THE OUTPOST IN THE SKY.

THE outpost in the sky is a feature of modern warfare. It sounds strange to speak of people living in balloons as performing the vigorous, but such is the way in which the British are watching their operations in South Africa at the present time.

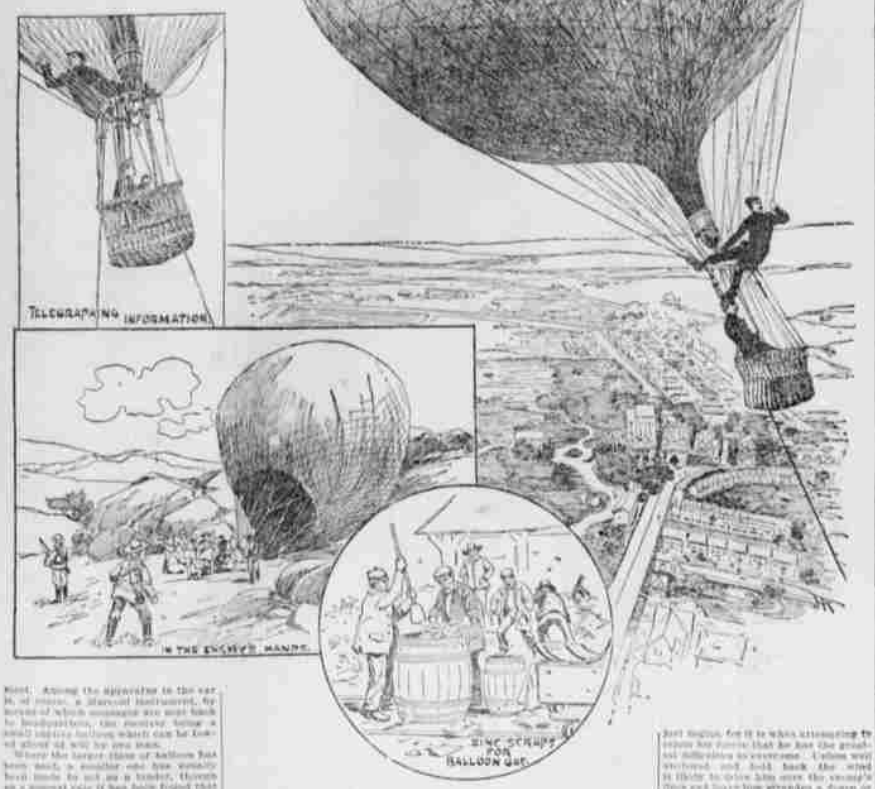
Balloons, it is true, are not altogether new in warfare. They were used almost Paris during the Franco-Prussian war, and in fact had been put to a test long ago over civil wars. A balloon also figured in the capture of Santiago, but as a general thing it must be admitted that the kite and balloon corps was never looked upon as a very valuable adjunct to an army.

It was not until the invention of wireless telegraphy that military ballooning became a valuable auxiliary to the advance guard of an army. This wonderful discovery brought about the possibility for a new system of reconnoitering, and England has shown herself to be up to date in having no less than 22 war balloons of the Cape. Ten of these are in Natal and ten distributed at other points. These balloons are made of gold beater's skin and impressed quite impressible, having kept up six months at Aldershot without losing their lifting power.

The British have already put their balloons to service in observing the operations of the Boers and have found them particularly valuable, owing to the wealth and broken nature of the country in which most of the fighting has been taking place. The most successful of these balloons in actual operation were the amateur ones, with a capacity of 31,000 cubic feet of gas and able to rise to 1000 feet, the winds with two men and all the necessary equipment. Among the apparatus in the car is, of course, a signal instrument, by means of which messages are sent back to headquarters, the receiver being a small copper balloon which can be looked at almost all day by any one.

Where the largest class of balloon has been used, a smaller one has usually been made to act as a tender, therein as a current rule it has been found that the smaller balloon has been the most satisfactory in every way, being more easily handled when inflated, less trouble to transport and fill with gas and more easily recovered when once sent up.

