A SUDDEN DEATH.

A very sudden death occurred at Northcote on Sunday, when Miss M. A. Sheehan, sister-in-law of Mr James Graham, solicitor, died while on a visit to Mr and Mrs G. Graham. The deceased lady was about 56 years of age, and when she retired early in the evening, appeared to be in her usual state of health. About half-past two in the morning Mrs Graham was awakened by hearing one of her children, who occupied the same room as Miss Sheehan, crying. Mrs Graham at once went to see what was the matter, and on entering the room found Miss Sheehan lying dead, death having apparently occurred some hours previously. An inquest was held on Monday before Mr T. Gresham (city coroner), when Dr. Moir certified to death being due to aortic dilation, a verdict being returned accordingly.

EASTER RAILWAY SERVICE.

The Railway Department advise that from Wednesday, April 19, until Wednesday, April 26, an extra express train leaves Auckland for Rotorua, Te Aroha, and Paeroa at 9 a.m. This train arrives at Hamilton at 12.30 p.m., Te Aroha 2.20, Paeroa 3.5, Matamata 2.5, Okoroire 2.25 and Rotorua 4.45 p.m. From Thursday, April 20, until Thursday, April 27, an extra express train will leave Rotorua at 10.5 a.m. and arrive at Auckland at 5.38 p.m. These extra trains will make the same stoppages as the ordinary express trains. Intending passengers are advised to travel by the 9 a.m. express train from Auckland, as by so doing they reach their destination an hour earlier than by the ordinary express. A dining car is attached to the extra express trains between Auckland and Frankton.

Russian Comments on the Japanese.

As told in Soldiers' Letters.

An interesting book might be compiled from what opponents in great wars have said about one another. The first outburst of war fever usually produces a crop of contemptuous and ungenerous judgments which time modifies as the logic of the desperate fight works its way into the soldier's mind. The present war is no exception. Contempt was the first feeling felt by all Russians for their "pigmy," "yellow-skinned," "monkeyish," "treacherous opponents. After the first few lost battles this easy feeling of superiority degenerated into hatred. But now, though contempt and hatred persist, there is arising a feeling of generous admiration.

Most Russian soldiers' letters reflect this change of feeling. Six months ago Private Alexei Turkhanoff of the famous 11th Siberians wrote, "The 'obliesaiani' (monkeys) are as cowardly and as treacherous as we expected. Ten Japanese will run at and stick one poor Christian Russian, but when they don't outnumber us like that they run away and hide in their monkey-holes." The attitude to-day is very different. "The Japanese can fight, though not so well as our men," writes a soldier named Pruitkoff, "and they are not afraid of being killed. Our men roared 'hurrah' at Liaoyang when two little Japanese, whose whole battalion had been slaughtered, continued to march slowly on to our bayonets. Luckily they were wounded only slightly."

Some of these Russian judgments are inexpressibly funny. "Yesterday," writes Corporal Konstantinoff, "we had a great dispute as to whether a Makak (derisive but not unsympathetic slang for Japanese) has a soul. I said they hadn't, as only Christians have souls. Our priest came up, and after listening he said, 'Yes, they have souls, otherwise they would not be so brave.' This we all agreed with, and Cousin Mikhail said, 'Yes, they have souls like us; but we will be saved when we die.'"

Private Alexander Sadovnikoff's description of his country's enemies is entertaining. "You will want to know what the Japanese are like. Well, small, and with skins like my boot. The ones we have here as prisoners behave just like ordinary men, but they take off their boots, and march on their bare feet. Why is that? Because the Japanese have tough soles fitted to their feet by God. They can walk over prickly weeds without feeling it. Another thing that makes them different from us is their hands. Many have webs between their fingers like geese. These ones are kept at the rear of the army, as they can't shoot well, but some day I hope to see one."

"Nearly every Japanese we have caught can read and write," says Cossack Tchoremisoff. "That shows how clever they are. Their characters are like spiders, all the same, an 'adski' (hellish) kind of writing. Not being Christians, and thinking they have no immortal souls, they don't fear to die. Indeed, many of them like it, as they have a bad time at home. Imagine 50,000,000 all clever men but kept like slaves. One Japanese prisoner told us that at home he was chained to a count's plough. He said this with a laugh, but I don't think he liked it. As they are very small they have a great advantage over us. Bullets don't hurt them. When we were in Korea I shot one through the chest. That's dead, thought I. But he kept running forward just as quick as the men who were not wounded, and didn't stop till one of our men who was hiding behind a hill put a bullet through his head. Is that bravery or 'bieshenstvo' (diabolical frenzy)?"

