

of the barrack square, the acquired lessons of unreasoned drill, the accepted formulas of collective movement, subordinating action to one mind and one command, and liable to produce inertness and helplessness whenever circumstances became such as previous precept had not contemplated. It has been already said that the slope of the ground from the rocks to the brow of the mountain concealed the advance of the Boers until they were about forty yards distant from our men. Then across those few yards of level space a fast and furious fire broke out. The first result of the fire upon our ranks was not discouraging. It was some seconds before it assumed accuracy. We seemed to be throwing quite as heavy a weight of lead upon the storming party as they were directing against us. And so no doubt we were, but while our volleys flew harmlessly over the heads of the Boers, theirs were striking low on the rocks behind which our men stood. Nothing was to be seen of the enemy except the muzzles of rifles appearing and disappearing, the incessant spurting of smoke, and now and again a head showing for a moment over the grassy level.

At the first opening of this fire our men had fixed bayonets, whether with the object of resisting or delivering a charge is not known. But the Boers had no intention of coming closer, and it is extremely doubtful if, in face of the storm of lead then sweeping the level space, any of our troops, had they essayed a charge, would have reached the enemy. While thus for three or four minutes this *feu d'enfer* went on, small parties of Boers, disengaging from the rear of their main attack, began to show themselves on the right flank, where at the edge of the hill-top the

thick cluster of rocks stood, equally commanding the outer slope of the hill and the inner depression. This point had now become the key of the position.

It has never been clearly ascertained what was the exact sequence of events at this important point after the first volley had been delivered by the Boers from below the crest, but it would appear that shortly after the first party of Boers had gained the summit a second body of about equal strength scaled the last ridge of the mountain at this rocky cluster, joined hands with the men who had already effected a lodgment on the summit, and began to work forward round the right flank of our position. In an official report we read that at the moment the attack of the Boers was about to begin at the rocks, the sailors who were stationed near the point at which we had ascended 'came running down, saying they were attacked from the east.'<sup>5</sup> They were sent back to their post. At this critical moment there was a lessening of resisting force at both flanks, showing itself in the steadily increasing trickle of men into the hollow behind the central fight. Some of these arrivals excused their presence in the hollow by asserting that they had been ordered to bring fresh ammunition, but there was no lack of ammunition, nor was there need of reinforcements, for already the ridge held more than the number required to man it, and a crowd or clump of soldiers was collected in rear of it. The rocks afforded good cover to our men. It was now of vital importance to secure the threatened flanks, and

<sup>5</sup> This may be accounted for by the fact already mentioned that some of the bullets fired by the Boers on the north face now flew over the hollow and fell among the sailors. The naval report, however

does not mention any attack except that 'on the other (*i.e.* the north) side of the mountain, towards which a naval officer took a few sailors, but was ordered back to his post. (see *S. Africa*, c. 2250, 1881).

desperate efforts were made to deploy the crowded ranks to right and left, but in the din of fight and the incessant crackling of musketry little could be heard and nothing done to induce or enforce order. A small body of men were with difficulty moved from the centre to reinforce the cluster of rocks on the right, about which anxiety had now become general, for the Boers, gathering strength at this part of the brow, were edging more and more round this flank, and their shots had already begun to strike into the basin and along the rear of the line holding the rocks. The chance remained that the party moving to the right would secure that threatened flank, but they never reached so far. As they neared the foot of the knoll, they were seen to turn to their right and disappear into a fold in the mountain. A minute or two later the remaining men on the knoll gave way, and the Boers were quickly in possession of the vantage-point. The right flank of the main line of defence was now completely turned, and from that moment the Majuba was lost.

What happened at the rocks will never be accurately known. But it is certain that suddenly the right of the line broke and fled; that the impulse of panic ran quickly along the confused body of men; and that, in less time than it takes to tell it, the whole of the troops rushed backwards from the rocks to the brow they had ascended nine hours earlier. It is said that a wild cry rose from them as they broke. It is certain that scarcely had the rout begun, before the Boers, realising that the hill was theirs, rapidly crowned the abandoned ridge and poured fire upon the retreating troops in the hollow immediately below them, and on the upward slope of the opposite ridge

over which the fugitives were crowding. It was here that the loss was so heavy. In every direction men were falling under this unerring fire, delivered well within a hundred yards of distance. Soon the Boers pressed on to the southern rim of the mountain, and their volleys smote the rocky declivities of the descent, carrying wounds and death far down the mountain side.

And meanwhile the General? To find him, we must go back to the ridge where the fighting line had stood. From the moment of the first retreat from the brow of the mountain to that of the final rush from the rocks was probably not more than an interval of fifteen minutes. The position taken by Colley in the centre of the line which was to meet the final assault of the Boers was the one he kept until the line broke. That throughout he maintained the same vigilant, active, but calm and collected demeanour, is shown in all the reports of the survivors. A moment before the line broke, a correspondent already quoted says that he 'saw his Excellency standing within ten paces directing some men to extend to the right.'

No order to retire ever issued from the General's lips. When the line gave way on the right, the panic ran quickly to the centre, in front of which the General stood. A group of men still held the koppie on the extreme left, but between that point and the centre there was an interval of open ground.<sup>6</sup> It is said that a few men remained a little while near the General after the remainder of the line had gone. When this 'cluster' went, he stood alone.

'Oh, my men, do not run.' It was thus he had

<sup>6</sup> The group on this koppie on the western face held their ground until they were all killed or wounded save two.

described, two and twenty years earlier, the closing scene in the life of a Kaffir chief far down in the Kaffrarian forest. 'When fresh men came up, his people began to give, but Tola called out, "Oh, my men, don't run, but follow me."' How strangely strong must the same thought have now come to Colley as that stream of men poured away from him at the Majuba! 'Oh, my men, do not run.'

The spot at which he was standing alone was at a little distance from the temporary hospital, and ten or fifteen yards from the ledge of rocks which the Boer frontal attack had now reached. To his right as he stood facing the ledge, the left flank of the Boer advance was already moving along the southern crest and drawing in towards the hospital in the hollow. His position therefore in relation to the enemy was encompassed on two sides by advancing lines, both of which were firing rapidly across the angle of ground, the size of which their converging movement was momentarily making smaller. No other figure was standing erect in that bullet-swept space, nor had any dead fallen near the spot where he stood, for it was among the fugitives on the further slope of the basin that the heaviest loss occurred. There were, however, many wounded men lying in what was called the hospital a few yards distant. Few among them were able in their pain and danger—for they were now shot at and over from two sides of their position—to note or think about other things. In the three or four accounts afterwards given by these men there are many discrepancies; comparing them with each other, with the statements of some Boers who were in the advancing lines. and with whatever information of the preceding

moments exists, the balance seems to incline to the account given by a corporal whose hurt was less severe than those of his comrades, whose statement was made immediately after the cessation of the fight, and recorded almost at the same moment. 'The General,' said this man, 'never moved from where he was when our men retired. He stood there trying to rally the men, and one of the Boers shot him straight in the forehead some time after the day was lost. Had he chosen to turn, he would have had as good a chance as any one else of getting away unhurt.' When these words were spoken, near the foot of the mountain on the day of Majuba, the man who uttered them had in his possession evidence that he had been near the final scene. He held in his hand the puggaree of the helmet which Colley had that day worn.<sup>7</sup>

In the sense in which death can have any pain or bitterness, George Colley died when his men broke and fled. This mountain, which had seemed but an hour

<sup>7</sup> The allusion to the General's death in the official report of Colonel Herbert Stewart, who was not so near at the moment, is to the same effect:

'I had been sent by the General to his left to extend the men to the right. I was doing so when the retreat commenced. I was unable to see him until, as I turned round, I saw him walking slowly some twenty yards in front of the Boer line, which was advancing and firing rapidly. I moved towards him for some two or three steps when I saw him fall. Very shortly afterwards I received a blow on my leg, knocking me down, and after vainly endeavouring for some thirty

hours to escape from amidst the Boers by whom I was cut off, I was taken prisoner.

'Every officer that I saw was doing his very utmost to instil that confidence into his men that the sudden retreat of the front line of the defence had somewhat rudely shaken.

'To the advance of the Boers being unseen and hence unreported, the consequent retirement, and the fact that the efforts of the officers were fruitless to check the demoralisation ensuing thereon, I attribute the loss of the position.'—Colonel Herbert Stewart's report (signed copy lent by Lady Pomeroy-Colley).

ago the solid base of a brilliant success, had proved to him the shifting quicksand of military misfortune.

Amid many vague and contradictory rumours this certainty remains. Drawing ever increasing fire from the converging lines of the enemy, he found a soldier's death on the field he would not leave. On the summit of Majuba, sword in hand, facing his foes—he fell. Less tragic might easily have been the closing scene, but not even the consolation of victory could have added to the quiet heroism of that supreme end which comes evenly to victor and to vanquished on the battlefield.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> 'I have just received, and am sending home by this mail, the helmet worn by your gallant husband on February 27. . . . Roos, who led the left column of the attack, and who was one of the first Boers up on the plateau, told me he saw your husband standing up facing the Boers just before he was shot. But the Boers did not then know who he was.'—Natal, Sept. 17, 1881. From Sir Evelyn Wood to Lady Pomeroy-Colley.

