back the package, as a mistake had been made. The man was very persistent, and said that the parcel intended for his mistress had been delivered elsewhere, and would be promptly called for when this one was returned. The maid, however, replied that she would not give up the package without an order. The man promised to bring an order, but of course was not heard from again.

With the hundreds of delivery wagons running all over the city, it is difficult to trap these swindlers. The best way to avoid trouble is to caution servants not to deliver any articles or packages on verbal orders.—New York Mail and Express.

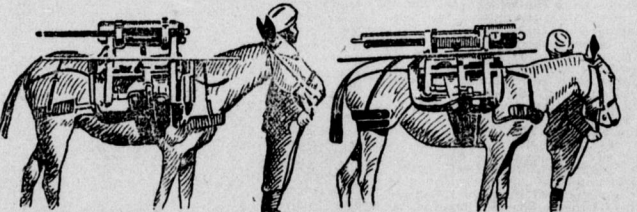
Caused Them to Hastily Retreat.

An extraordinary accident occurred to a trolley car at Sing Sing, N. Y., recently, which recalls Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dynamite," in which a man carrying a box of dynamite is jostled by a woman so as to cause the explosive to fall, though it does not explode. In the present instance a ton of dynamite was on a wagon when it was struck by a trolley car. A wheel was taken off the wagon and the vehicle was turned over. The driver of the wagon fell back in a half faint, and he knew it would be useless to run, even if he had not been paralyzed with fear. The motorman was also so frightened for a moment that he could not back away from the wreck. One of the passengers yelled, "Dynamite!" and they all beat a precipitate retreat, and there was little curiosity evinced when a new wagon was obtained and the dynamite was transferred.



CARRYING THE GUN WHEELS.

THE GUN CARRIAGE



BREECH OF THE GUN

HALF OF THE GUN—THE CHASE

HOW MOUNTAIN BATTERY GUNS ARE CARRIED.

been in harness and done a bit of knocking about already.

These new mules are to be used only for transportation purposes—that is, for hauling the long "Cape wagons" ten or twelve mules to each—and none of them is destined to carry packs, the former function of the mule in war. None of the new recruits will be pressed into service

carrying also the elevating gear between the wheels on top of the saddle. The load is about 280 pounds. Then the axle, with a case shot box and small store box; the load is about 313 pounds. Following him the three top loads, carriage, breech and chase, each load being about 290 pounds. Being top loads they necessitate tight girthing. Behind them come the first and