



Illustrated by G. Vernon-Stokes and B. Boese.

CA V E canem," especially if he be one of the "dogs of war," whose sagacity and indomitable courage are historic. Incidents in the present war in South Africa, together with personal experiences during ten years' campaigning as a war correspondent, have combined to suggest this passing glance at the achievements of dogs of war, past and present, and their probable uses in connection with the fighting of the future. In the early days of the siege of Mafeking, Colonel Baden-Powell's laconic telegram, "Heavy cannonade continues—casualties, one dog killed," will be fresh in everybody's memory; while that other dog recently found to be following our troops, when about to take a Boer position by stealth at midnight, is yet another up-to-date illustration of the devious wanderings of dogs on the warpath. Picture for one moment the discovery by that creeping, silent, almost breathless brigade as they scaled that *kopje*, that there was a dog in their midst, the faintest yelp or howl or bark from which would discover them to the enemy. To shoot or even to strangle the intruder would

have been fatal to their purpose, and chloroform—the only thing to secure absolute silence—was, of course, unprocurable. There was only one chance—and in this even there was an element of great risk that he might bark from sheer jubilation—and that was to have him gently led back to camp and then secured, the lives of those troops having already been for some hours at the mercy of that too inquisitive spaniel. By the way, the dog which follows the fortunes of the Northumberland Fusiliers—the "Fighting Fifth"—is a veteran who holds the record amongst dogs for gallant conduct at the front. At the battle of Omdurman and in the pacification of Crete he especially distinguished himself, and he has but lately assisted at the relief of Kimberley.

With a view to ascertaining more about the probable uses to which dogs may in the near future be put for purposes of war, the German military authorities are conducting a series of most interesting experiments in Silesia for the purpose of testing the value of watch-dogs, their capability for carrying back a message from a reconnoitring party to the rear, conveying ammunition to a given point, and barking—even in some cases "pointing"—on the discovery of wounded men who would have been probably unseen owing to rocky or wooded surroundings, or otherwise playing some new, useful, and interesting part in connection with future campaigns.

For these important experiments, German pointers, sheep-dogs, collies, and spaniels have been chiefly in requisition. I have lately placed myself in communication with the Duke of Argyll, who takes a very deep interest in dogs as employed in modern warfare, and from his courteous reply I gather he is of opinion that, under certain circumstances, dogs may be trained as despatch-bearers and for the discovery of newly turned earthworks, to a point at which their services may probably be invaluable.

The subject, at any rate, in reference to

when I—then, I think, one of the youngest war artists at the front—made my first acquaintance, during the Commune, with the various preparations of poodle to which clever *chefs* gave such delightfully delusive titles on their *menus*, that one felt that where ignorance was bliss it was folly to be wise.

Or, again, I am reminded of experiences out in Asia Minor during the Russo-Turkish war. Let us look back to the autumn of 1877. The moon—a large yellow moon—is just rising above the irregular



ST. BERNARD CARRYING A FLASK AND A ROLL OF BANDAGES.

the yesterday, to-day, or to-morrow of our four-footed allies, is brimful of interest. From the earliest times we glean stories of dogs being connected with campaigns. Xenophon tells of certain Spartan dogs wearing huge spiked collars; indeed, at Marathon, one of these formidable beasts won such exceptional glory that his virtues were recorded on his master's tomb. The mere reference in recent despatches to the hungry besieged residents of Mafeking having recourse not only to their horses, but to their dogs—the latter making "most excellent soup"—takes me back to the time

summit of the Deve-Boyun Pass, near Erzerum, several other war correspondents and myself being on our way thence to Kars, now closely besieged by the Muscovites. We have crossed the pestilential fosse which (for sanitary purposes!) is supposed to confine microbes to the suburbs, while beyond us is a vast plain, a valley of rocks and boulders, beyond which again the Deve-Boyun (or camel-back) Pass blocks the way. Ye gods of Olympus! what a feast of foul odours for the wolves, vultures, bustards, carrion crows, and, above all, the man-eating dogs which prowl, hover, and flutter in "the glimpses

of the moon " round about the putrefying bodies of camels and horses which have been ejected hither for the city's sanitation forsooth! Foremost amongst those grim scavengers are the man-eaters—long, lank hounds that confine themselves in peace times to body-snatching in Turkish graveyards, while in war they whet their appetites in the fosse and banquet on the battlefield, with the result that their backs and necks become raw and covered with sores, a revolting malady induced by eating human flesh.

