



Baden-Powell - The Hero of Mafeking

W. Francis Aitken

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Baron Baden-Powell is nowadays remembered best for his work as the founder of the Scouting Movement which has gone on to become a world-wide success; however his initial reputation rested on his military career centred on the Boer War.

Colonel Baden-Powell, as he then was, commanded at Mafeking and was charged with its defence no matter the odds. At his command he had few resources, even fewer men and slim prospects of holding out against overwhelming odds. What this book tells, with great gusto, is the miracle that Baden-Powell contrived to bring about by successfully defending Mafeking for seven months. His tactics were often unconventional but very effective in keeping up both the spirits of the townspeople and the Boers at bay. He set an example of sang-froid that was instrumental in ensuring the troops under his command did not give in to the fears of the odds facing them. The following anecdote is characteristic of him:

“Soon after the redoubtable Cronje [The Boer General] took command of the Boer forces, he forwarded a demand for surrender, to avoid further bloodshed, to which the reply [Baden-Powell’s] was, "When will the bloodshed begin?"”

Highly recommended.

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