'I saw him [the General] near the centre of the plateau on the top of the hill. They [the Boers] asked me to identify him, and this I did. He was only wounded once, and that through the top of the skull. Death must have been instantaneous. From the direction of the wound, he must have been facing the Boers when hit.'—H.M.S. 'Flora,' Simon's Bay, May 11, 1881. From Edward Mahon, Surgeon, R.N., to Henry Colley, Esq.

# APPENDIX



## I.

Sir George's grave stands first in the sad succession between that of Colonel Deane and the boundary wall, where—by some prophetic chance—a vacant space had been left. He had often expressed a feeling of strong repugnance to the practice of removal of the dead, and in accordance with what would undoubtedly have been his own wish, he rests in peace beneath the shadow of the Amajuba.

The wooden cross which marked his grave at first was replaced by a cross of marble bearing on its base the following inscription :

IN MEMORY OF  
SIR GEORGE POMEROY-COLLEY  
K.C.S.I., C.B., C.M.G.,  
H.M. HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR SOUTH-EAST AFRICA  
GOVERNOR OF NATAL  
MAJOR-GENERAL COMMANDING FORCES  
BORN 1ST NOVEMBER 1835  
KILLED IN ACTION ON AMAJUBA MOUNTAIN  
SUNDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 1881.

'O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.'



## II.

LETTER FROM LORD LYTTON TO MISS POMEROY-COLLEY  
UPON THE DEATH OF HER BROTHER.

Knebworth : March 10, 1881.

Dear Miss Colley,—We have never met before, but we meet now in that common grief which unites, how closely, all who have loved and honoured your dear and noble brother—as loved and honoured he will ever be, and henceforth more than ever by me and mine. To you and yours this irreparable loss is beyond words—I cannot speak of it. Nor yet of all that is lost to our country in the loss of one who, had he lived, would assuredly have been one of England's greatest soldiers and statesmen. But, if I feel that what is to me a duty will not seem to you an intrusion, it is because the very comfortlessness of my own loss may perhaps be of some comfort to yours. It seems like some poor part of my life-long obligation to my dear and ever honoured friend that to you, the sister he so loved, I should first be saying what I yearn to place on record before all the world—how much he was to me, how my wife and I revered him, how the fulness of his worth was felt by us, how constantly we shall love and look up to him still, and how deep is the pride with which we cherish the memory of his wisdom, his courage, his splendid intellect and golden heart.

Although out of my own life a source of light and strength is gone with that great soul, I feel already what a living force remains, still uniting me to him and leading me up to him, in the memory of his life and the beauty of his example. And so I feel sure it will be with all who have ever felt his influence.

Had his daring schemes and heroic efforts been crowned with success, we might have mourned him less bitterly, but I don't think I, for one, should then have felt so profoundly, or with a sense so akin to worship, the perfect grandeur and sweetness of that stately spirit, which shone brighter, and rose higher in all his acts and words and ways, during those terrible days of undeserved disappointment, throughout which he must have suffered so acutely.

I feel that henceforth in those hours of frustrated exertion and disappointed hope, when the heart fails and the head droops, your brother's image will stand before me, as I see it now, and shame away despair.

Surely it is not in vain that such men live or die.  
 Believe me, dear sister of my ever dear friend, in deep sympathy and affection,  
 Your true fellow-mourner,  
 LYTTON.

## III.

LINES BY HIS KINSMAN, THE LATE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

IN MEMORIAM G. P. C.

*February 27, 1881*

Gentle and brave, well skilled in that dread lore  
 Which mightiest nations dare not to unlearn ;  
 Fair lot for thee had leapt from Fortune's urn,  
 Just guerdon of long toil ; and more and more  
 We deemed was for her favourite in store ;  
 Nor failed prophetic fancy to descry  
 Wreaths of high praise, and crowns of victory,  
 Which in our thought thy brows already wore.

But He, who portions out our good and ill,  
 Willed an austerer glory should be thine,  
 And nearer to the Cross than to the Crown.  
 Then lay, ye mourners, there your burden down,  
 And hear calm voices from the inner shrine  
 That whisper, Peace, and say, Be still, be still.

*Richard Chenevix Trench.*

## IV.

GENERAL ORDER ISSUED BY SIR GEORGE COLLEY TO THE TROOPS  
 IN NATAL ON THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES WITH THE BOERS.

Headquarters, Pietermaritzburg :  
 December 28, 1881.

The Major-General Commanding regrets to inform the troops of his command that a detachment of 250 men of the 94th Regiment,

on its march from Leydenberg to Pretoria, was surprised and overwhelmed by the Boers; 120 being killed and wounded and the rest taken prisoners. The attack seems to have been made while the troops were crossing a spruit, and extended to guard a long convoy. The Major-General trusts to the courage, spirit, and discipline of the troops of his command to enable him promptly to retrieve this misfortune, and to vindicate the authority of Her Majesty and the honour of the British arms. It is scarcely necessary to remind soldiers of the incalculable advantage which discipline, organisation, and trained skill give them over more numerous but undisciplined forces. These advantages have been repeatedly proved, and have never failed to command success in the end, against greater odds and greater difficulties than we are now called on to contend with. To all true soldiers the loss we have suffered will serve as an incentive and stimulus to greater exertions; and the Major-General knows well he can rely on the troops he has the honour to command to show that endurance and courage which are the proud inheritances of the British army. The stain cast on our arms must be quickly effaced, and rebellion must be put down, but the Major-General trusts that officers and men will not allow the soldierly spirit which prompts to gallant action to degenerate into a feeling of revenge. The task now forced on us by the unprovoked action of the Boers is a painful one under any circumstances; and the General calls on all ranks to assist him in his endeavours to mitigate the suffering it must entail. We must be careful to avoid punishing the innocent for the guilty, and must remember that, though misled and deluded, the Boers are in the main a brave and high-spirited people and actuated by feelings that are entitled to our respect. In the operations now about to be undertaken, the General confidently trusts that the good behaviour of the men will give him as much cause of pride and satisfaction as their conduct and gallantry before the enemy, and that the result of their efforts will be a speedy and successful termination to the war.

## V.

## DESPATCH WRITTEN BY SIR GEORGE COLLEY TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR AFTER THE ACTION AT INGOGO.

Army Headquarters, Mount Prospect : February 12, 1881.

Sir,—For some days after the engagement at the Lang's Nek, reported in my despatch of the 3rd instant, the Boers remained quiet, occupied, apparently, in further concentrating their forces and strengthening their position ; and our communications with Newcastle were uninterrupted. I sent the Natal Mounted Police back to Newcastle at once to guard against any raids on that part of Natal, and some days later sent in the bulk of our transport, with the double object of reducing the number of animals in camp and bringing out fresh supplies when opportunity should offer.

2. On the 3rd a large convoy of wounded was sent into Newcastle, and, up to the 6th, waggons with bread and other supplies reached the camp unmolested. The post ran regularly and the telegraph line was uninterrupted.

3. On the 7th the post, proceeding as usual with a small escort, was fired upon by a party of Boers at a point a little beyond the double drift on the Ingogo, and obliged to return. The escort reported having seen about 50 or 100 Boers on the ridge between the Ingogo and Imbazane valleys. The same evening I received information from other sources that the Boers had detached a small force to harass our communications and intercept waggons, &c., passing between this and Newcastle.

4. On the morning of the 8th I moved out with a force of five companies 60th Rifles under Colonel Ashburnham, two field and two mountain guns under Captain Greer, R.A., and a detachment of 38 mounted troops under Major Brownlow, King's Dragoon Guards, to patrol the road, and meet and escort some waggons expected from Newcastle. My mounted force was necessarily very weak, owing to the withdrawal of the Natal Police and to the casualties suffered by the mounted squadron on the 28th ultimo.

5. The Ingogo River crosses the Newcastle road about five miles south of this camp, taking its rise in a deep recess or bend in the Drakensberg, and running from west to east, through a valley about five miles wide, to the Buffalo river, which it joins

about four miles below the road. Two main branches unite just below where the road crosses them ; whence this crossing is known as the 'Double Drift.' The two fords, which are about 100 yards apart, are rocky, with a rapid current, and sometimes dangerous in the sudden floods to which these mountain streams are liable.

6. The ridges to the north of the river, which are spurs of the remarkable square-topped mountain immediately overlooking this camp, and named the Umquelo, fall steeply in a series of steps to the Ingogo ; the road winds down a long stony hill, two miles in length, between two of these spurs, commanded for its whole length by the ridges on each side. On the south side of the river a plain or very gentle rise extends for more than a mile to the foot of the ridge or plateau which separates the Ingogo and Imbezane valleys. This ridge is nearly level on its summit, strewn with rocks and boulders, and irregularly cut by rocky valleys, now expanding into a broad plateau, and again narrowing to a mere neck. Its slopes, as a rule, are stony but not very steep. The road rises to its summit by an easy ascent along the face of a projecting spur.

7. Leaving two mountain guns and a company of the 60th on a commanding position on the crest of the ridge to the north of the Ingogo, I moved down the road with the rest of the force, our front covered by the mounted troops, and the ridges on each side occupied by infantry. No enemy, however, was seen until our scouts, cresting the hills beyond the Ingogo, reported Boer patrols in sight. The column, having crossed the Ingogo and drawn in its flankers, halted and formed on the plain south of the Double Drift, and then resumed its march.