"The Japanese dread being taken prisoners, hence we take few," writes another soldier. "Often, especially at Liaoyang, they get in among us and are surrounded. Our Captain Popoff knocked down the rifle of one and cried 'seize him!' The Japanese was safe enough and could have surrendered, but he stooped, picked up the rifle, and ran the bayonet right into his throat. In the hospital he sputtered out, with a lot of blood, 'Kill me, kill me!' Nobody killed him. Our officers say that we should be like this and never surrender."

The intimate habits of the Japanese are thus commented on by an artillerist named Dorfmann: "Every Japanese has a piece of soap with which he washes his feet and his face. Funny he doesn't mind his hands being dirty. He doses himself with medicine every day. Many dead Japanese we found had a hairless patch on their heads as our Cossacks used to have. The reason of this is that they believe shaving the crown prevents a man catching cold. Some of the Japanese we buried were tatooed. One had a palace done in three colours on his back and another a ship on his arm. Their skins are not as yellow as their faces. I suppose it's the sun that makes them so dark. Last winter when the weather was cold we buried two Japanese who had patches of sheepskin tied round their knees under their trousers. Their joints must be weak."

War News: Its Collection and Cost.

(By Edgar Mels.)

One of the hitherto untold horrors of the Russo-Japanese war is its cost to the newspapers the world over, conservatively estimated at £2,000,000 for the first year. Three-quarters of this great sum is being spent by the papers published in the English language, for the rest of the world—that which indulges in French and German and other foreign tongues—is not yet educated to the thrills of four-inch deep, first-page headlines, with eight lines of more or less accurate reading matter beneath. The newspapers of America and Great Britain are bearing the brunt of the expense—and are gaining nothing by it.

It is a strange fact, though explicable, that during every war within the last fifty years the newspapers have suffered loss of advertising, despite the natural increase in their circulations. This is explained by the fact that the extra circulation is gained by persons who buy two or three or more papers a day, read the war news, and then throw the paper away; whereas in times of peace one paper suffices, but is read from beginning to end—the advertisements included.

That is why the publishers of newspapers dreaded the coming of the present war. They had learned the bitter lesson during the South African campaign, and when hostilities looked imminent it was with reluctance that correspondents were sent to the Far East. Each paper was forced by reason of its prestige and circulation to send individual correspondents to the front—and some sent a dozen and the Associated Press more than one hundred—sought by means of combinations with other papers to reduce the cost to itself.

In this way the London "Times" shared expenses with the New York "Times" and the Philadelphia "Public Ledger." The New York "Herald" furnished its news to more than a hundred papers in various parts of the United States. The New York "World" combined with the London "Daily Mail" and the Philadelphia "Press." The Chicago "Record-Herald" also syndicated its news. The Chicago "Daily News," on the other hand, played a lone game, at an enormous expense, for it is one of the three papers having a private sea-going steamer, which, at a minimum, costs £300 a week.

The financial details of the combinations settled, correspondents were selected, some because of previous experience, some because of political and financial influence, and a few because they went to the scene of the war on their own responsibility and were there at the outbreak of hostilities to be utilised.

* * * *

How the correspondent gathers his news, and sends it to the home office, and how it is there knocked into shape, such as it represents when the paper is read, is fully as interesting as the news itself.

The army corps to which the correspondent is attached begins its march to the objective point to which it has been assigned by the commander. The march takes place at night and in silence, the men walking in file. Hundreds of coolies, carrying ammunition, sandbags for earthworks, and camp utensils, trudge along, with the correspondents flocking together for the sake of companionship and riding with the officers.

Then the battle begins—shells whiz through the air, shrieking a noisy warning; bullets hum—the shouts of the onrushing combatants, the shrieks of the wounded, the curses of the artillery drivers, all producing a pandemonium which requires a steady head for dispassionate thought. On some elevation, so that he may better scan the field, is the correspondent, looking hither and thither through field-glasses. His interpreter tells him the names of the various regiments, their strength, their location. The correspondent makes no notes—his memory must treasure all that, for he has to move—shrapnel is bursting close to him, and discretion is the better part of valour in this instance.

