

FACED A NATION.

HEROIC DEED OF ABEL KRUGER IN AFRICA.

The Cousin of President "Oom Paul" Slew a Thousand Warriors.

In these days, when the stalwart, unflinching figure of the Boer crowds the broad canvas of South Africa, it is of interest to encounter a true story of heroism from the early days of the Orange Free State. Such a story is that of Abel Kruger, whose marvelous exploits can be favorably compared with those of Horatius Coclus or the victors of Thermopylae.

The facts about Abel Kruger I learned during my stay in South Africa, from the lips of Mr. Lauchlin of Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, members of whose family were companions in arms of the gallant Boer, Kruger, was a near relative of President Paul Kruger of the Transvaal—the famous "Oom Paul."

A little more than thirty years have passed since the Orange Free State, at that time still in its infancy, waged a sanguinary war with the Basutus, then newly wedded into a nation by their astute king, Moshesh.

The country of the Basutus is a land of broken and rugged mountains, clustering about the Orange River, and the Orange River from the western foot of these mountains the open plains of the Free State stretch away, grassy and treeless, toward the setting sun. Over all its level expanse there is hardly a hill to be seen, while the air is so pure and dry that objects connected at an almost incredible distance.

At the very outbreak of hostilities with the Basutus, the Free State called to arms every able-bodied burgher within her boundaries. Now the Boer soldier, always a horseman, may literally be said to live in the saddle, and when the saddle he should be mounted, while riding, he half the time eats; and only dismounts when pressed by the exigencies of sleep. Trained from his childhood to shoot from the saddle, every man is an expert rider and marksman—such a soldier was Abel Kruger, one of the very best to be found among them.

The Boers forces all mounted—as has been said—were divided into small bands of from 60 to 200 men. Each band, or "commando," operated in a semi-independent manner against the half-civilized enemy, confining itself generally as much as possible to the protection of its own farms, and the driving back the murderous bands of Moshesh, who, coming down from their mountains at unexpected points, strove with demon ferocity, to blot out in fire and blood, every home and settlement of the whites within reach of fire and sword.

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The Kruger farmhouse was situated on the open plain some miles distant from the mountains, and Abel suspected that it would sooner or later be exposed to attack. It bore hard with him to go away with the commando, and leave his home almost defenseless. His wife and children were there, with only two or three faithful servants to protect them. Naturally he was anxious for their safety, when, after an absence of a week, his commando rode back to his "place."

While still afar off, Abel stooped low in his saddle, striving to descry the smoke wreathing up from the chimney. The cattle that should have grazed on the plain in the vicinity were nowhere to be seen. Nearer and nearer rode the troop, till at last the house was in view roofless and ruined. Five minutes later they dismounted before the blackened walls.

"Where are my wife and my children?" he cried, rushing in through the charred and smoke-begrimed doorway. Their mutilated corpses lay before him in all the horrible ghastliness of death. For some moments he gazed at them in silence. The shining tears coursed down his bearded face, but never a word did he utter. He slowly walked back and replaced himself in the saddle, vowing vengeance on the murderous Basutus.

His companions had mounted, and were ready to gallop away, when Abel rode up beside the commander, took off his hat, and with a prayer he called God and man to witness his resolve, that as long as the war should continue he would never again leave his ruined farm, "which," said he, "I was wrong to have gone from at all, knowing, as I did, that it was sure to be laid in ruins by those black-skinned and tiger-hearted murderers."

Reasoning with a man in Abel's state of mind was useless, so his commander and companions allowed him to do as he pleased. From the whole troop he got bountiful supplies of hitting, powder, bullets and buckshot. Then the commando rode away, leaving him alone at the desolate farm. He filled his sandbags, and stowed away his supplies on both his horses—for each burgher had two, one to mount when the other was tired. Then he off-saddled, and let his horses graze and refresh themselves, while he himself, stretched upon the grass, thoughtfully laid out his plan of campaign.