8. As we approached the foot of the ridge already described, reports were brought in that the Boers were in considerable force in our front, showing a strong skirmishing line, with four supports of 50 or 60 men each ; and shortly afterwards our videttes were driven in. I immediately pushed forward with the advanced guard to occupy the point of the ridge which the road ascends. As we did so the Boers showed in large numbers about half a mile distant, and at once galloped forward boldly to dispute the ridge, and to take advantage of the cover which the intersecting valleys afforded. The guns were brought into action, but the Boers had already got under cover, and now pushed up the valleys wherever cover could be got, directing a heavy and accurate fire on our guns and skirmishers, at the same time throwing their

right rapidly forward to envelop us. The companies of the 60th, as they came up the hill, were pushed forward to meet these attacks, and in a few minutes the engagement became heavy and general.

9. The ground occupied by us was a small plateau, roughly triangular in shape, forming part of the main ridge, with which it is connected by necks slightly lower than the plateau we held. The enemy's attack embraced the south and western faces of the triangle and the eastern angle. Part of the plateau was fringed with rocks, affording good cover, but towards the eastern angle there was no cover except such as the grassy brow of the hill afforded; and one company of the 60th Rifles pushed forward in the angle to cover the guns, and meeting the Boers at close range suffered terribly from the close and accurate fire of the Boers, who were able to seize some rocks on the slope giving good cover.

10. With a moderate mounted force at my disposal it would not have been difficult to have rolled up the Boer right, which was dangerously extended and exposed. But the small mounted detachment under Major Brownlow, already reduced by casualties among the horses, was too weak for such an attempt. The level top of the plateau afforded no cover for our horses, and these in consequence suffered cruelly. The artillery, also exposed to a concentrated fire, lost so heavily that I found it necessary to withdraw the guns to a less exposed position, from which, however, they still fired shells occasionally when opportunity offered.

11. When it became evident that the attack was a serious and sustained one, and that reinforcements were coming to the Boers, I sent orders to camp for three companies of the 58th Regiment, to move out and occupy the ridges over the Ingogo. Later in the afternoon, when it was clear that the enemy had no force in our left rear which could cut the reinforcements off from camp, I directed them to endeavour to push across the Ingogo towards us, holding, however, the spur immediately overhanging and commanding the Double Drift.

12. The action commenced a little after 12, and for some time the fire was very heavy. Towards 3, however, it began to slacken, and the enemy apparently abandoned the idea of trying to win the position, though a steady and very accurate fire was still maintained, any one at all exposing himself being almost certainly struck. Our men fired with great steadiness and cool-

ness, husbanding their ammunition. Towards 4 o'clock the enemy could be seen removing his wounded from the field and collecting them at a point about a mile distant, and a little later began to draw off from our left front. About this time the Boer reinforcements, which had been dropping in during the afternoon, began to stream in in large numbers, and the attack on our right was for a time more vigorously renewed; but towards sundown the fire slackened on this side also, and the enemy withdrew and concentrated their forces in the valleys on our right. A movement made by a considerable body of Boers towards the Ingogo Drift, apparently with the object of intercepting our return to camp, was stopped by the appearance of the companies of the 58th on the ridge above the drift; and before dusk the fire had ceased altogether.

13. As I had not contemplated camping out, and had brought no supplies, and as the enemy was evidently preparing to renew the engagement with overwhelming numbers the following morning, I decided to withdraw to camp during the night. I was chiefly anxious about the guns, as the casualties among the horses had been so numerous that it seemed impossible to make up the necessary teams; but by withdrawing the team from the ammunition waggon, and collecting all available horses, we were able to horse, though insufficiently, the two guns.

14. As soon as it was dusk the fighting line was drawn in quietly, the guns run back, and the wounded collected. The severity of the fire had made it impossible in many cases to remove the wounded from the advanced positions; and the ambulances sent out had been unable to reach the plateau, the Boers having threatened to fire on them if they advanced while the engagement was going on. One waggon indeed which accompanied the column had been left at the foot of the hill, all the mules being killed and the waggon riddled with bullets. All waterproof sheets, blankets, great coats, &c., were collected, and the wounded sheltered as well as they could be until the ambulances could be sent up.

15. The night closed in with dark clouds, heavy pelting showers, and occasional lightning; the moon from time to time breaking through the clouds and lighting up the country in drifting gleams. When all arrangements were completed the force moved off in silence and perfect order, arranged in a hollow square; the guns, &c., in the centre, the infantry in skirmishing order on the four sides. On approaching the Double Drift the column halted, and

a patrol was sent out to ascertain that the drift was clear, and the column then filed across.

16. A heavy thunderstorm had now come on, the darkness was intense, and the river, swollen by the rains, was deep and rapid. Some of the first men trying to cross were swept down, but saved by a projecting sand bank. The rest were got over in detachments, holding hands. When all were across, the force resumed its march to camp, which it reached about 4 A.M.; the guns drawn up the hill by the 60th Rifles, the horses being unable to pull them up the steep and slippery road. The 58th companies remained in possession of the ridges commanding the drift until withdrawn the following day. The officer commanding the 58th had crossed the Ingogo as directed, but, as darkness came on before he could advance to our position, he rightly withdrew again, and concentrated his force on the hill immediately overlooking and commanding the Double Drift.

17. I enclose a return of the casualties, which, I regret to say, were severe. I have suffered a heavy personal loss (and the service generally has also suffered) in the death of Captain McGregor, R.E., my Assistant Military Secretary, a most promising officer, who would certainly have risen to distinction if spared, of soldierly bearing, of distinguished ability, and possessing in an eminent degree all the most valuable qualifications of a Staff Officer. He was killed early in the engagement, while pointing out the ground to Lieutenant Garrett, of the 60th, as the latter brought his company into action. I have also suffered, in common with the Civil Service and Colony of Natal, by the death of Mr. M. Stewart, Resident Magistrate, of the Ixopo Division, and one of the ablest and most promising Civil servants of Natal—who was attached to my staff as Dutch interpreter.

18. In Captain Greer, the Artillery has lost a gallant and valuable officer. Having volunteered and obtained leave from the Staff of Sir George Strahan, late Administrator of the Cape Colony, he organised and equipped a division of Field Artillery from guns in store at Durban, horses purchased at Newcastle, and a detachment of a Garrison Battery sent up from Cape Town; and rendered good service in command of the Artillery of the column. He was killed early in the engagement while directing the fire of his guns.

19. The 60th Rifles have lost two promising young officers in Lieutenant Garrett and 2nd Lieutenant O'Connell. The latter,



having been temporarily withdrawn from the fighting line with a few men to form a reserve, asked leave to rejoin his company, and was almost immediately killed. But the battalion has suffered a still heavier loss in the death of its adjutant, Lieutenant Wilkinson. Having distinguished himself through the engagement by his coolness and gallantry, volunteering for every difficult or dangerous task, he was drowned crossing the Ingogo after returning to the battlefield with assistance for the wounded. Of singularly winning disposition and manners, distinguished in all manly games, an excellent adjutant and most promising officer, few men of his standing could boast so many and such warm friends, or be so widely missed and deeply mourned.

20. The conduct of all ranks throughout this trying day was admirable. After the death of Captain Greer, Lieutenant Parsons continued to direct the guns and assist in working them under a heavy fire, until ordered to withdraw, having lost more than half of his detachment; and then, with the assistance of a few men of the 60th Rifles, again served the guns until severely wounded himself. The conduct of the men of the Royal Artillery well sustained the reputation of that corps. The comparatively young soldiers of the 60th Rifles behaved with the steadiness and coolness of veterans. At all times perfectly in hand, they held or changed their ground as directed without hurry or confusion, though under heavy fire, themselves fired steadily, husbanding their ammunition, and at the end of the day, with sadly reduced numbers, formed and moved off the ground with the most perfect steadiness and order; and finally, after 18 hours of continuous fatigue, readily and cheerfully attached themselves to the guns and dragged them up the long hill from the Ingogo, when the horses were unable to do so.

21. My thanks are due to Lieutenant-Colonel Ashburnham, 60th Rifles, for the manner in which he commanded his battalion, and the valuable assistance which he rendered me through the engagement; also to Major Brownlow, King's Dragoon Guards, for the manner in which he covered the advance of the force with the limited means at his disposal, and for his ever cool and ready help during the action. The Rev. Geo. M. Ritchie, Chaplain to the Forces, again distinguished himself, and honoured his office by his humane zeal and indefatigable attention to the wounded, with whom he remained until late the following night and until he had assisted at the burial of the dead. Major Essex, Column Staff Officer, and Lieutenant B. Hamilton, 15th Regiment, my aide-de-

camp, rendered me active and valuable assistance throughout the day.

22. I desire especially to mention the conduct of Sergeant-Major T. Toole, R.A., who well seconded Captain Greer and Lieutenant Parsons in working the guns till the end of the action, and on whom the charge of the guns and the arrangements for their withdrawal devolved when the latter officer was wounded; also of Sergeant-Major Wilkins, 60th Rifles, who throughout the day was to be seen wherever the fire was hottest, setting an example to the men by his cool and steady shooting and cheerful gallantry.

