

A GROUP OF BATTLE PAINTERS AND WAR ARTISTS.

BY ROBERT MACHRAY.

AS a nation we have not hitherto been strong in military painters, which is certainly a remarkable fact when we consider how full our history is of heroic deeds and splendid feats of arms. Even the tremendous struggle which saw the rise and fall of Napoleon did not give us any great battle-pictures, and it is not a little singular that almost the only painting of epoch-making Waterloo in our public galleries—it hangs in South Kensington—is by the French artist, Phillippoteaux. France, on the other hand, with her adoration of *La Gloire* and her devotion to the Army, has found inspiring themes for several painters of the first rank in the stories of her wars. The walls of Versailles are covered with pictures of the achievements of her generals, and every art collection abounds in military subjects. One has only to recall the names of Meissonier, Horace Vernet, Détaillé, Yvon, and De Neuville, to say nothing of others, and a host of glorious canvases, dedicated

to the soldiers of France, spring instantly into the mind's eye.

It is just possible that the indifference of British painters to battle-scenes and military subjects generally will disappear in consequence of the importunate public demand that now manifests itself on all sides for pictures dealing with the war in South Africa. Not that they have not been given their cue in such matters before. Was there ever a more popular painting than "The Roll Call," by Lady Butler? I shall probably be told that art has nothing to do with popularity, but, as the Americans say, "Is that so?" Rather, it seems to me, does the universal desire, amounting to a positive craving, for pictorial commentaries on the



THE BATTLE OF MAGESFONTEIN : THE HIGHLANDERS SURPRISED IN CLOSE ORDER. BY JOHN H. BACON.

doings of our Army in South Africa point to the existence of a genuine instinct, not wholly brutal, which our painters would do well to satisfy. A nation of shopkeepers, no doubt, we are; but the man in the street, who perhaps serves behind a counter, none the less knows and feels with pride that he belongs to a conquering race. And so he calls and clamours for the brush and pencil of the war artist to make real and vivid presentments for him of the various aspects of the conflicts in which the fighting men of that race of his have been or are engaged.

The pictorial press has never had any doubt about it. Since William Simpson

same celerity and alacrity which characterise the movements of "Our Own War Correspondent." The war artist is thoroughly well aware of the fact that his sketches will be looked for quite as eagerly as, perhaps even more so than, those of his brother of the pen, for they bring home to thousands the incidents of warfare far more directly than any mere words can do, however eloquent or forceful the writing may be. Take us on the whole—we are not a particularly imaginative people—and we like pictures, because they present us with something tangible. They show us the actual; they realise things for us.



THE HAMPSHIRE MOUNTED INFANTRY IN BURMAH: A SUDDEN ATTACK BY DACOITS.

By W. B. Wollen, R.I.

sketched in the Crimea for the *Illustrated London News* (see our former article on "War Correspondents" in the *WINDSOR* for April), the work of war artists has been one of its most conspicuous and, at the same time, most acceptable features. No matter where flows the dark tide of war, there artist-specials are immediately despatched by those who direct our illustrated papers. Mr. Seppings Wright, himself a distinguished war artist, tells us how the imperative command is issued from the "office"—"Go to the front"—and within a few hours he is on board train or steamer, as the case may be, speeding to the scene of action with the

It is hardly to be wondered at, then, if the interest in general which attaches to pictures, combined with the war in South Africa and the Imperial spirit of the time in which we live, should lead to a great development amongst us with respect to the choice of military subjects by our painters—a development which is certain of wide appreciation.

It goes without saying that a military painter must be perfectly familiar with the details of military life. It is perhaps not necessary that he should have participated in a campaign—Lady Butler is a notable proof to the contrary; but to have been present in actions, to have shared in the emotions that

attend on victory or defeat, to have taken part in the forced march and in the life of the camp, to have bivouacked in the rain or under clear, starry skies—in a word, to have seen the reality of war—must surely hold its own inspirations. Meissonier was attached to the staff of Napoleon III. in the Italian war, and was frequently under fire. His first great battle-painting, "The Battle of Solferino," which is in the Luxembourg, is reminiscent of a day of fate of which he himself was a witness. D etaille was a soldier in the Franco-German war, and we are told that the double sympathies of the patriot

his canvas battle-scenes not actually observed with his own eyes.