He would fight the Basutus single-handed, and not only would he attack his ruined farm the headquarters, but he would find a bait sure to draw them thither. For this purpose some cattle would be necessary. These he would take from the Basutus themselves.

That night he rode off toward the mountains and stampeded one of their

herds in the darkness, collecting a number of them afterward, and drifting them to his farm. Next morning a few Basutus followed the spoor, and at a time sighted the cattle on the plain.

Now near Abel's ruined house there was a little hill, 100 or 200 feet high—one of the few in the Free State—rocky, bush-grown, and flat-topped. This hill sloped gradually upwards, till within ten feet of the top, a clear cap of rock rose up almost as straight as a wall. In some places it was accessible, in others not. On the top it was as flat as if it had formerly been a peak and was now sawed off. On the slope of the further side of this hill Abel had his horses and arms in readiness, while he himself, lying flat upon the level rock, watched the approaching Basutus as they came on for the coveted cattle.

Now at the time none of the Kafir tribes had horses—the southern Kafir tribes had horses called that animal, but have since called it "hashe," a Kafirism form of the English word.

Before driving off the oxen the Basutus prowled curiously about the ruins of Abel's house. But when he saw them gather together in a group, he knew that they were on the top of the hill, and he knew that the oxen were in his family had lain—floating, perhaps they were, over their own work—he could stand it no longer, but rushed to his horse and rode desperately down the hill, coming out on the plain two or three hundred yards from the warriors.

He fired on them, and yelling and brandishing their assegais, rushed towards him, expecting to meet and slay him, for he was galloping straightway towards them. But Abel knew when to turn. He knew too much of assegais to be deceived in the distance. He fired on them, and each knocking over a Basutus. The others then ran to the slope of the hill, but more of them fell before the remainder found shelter behind the rocks and boulders.

Keeping well out of range of their assegais, he now dismounted and crept towards the bushes. Two or three times of them had only partial cover, and others foolishly and vauntingly taunted him to come closer. When no more heads appeared Abel thought he might safely draw closer, and ride around to count the bodies. Two or three times over he counted, but could not find more than nineteen. Where was the other? For when they first came in view he had counted a score. At all costs the missing warrior must be sought, and he rode around the hill to the eastern side, and there, off over the plain, he saw the erstwhile most boastful warrior of them all legging it as hard as he could go for the mountains. Abel galloped after him till he was out of range, and then, dismounting, stooped him with a bullet. On going up to see if he were dead he found his own wife's ring on the fellow's finger.

The fact that the warriors had hidden behind the boulders on the hillside was not a lesson to Abel. He determined that never again would he let a party of them come so close to the hill. Every day after that he kept his solitary watch on the hill top while his horses, saddled and ready, browsed on the slope.

On the third day after he saw another party come toward him from the mountains. When they were still a couple of miles off he rode out to meet them. When they saw him galloping toward them they yelled, and with assegais ready came on without quickening their pace. At a safe distance he reined up and fired, killing a pair. Then he retreated, and they pursued at a run; thinking they would frighten him the more, as they thought he was going away from them. However, as soon as he had reloaded he doubled back to meet them, and shot two more. Then they stopped, for they thought it dangerous to follow him further. When he saw them halting he halted, and continued coolly firing and killing with every shot. At last they began running back, when they had lost nearly half their number. But the open plain gave them no cover, and Abel followed and shot, until the last man tumbled over on the side.

Returning to his post on the hill, he waited a whole week, but no more appeared; neither did any of the burghers come that way—a thing Abel was glad of, for he feared they might insist on his joining their party.

To entice more Basutus out on the plain he ran the risk of starting off after dark to drive the cattle toward the mountains. At dawn, while still a considerable distance out on the plain, he lighted a fire of withered grass to attract their attention. Letting the cattle graze about for a time, he sat in his saddle awaiting developments. When at last he saw a party coming after the cattle, he commenced to drive them to the mountains, as if he did not notice that any one was after him. If he saw them gaining on him he would go a little faster, and sometimes he pretended to have trouble with the herd, so as to encourage his pursuers. At last the Basutus were on the plain. On came the Basutus till Abel thought that they were far enough from the mountains for their friends to remain ignorant of their fate. Then he treated them as he did the other bands that had preceded them; not one escaped to tell the fate of the others.

