

Personally, I had had the pleasure of meeting him upon several occasions during my sojourn in the Transvaal and I was always impressed alike with the broad and enlightened mind he displayed and the urbanity and courtesy of his manner, whilst his absolute devotion to his country was unquestioned by the bitterest enemy of the Boers. His last precious words were "My people! my country! what will come of them?" Thus died the man, who, next to Pretorius, is reckoned as being by far the most prominent figure in our history during the last forty years at least. General Buller was in the highest sense of the term a gentleman, in which a higher encomium cannot be bestowed upon him. His funeral at Pretoria was more than an imposing state function; it was the spontaneous tribute of affection and respect alike of Boer and alien, burgher and Kiblauder.

Yet, curious as it may seem, there was evident - especially amongst the more energetic and extreme of the Boers - a distinct feeling of relief; not indeed at his demise, but at his removal from the office of head of the Boer army. It was considered by these people that he had been not nearly vigorous enough and far

eminent in his methods of conducting the war, and that he
 did not sufficiently follow up or taken full advantage of
 opportunities, especially in the earlier months of the war.
 The most notable instance adduced and the most presuently
 was his allowing General Buller to withdraw the whole
 his guns and forces across the Tugela, after the catastrophe
 of Spion Kop, without in any way molesting him; and
 notwithstanding the fact that he had the British forces
 practically at his mercy ^{during the whole of the time that} ~~was~~ the withdrawal was
 effected. That this was so is proved by the fact that the
 his guns were covering and within effective range of the
 point at which the crossing of the river was effected by the
 British forces.

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have more than once been asked, since my return to Eng-
 land, for an explanation of this almost inexplicable and cer-
 tainly puzzling action on the part of the Boers. The explanation
 undoubtedly is, that General Buller, out of sheer compassion
 for British soldiers, absolutely forbade any attacks upon what
 he considered his beaten enemy. I had opportunities - of which
 I availed myself to the fullest extent - at both Johannesburg
 and Pretoria of making full enquiries regarding the conduct
 of the war.

In the progress of the war, and from at least a score of sources, including the highest Government officials and the humblest soldier, I received the same explanation of the above incident. And what establishes the bona fides of the men making such a statement is that the action of General Goubert was almost invariably deprecated by them. Nor was the above a solitary instance, but was indicative of his whole policy in the conduct of the war. On one occasion, when some of his men demurred at not being allowed to pursue the retreating soldiers, General Goubert expressed the opinion that it would be wrong to let ~~run away~~ ^{run away} to kill men from behind who were running away. On ~~it being~~ ^{it being} pointed out to him that they would inevitably return on another occasion if allowed the chance, he replied "Then we must catch them again, and either shoot them while they are attacking us or else make them run away again, or take them prisoners." There are many similar incidents which lead General Goubert to have been a man of more than invariably humane instincts, ~~and a man of more than~~ ~~humanity~~, but one who was quite out of his element amid the stress and turmoil of modern warfare.

an interesting return, as showing how the casualties
 suffered by the Boers compared with our own, was published at
 beginning of March by Prof. Molengraaff, chief
 of the Intelligence Department at Pretoria. This was a
 list of all the Federal losses up to the relief of Ladysmith
 & Kimberley, but not including the last named fights.
 The list as published was as follows: -

Killed	677.
Wounded	2,129
accidentally killed	24.
accidentally wounded	171.
Died of sickness	99
Sick who have recovered or who are still under treatment	1,251
Total.	<u>4,551</u>

It has frequently been asserted that the Boers concealed their
 losses or minimised the number of their casualties. Personally
 I do not believe this, as all the evidence is against such
 an idea. ^{apart from the fact that their method of warfare does not conduce to heavy casualties,} The question arises, what did they do with their
 wounded burghers, if there were so many more than
 named in the lists published by the Intelligence Department?

Chapter IX.

The eventful history of Johannesburg - the great explosion -
awful effects - many killed and injured - funeral of victims
public sympathy - large relief fund subscribed - the explo-
sion: accident or design? - arguments pro and con - Brit-
ishers charged with it - another exodus of Britishers - works
at the shell factory - Christmas greetings per "long
Yours".

6/18
6/19
6/20
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6/30

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GENERAL VIEW OF THE EXPLOSION
24.4.1900

By far the most exciting event which occurred in Johannesburg before the surrender of the town to Lord Roberts was the explosion on April 24 at Begbie's Foundry, then being used as an ammunition factory by the Government.