23. Surgeon McGann well maintained the distinguished reputation of the Medical Department for self-sacrificing exposure in attendance on the wounded. Until the arrival of the ambulances, with Surgeons Ring and Landon, he was the only medical officer with the force, and laboured indefatigably with the wounded.

24. The wounded were all removed to the base hospital at Newcastle in the course of the following day, and the dead buried on the field by a burial party sent out under a flag of truce. The dead officers were brought in and buried here.

25. I sent to offer the Boer Commandant medical assistance for their wounded, but the offer, though most gratefully acknowledged, was not accepted. Later, however, they sent to ask permission for waggons, with their wounded, to pass through our lines. They were courteous in allowing all facilities for the removal of the wounded, but seemed surprised and disappointed to find that we were not still in the same position in the morning.

26. I regret to say that we had to leave one Artillery ammunition waggon in the enemy's hands. Owing to the heavy casualties among the horses, it was not possible to do more than horse the two guns when we marched from the plateau. I sent out fresh Artillery horses during the night, and they succeeded in bringing the waggon down to the Double Drift, but, by that time, the river had risen so high that it was impossible to get the waggon across, and finally it had to be emptied of its contents and abandoned, the Artillery officer in charge, with his horses, making his way to Newcastle.

27. I estimated the force of the Boers at first engaged against us at about 300, afterwards increased by reinforcements to 800 or 1,000. Probably during the night their numbers were raised a good deal higher, as a continuous stream of reinforcements passed

to them from the Lang's Nek by a road leading round the back of the Umquelo mountain. Piet Joubert, the Commandant-General, and their 'Field Commandant-General,' Schmidt, were both present at the engagement. It is difficult to estimate their losses, which the Boers set down as small; but this is hardly consistent with the character of the engagement, or with the numbers that could be seen being removed from the field.

28. It is reported to me that Piet Joubert and a considerable part of the Boer force have returned to the Nek; that several hundred occupy a position between this and Newcastle, about eight miles from the latter place; and that another party are working round Newcastle, with a view to intercept the approaching reinforcements on the Ingogani river. Reinforcements, consisting of the 15th Hussars, 2nd Bn. 60th Rifles, 92nd Highlanders, and two guns, Naval Brigade, are now between Ladysmith and the Biggarsberg; and I have ordered a concentration on the latter point, whence the united force will now move forward in one strong column.

I have, &c. (Signed) G. POMEROY-COLLEY,  
Major-General.

## VI.

LETTER FROM LIEUTENANT BRUCE HAMILTON (A.D.C. TO SIR  
GEORGE COLLEY) TO HIS SISTER.

February 11, 1881.

I have had so much copying, &c., to do ever since I last wrote to you, that I have had no time to write to any one until now. Sir George has no staff officer now except Major Essex and myself, and I don't know how he manages to get on. He will be glad when Major Macgregor and Colonel Stewart arrive to take some of the work off his hands—it is wonderful to see how he gets through everything himself, and I only wish I could be of more use to him than I am. He has written to you and will have told you all about Tuesday's fight—an unlucky day it was in losing so many brave officers and men. We started in the morning at about 9, not in the least expecting an engagement, though we thought it possible we might exchange a few shots with the enemy. I was riding my Waler, which had only arrived the day before; he behaved capitally throughout, though he had never been under fire before. About two miles from camp on the road to Newcastle

we saw some few Boers in the distance to our left ; we then went on down to the Ingogo, leaving one company of 60th Rifles and two guns on the hill from which we had seen the Boers. We crossed the river safely and saw nothing of the Boers until about one mile further on, when we were close to the hill, on which we remained all day. They were on this hill as we approached it, but went back out of sight when we got close. We reached the top and saw a large party of Boers galloping round behind a hill on our right ; they wheeled round and came straight over the hill, across the valley towards us, but were met by so heavy a fire that they were obliged to retire. By this time they had opened fire on us from all round, excepting only the point from which we had come. Poor Macgregor had gone with one of the companies of the 60th to show them where to post themselves, but, unluckily for him and the whole company with him, he took them too far below the brow and they got detached from the rest of our line, and being on the side of the hill the Boers could see them from the top of the one opposite. Only about sixteen men out of that company of seventy came back unhurt. Macgregor was shot, I believe, during the first half-hour. We had no sooner got possession of the hill all round than the firing became very hot all round. We all got off our horses, and they—poor brutes!—got killed right and left. The Artillery lost about twelve, and Mounted Infantry twenty-five. It was a wonder how Sir George's and mine and Major Essex's pony escaped ; they were all together the whole time, and were, I think, the only group of which none were touched. The firing went on, sometimes more, sometimes less, from 12 o'clock to sunset ; every now and then some poor fellow would be hit, and these were got together as much as possible. We made them as comfortable as we could before leaving them for the night, but they must have suffered fearfully from want of water and shelter during the night. When the sun went down the men were got together and formed up near the guns. About 9 o'clock we marched off in a hollow square, guns in the centre, and remainder of Mounted Infantry Rifles in skirmishing order all round. When we left the hill we all expected a real hard hand-to-hand fight before we should be able to cross the river, and if the Boers had occupied the drift I don't know how we should have been able to cross, with the water so high from the rain. And, as you will see in Sir G.'s letter to Mr. Childers, one of the Mounted Infantry had reported a large number were waiting for us, just before we

started. You ask me if Sir G. was in danger that day. He was, and more danger than I hope he will be in again. You see there was no keeping in reserve, and we were all pretty well in the same boat on the top of that hill ; but he seemed to be quite confident he would not be touched. Once, I remember, I told him he certainly would be hit if he did not sit down ; he said : ' Oh no, I shan't,' and seemed so certain about it that I began to think so too. The admirable conduct of the troops was, I think, almost entirely due to their perfect confidence in him, and to his coolness and self-possession throughout the day.

## VII.

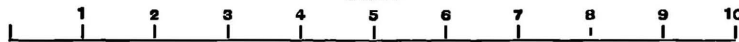
### THE NAME MAJUBA.

Amajuba means ' pigeons,' or ' doves,' and Majuba is the colloquial pronunciation of the word. The Zulu lays stress on the penultimate syllable, and generally sounds the first and last very lightly. Probably numbers of wild pigeons lived in the rocks near the top of the hill, and thus gave rise to the name.



**SKETCH MAP OF THE SCENE OF OPERATIONS IN NATAL.**

Scale:



Miles.

Heights thus: 5280 in feet above the sea. Names of Farms thus: BATTLEFIELD.

# INDEX

---

## ABDUL

**ABDUL RAHMAN**, 209  
 Abdulla Jan, 154, 209  
 Abramoff, General, 211  
 Accrofoom, 98  
 Acland, Sir T. Dyke, 85  
 Adansi Hills, 97, 98  
 Addison, Colonel, 67  
 Addison's *Knights Templars*, 21  
 Adrianople, 179, 204  
*Afghan Gazette*, 237  
 Afghanistan, 151; increase of Russian influence, 153, 181; England's new policy, 155; importance to England of a friendly, 172, 182; the Afghan crisis, 197-214; Colley's papers on, 212; Treaty of Gandamak, 216; Colley's frontier line, 217; the Kabul massacre, 238; second war with, 246  
 Afridis, the, 191, 224  
 Agemmanu, 108, 105  
 Agoonah country, the, 97  
 Akankawassie, 100  
 Aldershot, Colley D.Q.M.G. at, 146  
 Ali Khel, 220  
 Ali Musjid, 214, 220  
 Alison, Sir A., 30, 90  
 Alladina Kurd, a noted scoundrel, 167  
 Alma, battle of, 17  
 Amajuba mountain, 351; Colley's grave, 407  
 Amaspondas, the, 41  
 Amaswazi, the, 129  
 Amatola Mountains, 21, 116  
 America, Colley's visit to, 114  
 Amoaful, battle of, 99

## BIRCH

Amram Mountains, 218  
 Angera, 162, 168  
 Argyll, Duke of, 201  
*Ashanti Gazette*, 113  
 Ashanti war, 88-107  
 Ashburnham, Colonel (60th Rifles), 411, 416  
 Ashtown, Lord, 4  
 Athlone, 16  
 Austria, 205, 208, 209

**BAKER, COLONEL**, 101, 127, 128, 133, 136  
 Baluchistan, 151, 161, 169  
 Baluchs, the, 168, 170  
 Banca, 56  
 Barnett, Major, 239  
 Barnett, Mrs., 239  
 Barrikhal, mirage at, 220  
 Bashee River, 41, 43, 195  
 Basutoland, 250  
 Battel, Chief of the Guigas, 37  
 Batum ceded to Russia, 208  
 Beaconsfield, Lord, 150; his celebrated Guildhall speech, 173; the arbiter of Europe, 208; 'the stars in their courses, &c.', 247  
 Beauregard, General, 114  
 Bell, Mr., 127, 129, 131  
 Bell, Mrs., 128  
 Bellairs, Colonel, 256, 277  
 Bellew, Colonel H. W., 211  
 Berlin Congress, 204, 208  
 Bezhuidenout, 270  
 Biggarsberg, 261, 318  
 Birch, Lea, 15, 16