How many different parties he succeeded in thus wiping out is probably unknown, but it is said that human skeletons lined the trail from Abel's farm to within three miles of the mountains. Still the Basutus never suspected that one man was causing such havoc. But they found it out by accident, for a larger party than usual having set out on the spoor of the cattle, Abel made a serious miscalculation—he had too many to kill in the time, and was forced to let some of them escape. The effect of their return was

soon seen. The news ran like wildfire through Basutaland that some white "Medicine man" was destroying every Basutus that fell down on the road to Kruger's farm, and that the whole distance, from the little flat-topped hill to the mountains, was white with their bones.

The consequence was that most of Moshesh's warriors were dreadfully frightened and avoided going in that direction.

Nevertheless, the daring Boer soon got a surprise, which showed him forcibly how precarious was his position.

Twelve young bloods, who wished to curry favor with the King, banded themselves together and swore they would kill the white man. They had heard of his tactics from those who had escaped from his bullets; so they took no risk of advancing by daylight, but started out stealthily, under cover of the silence and darkness of night. Unhappily they were each armed with Abel's flat-topped hill and had themselves away among the bushes and boulders on the slope.

At the first signs of dawn, they saw Abel making his way along the head of the slope by the foot of the rock ledge. Soon they saw him, and he saw them, and then down flat on his face, Abel was drinking at a little spring, whose cool water boiled up in the midst of a pond or basin as clear as crystal.

As he lay there, face downwards, drinking, he noted in the water the reflection of the blue sky overhead and of the green leaves of the vegetation on the edges. Then he became aware of something else, and saw to his horror that his days were ended. The black faces of a dozen men were glaring at him from the bottom of the mirror-like pool, with assegais poised ready to strike him. He never stirred from his position. He believed that his hour had come, but in the same instant he thought of a ruse to escape by.

"Well, you've got me at last," said he, "and I know you won't spare me, neither will I ask you to do so."

"Ha, he never stirred from his position," said they, "and we'll pay you for all you have done to us."

"Well," said he, "I do me one favor before I die. I have loved always the wide, free world and the sky. Take me up on the hilltop and let me take one last look at God's beautiful world before you kill me besides." He added quickly, "My clothes will be useful to you, and you had better kill me naked, for if you stab me now with your assegais you'll make them full of holes."

Now he said these things while still lying face down over the water, watching their fierce countenances reflected from its depths.

"Quite right you are," shouted they. "Come up on the hilltop, then, and strip." So one of them took up his gun and went before, while the others, closing in around him as he arose, escorted him up on the top of the rock ledge, as they ascended by an easy way. Arriving on the flat hilltop, he gazed around, as he had asked, at the beautiful world, and then commenced to disrobe. First taking off his hat, he gave it to one. Then he took off his gaiters and gave to another, to a third his pipe, to a fourth his tinder box and flint and steel. Another got his knife, and another his coat; another his shirt, and so on, till he had given something to all but three, who remained, eagerly watching him, while the others were busy like children with their just acquired presents. They thought they had him safe, now that he was stripped of all except his trousers and boots. He noted their self-confidence with satisfaction. Taking off one of his long boots, therefore, with great deliberation, he handed it to one of the three who had as yet received nothing. Two remained—one on his right hand and the other on his left. Now he was standing quite close to the edge of the cliff, where there was a sheer drop of about eighteen feet. He took off his last boot with the same deliberation as the other; but just when he was taking his foot out of it, he gave it a mighty swing, striking the heavy heel of it in the mouth of the would-be recipient, at the same time knocking over with his other arm the one who was expecting the trousers.

