

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 rest are already on the way from New Orleans and Charleston. 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-carriages 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

WHITE HOUSE TOO SMALL

ENLARGEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANSION CONTEMPLATED.

The Necessity of Improvements—Objections to an Entirely New Structure—Machinery to Render the Classic Belle Safe.

The news that Congress is to take up seriously the subject of enlarging the White House in Washington comes not a day too soon, says the New York Post. The need of some such relief has long been plain, but no President since Harrison has moved in the matter. President Cleveland preferred to set up a home at a considerable distance from his office, so as to be sure of refuge where politicians and curiosity-seekers would have no excuse for intruding on his privacy. President McKinley, though using the White House for domestic as well as public purposes, finds it spacious enough for his small family, and has never encouraged proposals to enlarge it for his own comfort.

But the question has ceased to be one of mere personal convenience. The great increase of executive business has made necessary a corresponding increase in the President's clerical force, and this, in its turn, means more furniture, more heavy books and files, and many more persons continually coming and going. The old timbers were evidently not laid with a view to such a strain, and bends and breaks have occurred from time to time, till certain parts of the interior of the building are relics of ingenious patchwork. The main staircase gave way in President Arthur's time, and had to be tied into place with chains, which tradition says are still doing duty, hidden in a partition. A beam under one of the doorways through which hundreds of persons sometimes pass in a day cracked several years ago and had to be reinforced with metal plates and bolts. An enterprising mechanic, who attached the cold-air box to the present heating apparatus, finding one of the masonry arches in the cellar in his way, cut through it to save a deflection, thus making it necessary to put in a less satisfactory support after his trick had been discovered. It is an open secret in Washington that the floors of the parlors and state corridors always have to be sustained by rows of temporary wooden piers when the President holds his receptions, so great have the crowds become. These are a few of many facts which have come to public notice, showing that some form of relief is not only desirable, but essential to the safety of human life and limb. Congress has had repeated warnings, but has always preferred to spend the Government's money on other things, and treat the White House to a little more patching. If it had heeded the fortunes which it has wasted upon inferior works of art and makeshift repairs, and devoted all this to the enlargement of the President's official home, the country would have approved its course as in the line of true economy.

The thing which undoubtedly has retarded any permanent improvement is the fact that whenever the subject has been agitated some Philistine in authority has begun to make plans for a radical change, involving the demolition of the present structure and the substitution of something more "modern." This would be vandalism indeed. The priceless historical memories which cluster around the old pile forbid it. The best artistic judgment in the country would revolt at it, for the White House is architecturally a rare specimen of the work done by an earlier generation, when the republican idea was associated in men's minds with classic art as well as classic politics. It would be indefensible on economical grounds, because, however much the interior of the house may have suffered from strains which it was not meant to bear, the outside walls and supporting partitions are worthy of a baronial castle, and a monument to the conscience as well as the skill of their builders. In short, no plan for a change ought to be tolerated which does not have for its central idea not only the preservation of the old building, but the maintenance of its artistic integrity.

Another consideration which is underrated to have influenced Congress to set aside some of the earlier schemes suggested, was a fear lest the ultimate expenditure might far exceed the estimates. But of late years the country has learned that there is one agency to which it can look with confidence for the completion of public buildings within the appropriations as well as within the time specified. The Washington national monument, after lagging for forty years, was at last taken in hand by the army engineers, and finished with creditable speed, yet with no sacrifice of strength or of perfection in detail. The State, War and Navy department building, badly designed and threatening to consume a lifetime in construction, was transferred to the engineers in like manner, and with like success. The Library of Congress, the most gorgeous public building in the world, is a specimen of engineering work, the keys of which were turned over to the custodian before the date fixed, and with a small balance of money to restore to the treasury.

There need be no more of a "job" in the enlargement of the White House than in these other cases, if the same precautions are taken. Estimates made by Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds, Colonel Bingham of the Engineer Corps, are said to place the necessary cost of a thoroughly good piece of work at not to exceed one million, or, allowing for actual and probable changes in the prices of building materials, \$1,100,000. A reduction of one per cent in the next river and harbor bill would furnish the necessary sum.

RECORD BRIDGE BUILDING.

A Wooden Structure Replaced by Steel in One Hour and Thirty-two Minutes.

A record-breaking feat in railroad bridge building was performed on the Rock Island line near Lincoln, Neb., the other day. It consisted of taking out a big wooden bridge and replacing it with a steel one in an hour and thirty-two minutes, and without blocking traffic. The steel bridge was seventy-eight feet in length and weighed eighty tons. It was shipped from the factory in sections to Rokeby, a station three miles from the place where it was put in. Here it was riveted together.

