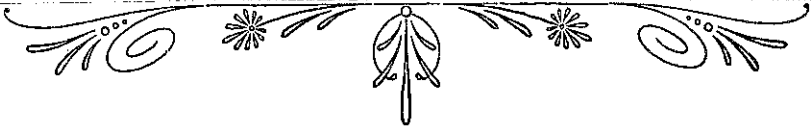


AT THE FRONT.

By FREDERIC VILLIERS.



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Imaginative War Correspondents.

III.

FEBRUARY 6TH.

THE War has lately developed a new type of journalism, which, as a member of the older school of war correspondents, I much deplore, for it is a difficult matter to keep pace with certain up-to-date members of the profession now in South Africa. First of all there is the "Snap-shot under fire" photographer, which I thought in this campaign, owing to the accurate shooting of the Boer, would not last long, but he is still as bold and rampant as ever. I was admiring the pluck and restlessness of a colleague in taking these snap-shots under bullet fire of the foe, especially one representing a section of the Dublin Fusiliers at the battle of Colenso. The men are blazing away into space from behind rocky boulders, and I was wondering how on earth the intrepid artist could get such good results under such exciting circumstances. The exact focus, distance, and, above all, the sun in the right place, while the Boers were blazing away at himself and his camera, and in spite of the men around him nursing cover, no doubt swearing and cursing at the artist who, by his bold attitude, was drawing an extra hail of nickel bullets. Eventually arriving in Natal, where most of these lovely pictures came from, I received a shock regarding the snap-shots in question. I was speaking to a young officer

of the "Dubs" about these photos appearing in a weekly illustrated paper, when he laughingly told me that the special artist in question had asked him to pose a number of his men as "artists' models" behind a ridge of rocks at Frere, and, to his surprise, they came out in the papers as "The Dubs under fire at the battle of Colenso, by our special artist under fire."

Travelling from Maritzburg to Durban, an officer of the Colonial Staff, who was, for a time, in charge of two guns at the front, told me that the same snap-shotter had asked him to pose his gun with men skirmishing round it, and this picture afterwards appeared as a snap-shot taken in the throes of a bloody battle. Then I was referred to a photo, "On board the armoured train," supposed to be taken under fire. Here the models distinctly gave the artist away. Many of the men are playing their parts, pulling their triggers at imaginary Boers, but others cannot resist turning towards the camera with a pleasant grin to have, as Tommy says, "their mugs struck."

I simply mention these facts for the benefit of the public, who are apt to look upon photos as above suspicion. In fact, as a colleague of mine once said: "You know the camera can never lie." After all it depends on whether there is a liar at the back of the camera! Of course there is some excellent photographic work being