Strangely enough, clocks and pianos, as well as the contents of the wine-cellar, formed the chief attraction for the soldier of the Fatherland when fighting for his country on the soil of France.

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We have already dealt editorially with the scandalous and wholesale looting of churches, convents, and private houses in the Philippines by both the officers and men of a number of the American regiments that were on service in the islands. The Sudan campaigns of 1885 and 1898 did not offer a very promising field to Thomas Atkins when in search of booty. Nevertheless many of the soldiers returned home from both campaigns with tidy sums in their fobs. Two privates realised over £400 by loot taken during the military operations of 1885. From the letters published from time to time in the New Zealand dailies we learn that looting is by no means an unusual incident of the present campaign in South Africa. A London weekly now before us is responsible for the statement that two British privates swelled their purses by more than £100 each by plunder taken by them after the battle of Elandslaagte. A letter from the seat of war published some time ago in the *Otago Daily Times* states that the writer witnessed a British regular rifling the pockets of a prisoner. In the columns of the same paper a member of the New Zealand Contingent details how he and certain others of his party entered a private house in British territory and 'annexed' therein a watch, a roll of music, and—a bundle of love letters! The story is told with a serene and amazing unconsciousness of guilt. For the life of us we cannot see how, in the moral order, all this differs from shop-lifting or pocket-picking. Military precept—as expressed in international law—is still manifestly leagues in advance of military practice; and we are evidently still far off from the verification of Leone Levi's statement that an armed conflict between nation and nation is merely 'a duel between the military and naval forces of the States at war.'

CONCERNING BOMBARDMENTS.

A CABLE message in Monday's daily papers reads as follows: 'Twelve thousand shells were thrown into Ladysmith. They did little damage, and killed only 35 persons and wounded 188.' A small result, in good truth, for such an amount of powder-blazing and shell-bursting and multitudinous and costly din! But it is the usual story of practically all later sieges which did not end in assault and capture. For instance, the Germans, under General von Werder, drew an iron cordon round Strassburg in the middle of August, 1870. On August 24 they started the bombardment of the city, and kept up a hurricane of shells at close range almost without cessation till its surrender on September 28. During that period they dropped no fewer than 193,722 shells into the famous old cathedral city. A good third of the city was battered into heaps of rubbish or set on fire. Some 10,000 people were driven out of the ruined or battered houses. But the accidents to life and limb were ridiculously out of proportion to the enormous expenditure of metal—the victims counting only some three hundred. Belfort was subjected to a searching bombardment from December 3, 1870, till, by direction of the French Government (then conducting the preliminaries of peace) its garrison surrendered with the honours of war on February 16, 1871. As many as 99,453 projectiles were dropped into the pleasant little town; but they accounted for the death of only sixty persons all told. Verdun was bombarded three times by the Germans. The first two were with field-guns, and Dr. Russell said that the investing force 'might just as well have bombarded Verdun with cherry-stones.' The third was performed with siege guns. The shells displaced great quantities of stone and brick and mortar and dug up sundry cavities in the earth. But the loss of human life was insignificant, and the surrender of Verdun was brought about by reasons that had no reference whatever to any punishment that the garrison may have received.

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Paris and its surrounding forts and fortified villages offer further evidence of the relative harmlessness of bombardments to human life. Six hundred shells thrown into Fort Nogent on January 2, 1871, did no damage beyond displacing a few hatfulls of earth and barrow-loads of bricks and stones, and slightly 'barking' the cuticle of an incautious French soldier. The incident reminds one of the fierce bombardment of Matanzas (Cuba) by the American warships: the net result of all the din and uproar and the expenditure of tons of ammunition and of tens of thousands of dollars was the docking of the tail of one Spanish army-mule! Between December 27, 1870, and New Year's Day, 1871, the Germans poured as many as 25,000 projectiles into Forts Noisy, Rosny, and Nogent. 'Yet even two days later,' says a well-known historian of the war, 'only thirty men had been killed and a hundred wounded, and the walls had not been seriously injured.' And yet we are told that the German's shell-fire 'was astonishingly good.' Casemates, 'dug-outs' (as in Ladysmith and Kimberley) and a sharp lookout for shells—the soldier will add the unknown element called 'luck'—account only in a small measure for the little loss of life that is caused by even the most terriffic bombardment. The war correspondent of the *Times*, after a visit to Fort Rosny, said: 'The general opinion in the fort was that a bombardment, though it made a good deal of noise, and seemed very frightful to the uninitiated, did, in fact, but little harm. This, however, could only be true of buildings specially made to encounter such visitations. Bombs falling on the fragile roofs of ordinary houses, or exploding against windows, are enemies of a very terrific nature.' Only four persons were killed and ten wounded by 16,000 to 18,000 shells that fell in and about Fort Vanvres. Only 107 persons were killed or wounded by some 10,000 shells which the Germans threw into Paris during a bombardment which lasted 23 days. And as in Kimberley and Ladysmith, the Parisians, in the first novelty of the siege, 'scrambled' for the scattered fragments of the exploded shells. In a siege, hunger and disease are worse enemies than hurtling shells. Of this Ladysmith, like Paris, has had an abundant experience.

