

valuable life, an unfortunate condition of mind which I would not mention except for the fact that soon after the great victory at Colenso it cost us dear. On the days immediately following the first important engagement of the war, when we had driven the enemy back into Ladysmith with heavy loss to them, I had devoted much energy to urging the Generals to rush the town, which at that time had practically no defenses and might have been taken without great difficulty. Erasmus declared that such talk was nonsense. He was supported by some others of his kind, with the result that while we sat on the hills, and smoked our pipes, and fired futile shots, the British strung barbed wire round the town and completed strong defenses.

Then it was that General Erasmus and his coterie decided, or pretended to, that it was time for vigorous action. The General announced with a great show of valor that he would lead an assault on Ladysmith, and sent messengers to the various commandos to inquire if we would follow him. Eager for action, we answered that we would. This is where Erasmus had miscalculated; for he had thought that the burghers would not countenance an attempt to rush the town at this late day, and that he would thus gain credit for bravery at no risk.

It had been agreed that the men were to be in their positions at three o'clock on the morning of January 6; but during the night General Erasmus sent out countermanding orders, forgetting, however, to have the Free Staters, the Irish Brigade, and the Pretoria town boys notified that the fight was off. I had been directed to take my men, with four field guns, to a small hill in front of the English fortifications on an elevation just out of Ladysmith to the north. At the first glow of light the Mausers of the Free Staters began to pop away to the west of us, and out in front, almost under the strong defenses of the British, we heard the rapid rifle fire of the Pretoria town boys. Never were braver boys sacrificed to the lapses of a fatuous superior officer.

To give them as much protection as possible, we opened on the fortifications with our four cannon, and almost at the same instant the guns on Bulwana, Lombard Kop, and Pepworth Hill began to thunder. We saw about one hundred and fifty of the Pretoria boys, reckless in their courage, try to scale a high stone wall that was the chief factor in the defensive works at this point, and saw a number of them fall back with bullets in their bodies. The remainder took refuge in a depression about one hundred yards from the British firing line, upon which we concentrated our shells.

For hours the artillery duel continued. I despatched a note to General Erasmus with the information that if he would send us reinforcements we could successfully storm the fortifications, which would give us a commanding position and would in all probability bring about the immediate surrender of Ladysmith. But the General, instead of coming forward with his large force, went back a mile. A furious gale of rain and hail arose during the afternoon, and under cover of this the Pretoria town boys made a run for life. Somewhat later the rest of us, seeing that our task was hopeless, retired from the attack. There was no singing along the hills that night, because fifty-five of our men were dead and one hundred and thirty-five were badly wounded.

The Colonel's Youthful Aide

MY messenger to General Erasmus had been Willie Smith, aged twelve. I had sent Willie because he was too small to shoot a gun, and also because I knew that there was no man in my command who was more likely to reach his destination. There were many things that the boy was too young to understand, and one of these was fear. When I intrusted him with the errand to Erasmus, he dug his heels into his horse and rode off furiously, with all the abandon of a born cavalier. And he returned too, like a young whirlwind, smiling sarcastically when he told me that the General had read my note, had crumpled it up, and said there was no reply.

During most of my rides Willie was at my side, and he held shells and bullets in such scorn that one of my chief worries was that he would be killed or wounded. I had taken a liking to him the first time I saw him,—a very dirty little chap crawling out from under the train that had brought my men and me down to the Natal border. He had ridden from Johannesburg on the trucks beneath the car. I had clapped him on the back, with a laugh, and he had at once appointed himself a member of my staff. I got him a horse and a revolver, and we went through many fights together. After the war one of the first friends I met in Johannesburg was Willie.

"Hello, Willie!" I exclaimed with great heartiness. "You're looking fine. What are you doing these days?"

"I'm a jockey now," replied the boy, looking up at me proudly. "I'm riding in the races here."

"Making money, I suppose?"

Willie grinned and pulled from his trousers pocket a roll of bills that was almost too large for his small fist to hold. "There's fifty pound right here," he announced, tapping the roll with his finger. He was about to put it away again, when he thought of something and glanced up at me.

"Need some money, Colonel?"

What Happened at Spion Kop

BUT to return to the front at Ladysmith. We heard that General Buller, having given up hope of crossing the Tugela River at Colenso and marching directly to the relief of the town, had taken his big

army some twelve miles up the stream and camped behind a high ridge that commanded all the hills on our side of the river. Since these hills, with the exception of the river itself, presented the only obstacle to a triumphant march into Ladysmith, it now became our task to fortify them.

It was after five days of endeavor to drive us from our positions with shell fire that General Buller turned his attention to Spion Kop, a hill that rose from the plain like a great cone with the top sawed off flat. This hill was somewhat to the north of the position of the British, and they had been so busy bombarding us that they had neglected it, with the result that General Botha had posted a small force there.

During the night of January 23 some two thousand British crawled across the valley, and at daylight in the morning went storming up the steep slope, driving from their trenches the handful of Boer defenders. While they were exulting in this success, another small band of Boers, about ninety men of the Carolina commando, stealthily climbed the hillside, and, reaching the flat top, poured from the rear a sudden and rapid rifle fire into the men in the trenches. The latter fought back with valor; but more Boers kept joining their comrades on the little plateau. Although less than five hundred gained the height, the British evidently thought the whole Boer army was upon them; for they suddenly began to climb out of the trenches, in which, by the way, they left their dead three deep.