There were many strange stories current during the Russo-Turkish war concerning the sagacity of dogs and the curious uses to which the Russians in some cases put them. I was myself at the front with Todleben's (4th) Division during the siege of Plevna, and heard more than one thrilling incident recounted concerning the devotion of dogs to their masters—true even unto death—dogs which, having, as in the Alps, followed through snow, ice, and blizzard during that Arctic winter on outpost duty, were frozen to death by their masters' sides. I



"THE DOG SPRANG AT HIM."

distinctly remember when at Porodem how (though not all thus accompanied) seventy poor fellows thus perished at the front in one night in the great snow-girt circle of investment surrounding devoted Plevna, which from our point of view looked after dark like some huge cauldron of liquid fire—a very hell upon earth—while on its outer edge the Ice King held his grim sway, the elements seeming in devilish competition to

crush those who had as yet escaped the fury of shot, shell, and sabre.

It is also curiously interesting to trace the association of dogs in the past with war. There is a delightful and well-authenticated story of the battle of Augrim, in which an Irish officer was accompanied by a faithful wolf-hound which fought with all the tenacity of its gallant master, who, towards the close of that hardly contested fight, was numbered amongst



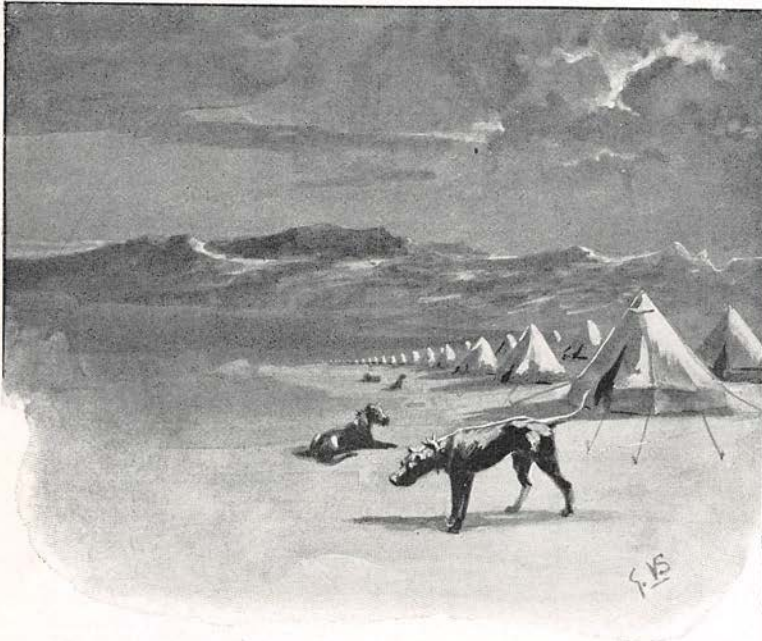
BLOODHOUNDS EMPLOYED IN THE MAROON WAR.

the slain. The grief of his four-footed favourite knew no bounds, and as the body was only discovered by heedless peasants and left in the long grass to rot, the officer's chief mourner commenced a solitary vigil, in which he defended his master's remains from such carrion, birds or beasts, as might have prowled or fluttered around in quest of food. Indeed, had it not been for these oft-recurring conflicts, which generally resulted to the advantage of the wolf-hound, he would have succumbed himself to starvation. From July to the following January did this faithful beast defend his master's body on the spot where he had fallen, till he was one day

every nerve in its body to approach its master. This it eventually succeeded in doing, when, having with an extreme effort climbed on to his breast, it expired.

Then, too, there is the equally well authenticated story of the dog of Montargis. Two officers of the King's bodyguard—Aubrey de Montdidier and Macaire—having previously had a desperate quarrel, met by chance in a wood near Paris. Aubrey de Montdidier, who had with him a favourite greyhound, was foully murdered by Macaire. Now, the devotion with which the dog clung to the spot where his master had been hastily buried by his murderer, and the ferocity he

displayed towards the latter when they came in contact, aroused the suspicions of the King, who decreed that a combat should take place between Macaire and the hound in the neighbourhood of Notre Dame, before the whole Court, the conditions being that the dog should have an empty barrel into which to escape, while Macaire should be armed with a club. The result was immediate and decisive. The dog with one bound seized his opponent by the throat, and the guilty man, thus



