

**GENERAL WHITE'S
BLUNDER.**

**ANOTHER ACCOUNT OF
THE LADYSMITH
DISASTER.**

MELBOURNE, November 24.

News by the Nineveh, which has just arrived from Cape Colony, states that the battle at Ladysmith, where the British lost the Tenth Mountain Battery and portions of the Gloucestershire Regiment and the Royal Irish Fusiliers, was an exciting one. It is estimated 20,000 Boers took part.

Joubert effected a junction with a Free State commando of some 10,000 men. He had disposed this combined force in a half-circle embracing Ladysmith.

They occupied a radius of at least 14 miles, the right flank being within 2 1/2 miles of Ladysmith, and the left flank resting on and being protected by a very strong position, some seven miles from the town.

Had it been possible for General White to have disposed his forces so that he could outflank the enemy and driven them on to his centre, there would have been a different story to relate. Once driven in upon his position, the enemy would have had to stand a bayonet charge as at Elands Laagte, with the cavalry in readiness to cut off their retreat Dundee way.

The Boer position was, however, too extended and ramified through physical advantage, and our forces were too few to bring about a decisive engagement.

General White effected all that could possibly be done with the means at his disposal.

The strength and accuracy of the enemy's shell fire, and their overwhelming numbers would possibly have meant decimation of our infantry if we had charged the main position.

There was nothing left but to fall back on Ladysmith, a movement which was carried on with perfect coolness, notwithstanding a galling fire from the enemy's guns.

Had the quality of their shells been the same as ours our loss would have been much greater than it was.

As a matter of fact, however, few of their shells burst properly, and beyond a few casualties, caused during the retreat, a most trying march back to camp was made in a wholly successful manner.

The battle opened at daybreak and raged till three o'clock in the afternoon.

Three columns were engaged, one working in and driving the enemy on the left, one operating on the right, while the third, under General White, engaged the Boer centre.

The Royal Irish, the Gloucesters, and the 10th Battery were detailed on Sunday evening to clear the left, so that the Boers should not slip past and get on to Ladysmith.

Shortly before three in the morning the stragglers from the Gloucesters and the 10th Battery began coming in, while the mules with the remains of the battery, were seen moving past, some in charge of Cape boys, and others leaderless.

What had happened was something like this: Shortly after midnight the leading mules with the battery, became suddenly frightened by some shots, and swerved round and bolted, stampeding the entire battery.

The mules broke through the Gloucesters and created confusion.

Two battalions, however, remained intact, and they afterwards gave a good account of themselves, as from the central position incessant firing could be heard all the morning on the left, showing that the Gloucesters and the Fusiliers were vigorously engaging the enemy there.

[At this point the message breaks off, several hundred words descriptive of reverse having apparently been cut out by the press censor as it was possibly in conflict with the official statement afterwards made.]

Until well on in the afternoon the Boer main body was inactive, awaiting the result of the artillery duel.

The guns kept up an incessant fire, but although our guns must have done considerable execution the superior range of the enemy's ordnance, and their accurate practice, enabled them to hold their own.

Meanwhile our force on the Boer right flank became hotly engaged, the Maxim fire being continually heard,

Some of the enemy's sharpshooters also threatened us.

The Devons were sent to protect the line there, and the Light Horse moved to protect the rear directly over Ladysmith, on the right of our position.

By noon General White brought up the Gordons and Manchester's to support the Devons.

The infantry were advanced, and it was hoped that it would be possible to charge the Boers, but the latter, who evidently held some of their big guns in reserve kept up a terrific fire, and as our right was overwhelmingly opposed, it was determined to retire to Ladysmith.

With this object, a strong body of Hussar lancers were directed to ride round the rear side of Lombardskop, and advance up the valley on to the plain, at the head of which a strong Boer stronghold was situated, and there to protect the retreating infantry.

The cavalry were speedily in action, but so hot was the fire to which they were exposed, that they had to change their position.

Their retreat was, however, coolly carried out, the cavalry doing their work nimbly and taking the hottest part of a very hot afternoon's work.

The Boers followed up the retreat with a hail of shell the missiles bursting repeatedly amongst our men, but, happily for the most part ineffectually.

The accuracy of the fire may be gauged by the fact that the Manchester's, when they had gained the plateau opposite the Ladysmith abattoir, had shells sent repeatedly into their midst, while on the nearer side into town, the enemy's guns lashed shell after shell on to the strings of retreating wagons as they came into view.

