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SIR REDVERS BULLER ON HIS CHARGER.

GENERAL SIR REDVERS HENRY BULLER, V.C. G.C.B., K.C.M.G.

BY SARAH A. TOOLEY.



From a photograph by Henry Cornish, Crediton.

DOWNES, CREDITON, THE HOME OF SIR REDVERS BULLER.

THE career of the valiant soldier who now holds the prestige of the British Empire in his hands has two distinct aspects. He is not only the distinguished General of Her Majesty's Forces in South Africa, with a military record worthy to compare with heroes of the past, but at home, in his native Devonshire, he is the country squire, fulfilling the duties of that position with practical thoroughness. While the man in the street knows "Buller" by heart, and can glibly recount his deeds of pluck and daring, it will scarcely be believed that at Crediton, where his family estate lies, the people have never seen the Squire in his regimentals. I think this is the only grievance they have against him. "Some of the young officers are a little too fond of showing their colours," said a native to me recently; "but Sir Redvers is too much the other way." When the Duke and Duchess of York visited Exeter, some canny folks set off from Crediton to see

the reception of the Royal visitors, thinking that this occasion would at least bring out the General in full uniform.

"And what did the Squire look like?" asked the home-keeping people when their more adventurous neighbours returned from Exeter.

"Just his usual."

"Had he no uniform on him?"

"Not a stripe nor a brass button, as I could see."

Several times has local expectation been at the highest pitch when Sir Redvers has returned to Crediton after a notable campaign, and the people have prepared a gala reception; but it has always been the familiar figure in the bowler hat and long overcoat which has stepped out of the railway carriage. If the General does not appear in uniform when he returns from this, his most momentous campaign, there will certainly be an insurrection in Crediton.



SIR REDVERS' KAFFIR DOG, "TUMI."
(From a painting.)

General Sir Redvers Henry Buller is descended from a long line of West Country ancestors. He comes of that class of valiant gentlemen of Cornwall and Devon whose deeds of daring and enterprise live in the pages of Kingsley, and mementoes of whom are to be found in the brasses of the West Country churches. He received the name of Redvers after Richard de Rivers, or Redvers, first Earl of Devon after the Conquest, with whose family the Bullers were connected by marriage.

Sir Redvers is the eldest surviving son of the late James Wentworth Buller, Esquire, of Downes House, Crediton, and was born in the ancestral home in 1839. He was the second son, one of a family of fourteen brothers and sisters, and was reared according to the best traditions of the old English gentry—to "Fear God and honour the King." His father had had a very distinguished career at Oxford, was a man of sterling worth, greatly respected by

the people among whom he dwelt, a good landlord, a magistrate who tempered justice with mercy, and a Whig of the olden school, representing his county in Parliament for

many years. The General's mother was Charlotte, daughter of the late Lord H. M. Howard, of Norfolk, a sweet and gentle lady, whose beautiful, serene face looks at you

from the walls of nearly every room at Downes.

I have been unable to discover the origin of the name of Downes. The Manor and house came into the possession of the Buller family in



SIR REDVERS BULLER'S FATHER AND MOTHER.
(From paintings.)

1726, through a marriage with the heiress of Gould, and has since remained the seat of the family in Devonshire.

Most interesting is the old entrance hall, entered from the garden front. It is wainscoted in oak from floor to ceiling, and the handsome staircase is shut off, as shown in our illustration, by two beautifully carved gates. These were used in olden times to keep the dogs from going up the staircase. This portion of the house is between two and three hundred years old.

In the vestibule are the marble and bronze clock and ornaments presented to Sir Redvers by the officers and

troops of Baker's Horse after the Zulu War of 1879, in testimony of his valour as an officer in the Flying Column, of which they formed a part. The Frontier Light Horse,

which he commanded in the same campaign, presented him with two silver lamps; and the ladies of Capetown, in recognition of his gallant services, gave him two large silver shields with martial designs in bas relief. In the vestibule also stand some quaint chairs of carved oak, having in the centre of the back the Buller crest—a Saracen's head, the fierce physiognomy of which accords well with the family motto, *Aquila non capit muscas* ("An eagle does not catch flies").

One turns with special interest to the room at Downes devoted to the General's own use, and the first feeling is one of surprise that it contains so little that is distinctly military. It is panelled in light oak, and around the top of the walls are shields showing the coats of arms of the various branches of the Buller family. There are twenty-two different shields. The pictures are old prints and family portraits, and there is a sketch of "Tumi," Sir Redvers' Zulu dog, of which I shall have more to say

later. The cases, filled with military books, alone reveal the soldier; while the capacious writing-table bespeaks the active man of business. It is a retired room, with an

outlook over an unending stretch of green country.

