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WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Interesting Particulars of the Struggle Between Great Britain and the Boers.

SOCIAL LIFE IN NATAL.

Pietermaritzburg a Gay Capital Before the War
—All That is Changed Now.

A writer in an English paper dating from Maritzburg says: I used to drive with one lady round the barracks among the Tommies' wives. She kept a little bank for them, and collected their money each week to put by for a rainy day. She knew every woman and child by name. Her little son Dolly was simply the pride and pet of the regiment, and though only five used to be allowed to take the reins and drive his mother in his dog-cart. In India, the following year, he rode in a children's steeplechase. I paid several visits to country houses outside Maritzburg. They were all delightfully situated and the owners very hospitable, but quite different to the Cape colonial houses, with their surroundings of bamboos, banana trees, palms, and hedges of the pretty little shrub with pink waxen flower called Christ's thorn. Vegetation everywhere is wildly luxuriant, and there is plenty of grass, of which Cape Colony is so destitute. One house I went to, belonging to an English country family, was furnished with all the furniture of an old English country house, and the old oak and family portraits seemed like a bit of old England dropped into the far-off land. This gentleman's daughters, two of the belles of Maritzburg, which, by-the-by, swarmed with pretty women, married two officers of the Dublin Fusiliers within six months of their arrival in Natal.

A very delightful jaunt I had with my government house friend was to Howick, a pretty little village 14 miles north of Maritzburg. I had my choice of going there or to Durban to visit the fleet, which had suddenly appeared there to everyone's astonishment. As fleets were no novelty, and Howick was, I went to Howick, and was well repaid. The falls of the Umgeni river in a single drop go down 370 feet. Between Howick and Maritzburg the railway ascends nearly 1,300 feet in 14 miles, so the gradient and the curves can be imagined. I viewed the fall both from the top and from lower down, and it was really a magnificent sight. The whole neighborhood was very mountainous, and abounded with waterfalls and cascades. Howick itself is quite a fashionable resort in summer as it is much cooler than towns nearer the coast.

The principal social event that took place was the ball given by the governor, in honor of the queen's birthday, on the 24th of May. In the morning a grand military parade was held, which I viewed from a dog-cart. If it had not been for the numerous Zulus around I could have fancied myself at Aldershot. I was highly amused at a Zulu lady, who started across the parade ground just as the cavalry was about to charge. The cavalry had to stop their charge in the middle. While she walked in a very dignified manner to the other side. The Zulus are a magnificent race, both male and female. I never saw more superb types of humanity as regard figure. They took an enormous interest in this parade and turned out in great numbers adorned profusely with bangles, beads, of which the men wore necklaces, and feathers, the latter in their wool. The ladies each wore a short petticoat and a sort of toga arrangement, with elaborately embroidered borders of beads, and their wool was plastered up with clay into the prevailing style of head-

dress worn in Zulu society, chiefly in a long, truncated cone, starting from the crown of the head. The dress itself was made of calico, saturated with oil, and then rubbed all over with clay. Some of us captured a few of these wild fowl just outside the hotel gates as they returned from the parade, and bartered with them with signs for their various ornaments. The evening of the governor's ball distinguished itself by the electric light going out just as we were in the middle of dressing and at my hotel there was a grand scramble for candles. Capt. and Mrs. W.—and myself arrived at government house and found the avenue all in darkness, though lined with men of the 9th Lancers, as was the ballroom itself. The latter was lighted, certainly through the ingenuity of Lieutenant Victor Brooke, the ubiquitous and universally-liked aides-de-camp, who proved his value in an emergency by sending for two huge railway lamps, which were stuck up on pedestals, and lent a brilliant light to the ceiling and upper part of the room, but left the people and the floor in utter darkness. The governor and his wife stood in on a dais under one of these, he in full court costume of white satin breeches and coat heavily embroidered with gold, she very beautiful in white satin and a tiara. There were at least 800 present and thanks to the misfortune with the electric light all stiffness vanished in the dark. However, it (the light) suddenly turned on about midnight, rather to some people's concern. Among the dancers I noticed Lady Charles Bentinsk, who had just come out as a bride, her husband being in the 9th Lancers. How very many of all that gay throng are now in the midst of the horrors of war. This was my last gaiety in Maritzburg. Two days afterwards I left for Durban to spend a few days there before saying "good-bye" altogether to South Africa.