The position of an artist making sketches on the field of battle must be a trying and difficult one. He has to do his work often on horseback or on camel-back, amidst a scene of confusion. He must not allow himself to be daunted or greatly disturbed. Above all, he must have a quick eye and a steady hand. He must be ready to seize points of interest as they arise and to transfer them to his paper with all possible speed, therefore coolness and great dexterity must be his. Sometimes he may have time to



AN INCIDENT OF THE INDIAN FRONTIER RISING OF 1897: THE RELIEF OF FORT GULISTAN.
THE 2ND PUNJAB INFANTRY BREASTING THE KOTAL, SUPPORTED BY GURKHAS.

By H. C. Seppings Wright.

and the artist were so strong that even on the field of battle he would drop his gun to take his pencil, and then, the sketch finished, take up his gun again. Several of our English battle painters have had experiences of war, and their art must surely gain from what they have seen.

A distinction, however, must be drawn between battle painters and war artists. Every battle painter is in a sense a war artist, but not all war artists are battle painters. For the purpose of this article I shall define the war artist as a "special," who sends us pictures of incidents at the front, the battle painter as one who puts on

finish his sketches, but we are all familiar with his work published in the rough, helped out by written notes, such as those sent by Mr. Melton Prior and others. More frequently the rough sketches are worked up in black-and-white by artists at home whose services are specially retained by the illustrated papers on account of their capacity for rendering adequately the real feeling, the veritable atmosphere, of war. Several of the pictures accompanying this article belong to this class. They are the productions of battle painters rather than of war artists. The battle painter, however, may or may not have any such notes to work from.



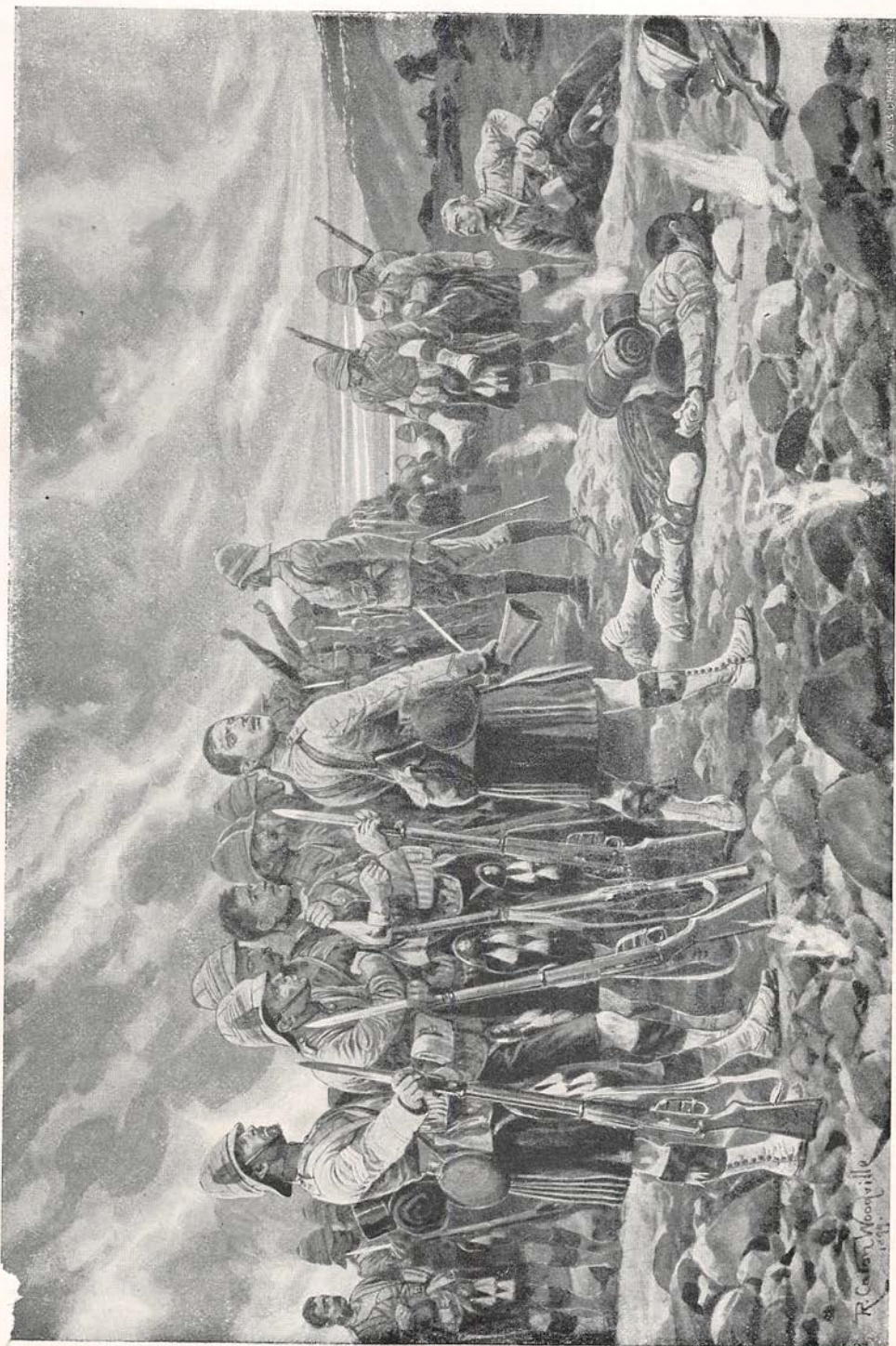
CURSING THE INFIDEL: AN INCIDENT IN THE INDIAN FRONTIER RISING OF 1897. BY S. BEGG.