The Bullers have always been a studious race, and the library, which is close to Sir Redvers' room, is one of the handsomest apartments at Downes. It was originally the dining-room, and was first planned as a library by the late owner; but Sir Redvers completed the transformation, and had the light oak cases made and the collection arranged. The books comprise sets of standard British authors. The walls and mantelpiece are decorated with blue china, collected by Sir Redvers in Holland.

Downes is not, however, without its military relics, for

the billiard-room, used as a morning-room, is quite a museum of trophies brought home from the wars. Zulu shields and assegais and Egyptian shields and swords are hung around the walls, and in the place of honour,



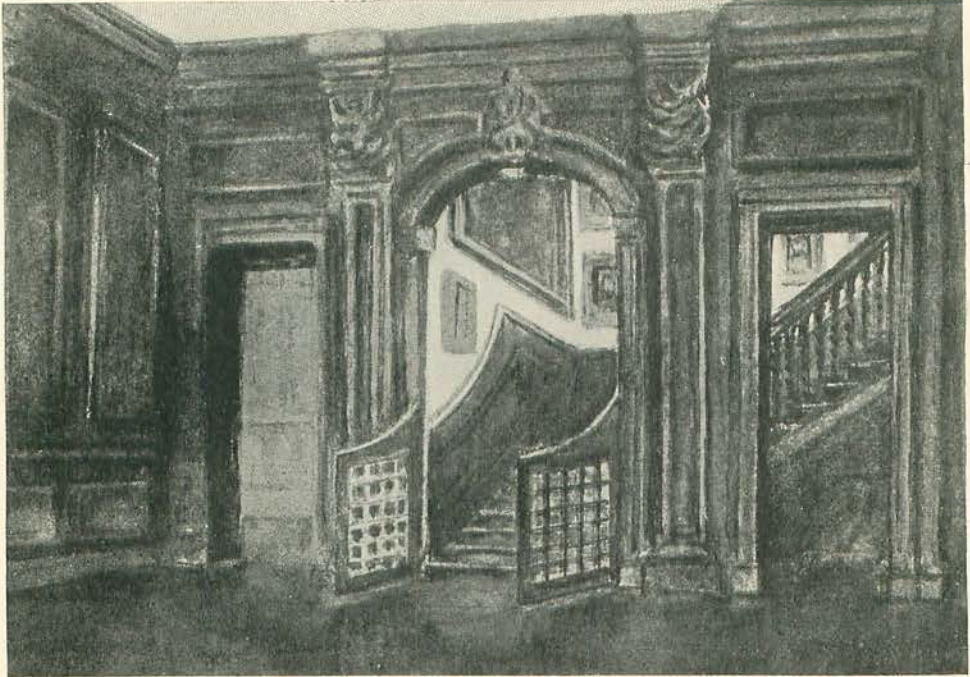
From a photograph by C. Knight, Aldershot.

THE LATEST PORTRAIT OF SIR REDVERS, TAKEN BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR SOUTH AFRICA IN OCTOBER.

surrounded by swords, is the flag captured from Osman Digna. It is a small red linen flag, inscribed in large white Arabic characters with the motto, "There is but one God; He is Allah." Sir Redvers is proud of his old regiment, and the walls of this room are hung with pictures relating to the 60th Rifles. There are prints showing the old uniforms of the 60th, a series of pictures of the battles in which the gallant regiment has been engaged, and groups of the officers of the 3rd and 4th battalions. The most beautiful curios brought home by

"Master Redvers," and her devotion is amply returned by the General, a very pleasing trait in the distinguished soldier.

"I remember him," said she, "as a fair-haired, blue-eyed little fellow. He was a regular 'spirit,' and indeed they were all that, the whole family. He would ride over hedges and ditches, climb the tallest trees, and was always ready for a bit of daring. Many a time has he got out of this window when my back was turned, and walked round the parapet of the house. The family were allowed a great deal of



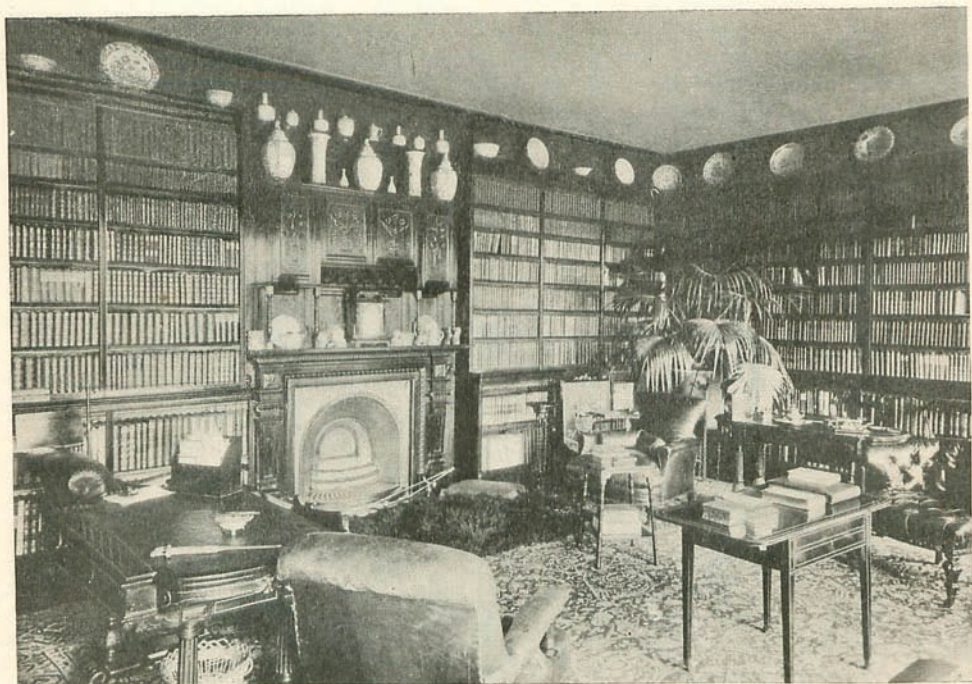
THE ENTRANCE HALL, DOWNES.