General White remained in the field to the last, conducting the retiring movements, and the whole force arrived safely in Ladysmith.

BRITISH PROPERTY COMMAND-DEERED.

Thousands of pounds' worth of property at Johannesburg have been commandeered, and other nationalities receive similar treatment, but nothing like the extent of the British.

A BOER REFUGEE.

The Nineveh brings several refugees, one, who was formerly connected with the Labour movement at Broken Hill, has decidedly pro-Boer sympathies. He says the Transvaal, under Boer rule, was essentially a poor man's land but he was doubtful if it would continue so when Great Britain got hold of it. He asserts that the franchise would not be regarded seriously by the Uitlanders, though it was a good enough pretext for the quarrel. The majority of the Uitlanders did not want to vote, as they regarded the Transvaal merely as a place to make money, which they would spend in England or Australia. The Boers promise to make it warm for the volunteer fighters, and express sorrow for Tommy Atkins, who fights because he is paid; but to the volunteers, who preferred to battle against them, they would show no mercy.

**THE NEW SOUTH WALES
LANCERS WHO RE-
TURNED.**

MELBOURNE, November 24.

Thirty-one of the New South Wales Lancers returned by the Nineveh. Six are invalided, and were not passed by the army doctor at the Cape.

It had originally been supposed that all had volunteered with one exception, but when the test was applied at the War Office, three days before the Nineveh left, it was found that 30 declined to sign the paper to volunteer.

Great indignation was expressed by the War Office authorities.

The men who are returning state that they were never seriously asked to volunteer. Had they been, they should not have refused to go.

In June Captain Cox asked whether, in the event of war, they would join with him in offering their services.

The captain asserts only one refused. On the strength of this fact he conveyed the offer to the War Department, and secured the influence of Lord Carrington to induce the authorities to accept them. He never dreamt that it would be necessary to consult the men again when the offer was accepted. He, however, got some inkling that the men were going back on him.

The men declare that Captain Cox never consulted the whole of them, and some say that under no circumstances would they have consented to go with Captain Cox.

Following are copies of cablegrams sent by the Premier to Captain Cox, commanding the Lancers, addressed as follows: Nineveh, Capetown:—

"Inform Privates Baly, Madden, Ranken, Maynes, Smith, and Morris, parents desire their return; and Gould, brother desires his return to Sydney direct by Nineveh, October 20."

"Inform Privates Larber, Beaver, Bradbury, and Dooley parents desire their return to Sydney direct by Nineveh, October 25."

"Inform Rogers father desires his return to Sydney direct by Nineveh, October 31."

**DUMMY KINGS AND REAL
ASSASSINS.**

While the detestation in which ex-King Milan is held in Serbia is sufficient to account not merely for one but dozens of attempts upon his ignominious life, there is reason to believe that the latest endeavour to assassinate him was bogus.

There is little doubt that it formed part of a conspiracy concocted by himself to afford him an excuse for casting into prison a number of his political foes and personal opponents.

That such is the case is asserted in leading European capitals, even in Vienna, in spite of the fact that Milan is the champion of Austria's interests in the dominion of his imbecile son. Further corroboration is given to the story by the continental correspondents of the London "Times" and other English papers.

Bogus attempts upon the lives of rulers of the Old World have often been concocted by the secret police and by Government agents for the purpose of reviving the waning popularity of the sovereign or chief magistrate in question. In France, for instance, an affair of this kind takes place almost each year when the President drives in state to the Grand Prix. There is never any damage done, and inasmuch as after the arrest of the alleged assassin nothing is ever more heard of him, or of his punishment, the French, ever disposed to be sceptical, have come to regard the incident as one of the regular features of the day, got up by the police for the purpose of giving a sort of fillip to the President's popularity, and only calculated to take in greenhorns.

Only on one occasion was the customary attempt on the French Chief Magistrate's life not down on the police programme—namely, when President Carnot met his death at the hands of the Italian anarchist, Cesario. Even on the occasion of the recent assault by aristocrats upon Loubet, which was genuine enough, the police were not surprised.

Sometimes these bogus attempts on the lives of sovereigns are organised not by their own police but by the agents of foreign governments, not with any idea of endangering their lives, but solely for the purpose of furthering some political design.

