

MESSRS HENNING AND SERVICE, OF AUCKLAND, AND THEIR MOTOR-CYCLE.

MEN WHO WIN, BUT NEVER WEAR THE VICTORIA CROSS.

While there is nothing more glorious in war than the winning of the Victoria Cross, there are few things more tragic and pathetic than the cases in which gallant men, like the late Lieutenant Roberts, have won the cross for valour, but have not survived their heroism to wear it.

There are many such cases in our war annals of the last forty-four years since our Queen first instituted this reward for conspicuous bravery on the field of battle. During the recent Matabele war, when a handful of our men were being hotly pursued by the enemy, Trooper Wise, of Grey's Horse, was struck by a bullet when he was in the act of mounting. His horse bolted, and the enemy were within a few yards of the fallen man when a fellow-trooper, Baxter, seeing his plight, dismounted from his horse and lifted Wise into the saddle amid a perfect hail of bullets.

Baxter's position was now worse than that of the man he had rescued. Supporting himself by the stirrup-leather of another trooper he commenced to run, but had not proceeded many yards when a bullet struck him, and he fell to the ground mortally wounded. Baxter had won the cross, but never even knew it.

Our army has produced no heroes braver than the small band of eight men who blew up the Cashmere Gate in the Indian Mutiny. Each man carrying a bag of powder, the gallant little band crossed the drawbridge and rushed up to the inner gate in the face of a tornado of shells and bullets. As they placed their bags of powder in position against the gate the bullets spat around them like rain, and first one and then another dropped.

Then, before the bags were all in position, the powder was accidentally ignited, and with a deafening crash and roar the gate was blown into the air, and those who had not fallen were hurled from their feet and smothered with the falling debris. Of the gallant eight two only, Sergeant Smith and Hugler Hawthorne, lived to wear the cross they had so bravely won. The news came to Lieutenant Salkeld as he was dying that he was recommended for the cross, and he died happy in the thought that "it would be nice to have it sent home."

During the Afghan war of 1880 an English gunner performed a feat of daring which eclipsed even that of the famous "Light Brigade." At the battle of Maiwand, when the enemy were charging the guns in irresistible numbers, a small body of cavalry started to meet them and intercept the attack. Gunner Smith, of the E Battery, joining in the charge. When they were within one hundred yards of the

rushing enemy the brave gunner found himself absolutely alone, the remainder of the small force having retired from the hopeless venture. Nothing daunted, Gunner Smith continued the charge alone, and hurling himself at the front rank of the enemy, was hewn down with a dozen sabres, winning the cross and losing his life in a single moment of reckless bravery.

It was in Afghanistan, two years earlier, that Lieutenant Hamilton lost his life while winning the cross. At Kujja, when riding with a native guide to the rescue of his major, the guide was unhorsed and immediately surrounded by a crowd of Afghans. Seeing his companion's plight Lieutenant Hamilton rushed to his assistance, and simply mowed down his assailants with the sweeping blows of his sword until the guide was able to mount again and to escape. This was only one of many similar feats which won for the brave lieutenant the cross for valour. He fell at last, however, covered with terrible wounds, and never even saw the cross he had won.

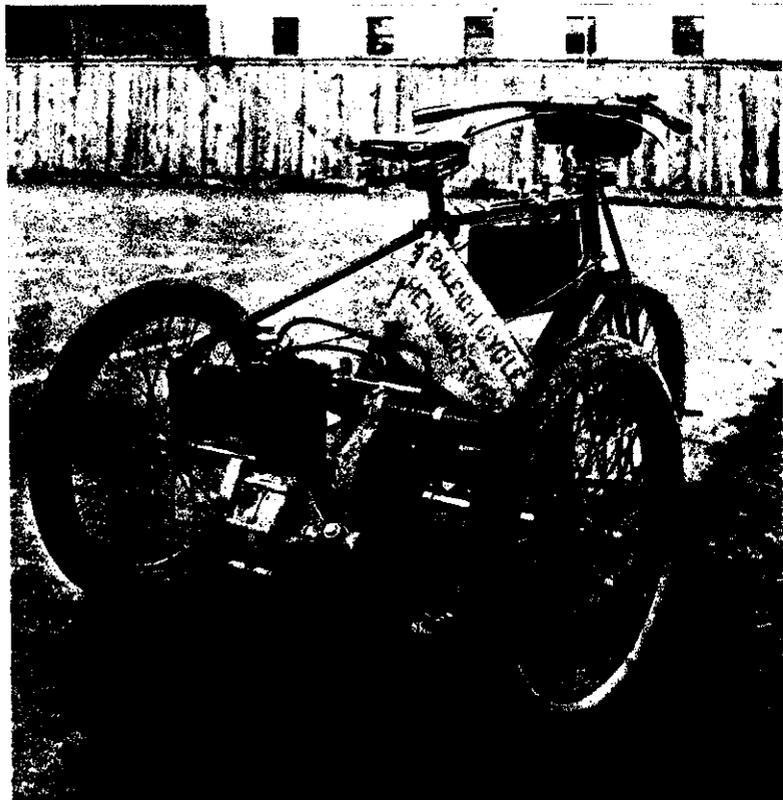
Of the nine men who risked their lives in a vain defence of the magazine at Delhi, and blew it up rather than allow it to fall into the mutineers' hands, only four survived the venture, and of these three only lived to wear the cross of which death had robbed their six comrades.

While many brave men have thus fallen in the supreme moment of winning the cross others have survived to wear it only by an apparent miracle. During the Persian war of 1856 Captain Wood, of the Indian Army, was hit by no fewer than seven bullets while leading his men against a fort. Although thus riddled by bullets and dripping with blood, the gallant captain dashed into the fort and wrought such havoc with his sword that the enemy beat a hasty retreat. He ultimately survived his terrible wounds, and wore the cross which he had so dearly won.

Even more remarkable was the escape of another V.C. hero, Sergeant-Major Henry, who, at the battle of Inkerman, defended the guns single-handed against an army of Russians. With sword and bayonet, one in each hand, he held them at bay until deluged with blood, which poured from a dozen wounds, and, overcome by exhaustion, he fell fainting to the ground. Of the sixty-two Crimean heroes on whose breasts our Queen pinned the Victoria Cross in June, 1857, none had won it more bravely than Sergeant-Major Henry.

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BACK VIEW OF THE CYCLE, SHOWING THE ENGINE.

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