The old structure rested on concrete abutments put in after a disastrous wreck five years ago. The bolts and spikes of the old structure were removed after the new one had been suspended above. The new bridge was brought to the scene on flat cars, from which it was lifted by a double drum friction engine on a pole driver onto galley frames erected over the track, these frames being away braced longitudinally and on cross sections. To the galley frames two pairs of double blocks were fastened to each other and these were assisted in lifting the weight by a pair of double blocks and one pair of single blocks, eighteen lines of inch cable being used on each corner. Fastenings on the frames and iron work were made by the use of elevators and joles. When all was ready, the windlasses were started. A locomotive was coupled to the snub car to prevent the weight from pulling it over, and the bridge was lowered easily and properly.

Some idea of the celerity may be gained by the time schedule. The train left Rokeby at 7.45 in the morning. Thirty-eight minutes later it was at the scene. At 8.57 the iron work had been lifted clear of the cars and the latter run out; at 9.15 the old bridge had been torn out; at 9.33 the new bridge was in and at 9.57 the track was pronounced "O. K." and the flagman called in.

This is said by the railroad men to be one of the greatest lifts ever made with ropes. Thirty men, two locomotives and a bridge car with windlasses were used.

Money Squandered On Signs.

"Strange how much money is spent in a big city for useless signs," said a New Orleans sign painter. "On almost every street one finds big announcements masked by awnings, hidden under cornices, and in all sorts of queer places that the eye would never be apt to reach. I can point you out a handsome piece of black and gold lettering not a block from here that is executed on the glass of the fourth story window. It must have cost considerable money, yet the characters are so minute that I will venture the assertion that nobody can read it without an opera glass. Another sign that I discovered quite by accident the other day is painted across the front of a building near the roof. Directly beneath is a covered gallery, and the only place from which the inscription can possibly be seen is a bit of sidewalk about a dozen feet long diagonally across the street. The chances of a passer-by looking up in just the right direction are possibly one in 10,000. The prize freak sign of the city, however, adorns a certain roof, and is visible from only the upper stories of one or two adjacent buildings. Nearly all the useless signs in town might have been located much more advantageously if the people who ordered them had allowed the painter to use his judgment. We calculate the chances of observation down to a nicety, and know exactly how large a letter ought to be visible at a given distance. As much skill is required for that sort of thing as for the actual painting." — *New Orleans Times-Democrat.*

The Great Trek.

At the outbreak of war between France and England in 1803, Cape Colony belonged to the Netherlands, says Alleyn Ireland in the Atlantic. In 1806 Louis Napoleon was made King of the Netherlands, and in the same year England attacked the Cape as it was then a French possession. The Colony capitulated on January 10, 1806. The British occupation was made permanent by a convention, signed in 1814, between Great Britain and the Netherlands, by the terms of which England paid \$30,000,000 for the cession of Cape Colony and of the Dutch colonies of Demerara, Berbice, and Essequibo, which now form the colony of British Guiana.

It was hoped that the Dutch and the English in the Cape Colony would live together in friendly intercourse, and that eventually by intermarriage a fusion of the two races would be effected. This hope was doomed to disappointment, for an antagonism gradually developed between the old and the new colonists which led to the establishment of two republics beyond the border of the colony. The first step toward the formation of these republics was the emigration, during 1836 and 1837, of about 8000 Dutch farmers from the Cape Colony, a movement which is generally referred to as the Great Trek. These men went out of the Colony and established themselves in the vast hinterland.

Has no Desire to Travel.

There is a man in Western Massachusetts over sixty years old who lives on the line of the Boston and Albany road; he has been in the service of that company for over forty years, and could ride free on its cars whenever he chose to do so; yet he has never visited this city. — *Boston Transcript.*

J. P. Bryant, the Bardwell (Ky.) millionaire, owns the largest strawberry patch in the world. It covers 1700 acres, and has made his fortune.

KEYSTONE STATE NEWS CONDENSED

MELANCHOLIA CURED.

Young Woman Restored to Health by Fasting for Forty-five Days in a Philadelphia Institution.

A handsome young woman, who spent several months in the Friends' Asylum for the Insane at Frankford, near Philadelphia, a wretched victim of melancholia, has apparently been restored to excellent health, mentally and physically, after a fast of 45 days, according to the statements of the woman and friends, who were with her almost constantly during that period.