THE 'MAGERSFONTEIN SLAUGHTER.

It will be remembered that a correspondent of the London Morning Post, wrote from Magersfontein that the Highland brigade were so demoralized by the sudden fire poured into them from the Boer trenches to the edge of which the Highlanders had unknowingly advanced, that they broke and ran. Here is the very different story of another correspondent, who was close behind the Highland brigade. The correspondent is S. C. Von Tuger Simoniski, the Montreal Herald representative, whose letter published in the Herald on Saturday, was the first to arrive in Canada:—

The men were fairly caught in a trap. From the Boer trenches, not two hundred yards away, from trenches, tier upon tier, from rifle and machine gun, there poured an awful storm of death and destruction. Our men were still in their close formation, presenting a mark that the poorest marksman could not fail to hit.

There was no time to deploy. In a flash every man lay down, some to rise no more. The men in the rear began firing in all directions, and many a poor fellow was wounded by bullets from the rifles of his comrades.

For five long minutes the Highland brigade was prone upon the ground, a struggling mass of humanity, in places four and six deep. Then two companies of the Black Watch alone heard the order to charge, and whipping out their bayonets, they sprang like demons upon the first trench and left not a man alive in it. Mad with anger, and crazed with grief for their beloved general, Wauchope, of Omdurman fame, fell among the

first, they thrust their gleaming bayonets right and left.

Every man in those two companies deserves special recognition. 'Tis such as they that have built up our vast Empire. But they simply withered away before the terrific fire from the other trenches, drawing much of the fire that otherwise would have decimated the whole brigade. This all took place in the dusk of the early morning. They fought like heroes. Had all the brigade heard that order and obeyed it, what is virtually a severe repulse, yes a defeat, would have been turned into a glorious British victory which would have wiped out all memory of Majuba hill and 1881.

But unfortunately, someone, as is usual on such occasions, gave the order to retire, and utterly demoralized leaving the ground littered with dead dying and wounded, the Highlanders fell back, leaving the two companies of the Royal Highlanders unsupported and compelling them likewise to retire from the trench gained with their heart's blood. Then again the whole brigade caught it, for the men were still "en masse."

From Simoniski's account there appears little reason to blame Methuen. The Highlanders had marched several miles in the darkness, such darkness that the leading companies marched with a rope carried across their front to keep the men from losing line and touch with each other. The force expected to meet the Boer pickets first, and then to open out for attack. But the Boers, expecting the attack had drawn back the pickets into their trenches. The Highland brigade had no skirmishers or scouts in front, and just as the darkness began to break they found themselves in solid quarter column, right under the Boer position.

The blame which may attach to Methuen can apparently be only such as may pertain to an order to infantry to attack a strong fortified position, without previous or simultaneous use of artillery.

A pretty little story of General Gatacre was reported by a Queenstown paper the other day. An orderly had ridden into camp with despatches from a considerable distance. The General when he received the despatches noticed how tired and fatigued the bearer was. "Go and lie down in my tent," said Gatacre, gruffly but kindly; "I'll go see to your horse."

Pte. John Murphy, 3rd Grenadier Guards, says: "Oh, its extra to be out in the wars. It's then you see every body praying. The biggest of villians come to it when they see the first fight. Seeing poor fellows shot at your feet, it's then the thoughts come into your hearts."

"It was a trying time," writes Pte. William Moon, at the front with Lord Methuen, describing the Modder River battle. "Every minute you could hear some poor soldier crying for help while not one, but a great many, lay dead and dying all around us. To as many as I could I gave all my water, for that is the first thing the wounded ask for. It was a sight which I shall never forget in all life, and I think God that I am spared to write this letter to you. More than once we said to one another that death would be a relief to us."

A Jury of Women

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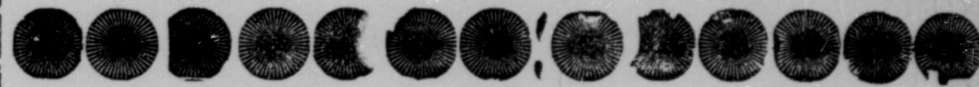
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