Thus it is well known that Bismarck was cognisant beforehand of the intention of the Pole Bergowski to fire a shot at Alexander II, of Russia when driving back from the review at Longchamps, in Paris, with Napoleon III. The French authorities are convinced on this day that Berezowski, who is now insane and a convict in the penal settlement of New Caledonia, was incited to commit the deed by German agents.

At any rate, it had the effect of preventing Russia's intervention on behalf of France in the war of 1870, the Czar and his sons having quitted Paris with feelings quite the reverse of pleasant toward the country in which they had been subjected to this sear, even if one does not call it by a harsher name. Planned or not, it worked as Bismarck wished.

The same Czar escaped another and this time perfectly serious attempt upon his life in 1878, or 1879, in a very singular manner, which is not generally known. He had lost his nerve, and had announced to his entourage that he had made up his mind to give up the custom of his daily drive through the streets of St. Petersburg on the ground that he hated driving, hated saluting, and hated being stared at.

Count Alderberg, who was at this time his chief confidant and most intimate associate, represented to him

how unwise it would be to disappoint the people. Finding the Czar obstinate, he conceived the idea of a waxen figure made in the likeness of his master, with practicable joints worked by interior mechanism. It was so constructed by an English firm that when wound up it turned its head slowly from side to side, with a slight bend of the body, raising its hand in salute.

It was an admirable likeness, though the Count used subsequently to declare that the face of the dummy was just a little bit too distinguished looking. At any rate, it was sufficient to deceive the subjects of the Czar, especially as the Imperial carriage was always driven at a tearing gallop, almost surrounded by an escort of Cossacks.

It was this dummy that took the place of the Emperor in his daily drives, and it was this dummy that received, fair in the breast, the bullet of the pistol fired by the would-be assassin, Soloviev. An inch lower down, it would have smashed and stopped the mechanism. As it was, the dummy continued to bow and salute, just as if nothing had happened, and Lenter's correspondent, in describing the affair for the foreign press, writes that evening, wrote as follows:—

"Luckily, the Emperor, who was accompanied as usual by Count Alderberg, was untouched. As so often happens in such cases, the assassin, doubtless through excitement, entirely missed his aim. The remarkable thing was the coolness and courage displayed by the Emperor. So far from exhibiting the slightest alarm, he continued to salute the crowd on either side, smiling as ever, as though nothing at all had happened. Nor was his drive in any way curtailed. Later in the afternoon, when the news had spread, a vast crowd of people collected in front of the Winter Palace, and the Czar, in answer to their continual cheers, at length appeared upon the balcony and bowed repeatedly."

Of course it was the Czar in flesh and blood who appeared on the balcony.

The only sufferer, therefore, in this whole affair was the would-be assassin. For not only did he get no credit for his coolness and courage and the excellence of his aim, but he suffered death on the gallows for, after all, having done nothing worse than shoot at a dummy. But it would have been impossible to let him off without revealing the whole truth.

ROUGH INTRODUCTIONS.

Strange incidents sometimes pave the way to marriage. A pretty woman was riding in a public omnibus when she suddenly called out that she had been robbed of her purse, and accused a middle-aged man, who was sitting next her, of the theft, nor, despite his vehement protestations of innocence, was she content until a constable had been summoned. This was done, but on the arrival of the party at the police station, the lady to her horror remembered that she had left her purse at home. Eagerly she offered to make any reparation in her power to the man she had accused, who, in response, presented his card, requesting that he might have the honour of calling upon her. This was granted. He proved to be a man of good standing, morally and materially, and six months later the lady was his wife.

Two cyclists, a man and a woman, came into collision. The man was knocked down, but the lady was hurried from her machine, receiving severe injuries, whereof the memento, in the shape of an ugly scar, she will bear to her grave. The gentleman, who was not much hurt, rendered all the assistance in his power, and afterwards called daily at the lady's house to make inquiries as to her progress. These frequent visits resulted in a friendship that culminated in marriage.

In trying a case a lawyer had to submit a lady to a searching cross-examination. The following day he received a call from his victim, who complained bitterly of the indignities she had suffered at his hands. Shamefacedly, he pleaded the exigencies of duty, and then, his feelings as a man overcoming his subtleties as a lawyer, made an ample apology, which the lady accepted so graciously as ultimately to lure him on to those more tender advances that lead to matrimony.