Prominent amongst our battle painters stands Mr. R. Caton Woodville, R.I., one of a band of distinguished men who made their reputation first in the pictorial press. Rather more than a score of years ago, Caton Woodville, a youth of twenty, submitted a drawing in black-and-white to the *Illustrated London News*, and his connection with that journal

has remained unbroken since. His father was an artist of distinction, whose paintings were exhibited at the Royal Academy; his mother was a Russian. After his father's death, the boy and his mother went to Petersburg, then to Germany, where, at Düsseldorf, young Woodville studied art under E. von Gebhardt, a painter who had



A COLUMN OF BRITISH SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE ON THE MARCH TO MAFERING THROUGH BECHUANALAND.
By R. CATON WOODVILLE, R.I.



“ALL THAT WAS LEFT OF THEM”: THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE RE-FORMING AFTER THE BATTLE OF MAGERSFONTEIN.
By R. CATON WOODVILLE, R.I.

a predilection for religious subjects. Coming to London, he continued his studies. When he was just twenty, Sir William Ingram sent him to represent the *Illustrated London News* in the Servian war of 1878, and he also acted as war artist for the same journal in the Egyptian campaign of 1882. He has thus had abundant opportunities at first hand of seeing what war really is, and so it is no wonder that his paintings are full of actuality, of life and movement.

On Mr. Woodville's return from the wars he began to paint large canvases devoted to military subjects, exhibiting in the Royal

his paintings and wash drawings is his wonderful success, his amazing skill, in expressing action. Take, for example, "The Charge of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman," which appears with this article. The whole scene, with its pell-mell of fighting, struggling Dervishes and Lancers, is instinct with life. The incident itself was one of the most stirring in the campaign of Kitchener against the Khalifa, and can hardly yet have faded from general recollection. The picture, which appeared in the *Illustrated London News*, was worked up from a sketch made by an officer of the Seaforth's. Another Egyptian