At the works of the American Ax and Tool Company, at Beaver Falls, the other night, John Reese, an engineer, while adjusting an electric light near the ceiling, had the bottom of one leg of his trousers caught in a set screw of a rapidly revolving shaft. He was whirled around the shaft, his clothing stripped from his body, and he was hurled to the floor beneath, 16 feet, bleeding and unconscious. No bones were broken, but it is feared he is injured internally.

The decision in the case of the city of Pittsburg against State Senator Wm. Flinn and others for \$300,000 damages, was handed down at the opening of court by Judge White. The defendants were acquitted. The suit was in trespass, and was based on the allegation that ex-Assistant City Attorney W. H. House had loaned city money to Senator Flinn.

James Grinnen, a young man living at Mead Run, Elk Co., accidentally shot himself the other day while hunting in the woods near Du Bois. He received the contents of a double-barrelled shot gun full in the abdomen, and though suffering terrible agony he crawled fully a quarter of a mile before help arrived. He was carried to his home, where he died two hours later.

While Carlo P'Eluso and Vito Vangelista, Italians, quarrelled in a shanty occupied by them on the outskirts of Butler, the other night, P'Eluso threatened to stab his companion, when Vangelista pulled a revolver and shot P'Eluso in the right shoulder and breast the second ball penetrating. His assailant disappeared after the shooting and has not yet been located.

Nathaniel Trout, a track walker on the Pennsylvania Railroad, was found dead along the road at Lepman Place, near Lancaster, the other day. When the Harrisburg express reached Lancaster a handkerchief and bloodstains were found on the pilot, and it is supposed it struck and killed Trout. Both legs and arms were broken and the body was badly cut.

John Hart, an employee of the gas department, of Butler, was found dead in a gas house at Mullett just over the Butler county line, in Allegheny county. Alfred T. Blatsford, foreman at Welch's brick works and a resident of Monaca, was found dead the other morning near the Pittsburg and Lake Erie railroad tracks.

At the services in St. John's church, at Sharon, a few days ago, Rev. Seaves M. Holdan announced that the entire debt upon the church had been liquidated. The debt three years ago amounted to \$8,000. It is expected that the church will be consecrated by the bishop as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made.

Henry Schnell, of Clintonville, was found frozen to death at Grove City a few days ago. He had reached the edge of town when it is supposed he had an attack of heart weakness, with which he was troubled, and sat down in the fence corner when he became chilled and was frozen to death. The dead man was 60 years of age.

Abram K. Lefever, a farmer of Greendale, near Lancaster, aged 45 years, died the other morning from hydrophobia. He was bitten on the hand by a cat about four months ago but did not feel any ill effects until Saturday, when his arm became stiff. By Sunday he was violently ill and it became necessary to keep him under the influence of opiates.

Mrs. Margaret Shannon, an aged woman living at Cromby, near Phoenixville, was found dead at her home a few days ago. Mrs. Shannon had a number of ugly wounds on her head and much blood was spattered about the room in which she was found. It is believed that she met with foul play and her husband was bent upon police investigation.

While skating on the Beaver creek at Brighton, a few days ago, Fred Hayward broke through the ice and was drowned. A companion, Iphi Calvin, narrowly escaped. Hayward's body was recovered. He was 27 years old, single and resided at Fallston.

Grant Powell, a brickworker, employed by the Enterprising Brick Company near Lockport, Pa., shot and probably fatally injured his wife on Christmas day. Powell was arrested and was committed to jail. Mrs. Powell has been taken to a Pittsburg hospital.

Matthias Luppold, employed at the Homestead Steel Works, at Homestead, was hit by a Pittsburg, Virginia and Charleston Railroad train and instantly killed at Munhall the other morning while going home from work. He was 54 years of age.

A complete system of sewerage for Beaver Falls, is contemplated and council has passed on first reading an ordinance to borrow \$55,000 for that purpose subject to the vote of the citizens at the coming spring election.

