London Letter.

Of military ardor there is no end. We are lionizing the Sirdar to our heart's content, remembering that our time is short, since he is to return to Egypt—according to present arrangements—early next month. If any pretty maiden—or even that charming titled widow who is trying so hard—intend to catch him, she will have to use all haste.

Two other gallant gentlemen, however, are sharing public attention with Lord Kitchener—one alas! only vicariously; and never was there a more pathetic contrast than that afforded by the fate of the two, so sharply contrasted. They may be called the tragedy and comedy of the battle at Atbara. I will take the tragedy first. Captain Findlay, a splendid young soldier, was married four months before he fell in that memorable fight. His wife—quite a girl—is an officer's daughter, and the pair were devoted to each other By some means, best known to themselves, her people managed to keep from her the news of her loss until after the birth—a few days ago—of a son. The Queen was so much touched by the story that she has not been "able to get the poor girl out of her head"—as she puts it in her motherly way. She wrote her a tender letter, asking that the child might be called Victor Alexander, and offering to be his godmother. Since then she has chosen for him several pretty garments including a very handsome christening cloak.

The comedy at Atbara is also connected with a marriage, that of Major Lawrie, which took place last week. Before Atbara he found in the ventilator of his helmet a spider, which had there contentedly taken up its residence. Being kind hearted, he did not disturb it; and when he came out scathless from the melee, and his friends were attributing his luck to the spider, the cheerful insect came out—as was its evening custom—caught its supper of flies and went back to bed! It continued to inhabit the helmet; went with its protector into the battle of Omdurman (where Lawrie commanded a battery, yet received never a scratch(. After the victory baggage was packed for home. The gallant Major, not unnaturally, forgot for a time about his little friend; but when he remembered that had sent it off in the helmet-box, unprovided for a voyage, he was so much "cut up" that his comrades chaffed him unmercifully. No sooner had the Major reached London than he fell upon the helmet box and opened it, meaning, at least, to secure the corpse of his "mascot" and pet; but behold! what he found was a proud mother and two lively baby-spiders! Of course the trio were welcomed with effusion, and the most admired gift received by Major Lawrie's pretty bride was from her mother, a diamond spider that will perpetuate the family romance and be shown, let us hope, to wondering little ones in years to come!

I think I have already told you that the Duchess of York had enrolled her husband as the only male vice president of the Needlework Guild, and had coaxed him out of 300 contributions, mostly boys' suits and pairs of boots! You ought to have seen her one day last week, running about wearing a large apron, sorting huge piles of clothes and making out lists, also tying up bundles for distribution! She looked pretty and matronly; her eyes were as bright and her complexion as clear as ever. In a way the task must have been a sad one to her, for it was while she was helping her mother over it that the poor Duchess was seized with the fatal illness. Princess May will never forget that, had it not been for the Guild, she would have missed the chance of being with her mother when she died. Perhaps it is this thought that makes this especial charity so dear to her.

Young Lord Tullibardine, another hero is engaged to be married to Miss Kittie Ramsay, daughter of Sir James Ramsay of Bamff. She is the pretty and clever child of a lovely and most accomplished mother, Lady Ramsay being as noted for her beauty as for her compositions and singing. The Duke of Atholl's heir began his career by getting thrown from his horse on the occasion of the Duke of York's wedding. He was then a mere boy. Having just been promoted and selected to command a troop in St. James's Park to escort the royal pair, he must needs choose a splendid steed, which unluckily, objected at the critical moment to the firing of guns and the roars of cheering. So the poor youth got a nasty spill close to the Royal carriage, was unconscious for some time and lost his day's fun. The Queen make frequent inquiries about him, as he and his people are favorites. (His handsome mother is the eldest sister of Georgina, Countess of Dudley.) The young man has lately done gallant things in Egypt; one of his exploits being the rescue of two of the men of his troop under a heavy fire. Both the poor fellows died; but Lord Tullibardine at least saved their bodies, at the risk of his life, from desecration. His men are deeply attached to him. During the fever which he contracted after the battle they were intensely anxious; but now he is well on the way to convalescence. He will probably get the Victoria Cross. His pretty betrothed —who is twenty-four, three years younger than he—must have suffered much during his absence. They were engaged before he left, but it was thought best not to publish the fact until the war was over.

I hear that the Duke of Marlborough paid a flying visit to Paris. He is back again now. The Duchess and her baby boy are doing well. The glass portrait of Her Grace, which Alma Tadema is executing for Blenheim, will be very handsome, if I may judge by the artist's sketches. It will represent her in her presentation costume, just as she wore it at Court, and some of her finest jewels.

Madame Blanche Marchesi (Baroness Caccamisi) was accompanied by Princess Beatrice in all the songs she gave before the Queen. Henry Bird was ill, and disappointed at the last moment. It is a good thing that the Princess is such a fine pianist! Blanche Marchesi is much excited over her coming American tour for which she is busily arranging her programmes She has just been to Paris to see her mother, and to get her gowns for her tour. "I don't expect to find time even to buy a pair of shoes before next August!" she said, the other day. She was recently interviewed and told the strange story of her wonderful talent. It appears that she had no voice at all until she was twenty five; that is to say the voice was there but it would not come out; the larynx would not develop. But all the while she was waiting she was "practicing with her brain." She heard all her famous mother's instruction; she declares that her will so influenced her vocal chords that they gradually learned what they had to da and became flexible. When at last, "like a flash, her voice came to her—she could sing perfectly. That she does this you will agree when you hear her. The art is consummate; rare tone color, impulse, passion, intellect—all combine to make up the fascinating entity of this beautiful woman. I am glad to learn that she has made an exception in your favor, having invested in some lovely colored gowns—one in palest flesh-pink, another in yellow and so on—for her appearance among you. As a rule, she dresses only in black. Blanche Marchesi is a delightful talker. You will be charmed with her, both as a woman and artist.

There's none so blind as he who sees double.