HOW LORD ROBERTS'S SON WENT OUT TO SAVE THE GUNS AT COLENSO

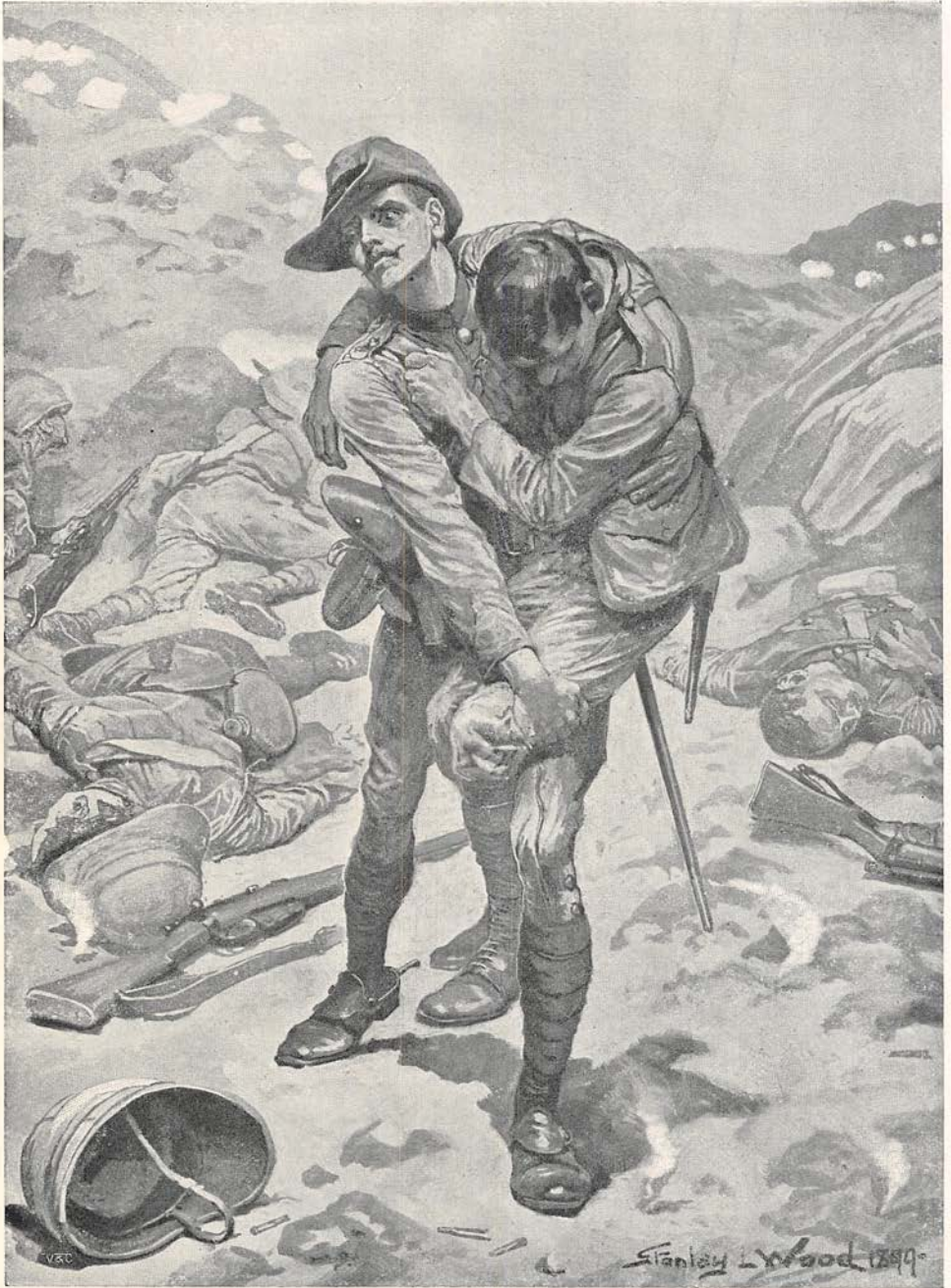
Drawn by Sidney Paget from a sketch by Ernest Prater.