- BISMARCK
- Bismarck, Prince, 208  
 Bloemfontein, 143  
 Bloemhof, 263  
 Blyth, Mr., 322  
 Boers, the, 116 *et seq.*, 124, 140 *et seq.*, protest against annexation, 238, 250; their exasperation, 251; sympathy the vital want, 252; bitterly hostile, 256; strange reports about, 267; a game of brag, 268; Republic proclaimed, 268, 272; Bronkerspruit, 269; Pocheftroom, 270; occupy Heidelberg, 272; Lang's Nek and the Ingogo, 274-315, 410-418; their marksmanship, 278, 308, 317, 412; their military tactics, 299; their political aptitude, 320; England negotiates with, 321-348; Majuba Hill, 371-406  
 Bok, W. Eduard, 331  
 Bokhara, 172  
 Bolan Pass, 153, 167, 169  
 Bolton, Lieutenant, 111  
 Bond, Colonel, 888  
 Book of Howth, the, 3  
 Boomah Pass, 22  
 Borrowes, Sir Erasmus D., 202  
 Boshoff, 'Hangman,' 122  
 Brackenbury, Lieutenant-General Sir H., 81; *Narrative of Ashanti War*, 102  
 Brand, President, Orange Free State, 143, 276, 279; negotiations with the Boers, 321-348  
 Brand, Mrs., 144  
 Bronkerspruit, disaster to the 94th at, 269, 409  
 Browne, Sir Samuel, 220  
 Brownlow, Major (K. D. Gds.), 287, 291, 315, 411, 413, 416  
 Buckingham, Duke of, 186  
 Buffalo River, 281, 358, 411  
 Buffel's Hill, 129  
 Bulgaria, 205  
 Buller, Sir Redvers, 230  
 Burke, Mr., 139  
 Butler, Major, 122  
 Byron's *Curse of Minerva*, 69
- COLLEY
- Cape Coast tribes, 94  
 Capetown, 144  
 Carbery Castle Estate, the, 4  
 Carlow (Ireland), 14  
 Carlyle, Thomas, 14, 170  
 Carnarvon, Lord, 120, 124, 143, 200  
 Carter, Mr., war correspondent, 306, 354, 379, 384  
 Cashel, Rock of, 13  
 Cathcart, General Sir George, 23, 86, 366  
 Cavagnari, Sir Louis, 188; his friendship with Colley, 190, 207, 209, 226, 228; attached to Kabul Mission, 211; Treaty of Gandamak, 216; his congratulations to Colley, 228; killed at Kabul: reception of news at Simla, 238, 239  
 Central Asian question, the, 149, 180, 181, 185  
 Cetewayo a prisoner, 237  
 Chamberlain, Sir Neville, 210  
 Cheam School, 6  
 Chelmsford, Lord, in Zululand, 238  
 Childers, Right Hon. H. C. E., Colley's despatch after Ingogo, 305, 411-418; Colley on the Boer successes, 318  
 China, war with, 52, 56-69; Peiho forts, 58; Taku forts, 60; surrender of Peking, 65; Summer Palace burnt, 67; end of war, 68  
 Christiana, 263  
 Clandeboye, Viscount, 202  
 Clarke, Mr., 127, 128  
 Clonmacnoise, ruins of, 15  
 Colenso, Bishop, 124  
 Colley, George (father), 4, 11, 225  
 Colley, Mrs. George (mother), 4; letters from her son, 13, 14, 22, 24-28, 30, 32, 45, 51, 52, 60, 65, 78, 79  
 Colley, Lady (Miss Edith A. Hamilton), married to Colley, 200; her father-in-law's death, 225; a plunge into chaos, 253; calm before storm, 264; a true helpmate, 277; Bruce Hamilton's letter to, after Ingogo, 309, 418; her husband's letters to, 145,
- CALDER, SIR R., 32  
 Cambridge, Duke of, 76, 90, 303



## COLLEY

- 147-149, 157, 186, 187, 194, 195, 199, 229-231, 233-237, 241, 261, 263, 291, 292, 307, 308, 313, 320, 325, 344, 347, 348, 366, 367
- Colley, Miss (elder sister), *see* Vernon, Mrs.
- Colley, Miss (younger sister), letters from her brother to, 43, 44, 54, 62, 68, 75; Lord Lytton's letter on her brother's death, 408
- Colley, Miss Mary (Viscountess Harborton), 4
- Colley, Sir George Pomeroy, birth, 5; makes the grand tour, *ibid.*; at Cheam School, 6; R.M.A. Sandhurst, 7
- 1852-1856. Ensign 2nd 'Queen's,' 8; at Kinsale, 10; early pursuits and interests, 10-13; Rock of Cashel, 13; at Shannon Bridge, 14; his friend, Lea Birch, 15; to the Cape, 17; a soldier's prayer, 18; his life in Kaffraria, 20; the Amatola Mountains, 21; Sir George Grey, 24; a surveyor, 25; a master builder, 26; efforts to get to the Crimea, 27; a German colony, 29; the books he reads, 30; his view of Napoleon, 31; how to think, 33
- 1857-1859. The Kaffir famine, 36, 38; a rude Archbishop, 39; a disappointment, 40; Transkei expedition, 41; poor Krali! 43; on Major Gawler, 44; Border Magistrate and 'Chief' on the Bashee River, 45-47; Tola's defeat and death, 49, 50; the loyal Kaffirs, 50; land-hunger of South Africa, 51; off to China, 52; good-bye to the Kaffirs, 53
1860. Voyage to China in H.M.S. 'Vulcan,' 56; Straits of Sunda, Banca, and Sumatra: the Malays and Javanese: Talian-wan, 57; the Peitang forts, 58; Tartar and Sikh cavalry, 59; the Taku forts, 60; Chinese guns, 61; Lord Elgin reaches Tien-tsin, 62; Chinese diplomacy, 62; a Chinese market, *ibid.*; a hot march to

## COLLEY

- Tong-chow, 63; spoiling a Tartar reconnaissance, 64; fate of the prisoners, 65; at Peking, 66; Summer Palace burnt, 67
- 1861-1874. The clipper ship 'Alfred,' 70; Froude *v.* Macaulay, 71; Table Bay, *ibid.*; with Sir George Grey again, 72, 73; detained at the Cape, 74; Kaffir gratitude, 75; Transkei again, 76; action the true school, 77; back in England, 78; the Staff College: a brilliant examination, 79; at Newbridge with 10th Hussars, 79; Brigade Major at Devonport: Council Examiner, &c., for Sandhurst, 80; studies in tactics: his notions of the Prussian system, 81-84; at the War Office: Army reform, 85; Professor of Military Administration, Staff College, 86; travelling and sketching, 87; the Ashanti war—sent for by Wolseley, 89; in charge of transport, 93; desertion of carriers *en masse*: reorganisation, 95, 96; his friend Wolseley, 96, 114; Quarman, 101; his boundless energy, 102; Fommanah, 103; on to Coomassie, 105; the King's palace, 108; declines Gold Coast Governorship, 109; his zeal and ability, 111; Winwood Reade's opinion of, 112; Colonel and C. B.: the coming man of the service, 113; visits America, 114; veterans of the North and South, 115
1875. To Natal with Wolseley, 116; his 'position charmingly vague,' 120; his novel duties, 121; the Legislative Council, 122; his maiden speech, 123; first visit to Transvaal, 125; *en route* to Delagoa Bay: glimpses of Dutch and native life, 126-134; the Amaswazi, 129; 'our friends, the Eton boys,' 130; a Dutch Commando, 130; the Lebombo Mountains, 133; the tsetse fly,

## COLLEY

- 185; the gold diggings, 186; Pilgrim's Rest: Leydenberg, 187; abusive Dutchmen, 187; meets Joubert at Pretoria, 188; his Transvaal Report, 140; his reception at Bloemfontein, 148; 'my old friend Krali,' 144; D.Q.M.G. at Aldershot, 145
1876. In praise of Froude, 145; Lytton's Military Secretary, 146; voyage to India with the Lyttons, 147; two sorts of work, 147, 148; General Lee, his greatest military hero, 148; what a frontier should be, 152; a Military Secretary's duties, 157; a 'hopeless blackguard,' 158; starts for Khelat, 159; Jacobabad, 160; at Khelat with Sandeman, 160, 165; the Khan's Court, 161; heat of the Sindhian desert, 162; Major Upperton, 162; Angera and Schrab, 163; his illness, 164; his opinion of Sandeman, 166; Quetta and the Bolan Pass, 167; the Baluchs, 168; strategic value of Quetta, 169
1877. His intimacy with Lytton, 171; a long ride, 174; plan of action for the Oxus, 174; the Khan's requirements, 175; ready to join Wolseley, 176; a day's work, 177; Russia's advance: importance of Merv, 181; effect of masterly inactivity, 182; 'luck and the Turks,' 183; Madras famine, 186; Punjab frontier raids, 188; Cavagnari, 188, 190; the Peshawur conference, 189; how to fight the Afridis, 191; his scheme of frontier reorganisation, 192, 193; circumlocution of command, 193; his tact, 193; Egerton's loyalty, 194; the Viceroy's private secretary, 194; news from the Bashee River: leaves India, 195; 'a letter to me at Aden,' 196
1878. On matters of 'inner thought,' 198; religious earnestness, 199; mental effect of hard work, 200; political interviews,