This was a panic-stricken retreat; but the Boers, realizing the danger of their position in view of the vastly stronger force of the enemy, thought it was a flanking movement, and so they likewise began to run. Both sides were in such a hurry to get away that there was little looking back on the part of either, and each was soon hidden from the other on the opposite side of the hill. The result was the remarkable situation of two opposing forces fleeing in terror from each other.

But there were three Boers, Captain Jack Hindon, Heinrich Slegkamt, and Charlie Roos, who began to think, after they had got about halfway down the slope, that the enemy might not be in pursuit after all. Hindon imparted this idea to his two friends, who were close beside him, and asked them to return up the hill with him to take a look around. With the rest of the command still running, they went back on their hands and knees, and, reaching the flat top, found it bare of all but dead and wounded men. Captain Hindon had a Boer flag with him, and this he planted high among the rocks. Pausing at the foot of the hill, the commando saw their emblem in the breeze high above them.

They gazed at it in astonishment, and then, almost

as a single man, the commando turned, with shouts, and went climbing up again. Hindon danced in the sunlight on the crest to give them assurance that the planting of the flag was not an English trick, and they swarmed again upon the flat, jumped across the dead in the trenches, and, gaining the opposite slope, poured hot volleys down at the foe who, throwing away accoutrements as they ran, were straining across the valley. It was now that our batteries began to play their part. We opened a raking side fire upon the flying host. Bullets and shells swept the plain like gusts of hail, and after the battle, when we were requested by General Buller to bury his dead and send the bill to him, we put into graves where they lay on the plain and hillside twelve hundred British soldiers. Our loss was fifty killed and one hundred and twenty wounded.

When Buller Realized His Error

ONCE more the British army dragged its weary length back to its old position behind Colenso, and here, where General Buller had opportunity for meditation, he finally realized, as I had long feared he would, that he had made a mistake in attempting to relieve Ladysmith from the west, but should have gone to the east. In this direction our line of defense was weakest. Langwan Hill was the real key to our position, and in a desperate assault the British took it. Our extreme left was turned. There Buller hurled his hordes on Pieters Hill, on Groblers Kloof, and the other elevations that loomed up on the way to Ladysmith. Time after time his regiments were beaten back, losing hundreds at each repulse; but he was desperate now, and sacrificed without scruple his Irish infantry, which always led each fresh attack. Day and night the heavy Lyddite shells pounded our positions on the hills, tearing off their very tops, and every morning we had to drive back storming forces that outnumbered us twenty-five to one. For ten days the Boers underwent this strain, lying without relief and with little food in trenches half filled with mud and water.

It was on February 27 we heard that General Cronje, with his entire army, had surrendered to Lord Roberts at Paardeberg in the Orange Free State. This bad news, coming on top of our exhaustion from ten days' incessant fighting with a force overwhelmingly superior, was too much for even the strong spirit of the Boers, and the hills that had been so valiantly defended were reluctantly abandoned. The next day Ladysmith was relieved, and, with all our big guns and a line of wagons fifteen miles long, we went trailing across the veldt to the north for defensive positions in the Biggarsberg Mountains.

To be continued.

ON THE TRAIN

By Wilmot Price

ONE night a little more than three years ago as I was stepping rather hastily into a New York train, there occurred a very slight incident which led to larger consequences. My foot caught in my skirt, and involuntarily I uttered the wordless exclamation of annoyance that the occasion seemed to warrant. Looking up suddenly, my eyes met the rather piercing gaze of a short, dark, ordinary looking man of middle age. He was by no means noticeable, yet his face made an impression on me not altogether agreeable. I settled myself in the dusty plush seat of the car, and, having no book with which to while away the time till we should reach the metropolis, I opened my paper.

A woman traveling alone is likely to be the conversational victim of other feminine wanderers,—certainly no one of the opposite sex would feel tempted to molest me, austere looking female that I was, wearing portentous spectacles and swathed in a black automobile veil which served as a bandage for my asthmatic throat.

I regarded the newspaper as a protection,—a sign that I did not wish to be disturbed,—and trusted that it might be so interpreted by a restless looking woman on the seat across the aisle. I instantly became absorbed in a paragraph containing a story with which the morning papers had been filled concerning the disappearance from Albany of one Daniel M. Bailey, the treasurer of several charitable institutions in that city.

The day before he had apparently started for his down town office as usual; but he never arrived there, nor could his astonished and alarmed wife give any explanation of his whereabouts. Immediate investigations of the funds intrusted to him revealed a shortage of fifty thousand dollars. The thefts from the treasury had extended over a period of several months, and the indications were that Bailey, like so many of his predecessors, successful and unsuccessful, had intended to be merely a borrower and had ended by becoming a thief. The maelstrom of speculation had sucked him in,—not

only his soul, but apparently his body as well, for of that, dead or alive, there was no trace.

The police were very sure he was lying low, and that he would eventually be caught boarding an ocean steamer or otherwise seeking to make his escape to alien shores.

A picture of a commonplace looking man with a small black mustache and prominent ears completed the familiar story, and I sighed as I read the offer of the enterprising newspaper to present five hundred dollars to his capturer. I smiled cynically to myself, and thought it would be harder to find the man who did not look like this average citizen than to discover his counterpart. Involuntarily my