BULLETS AND THEIR BILLETS.

IT is evident from all this that you are about as safe from the enemy's shells in a bombarded town as, in a thunderstorm, you would be from the electric fluid in a four-poster feather-bed. Perhaps it is the comparative bloodlessness of bombardments that has given rise to the legend that it takes a ton of metal to kill a man in war. In the siege of Paris—and we believe our estimate to be correct—it took about two hundred weight for every person *hit*; at Fort Vanvres, about four and a quarter tons for every man *killed*. The bombardment of Samoan villages by the British and American warships probably furnished an equally absurd disparity between effort and achievement. We don't know how much weight of metal it took to sever the partnership between the soul and body of one of Mataafa's warriors during those costal bombardments. But it took several broadsides from a British war-vessel and an expenditure of several thousand pounds sterling to kill a harmless Mataafa porker that was straying promiscuously about a deserted seaside village—it cost only £9000 worth of ammunition (5,681 projectiles) to send Admiral Montojo's fleet to the bottom of Manila Bay. It was confidently predicted that troops in the open would be pounded into mincemeat—a most magnificent and unexampled slaughter!—after the advent of quick-firing, long-range guns, high explosives, and Mauser, Krag Jorgensen, Lebel, and Lee-Metford magazine rifles that sputter bullets with a pressure of nearly 18 tons to the square inch, and with an initial velocity of a mile a second. Here is one of those hot-brained estimates given by a 'military expert' a few years ago, before the recently improved Maxims and lyddite were heard of:—

A regiment of 700 infantry armed with the Krag-Jorgensen rifle, a six-gun battery of small breech-loading cannon, and a couple of Gatling guns, open fire on an opposing force of 1500 men at a distance of 3000 yards. During the first minute's fire alone 36 shrapnel explode in the face of the enemy, hurling at them 10,800 messengers of death. The two Gatling guns fire 2000 shots, and 700 men discharge 14,000 bullets. Thus, within 60 seconds, the advancing ranks are swept by a hail of over 26,000 missiles, which will scarcely fail to lay 1000 men in the dust. Another such minute of havoc, and all that is left of an army is a mere handful of flying men.

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In other words, 26 shots are to disable a man. But this supposes an altogether unusual coolness and accuracy of fire on the part of both gunners and riflemen. It is very doubtful if the improvement in accuracy of shooting has been at all commensurate with the improvement in the weapons that have been placed in Mr. Atkins's hands. In the British army there are many capital individual marksmen. But the shooting average is and long has been admittedly low, as it was also in the days of the Snider and Martini-Henry. A military writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* tells how, at the battle of Ulundi, the British troops blazed away solidly for twenty minutes at thousands of yelling Zulus that were attacking them in the open. When the crackling of the rifles was stilled it was found that only a few of the dark-skins had fallen, and that fourteen out of fifteen of the soldiers had been burning gunpowder for a third of an hour without doing any bodily damage to the enemy. When a 'bould sojer boy' loses—or has not acquired—perfect steadiness he's a poor shot, and would as often miss as hit a haystack at ten yards off. In his *Barracks, Bivouacs, and Battles* the noted war correspondent, Archibald Forbes, has the following in point:—

I remember standing with a German general before Metz watching a skirmish. The German battalion engaged happened to consist chiefly of young soldiers, and they were not very steady. The old general shrugged his shoulders and observed: 'Dey vant to be a little shooted; dey vill do better next time.'

'All young soldiers,' Forbes adds, 'need to be "a little shooted"' before they become steady enough to fire coolly and tolerably straight when bullets are zipping and shells crashing about them. The first Napoleon expressed the same idea in