There would appear to be a fatality about Johannesburg which induces more than its fair share of untoward occurrences. During its brief existence of less than fourteen years it has experienced famine, drought, the revolution in connection with Jameson's Raid and consequent demonstration of armed men within its borders; the awful dynamite explosion of ^{February} 1896; ~~more~~ more than one smallpox epidemic; its cattle swept off by rinderpest, in common with the rest of the country; the events of the twelve months preceding the war, including riots, murders and disorderly meetings, culminating in the war with its accompanying exodus of Uitlanders, ruin of hundreds of erstwhile prosperous citizens and suffering of thousands. And then, while the war ~~was~~ actually in progress, there appeared yet another explosion which, although not nearly so awful in its effects as that of 1896, was still sufficiently so, for it resulted in the deaths

of at least twenty persons - it was impossible to say ^{exactly} how many were killed, as many were literally blown to pieces and several sackfuls of remains were collected, some of which could not possibly be sorted out and identified - and injuries to some eighty others; besides destroying many thousands of pounds' worth of property and rendering hundreds homeless.

About five-thirty in the afternoon of the day in question when people were returning from business the light was waning, the whole town was ^{startled} by a tremendous report. So severe was the concussion at being at home at Hospital Hill, fully two miles from the scene of the disaster, the first thought that occurred to me was that it was due to the discharge of one of the heavy guns at the fort, a few hundred yards away. On seeing the direction of the enormous smoke and which rose from the place, however, I next remembered that ~~it was~~ the dynamite magazine of either City and Suburban or the Village Chain Reef mine had exploded, and it was only on reaching the actual place that it was found to be the ammunition factory at Begbie's foundry, at the City and Suburban Township.

But long before reaching the actual scene of the disaster my evidences of its effect ^{were} met ^{with} ~~the~~. Within

radius of half-a-mile not a building stood intact, whilst at a much greater distance, doors were blown off their hinges, ^{were} roofs, ^{were} damaged and windows shattered. Immediately surrounding the block of lands upon which the foundry was built, as well in the case of that building itself, a scene of almost indescribable devastation met the view. What had few moments before been cottages, houses, shops and factories ~~had been~~ ^{were} converted into mere heaps of splintered wood, distorted and crumpled-up sheets of galvanised iron and crumpled wire; from which protruded articles of household furniture of every description and in every stage of delapidation and ruin. Men and women were rushing panic-stricken hither and thither, many with blood-stained heads and blackened visages. Others ~~there~~ were prone upon the ground, where they lay with shattered limbs and their bodies, in some cases pinned down with heavy masses of woodwork and masonry. [Every heap of debris soon became a scene of busy workers engaged in burying the wounded and extricating the dead.]

ladders, carts and wagons of every description were requisitioned to carry the wounded to the Hospital or to their homes and squads of ambulance men and a number of doctors performed a labor of mercy in attending to the most seriously injured and alleviating their sufferings. To add to the horrors of the scene, the collapsed buildings caught fire and the flames increased the danger alike to rescuers and those who needed their assistance. The fire engines promptly arrived, however, and in a short time the flames were subdued, and that source of danger removed.

The explosion having occurred at sundown darkness soon fell and it added to the difficulty of the work of rescue. The impressiveness of the scene was now greatly increased by the many large ~~flambeaus~~ flambeaus which were lighted to aid the searchers in their arduous but dismal work and which threw a weird and fearful light over the field of operations. Night through the light were men engaged in the work of search and rescue and ^{their} were efforts relaxed until it became ^{evident} ~~apparent~~ that any who might still be under the piles of ruined brick and mortar work could not possibly have survived.

On the following day were buried the bodies of those killed by explosion and those who died from their injuries after

being rescued, and the funeral was a most impressive function, practically the whole of the population of the town attending to express its sympathy with the victims of the disaster and the survivors alike. Nor did their sympathy end at that. Immediately after the explosion subscription lists were opened for the relief of the sufferers by the said occurrence and within two days the sum of £3250 had been collected, and when the lists were closed at the end of sixteen days the fund amounted to over £5000 - a very practical expression of sympathy indeed.

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The prevailing impression was that the explosion was the outcome of a diabolical plot, the work of Britishers or others in sympathy with England over the war, and its object to embarrass the Boers by cutting off that source of supply of shells for the front.

Unfortunately there appeared to be several reasons for believing this to be true. In the first place there was not nearly sufficient explosive material on the premises to cause such devastation as was wrought by the explosion, and what was contained in the factory was smokeless powder. In the next place, the experts were unanimous in declaring that

Collection Number: A1203

Collection Name: Edward Bushnan Rose

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive

Location: Johannesburg

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