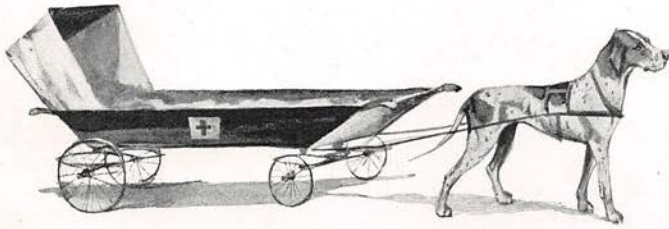
BOARHOUNDS ON GUARD.

disturbed by a passing soldier who came unwittingly so near the dead officer's now bleached bones, that the dog sprang at him and pinned him to the ground. But with one too well directed shot the faithful creature was laid low for ever by his master's side. Then it was that the story of that poor hound's devotion eked out. Certain villagers there were at some distance from the spot who from time to time had fed it, though, if they ventured too near, an ominous growl always sent them scared away.

The fidelity of the dog was never more touchingly exemplified than at the battle of Magenta, where near a dead officer lay his wounded hound, which was seen to strain

staring Fate in the face, confessed his crime, and was only rescued from death by the hound's jaws to be executed immediately afterwards.

To the same branch of the subject belongs the story of King Pyrrhus, who, finding one of his troops lying dead by the way—his dog watching the body—and suspecting him to have been murdered, had recourse to the expedient—so Plutarch tells us—of having the men of that particular regiment drawn up in the presence of the dog, which, when let loose, made such savage attacks on certain of their number that inquiries were instituted, when, though they did not confess (as in the similar



AMBULANCE CARRIAGE.

canine favourite, first with the stripes of a corporal, and ultimately with those of a full sergeant.

Germany, however, as I have already implied, is *facile princeps* in her appreciation of the value of dogs in war, not only in searching for the wounded and barking at



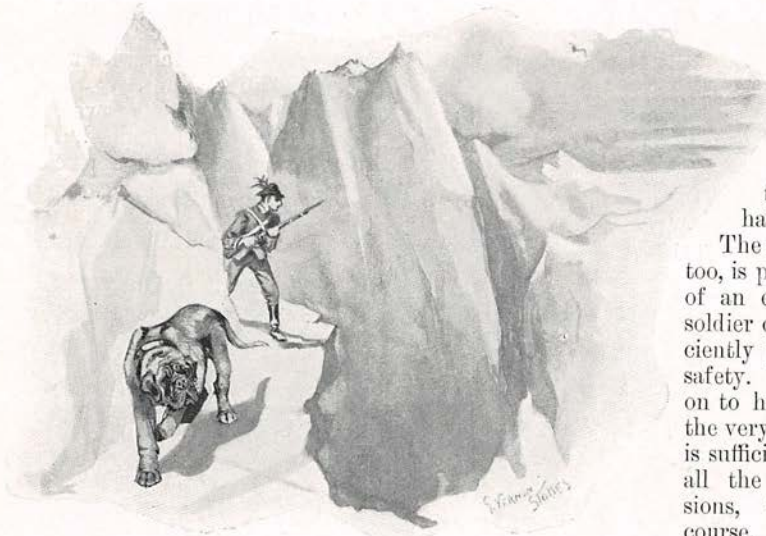
COLLIE BARKING ON THE DISCOVERY OF THE WOUNDED.

case of Macaire and the dog of Montargis), they were nevertheless discovered beyond the shadow of a doubt to be guilty, and punished accordingly.

A certain Signor de Rossi has made some very interesting experiments in connection with dogs, having invented, amongst other things, a canvas satchel, connected across the animal's loins with a belt of light bent wood, intended for the conveyance of ammunition to the front, thus supplementing the supply carried by troops. The Austrians claim for dogs a foremost place as path-finders and mountain guides, while the French in Algeria decorated a certain



THE CANVAS SATCHEL.



IN THE ITALIAN ALPS.

their discovery, but in carrying back to camp the cap or some other portion of the uniform, and then leading the rescue party to the spot where the sagacious animal has made his find. The St. Bernard is said to exercise the same intelligence he displays at the *hospice* from which he derives his name—a flask being carried, to which, in this case, a roll of bandage, as will be seen in our illustration, is added. The training of these dogs of war commences when they are about eight months old, and their education is supposed to have

German Boarhound.

been completed by the end of their first year. Would that I could have tackled the *pons asinorum* with equal success! How my early troubles would thereby have been lightened!