At last the battle is over—the Russians are in full retreat, and while the cavalry is in pursuit the infantry is resting or helping the ambulance corps to take care of the wounded and bury the dead. Then the correspondent takes time to write his dispatch in skeleton shape, probably sitting on the body of a dead horse, or on a rock, or standing up—he has no choice, for time is precious. The dispatch finished, he must find the censor. Just where that worthy is is hard to tell, for he is an officer as well as an editor, and he may be miles away. At last he is found and the dispatch is submitted.

"Most interesting and accurate," he says, and then adds deprecatingly: "You mention certain movements we expect to make to-night, and forecast some for the future. Don't you think it might be best to omit that?"

And the correspondent, who knows the necessity of keeping on the censor's good side, agrees, and the dispatch is ready to be sent to the nearest telegraph station. Now, it may be that the military telegraph is not too crowded and can be utilised, but in most instances the dispatch has to be sent by native runners to the nearest office out of the zone of the actual hostilities, whence it is transmitted beneath leagues of sea to the news-room of the newspaper.

Having reached its destination it goes to the war editor—the man who has, charge of all the war news and who acts in conjunction with the managing and news editors. The war editor supplies the word missing from the skeleton. The dispatch, for instance, may come to him in something this shape:—

"Express correspondent, Nagasaki, via Shanghai, Friday: Admirals Yamamato (and) Teregouchi (have) both been summoned (to the) imperial palace (to) explain (to the) Emperor how (the) Kinshiu Maru, which (was) sunk by (the) Russians at Gensan, came (to) be allowed out without (an) adequate convoy. Both (are) severely censured."

The financial side of the correspondence is also interesting. Summed up it is something like the following per week:—

	£
200 correspondents, at £15 each	3000
200 interpreters at £2	400
200 servants, at £1	200
Food for 600, at £3	1800
Feed for 600 horses	400
Relay runners	100
Three dispatch boats	900
Total per week	£6600

In addition there is the costly work of telegraphing, which comes to probably £20,000 a week.

Each of these correspondents sends, on an average 1000 words a week, though, in the majority of instances, not one-half of what he sends gets into print, for it often arrives days after being sent, when the news is stale and more important news has arrived. Cable rates, even for press messages, are high, and must be prepaid. This forces the newspapers to establish credits with banks at the various points where a message is liable to be filed.

That correspondents are useful in other ways than those of news-getting experience has proved. During the Turko-Grecian war in 1897 Volo surrendered to Mr Gwynne, of Reuter's agency, and G. W. Steevens, of the "London Daily Mail." They drew up a proclamation demanding the surrender of the town, which was read to the scared populace by a native, and when the Turkish army arrived some hours later the papers of capitulation were already in the hands of the correspondents.

Mr Gwynne had a similar experience in South Africa. He and Mr Patterson, of the "Sydney (Australia) Herald," rode in advance of Lord Roberts' army and entered Bloemfontein, the capital of the then Orange Free State.

"The first of the British—the first of the Rooineke," shouted the inhabitants, and they held up their hands in token of surrender. So far the situation was ludicrous, but it became embarrassing when the Mayor, the landrost and the Acting-State Secretary signified their intention of surrendering the town to the two correspondents. The matter was finally compromised by taking the officials to Lord Roberts.

Sir Henry M. Stanley, who died not long ago, first won his spurs as a war correspondent in Abyssinia. Accompanied by many veteran newspaper men, he was at the victory of Magdala. Without waiting to write his dispatch Stanley jumped on a horse and rode like mad for the coast, where he filed his story hours in advance of any other correspondent.

The greatest feat of this kind was that of Archibald Forbes, then representing the "London Daily News." The occasion was the battle of Ulundi, in which the power of the Zulu King, Cetewayo, was utterly crushed, and the Zulu war of 1879, in which the French Prince Imperial was killed, ended. Lord Chelmsford, in command of the British forces, announced after the battle that he should not send the news of the victory home until the next day. Forbes rode from the battlefield at Landsman's Drift to the nearest telegraph office, one hundred miles away, through a country swarming with hostile Zulus—Lieutenant Scott-Elliott and Corporal Cotter were killed on the same path the same night. After hairbreadth escapes Forbes reached the telegraph office, and the "News" published the story twenty-four hours before any other paper, and as long before the British Government received its advices. Forbes' dispatch was read in both Houses of Parliament and became a part of the Government record.