One bound carried him down over the rocks. A yell of disappointment burst from the throats of his outwitted captors. The hurried but ill-aimed assegais flew after him, but none of them touched him; for he ran around under shelter of the rocks and none of them dared to follow him in his jump, but ran down by the easy way by which they had brought him up. Then they were too late, for Abel got around to the western side of the hill, mounted his horse and began to pick them down with his gun he had strapped on the saddle. When they saw how things were going against them, they scattered over the hillside to hide from his bullets. But all day long he sought them out. Yet one fellow lay so well hidden that Abel unsuspectingly went into danger and started when an assegai whizzed past his head. But this lurker got shot, too, and by night the whole twelve left their bones to be added to the rest.

Some of them, after getting their presents of wearing apparel, had put it on, and did not perhaps have time to take it off afterward, for Abel sent a bullet through the breast of his own coat when he shot the Basutus who wore it. Had any fellow lay so well through it. His gun and pocket articles he found where the warriors had dropped them on the very spot they had stood in when he jumped down.

That night he was sure he didn't rest easy, fearing lest another party might put in their appearance. But they left him in peace for a few days. However, they were bent upon taking him, dead or alive.

After escaping from two or three other nocturnal attempts, he was advised by a commandant of burghers to leave the farm for a time and go with his troop.

They say that the number of Basutu warriors killed by Abel Kruger exceeds all belief. Some put it at a thousand, others say a little less, but at any rate they made such a slaughter among them that his name will be handed down for generations as one of the most famous of all the heroes of the inter-racial wars of South Africa.—Cleveland Leader.

Used to It. Drummer (in Kansas village)—I presume that there was a good deal of excitement and terror while that savage hyena, which escaped from the circus, was roaming at large in the vicinity? Merchant—Well, no! You see, Mrs. Lease and other calamity howlers spoke here several times during the campaign, and the people kinder got used to that sort of thing.—Puck.

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WHAT THE LAW DECIDES.

Important Legal Decisions in Condensed Form.

For thefts by hotel employes from guests while asleep in rooms assigned them at a hotel, even if they are intoxicated, it is held in Cunningham vs. Buckley (W. Va.) 35 L. R. A. 850, that the innkeeper is liable.

An obligation to maintain a street railway is held, in San Antonio Street Railroad Company vs. State, ex rel. Elmendorf (Tex.) 35 L. R. A. 602, not to be imposed by the grant of a mere privilege to construct and maintain.

A libelous publication concerning a family in its collective capacity is held actionable in favor of any member of the family in Fenstermaker vs. Tribune Publishing Company (Utah) 35 L. R. A. 611. The case holds that a newspaper article which relates wholly to the private acts of a family with respect to cruel treatment of a child is not privileged.

The exemption of the books of a lawyer from execution is held, in Equitable Life Insurance Society vs. Goode (Ia.) 35 L. R. A. 612, to be a matter of public policy.

A "vote of the people" by which city bonds are authorized, in Bryan vs. Stephenson (Neb.) 35 L. R. A. 752, to mean a majority of the voters of the city, and when the vote is taken at the general city election the proposition must receive a majority of all the votes cast at that election.

The right of a municipal corporation to be a part owner of property is denied, in Ampt vs. Cincinnati (O.) 35 L. R. A. 737, by virtue of the constitutional prohibition against loaning aid or credit to any company, corporation or association.

Other authorities on this question are found in a note to the case. The right of a non-resident, who is a spring for irrigation by the owner of the land on which the spring is located, is held, in Bruening vs. Dorr (Col.) 35 L. R. A. 640, to be unlawful as against a prior appropriator of water from a stream into which the water of the spring percolates or seeps.

Ice owned by a non-resident, which is stored in ice-houses from which it is to be taken for sale within the limits of a town, although but little of it is to be sold in that place, is held to be taken to another State for delivery as wanted.

An ordinance to compel a railroad company at its own expense to keep a watchman and maintain gates where the tracks cross a street under penalty for failure to do so is not unconstitutional, in Chicago vs. St. Louis Railroad Company vs. Crown Point (Ind.) 35 L. R. A. 684, to be invalid under a general grant of power to regulate travel on the streets and enact ordinances for the protection of life, health and property.