The operation of these new aerial warfare is in South Africa is looked after by the special balloon section of the royal engineers. For months before war broke out on the north end of the dark country the British military officers have been busily experimenting with the balloon as a war instrument at Aldershot. Here they made many exhaustive tests of the special balloon outfit and greatly aids for use of the utmost daring and courage. Such a picket generally takes his life with his own hands when he once steps into the little car and is hurled up among the clouds to hang dangerously over the camp of the enemy, where a chance shot or the slightest miscalculation of the aeronaut in the management of the apparatus may send him headlong to the earth. Even if he escapes the sudden fall, he is in a position to be very much exposed to the fire. It requires the coolest nerve to sit poised as above the earth 1,000 feet and with powerful field glasses look calmly down into the enemy's camp or along their lines, observe every movement that is being made and hospitals the information back to the firing line. When this is done, and his observations have all been made, the trouble of the balloon picket is not yet over, for he must then descend in the face of the enemy, and this is often a very difficult matter, as the balloon is very unwieldy and hard to manage in the face of a strong wind. Among the apparatus in the car is a powerful field glass, for it is when attempting to reach his camp that he has the greatest difficulty to overcome. Unless well anchored and held back the wind is likely to blow him over the enemy's lines and leave him stranded a dozen or more miles away with a few thousand Boer horsemen between him and his comrades. So the life of the outpost in the sky is never an easy one. When some special duty is required for the destruction of his frail craft, the despair of this fighter was a mother landsman but women will be even greater.

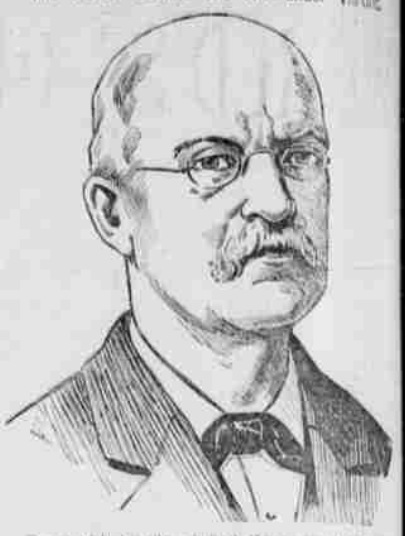


The Guardian of the Wounded.

In the modern army the medical department is one of the most important. Officers go on the principle that, while hoping for the best, one must be prepared for the worst, so for this reason the sister department of the English forces in South Africa has been strengthened for on a plan never before known. The medical and nursing staff is to be doubled, one thought, by those of the fact that a great number of wounded have to be taken care of. It has proved some too large. The head of this staff is Surgeon General T. H. Wilson, whose many years' experience as a war surgeon has well fitted him for such a responsible post. Fortunately, the climate at the seat of war is of the best, so that the wounded have a chance of recovery without those complications of fever and cholera that are so often more disastrous than the shot and shell of the enemy.

The foreign commerce of the United States during the month of August was the most profitable in the history of the country.

The Power Behind the Afrikander Throne.



The power behind the throne in South African politics is Sir Schalk Burger, the chief of the famous Dutch Afrikander family and the adviser of President Kruger of the Transvaal. Burger set for a number of years in the Cape house of assembly and in 1881 became a member of the executive council, showing a great aptitude for business. Considering the antagonistic Dutch and English interests, though in his earlier days he had taken active part with the former in their deeds of violence at the Cape. He is now, however, a protagonist of Dutch supremacy under the Kruger crown. On account of his great abilities and power he is regarded as the "boss" of Cape Colony politics, and he it was who made the first move on the part of the Afrikanders for a solution of the present difficulties without resorting to the horrors of war.

Officers Who Are After Slave Traders.

Here are the English and Portuguese officers who are at present working together in an effort to weed slave trading out of Central Africa. The capture, among the many others which have been attempted in the more southerly part of the dark continent, has been quite lost sight of, notwithstanding the fact that it will have an important effect in determining the destinies of the central part of Africa. The British forces are under the command of Captain Foster, and some 500 trained native troops, the Sikhs, the Maxims and the 7 quarters in the country. The Portuguese are even more strongly represented, both in infantry and artillery. The individuals whom this expedition are after are the chiefs of Mwembe, Kazeh and Mataka, all notorious slave traders.

An Extensive Sunshade.

The New Cuban Stamp.

The Spanish coat of arms has been removed from the new issue of postage stamps of Cuba in the interim government, which is now in control of the island. The design represents a group of palm trees, and experimental specimens of the stamps have been issued. The design of other denominations in the same issue are equally pleasing.

Great Britain's Colonial Secretary.

The man who might be said to be responsible for the South African war is the Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, the colonial secretary of Great Britain, whose latest and best portrait is herewith shown. Mr. Chamberlain is also the man who has been an imperialist of the most enthusiastic kind. He has been called "Joseph the Second" because of the way in which John Bright used to call him "John the Second." Down the way to which John Bright used to call him "John the Second." Down the way to early station when Mr. Chamberlain was only a member of the Birmingham Debating society, he began to express views very advanced for those days. When, year by years later, he became a member of the house of commons, not to be superior to the