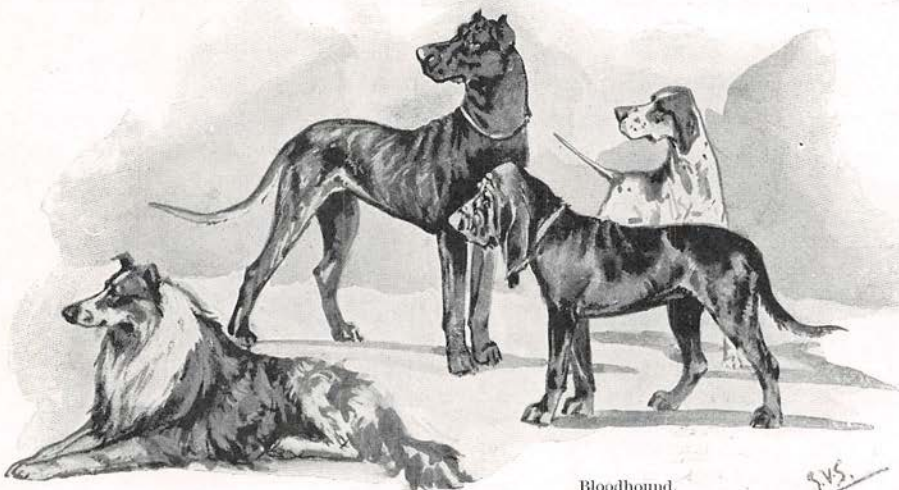
The method of instruction, too, is peculiar. The uniform of an enemy is worn by a soldier of the regiment, sufficiently padded to insure his safety. The dog, being set on to him, so worries it that the very sight of that uniform is sufficient in future to excite all the animal's worst passions, this being only, of course, with the object of its use from a combative point of view. For the carriage

of ammunition to the front, or for the conveyance of stores, the German boarhound and the Russian Borzoi are considered the most useful beasts of burden. Light carts are also found convenient, to which these and other dogs—pointers, for instance—are harnessed.

Thus, in almost all European countries except England, dogs have their several positions in connection with war; indeed, as scouts they have at times proved themselves more apt than their human allies.

Amongst famous four-footed warriors may

Pointer.



Collie.

Bloodhound.

DOGS OF WAR.



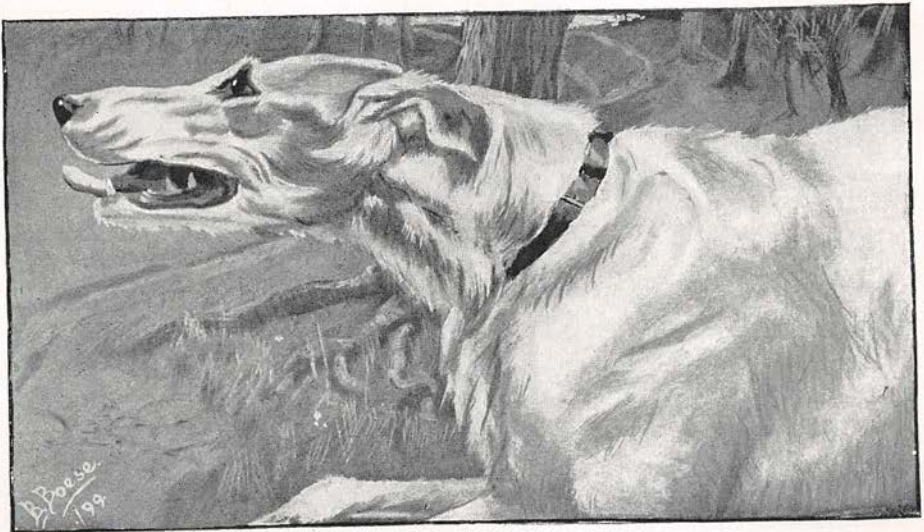
ST. BERNARD.

be mentioned the mastiffs which followed the footsteps of the Knights of Rhodes. These animals not only "sniffed battle from afar," but also recognised the peculiar odour of advancing Turks miles away. Nor must we forget that the Dutch were much indebted to the services of dogs during the fighting in Acheen, and that it is an historical fact that a spaniel, opportunely barking at the moment of a pending attack on his camp, awakened William the Silent and thus averted a terrible catastrophe.