Attack on an Exploring Party.

In February last Lieutenant Eldred Pottinger, Royal Artillery, who was for some years stationed at the outposts of the Burma frontier, set out from Sadon to explore and map out the unknown tract of country south of the route traversed by Prince Henri of Orleans on his adventurous journey from Tongking to Assam, and lying between the Irrawaddy and the Salween. This done, it was his intention to explore the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy and add something to our present knowledge of the country north of the two branches of that river north of the confluence.

Lieutenant Pottinger was accompanied by Mr. Lawrence, an officer of the Third (Militia) Battalion Seaforth Highlanders, two Chinese interpreters, an Indian surveyor named Dal Singh, a Gurkha, two servants, and a number of coolies. The Nmai Kha (the eastern arm of the Irrawaddy) was explored, and all went well till the party crossed the Shin-Ngaw Khil and got to the country of the Marus, a well-known Kachin tribe with an evil reputation. The explorers were received in a very friendly way, presents of rice, fowl, and eggs being brought to them. Everything went on satisfactorily till the beginning of May, the travelers continuing their survey. Early in May they entered a country so rugged and mountainous that all the mules had to be sent by a southerly route towards the Salween, Messrs. Pottinger and Lawrence intending to cross the watershed further north and then turn south by the banks of the Salween.

The party got as far north as 26 degrees 45 minutes, where the last big affluent joins the Nmai Kha. This is the heart of the "Black" Maru country, a tribe hitherto unheard of except by a few of our frontier officials, who have been told by Kachins of a very dark race inhabiting a portion of the no-man's-land lying between Burma and Tibet. The travelers found them to be Kachins, their blackness being merely due to sunburn. Early in May they entered a country so rugged and mountainous that all the mules had to be sent by a southerly route towards the Salween, Messrs. Pottinger and Lawrence intending to cross the watershed further north and then turn south by the banks of the Salween.

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mother usually succumbs before the problem of giving a strong healthy baby a constant supply of fresh air which never varies in temperature, and ends by giving a delicate child no air at all. The temperature in the chamber is maintained by a self-regulating thermometer. The exact degree of heat required in proportion to the development of the wee morsel of humanity is estimated by a system of calculation. If the temperature rises above that level the thermometer rises as well, and by its ascension alone diminishes the action of the current of heat. If the temperature tends to fall, the thermometer allows more heat to pass. To watch these little animate rolls was quite a blow to that instinct which makes us associate a certain state with the new-born heir to eternal life entering into his kingdom of existence. They were all exactly alike, red and wrinkled, sleeping away like so many little animals. They were dressed, however, in little white frocks, on which one saw the finest of French needle work above the limbs, emmalottes, or swathed, according to French custom, and each had a tiny bow of the narrowest pink ribbon on her sleeves. Four times a day they are taken out and fed, and the tiniest mites, "6-month babies" as they are called, are fed through the nose by a curious spoon, with a bowl like a rose petal pinched together at one end. At the back of the room we noticed a little glass room, in which were two rosy-faced nurses, for so simple and so purely mechanical is the work of baby incubating that very little care is needed. Each baby is touched only six times a day—four times to be fed, twice changed. The nurses live in a temperature of about twenty-five degrees centigrade. The baby is covered to be carried to the nurse, and as soon as it is normal it takes the breast. Out of the eleven mites in the room when we were there five weighed less than two pounds at birth. Out of 185 children carried to the incubator in three years, 157 have been saved. The baby incubator was invented in 1891, and charity institutions in France are the work of a philanthropist, Dr. Lion, who has interested prominent people of all sorts and conditions of life in the work, and hopes to establish similar institutions all over Paris. An incubator can be rented for 60 francs a month, and any family, by means of an ordinary gas tube, a kerosene lamp, or a current of electricity, and twelve dollars a month can save a little life, still more precious to those to whom it has been given by reason of its fragility. —Harper's Bazar.

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