## COLLEY

- 201; engagement and marriage, *ibid.*; Lytton's friendship and affection, 202-204; *Fables in Song* inscribed to, 202; Berlin Congress, 204; final look at the diplomatic struggle, 205; 'the strain will go on for ever,' 206; working at full pressure, 207; Cavagnari, 207, 209; grave news from Kabul: England's opportunity, 208; Crete and Cyprus—their value, 209; the Afghan question, 209, 212, 213; a fatal mistake, 211
1879. Cavagnari and the Amir Yakub: Treaty of Gandamak, 216; his views on the frontier line: 'hold the passes and no more,' 217-219; a tour of inspection: Gandamak, Ali Musjid, Barrikhal, 220; to top of Shutargardan Pass with Roberts, 211; Peiwar: the fight refought, 223, 224; his father's death: Lytton's sympathy, 225; Indian honours for, 227; starts for South Africa: Cavagnari's congratulations, 228; much missed in India, 229; the Prince Imperial's death, 229, 230; once more on familiar ground, 231; too late for Zulu war, 232; Lord Chelmsford's success, 233; old comrades, *ibid.*; ludicrous incidents of the campaign, 234; joins Wolseley at Port Durnford, 234; the field of Isandula, 235; transport difficulties, 236; Cetewayo caught, 237; K.C.S.I., 237; the Boers and annexation, 238; Lady Colley on Cavagnari's fate, 239; called back to India by Lytton, 241; interviews Joubert, 241-243; Wolseley's tribute to, 245
1880. Governor, High Commissioner, and Commander-in-Chief in S.E. Africa, 247; Lytton's farewell to, 248; at Natal again, 249; the Boers, 250, *et seq.*; a dual control, 252; a plunge into chaos, 253;

## COLLEY

difficult nuts to crack, 254 ; on Transvaal military expenditure, 255, 257 ; Joubert and Kruger, 256 ; the Transvaal garrison, 257 ; the crime of desertion, 259 ; new scheme of Boer Government, 260 ; travel in the Transvaal, 261 ; Bloemhof v. Christiana, 263 ; Frere's recall, 263 ; calm before storm, 264 ; darkening clouds, 265 ; Potchefstroom, 266, 271 ; agitation against taxes, 267 ; a game of brag, 268 ; a Boer Republic, 268 ; the Bronkerspruit disaster, 269, 277 ; his accurate forecast, 272 ; his General Order to the troops, 273, 409 ; bad news, 274 ; conflicting rumours, 275

1881. A sad and anxious New Year, 276 ; his feelings about the war, 277 ; his preparations, 278 ; a fruitless hope, 279 ; from Maritzburg to Newcastle, 280 ; a scratch force, 282 ; 'our weak point is Potchefstroom,' 283 ; Lang's Nek and after : his letter to Wolseley, 285-290 ; how a brave man takes defeat, 291 ; entrenched at Mount Prospect, 294 ; his plan of campaign after Lang's Nek, 294-296 ; Ingogo, 298-315 ; his despatch to Mr. Childers, 305, 411-418 ; Boer marksmanship, 303, 317, 412 ; the flooded river, 307 ; poor Mr. Pixley, 307 ; Lieut. Wilkinson, 308 ; 'everything I care for taken,' 310 ; 'as brave as a lion and as strong too,' 311 ; the eloquence of his silence, 313 ; the fortune of war, 315 ; Ingogo's lessons, 317 ; reinforcements at Biggarsberg, 318 ; the diplomatic situation, 319 ; his opinion of Mr. Courtney, 321 ; no instructions, 325 ; his earnest appeal to the Boers, 326 ; 'armed resistance must cease,' 327 ; promise of amnesty, 328 ; the real crux, 330 ; Kruger's letter to, 331 ;

## COLLEY

his letter to Wood, 333 ; meets Wood at Newcastle, 335 ; against Government proposal, 338, 343 ; 'I would rather resign,' 339 ; more telegrams, 340, 341 ; his reply to Kruger, 344 ; newspaper criticism : his first bitter words, 345 ; 'these horrid ciphers,' 347 ; a brighter prospect, 348 ; the Boers entrenching, 349 ; the Great Mountain, 351 ; the night march, 353-377 ; a view of the Majuba, 352 ; means to take the Nek, 356 ; his preparations, 356-361 ; proposed armistice, 357 ; composition of his column, 363 ; his intentions, 364 ; many a troubled thought, 365 ; Sir Leicester Smyth, 366 ; his last letter, 367 ; his thoughtfulness, 369 ; an insolent document, 371 ; the summit gained, 375 ; the ground examined, 376 ; when day began to break, 378 ; organises the defence, 379 ; 'we can stay here for ever,' 383 ; no signs of weariness 384 ; his last messages, 386 391, 392 ; in close touch with that outer ring, 388 ; Romilly struck down, 390 ; a short rest, 393 ; rallies his men, 396 ; the final phase—'cool and collected as ever,' 399 ; Majuba lost : 'Oh, my men, do not run,' 403, 404 ; the quiet heroism of the end, 405, 406 ; his grave, 407 ; in memoriam by Archbishop Trench, 409 ; his papers on *Reorganisation of the Army and Militia*, 85 ; *Military Aspect of the Central Asian Question*, 149 ; *Frontier Policy* (1877), 192 ; *Russian Action in Afghanistan: Note on the Kabul Mission and our Frontier Policy in Central Asia*, 207

Colley, Sir Henry, 4

Colley, Richard (first Baron Mornington, &c.), 4

## COMMANDO

Commando, a Dutch, 181, 141  
 Constant's *Memoirs*, 81  
 Constantinople, Conference at, 172  
 Coomassie, 105-108; the Gloomy  
 City, 107; King's palace, 108  
 Courtney, Leonard, 320  
 Cowley (Coule, Cooley, or Colley),  
 Robert, the 'plover-taker,' 2;  
 Councillor to Lord Kildare, 8;  
 Master of the Rolls, 4  
 Cowley, Sir Henry, 4  
 Cowley, Walter, 4  
 Crete, Colley's views on, 208  
 Crimean war, the, 17, 27  
 Cromwell, Thomas, 2  
 Currie, Sir Donald, 332  
 Cyprus, Convention of, 205; ceded  
 to England, 208

## DADUR, 164

Dah River, 103, 104  
 Daud Shah, 240  
 Davis, Jeff, 114  
 De Villiers, Chief Justice, 322  
 Deane, Colonel, killed at Lang's  
 Nek, 288, 290-292, 312, 347; his  
 grave, 407  
 Delagoa Bay, 185, 231  
 Delhi, 175  
 Detchiasso, 98  
 Devonport, Colley Brigade-Major  
 at, 80  
 Diamond Fields (Kimberley) an-  
 nexed, 119  
 Double Drift, the (Ingogo), 304,  
 412-415  
 Drakensberg Mountain, 186, 280,  
 297, 411  
 Dublin, Colley at, 115  
 Duncan, Captain, 108  
 Dunquah, 92, 98  
 Durban, 121, 144, 232  
 Dushani, 75  
 Dutch East India Co., 117

EAST LONDON (South Africa), 20, 30  
 Ecomfees, the, 94  
 Egerton, Lieut.-Governor, Punjab,  
 194  
 Egginassie, 99  
 Egimacoo, the, 94  
 Egypt, occupation of, 205

## GORDON

Elgin, Lord, 62, 65, 68  
 Elwes, Lieutenant, killed at Lang's  
 Nek, 288, 290-292, 312  
*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Colley's  
 Article 'Army' in, 87  
 Escombe, Henry, 279  
 Essex, Major E., his gallantry at  
 Lang's Nek, 289; at Ingogo, 416,  
 418, 419

## FAIZ MAHOMED KHAN, 211

Faku, 41  
 Fane, Major, 59, 63  
 Fommanah, 98; battle of, 103,  
 108  
 Fort Albert, 258, 261, 270  
 Fort Grey, 30  
 Fort Hare, 20, 24  
 Fowler, Captain W., 94  
 France, 203  
 Fraser, Major, R.E., 360, 369, 372,  
 375  
 Frere, Sir Bartle, 195, 242, 250,  
 252, 263  
 Froude, J. A., 71, 142, 145, 231  
 Fulton, inventor of steam engine,  
 32  
 Fynn (interpreter), 43, 44

## GALEKAS, the, 41

Gandamak, Treaty of, 216  
 Garrett, Lieutenant (60th Rifles),  
 415  
 Gawler, Major, 41, 44, 75  
 Gerald, Earl, 3  
 Gerald, Lord Thomas 3  
 Geraldines, the, 3, 6  
 German settlers in South Africa,  
 29, 33, 73, 144  
 Germany, 203  
 Ghilzais, the, 222  
 Gibbon, Edward, his *History*  
 quoted, 69  
 Gifford, Lord, 99  
 Gifford, Mr., 123  
 Gladstone, Rt. Hon. W. E., 150;  
 his windows broken by mob,  
 204  
 Goomoahs, the, 94  
 Gordon, General C. G., Ripon's  
 private secretary for two days,  
 248