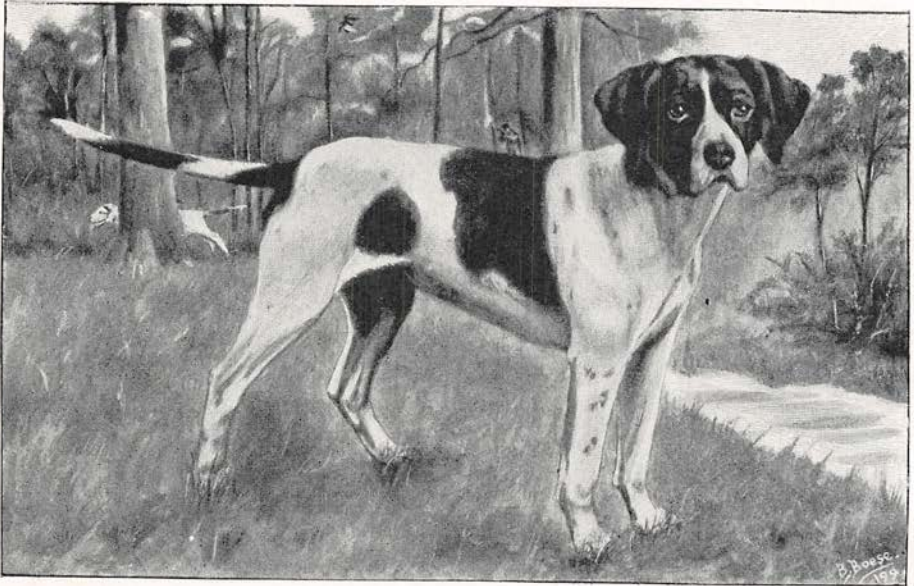
In 1795 a hundred bloodhounds were engaged in the Maroon war in the West

Indies, forty Spanish Chasseurs being told off to hold them in leash till such time as, in full cry, they made for the enemy; but this, owing to their struggles, was found to be impossible, and so, dragging those Chasseurs after them, they made such an impression on the foe that the latter were soon in rapid retreat. Indeed, it is recorded that General Walpole reviewed this savage battalion with much pomp and circumstance—let us hope to their complete canine satisfaction.

In the sanguinary war of extermination by the United States Government against the once powerful Seminoles, immense



BORZOI HOUND.



POINTER.

numbers of bloodhounds were used, as, indeed, they were only a few years since against the Sioux Indians.

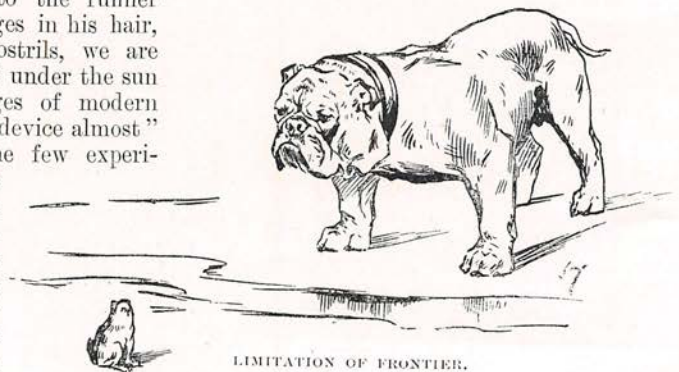
In the Italian Alps the lonely sentinel's constant companion through the silent watches of the night is his dog, many instances having been quoted in which this four-footed patrol has been of inestimable service.

From a military point of view dogs are an exemplary fighting force. They can live on very little; are never disposed, however great the victory at which they have assisted, to drink too much; and are as true to their friends as they are dangerous to their foes.

At the present moment we are but tardily nearing the end of a war which has taxed the ability of great generals and the ingenuity of minor lights. From armoured trains, balloons, and pigeon-post, to the runner who dexterously hides messages in his hair, his ear, or one of his nostrils, we are practising every device *almost* under the sun in connection with the usages of modern warfare. I have said "every device almost" advisedly, since, though some few experiments have been made, the services of dogs in war have not certainly commanded sufficient attention. Surely while experiments on a peace footing are going on with dogs elsewhere, these same animals might be put to the test in

actual warfare, in connection especially, I should say, with ambulance work. The historic dogs of St. Bernard, at least, might be of inestimable value in connection with the Red Cross.

This sketch has been intentionally discursive, since I have endeavoured to embrace references to many lands and many periods, but if I have by one word served a good cause and at the same time interested the readers of the WINDSOR MAGAZINE, I shall be more than pleased that my experiences as a war correspondent have been brought to bear on a subject which is worthy the serious consideration of our military advisers and experts, and one that has not, so far, had the prominence given to it which in the cause of fighting humanity it deserves.



LIMITATION OF FRONTIER.