

Majuba Hill.

Majuba Hill is a dark spot in British South African history. It marks one bitter and ever galling British defeat at the hands of the Boers in 1881. For the Boers, on the other hand, it has been an inspiration, for it seemed to prove their superiority to the soldiers of the Queen. For nearly a score of years the record of the battle has stood a menace to peace, because it rankled in the British heart, at the same time giving to the Boers a possibly ill-founded assurance of their power to do their will, whatever it might be. As this is written the issues of Majuba Hill are being fought over again, and the result no one may wholly see.

General Sir George Pomeroy-Colley was in command of the British forces in that battle of February 27, 1881. Just before starting on his perilous undertaking he wrote a letter to his wife in which this passage is found:

"I am going out to night to try and seize the Majuba Hill; I leave this behind to tell you how very dearly I love you, and what a happiness you have been to me. Don't let all life be dark to you if I don't come back to you. It is a strange world of chances" even he within a few hours of his doom shrieked that word destiny and put it in a lighter phrase—"one can only do what seems right to one in matters of morals, and do what seems best in matters of judgment, as a card player calculates the chances. Good-night, darling. How I wish I could believe the stories of our meeting again hereafter. Think of our happiness together, and our love—not a common love, I think—and think lovingly and sadly, but not too sadly or hopelessly, of your affectionate husband." Not on his own striving, not on his own wishing, would follow the facts and the faiths of the man, the already dying man who wrote that letter. "There seems to be a kind of fatality about my staff" he said—fobbing in the same breath, the arousing of his aide-de-camp and brother-in-law Lieutenant Bruce Hamilton. "I don't mean to take him tonight. If anything were to

happen to him it would kill his sister." Then he sat out on the moon-light march that took him to his catastrophe.

From the top of Majuba Hill, successfully reached the British force looked down on the camp of the enemy below. Then they saw a strange sight. Of a sudden all the Boer laagers were studded with lights. It was the Sabbath morning and all the burgers had arisen, before the dawn to read their Bibles, to offer their public prayers. The British force, as it looked down, seemed to hold its foes in the hollow of its hand. Tommy Atkins shouted down exultantly "Come up here you beggars!" and they came. As they marshaled themselves at the base, it could be only to fly' thought the British. But no; they began the ascent of the practically impregnable height. Under cover of bushes, of rocks and of hollows, they climbed and climbed, and the British soldier at the top, if he looked over the top of his high plateau, fell back with a bullet that had gone straight home, fired by an adversary he could not discover.

yet no doubt as to the result of an assault was felt until that assault suddenly came. The Boers had scaled the heights and made an inrush before which the British soldiery fell back. The General, moving toward the point whence came the fire, met his retreating forces. What happened exactly will never be known; but this is said for certain that no order to retire ever crossed his set lips. "Oh, my men, do not run!" It was thus says his friend and biographer, Sir William Butler, that he had given twenty years earlier, the last words of a Kaffir chief. And now, if Pomeroy-Colley had spoken, those words had been his own—"Oh, my men, do not run!" A few lingered about him for a moment. Then he was left alone. "The General," said a corporal, when the story of the dark day's doings came to be told, "never moved from where he was when our men retired. He stood there trying to rally the men, and one of the Boers shot him straight in the forehead some time after the day was lost.

THE BRIDGE.

I stood on the bridge at midnight,
As the clocks were striking the hour,
And the moon rose O'er the city,
Behind the dark church tower.
I saw her bright reflection
In the waters under me,
Like a golden goblet falling
And sinking into the sea.
And far in the hazy distance
Of that lovely night in June,
The blaze of the flaming furnace
gleamed redder than the moon.
Among the long, black rafters
The wavering shadows lay,
And the current that came from the ocean
Seemed to lift and to bear them away;
As, sweeping and eddying through
them,
Rose the belated tide,
And, streaming into the moonlight,

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