Academy first in 1879, and fame came to him almost at once. His picture of "Saving the Guns at Maiwand," which was bought by the Corporation of Liverpool for the Walker Art Gallery, placed him at a bound in the front rank of military painters. Since then he has increased his reputation by such pictures as "Kassassin," "Kandahar," "1815" (his Waterloo picture), "The Storming of Badajoz, 1812," and "Balacava." In addition to his paintings, Mr. Woodville has always done a large amount of black-and-white work, for the *Illustrated London News* in particular. To me, the most striking characteristic of both

picture by Mr. Woodville is given on page 271, "The Destruction of a Transport near Suakim," in which may again be observed the same vigour of movement. Two subjects derived from the war in South Africa are presented as further examples of Mr. Woodville's work. One depicts "A Column of British South African Police on the March": the other, "All that was Left of Them," a picture of mournful but heroic suggestion, which appeared in the *Spear* as a supplement, has for its theme the calling of the roll of the remnant of the Highland Brigade after the disastrous morning of Magersfontein.



A ROUGH ROAD FOR THE GUNS.
By JOHN CHARLTON.



A GOOD SAMARITAN UNDER FIRE.

"At the battle of Willow Grange an officer of the Imperial Light Horse went into the open and rescued a badly wounded private and carried him into safety under a heavy fire."

An incident of the present Transvaal War depicted by Stanley L. Wood.

Another South African picture, a line of Highlanders under fire, is that of Mr. John H. Bacon. The original of this first appeared in *Black and White* a short time ago. Mr. Bacon has had no experience of war itself, but his work, as shown in this and other sketches, is very effective. He has studied the best French models, and readers of the *WINDSOR* will readily recall the striking illustrations by him which appeared in this magazine accompanying Mr. Guy Boothby's serial, "Pharos the Egyptian."

Mr. Wollen, an artist who has done a large amount of work for the illustrated

page 264 shows some of the 2nd Punjab Infantry breasting the Kotal as they march on to the relief of Fort Gulistan—an episode in the Indian Frontier rising of 1897. To the same time belongs Mr. S. Begg's remarkably effective "Cursing the Infidel," the central figure, that of a native *mullah* or prophet, being drawn with splendid *verve*. One of the grandest achievements of any war is portrayed by Mr. Sidney Paget (*The Sphere*) in his fine picture, "How Lord Roberts's Son Went Out to Save the Guns," an ever-memorable incident of the effort to relieve Ladysmith. Mr. John Charlton, who is well known as the painter of several