## GORDON

Gordon, Lieutenant, 111  
 Grantham, Mr., 73  
 Greece, 205, 209  
 Greer, Captain, R.A., killed at Ingogo, 301, 411, 415 417  
 Grey, Lord Deputy, 3  
 Grey, Sir George, Governor and High Commissioner of South Africa, 23-25, 41, 71, 72, 74  
 Griqualand West, 119  
 Guigas, the, 37  
 Gundava, 161  
 Gurkhas, the, 224

HALIFAX, LORD, 201  
 Hamilton, South Africa, 127  
 Hamilton, Lieut. Bruce, his letter to his sister (Lady Colley) after Ingogo, 309, 418; Colley's care for, 369; at Ingogo, 416  
 Hamilton, Miss Edith A., *see* Colley, Lady.  
 Hamilton, General Meade, 201  
 Hamilton, Lord George, 201  
 Hamley, Sir Edward B., 217; *The Battle of Dorking: The New Ordeal*, 302  
 Harberton, Lady (Mary Colley), 4  
 Harberton, Lord, 4, 6  
 Hazardarkt Defile, 222  
 Heidelberg, South Africa, 244, 258, 270, 283  
 Hiambanzati, 128  
 Hong-kong, 57  
 Hood, General (American Army), 114  
 Hope, Admiral, 58  
 Hosinoo, 63  
 Howth, the Book of, 3  
 Hubid Killa, 222  
 Hudson, Mr., 267  
 Humboldt's *Cosmos*, 14

INDUSHA, 46, 51, 52  
*Illustrated London News*, 15  
 Imbezane Valley, 411  
 Imquela Mountain, 297, 351, 363, 371, 372  
 India in 1877, 171-196  
 Indus, valley of the, 151, 168  
 Ingogo River, 125; fight at the, 296 315, 411-418; its lessons, 316

## KINGWILLIAMSTOWN

Inman, Lieut., killed at Lang's Nek, 288  
 Insarfu, 99-102  
 Isandula, 235

JACKSON, GENERAL, 24  
 Jacobabad, 160, 165  
 Jamrud, 220  
 Java, 56  
 Jeejeeboy, Sir Jamsetjee, 248  
 Jellalabad, 214, 219  
 Jøppe, Mr., 140  
 Josan, 133  
 Joubert, Commandant General Piet, 138; Colley's interview with, 241-244; a delegate, 256; surprises the 94th, 269, 330; at Majuba Hill, 381; at Ingogo, 418  
 Jowakis, the, 189  
 Jung, Sir Salar, 157

KABUL, 156; its importance to England, 172; Russian influence at, 181; Russian mission to, 206, 208, 210; massacre of Cavagnari and his suite at, 239  
 Kaffir police, 75  
 Kaffraria, 20, 35 55; famine in, 86, 88  
 Kandahar, 156; entered by Stewart, 214; its retention urged by Colley, 217  
 Keate award, the, 253, 254, 263  
 Kei River, 20, 23, 35, 49  
 Keiskama, 41  
 Kennedy, Sir Michael, 239  
 Kerr, Lady Anne, 239  
 Khelat, Khan of, mission to, 158-168; his court, 161; 'only give me a banner,' 176  
 Khyber Pass, 153; closed to Kabul Mission, 211; its doubtful value, 218  
 Kildare, Earl of, 3, 6  
 Kimberley diamond fields, 119  
 Kimberley, Lord, his letters and telegrams to Transvaal, 322-324, 328, 329, 340, 341; 'reasonable guarantees,' 330; Colley on the Government 'scheme,' 338  
 Kingwilliamstown, 24, 25, 29, 78, 144

## KINSALE

Kinsale, 8, 10  
 Kizil Arvat, 180, 183  
 Knebworth, 208  
 Kohat, 198, 221  
 Kojak Pass, 218  
 Krelî, 85, 41, 43, 144  
 Kruger, Paul, 256, 267, 269; his letter to Colley, 330; Colley's reply, 844, 857  
 Kuram Valley, 158, 214, 218  
 Kushi, 219

LAKE CHRISTIE, 127  
 Landon, Surgeon, 417  
 Langalabalele, 119  
 Langensalza, battle of, 81  
 Lang's Nek, 125; battle of, 281-292  
 Lanyon, Sir Owen (Administrator, South Africa), 256; on Boers' political feeling, 265; an affair of taxes, 267; absurd reports, *ibid.*; his optimism, 268, 278; a puzzling situation, 269  
 Lawrence, Lord, 151, 154  
 Lebombo Mountains, 183-185  
 Lee, General, 148  
 Leydenberg, 187, 257, 261, 270, 280  
 Looh, Lord, 65  
 Locke, 14, 21  
 Lorenço Marquez, 134  
 Lundi Kotal, 219  
 Lus Beyla, 170  
 Lyall, A. C., 207, 237  
 Lytton, Bulwer, *My Novel* quoted, 47  
 Lytton, Lady, 197; the Kabul massacre, 239; Colley's letters to, 162, 197, 200  
 Lytton, Lord, Viceroy of India, appoints Colley his Military Secretary, 146; at Bombay, 155, 159; his intimate relations with Colley, 171, 173, 202, 203; an Afghan alliance essential, 172; the Delhi pageant, 175; fruitless negotiations with the Amir, 178; Madras famine, 186; his embarrassments, 187; sends Colley to Peshawur Conference, 189; appoints Colley his Private Secretary, 194; inscribes *Fables in Song* to Colley, 202; congratulates

## MITRI

Colley on his marriage, 203; his disbelief in war with Russia, 204; at Lahore, 220; his letter of sympathy to Colley, 225; his tribute to Colley, 241; Gordon's extraordinary letter, 248; his letter to Miss Colley on her brother's death, 408; his letters to Colley, 171, 202, 208, 248; Colley's letters to, 159-161, 165, 174, 189, 190, 198

MACAULAY, LORD, 71  
 McCook, Colonel, 115  
 McGann, Surgeon, 417  
 MacGregor, Captain, R.E. (Colley's Assistant Military Secretary), killed at Ingogo, 301, 312, 415, 419  
 MacGregor, Colonel, Colley's views on frontier policy, 217-219  
 Maclean, Colonel, British Commissioner for Kaffraria, 25, 45, 50, 52, 76  
 Mac-mac gold diggings, 136  
 McNeil, Ashanti war, 90  
 Macomo, 23, 48  
 Madras famine, 186  
 Mahdipur, 172  
 Mahon, Surgeon Edward, R.N., 390, 406  
 Maiwand, disaster at, 254  
 Majuba Hill, 125, 351, 353-355, 361-365, 374-406  
 Majuba, origin of name, 420  
 Malet, Sir Louis, 201  
 Mandeville, Lord, 144  
 Mansu, 92, 97, 98  
 Marabastadt, 257, 258, 283  
 Maritzburg, 121, 142, 234, 263, 280  
 Marter, Major, 236  
 Mayo, Dr., Master of Cheam School, 6  
 Mayo, Lord, 154  
 Merv, 179-181  
 Middelberg, 258, 270  
 Middledrift, 20  
 Mir Khodadad, Khan of Khelat, 158; mission to, 158-168; his court, 161; 'only give me a banner,' 176  
 Mitchell, Sir Charles, 384  
 Mitri, 166

## MOLESWORTH

Molesworth, Sir William, 26  
 Montagu, Major, 279  
 Montine, Jan, 126  
 Moody and Sankey, 199  
 Morgan, General (American Army), 114  
 Mornington (afterwards Wellesley), Lord, 4  
 Mount Prospect, 293, 294, 304, 351, 358, 364, 389  
 Mullah Pass, 162  
 Mustang, 166, 168  
 Mysore, 187

**NAPIER, GENERAL, Director-General of Education, 80**  
 Napier of Magdala, Lord, 217  
 Napier's *Memoirs* cited, 64, 210  
 Napoleon Buonaparte, Colley's admiration for, 80; his St. Helena memoirs, 82  
 Natal, 116, 120, 246-273; a land of contradictions, 280  
 Natal Mounted Police, 319, 410  
*Natal Witness*, 269, 314  
 Naval Brigade, Ashanti, 106; Transvaal, 819, 856, 863, 869, 879, 880, 890, 418  
 Nazareth (South Africa), 137  
 New Orleans, Colley at, 114  
 Newbridge, 79  
 Newcastle (South Africa), 125, 258, 281, 286, 293  
 Newdigate, General, 315  
 North, Captain, 103  
 Northbrook, Lord, 85, 155, 159, 163, 201  
 Nott, General, 210  
 Nur Mohamed Shah, 172, 177

Ockley's *History of the Saracens*, 21  
 O'Connell, Lieutenant (60th Rifles), 415  
 O'Neill's Farm, 373, 386  
 Orange River, 20, 118  
 Orange Free State, 119, 142, 324, 335  
 Ordah River, 105  
 Ordahsu, 106  
 Orenburg, 179, 181  
 Ormonde, Earl of, 3  
 Oxus River, 174, 179, 181