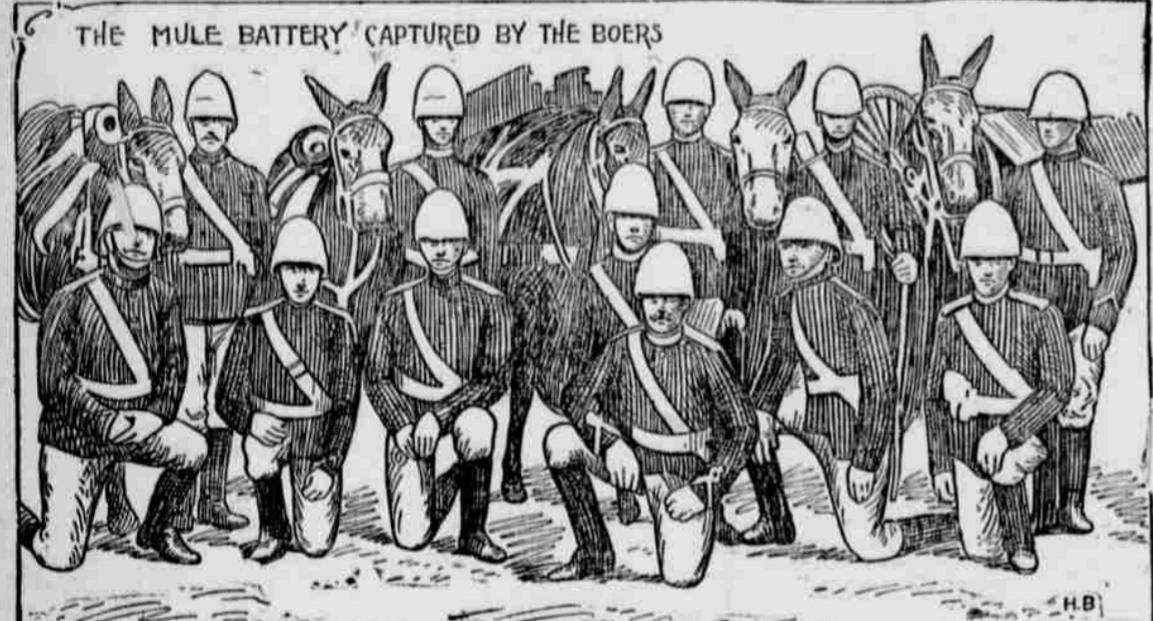
Mrs. W. S. Arnold, wife of a wealthy planing mill owner, of Bedford, while coming up Pitt street the other evening, was knocked insensible and her pocket-book stolen from her. Her assailant escaped.

The dormitory at Geneva College at Beaver Falls, was entered by thieves the other night and \$40 worth of silverware carried away.

Lee Robinson, a watchman, 57 years old, whose home is in Elliott borough, near Pittsburg, died while sitting in a chair at Smolz's brewery, at that place, the other night. Heart disease is believed to have caused his death.

Robert Owens, a teamster, aged 60, while attempting to cross the tracks on the Lehigh Valley railroad at Plainsville, the other evening, was run over by an express train and instantly killed.

Fire at Altoona the other morning destroyed the double frame building occupied as a dwelling and store by Fred Stains and W. C. Maul. The cause of the fire was an overheat stove.



THE MULE BATTERY CAPTURED BY THE BOERS



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 which would impede the progress of the battery. His load is about 320 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.

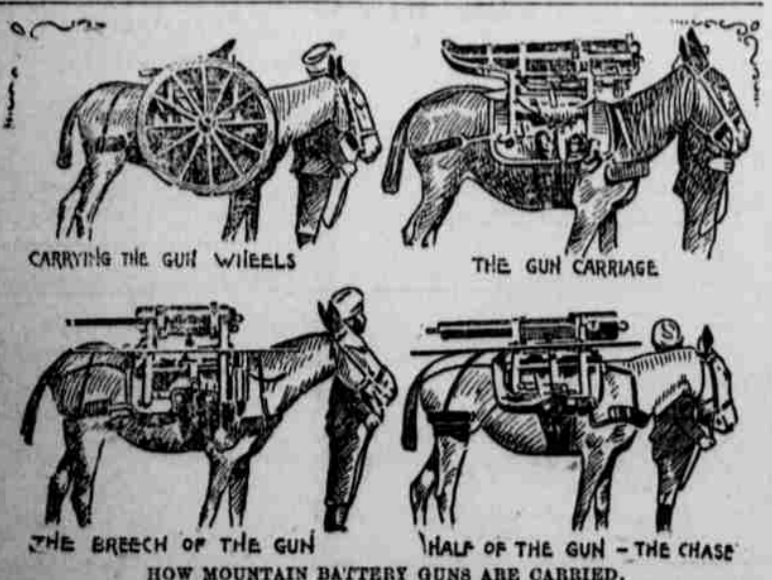
Parcel Trick Revived.

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 her 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 "Dynamiter," 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, "Dynamiter!" 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. THE 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