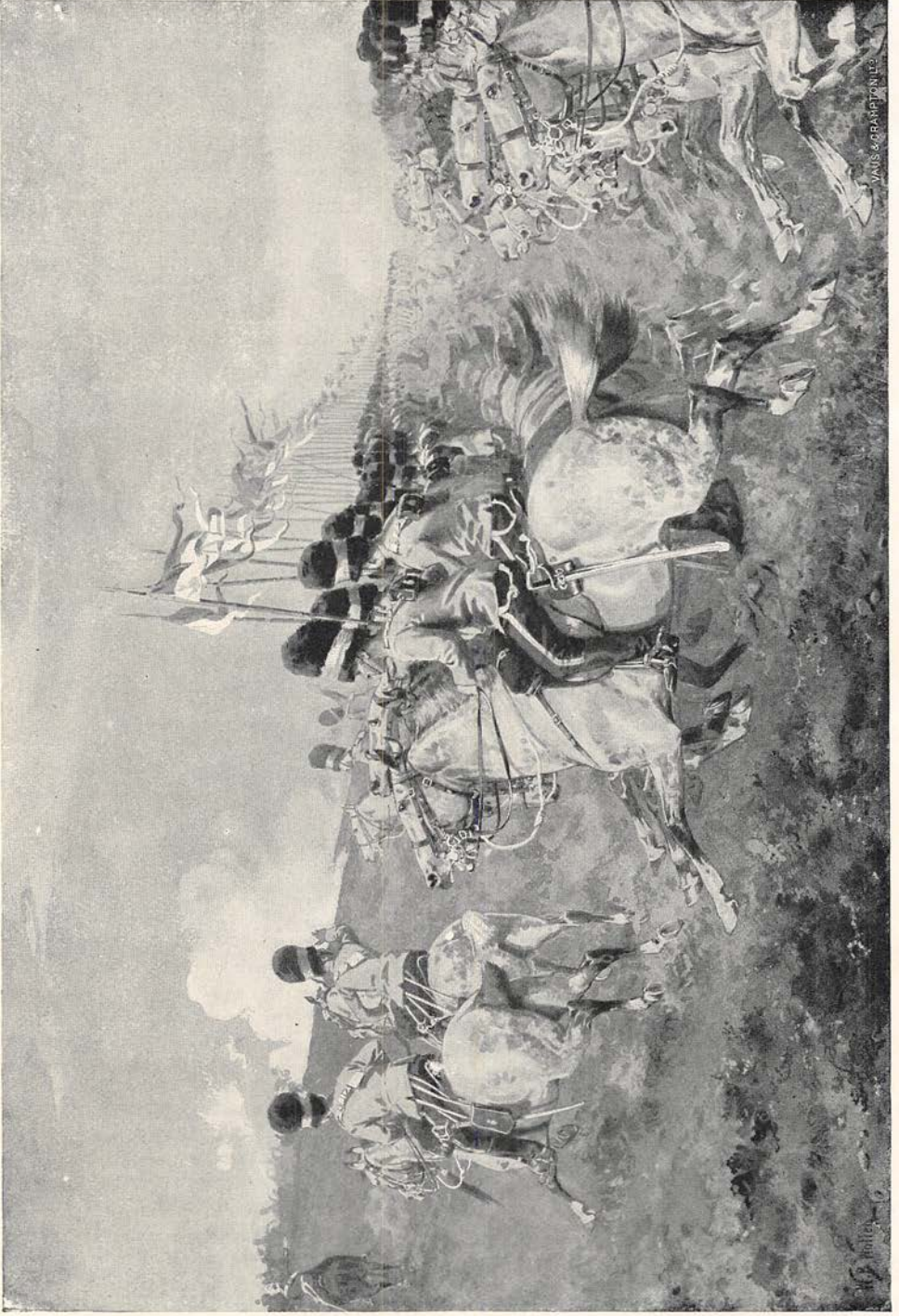


THE DESTRUCTION OF A TRANSPORT NEAR SUAKIM: AN INCIDENT OF THE SOUDAN WAR OF 1885.

By R. Caton Woodville, R.I.

press, particularly in military subjects, is represented here by "A Review of the Scots Greys" and "A Sudden Attack." In the latter a detachment of the Hampshire Infantry are seen repelling an attack of Dacoits in Burma. Mr. Wollen has lately been in South Africa for the *Sphere*. Mr. Seppings Wright, who has successfully combined in himself the functions of war correspondent and war artist, has seen several campaigns, but not the last. One campaign is enough, he thinks, to furnish forth a war artist with all the material he needs for his battle-pictures—so he once confided to me. The wash drawing on

military pictures, such as "Ulundi" and "Tel-el-Kebir," and who painted the official picture of the Thanksgiving Service in front of St. Paul's on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee, called "God Save the Queen," contributes to our article an animated presentment of artillerymen in the act of crossing a ford: it is chosen from the *Graphic*. Mr. Stanley L. Wood, who is in his element in battle painting, is represented here by his spirited study of the rescue of a wounded soldier by a comrade, originally published in *Black and White*. Personally, however, I think Mr. Wood is at his best when he draws horses; no one can beat him at that.



A REVIEW OF THE SCOTS GREYS. DRAWN BY W. B. WOLLEN, R.I.

WALS & CHAMBERS



THE CHARGE OF THE 21ST LANCERS AT OMDURMAN, SEPTEMBER 2, 1898. BY R. CATON WOODVILLE, R.I.