## RING

PAGET, SIR A., 205  
 Palmer, Lieutenant, 261  
 Parkes, Sir H., 65  
 Parsons, Lieutenant, 416, 417  
 Pechili, Gulf of, 57  
 Peiho River, 57; forts on the, 58  
 Peitang forts, 58  
 Peiwar Kotal, 214, 218; scene of the fight, 223  
 Pekin, 65; burning of Summer Palace, 67  
 Pelly, Sir Lewis, 156, 159, 177  
 Pennefather, General, 86  
 Pensioners' Village, 25, 73  
 Pertab Singh, Prince, 211  
 Peshawur, 170; negotiations with Amir at, 177; conference on Punjab raids, 189, 193  
 Pilgrim's Rest, 137  
 Pishin, 218  
 Pixley, Mr., 308  
 Plevna, 133, 184  
 Pollock, Sir Richard, 187  
 Pomeroy, Arthur (Lord Harberton), 4  
 Poole, Major, killed at Lang's Nek, 283, 290-292, 312  
 Portugal, Princess of, 9  
 Potchefstroom, open revolt at, 270; closely invested, 283-285, 337  
 Prah River, 88, 90, 96, 97, 105  
 Prahsu, 98  
 Pretoria, 138, 271, 282  
 Pretoria's Kop, 135  
 Pretorius, 269  
 Prince Imperial, killed in Zululand, 229, 230  
 Prussian tactics, 81  
 Punjab frontier, 159; the raids, 188

QUARMAN, 99 102  
 'Queen's,' the, 9 19; in South Africa, 20; ordered to China, 52  
 Ta-lien-wan, 57  
 Quetta, 161; 'the finest of these valleys,' 166; strategic value of, 169

RATT, MAJOR, 106  
 Rathangan, Co. Kildare, 5  
 Reade, Winwood, 112  
 Ring, Surgeon, 417

## RIPON

Ripon, Lord, 248  
 Ritchie, Rev. G. M. (Chaplain to the Forces), 811, 814, 869, 416  
 Robbin Island, 48  
 Roberts, Lord, 207; storms Afghan position, 214; to Shutargardan Pass with Colley, 221; on Cava-gnari at Kabul, 241; second Afghan campaign, 246  
 Robinson, Sir Hercules (Lord Rosmead), negotiations with Boers, 823, 824, 826, 840  
 Romilly, Commander, 869, 887, 890  
 Roos, the Boer, 406  
 Rudolph, Mr. (Natal), 129, 181, 182  
 Rush, Mr., 186  
 Ruskin's *Modern Painters* and *Seven Lamps* referred to, 14  
 Russell, Major, 106  
 Russia, 15; in Central Asia, 149, 180, 181, 185; within measurable distance of Afghanistan, 150; menaces Merv, 179; occupies Kizil Arvat, 180; Plevna, 188; end of war with Turkey, 204; England's hint to, 206; her Kabul mission, 206, 208, 210; Batum ceded to, 208  
 Rustenberg, 258, 283  
 SAFED SANG camp, 228  
 St. John, 211  
 Salisbury, Lord, Conference at Constantinople, 171; Colley's interview with, 201; Berlin Congress, 205  
 Samarkand, 156  
 San Stefano, Treaty of, 204  
 Sand River, 186  
 Sandeman, Sir Robert, Political Agent Punjab frontier, 158-161, 165, 169; his *Life* quoted, 176  
 Sandhurst, Colley at, 7  
 Sandili, 28  
 Sapri, 190  
 Schiens Hoogte, 297  
 Schrab, 168  
 Scott, Sir Walter, *Lady of the Lake* quoted, 44  
 Seistan Boundary Commission, 154  
 Server Pacha, 205  
 Sevastopol, 16, 17  
 Shannon Bridge, 14  
 Shepstone, Sir T., 274

## TAYLOR

Sher Ali, Amir of Afghanistan, 154, 172, 177; his fatal mistake, 211; England's ultimatum, 213; his flight and death, 214, 215  
 Shutargardan Pass, 221  
 Sigidi, 54  
 Sikh cavalry, 59, 68  
 Sindh, 168  
 Sindhian Desert, 162  
 Sindia, 175  
 Singapore, 57  
 Singho, 59  
 Siwani, 58  
 Smidt, Field Commandant General (Boers), 807, 812, 857, 860, 889, 418  
 Smyth, Sir Leicester, 866  
 Somerset, Lord Charles, 118  
 Souhang Marsh, 107  
 South Africa, 20-34; its condition in 1854 summarised, 20; in 1875, 118-139; *Blue Book*, 282, 401  
 Spain, 80  
 Spencer, Mr., 7  
 Spencer, Sir Augustus, 81  
 Spottiswoode, Captain (10th Hussars), 221  
 Staël, Madame de, 21, 81  
 Standerton, 280, 288  
 Stansfeld, Colonel, 289  
 Stewart, Dugald, 80  
 Stewart, Sir Donald, 214, 247  
 Stewart, Sir Herbert, in the Boer campaign, 852, 854, 855, 858, 860, 875, 879, 883, 884, 887, 893, 405, 418  
 Stewart, M., Resident Magistrate, &c., Natal, 415  
 Stolietoff, General, 211  
 Stone, Lieutenant (55th), 27  
 Strahan, Sir George, 415  
 Stuart, Lieutenant, 812  
 Suez Canal, 208  
 Sulimani Range, 152  
 Sumatra, 56  
 Sunda, Straits of, 56  
 Syud Nur Mahomed, 172, 177  
 TAKU forts, the, 60  
 Ta-lien-wan, 57  
 Tang-ko, 60  
 Tartar cavalry, 59, 68  
 Taylor, General (American Army), 114



## TEMPLEMORE

- Templemore (Ireland), 18  
 Templetown, Lord, 81  
 Thompson, Jeff., 114  
 Tien-tsin, 61  
*Times*, 15, 112; and Indian matters, 187  
 Tola, 49  
 Tong-chow, 62, 65  
 Toole, Sergeant-Major T., R.A., 417  
 Tora, camp on the, 77  
 Trans-Indus district, Colley's scheme for, 198  
 Transkei, the, 41, 73, 75, 144  
 Transport difficulties in Ashanti war, 92, *et seq.*; in Transvaal, 261  
 Transvaal, Colley's 'Report' on, 140; the Boers and annexation, 238; chaos indeed, 253; Colley on military expenditure in, 255, 257; distribution of troops in, 258; alarming desertions, 259; difficulties of transport, 261; Republic proclaimed, 268; defeat and disaster, 269-272; Lang's Nek and Ingogo, 274-315; England negotiates with, 316-348; Colley's despatch after Ingogo, 411-418  
 Trench, Dr. R. C., Archbishop of Dublin, his lines on Colley, 409  
 Trench, Stuart, *Realities of Irish Life*, 33  
 Trench, Dr., Dean of Kildare, 4  
 Trench, Miss Frances (Mrs. George Colley), 4  
 Tryon, Admiral, 116  
 Tsetse fly, 185  
 Tugela frontier, 142  
 Turkey, and Russia (Plevna), 183; defeated and prostrate, 204
- UMBOLUS RIVER, 134  
 Umgwali River, 44  
 Umhala, 53  
 Umswazi, 128  
 Upperton, Major, 162, 164  
 Utman Khel, 190
- VAAL RIVER, 119  
 Vernon, John, 45, 46  
 Vernon, Mrs. (sister), letters from Colley to, 7-133, *passim*; 220, 221, 223, 311

## ZULUS

- Victoria, Queen, her confidence in Colley, 312  
 Villiers, Colonel, 212  
 Volunteers, 84  
 'Vulcan,' H.M.S., 56
- WAKKERSTROOM, 126, 140, 257, 258, 282  
 Wavell, Colonel A. H., 294  
 Wellesley, Lord (first Baron Mornington), 4  
 Wellington, Duke of, 4  
 Whately, Archbishop, 39  
 Wilkins, Sergeant-Major (60th Rifles), 417  
 Wilkinson, Lieutenant, 261, 308, 312, 416  
 Wolseley, Lord, the Ashanti war, 88-108; sends for Colley, 89, 226; his confidence in Colley, 96, 108; his offers to Colley, 109, 176; Colley's friendship with, 114, 121; Governor of Natal, &c., 116; his official visits, 142; 'these accursed Tartars,' 184; joined by Colley at Port Durnford, 234; interview with Joubert, 242; his tribute to Colley, 245; Colley's plan of campaign in the Transvaal, 282; Colley v. Colonial Secretary, 343; Colley's letters to, 158, 174, 176, 188, 189, 197, 205, 212, 282-290, 345, 348  
 Wood, Sir Evelyn, 106, 230, 233, 294; in command at Biggarsberg, 312; Colley on Transvaal prospects, 333; with Colley at Newcastle, 335; instructions from home, 340; a reconnaissance, 341; Colley and the Nek, 356; Colley's last message to, 386; his message to Lady Colley, 406  
 Woolwich, Colley at, 79
- YAKUB KHAN, 154, 209, 215; signs Treaty of Gandamak, 216; the Kabul massacre, 240  
 Yancoomassie, 93, 94  
 Yellow Woods, the, 30
- ZAKHA KHEL tribe, 220  
 Zanzibar, 229  
 Zulus, the, 119, 124, 232

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