(From a painting.)

Sir Redvers are a collection of ornaments in old Cloisonné enamel from the Summer Palace at Peking, captured during the Chinese War of 1860, when, as a young ensign, the General won his first laurels.

It was with peculiar interest that, during my visit to Downes, I sat in the old nursery, at the top of the house, where Sir Redvers had played as a child, and chatted with his nurse, Mrs. Cleave, who entered the service of the Buller family when a mere girl, and is now housekeeper at Downes. She is not a little proud of having had charge of

freedom; I should not say that they were at all strictly brought up. Sir Redvers had a very bright and joyous childhood, plenty of out-door life, and learned how to use his hands in many ways. He was very fond of working in the carpenter's shop attached to the house. He was always reserved and quiet with strangers, rather a shy boy; but he had a very affectionate disposition, and would do anything for those whom he felt at home with. Of course, he was a bit mischievous and wilful: most 'spirity' boys are. He and I used to have some battles



THE LIBRARY, DOWNES.



SIR REDVERS BULLER'S ROOM, DOWNES.

From photographs taken especially for THE LADY'S REALM by Henry Cornish, Crediton.

at times, but he knew that if I once said a thing I should stick to it, so it was no use for him to think that he would have his own way. He was very fond of horses and dogs and of all kinds of sport—shooting, hunting, and fishing. When a small boy, he used to talk about being a soldier—it seemed to be his great desire, although there was nothing particular to turn his

It was a cruel shock we got here the other day, when that telegram was sent to the Exeter papers saying he had been assassinated on landing at Capetown. Everybody was just wild in Crediton. I cannot think how such a story could have got about." And the poor old lady wiped her eyes at memory of it.

After Sir Redvers was out of the hands



SOME OF THE GENERAL'S PRESENTATIONS.

From a photograph taken especially for THE LADY'S REALM by Henry Cornish, Crediton.

mind in that direction, for the Bullers have not been a soldiering family. But there, I must say no more: Sir Redvers does not like to be talked about. He is a man of few words—that is why the war correspondents do not like him, he won't tell them enough; but then, he never talks to anybody about what he has done in the wars. He is a great man for his home, is Sir Redvers, and always so kind and thoughtful to everybody.

of the home governess, who, from all accounts, had rather a lively time with him, he was sent to school at Exmouth, and from thence to Eton, where he was "fag" to the present Head, Dr. Warre. Having already determined to enter the Army, he did not proceed to the university, but completed his education at the Military College. He was distinguished in his studies for quickness. Lessons came easily to him, as he

had a nimble intellect, which soon got at the bottom of a thing. At the early age of seventeen he entered the Army as an ensign in the 60th, the King's Own Rifles; but before he actually joined he met with an accident which very nearly lost him the career upon which he had set his heart, and the country a valuable soldier. When at Downes, just before

joining his regiment, he was out one morning in the park cutting wood, and the hatchet slipped and cut him severely across the side of the knee. The doctor took a very serious view of the wound, and strongly advised amputation.

"Take my leg off?" said young Buller,



From a photograph by Henry Cornish, Crediton.

THE GENERAL'S ONLY CHILD. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN TO SEND TO SIR REDVERS DURING THE SOUDAN WAR.

with a gasp of horror at the thought of losing not only his limb, but his military career. "No," he continued emphatically; "I would rather die with two legs than go through life with one." His father and the doctor yielded to the boy's decision. The wound was sewn up, faithful Mrs. Cleave holding him while the operation was performed. Thanks to good

nursing and the patient's indomitable spirit, the injured leg was perfectly restored to use, and Sir Redvers has never throughout his career been at all inconvenienced by weakness attendant on the accident.

At the age of twenty-one Ensign Buller went out with his regiment to China, and



GROUP SHOWING MISS BULLER AND THE MISSES HOWARD.

(From an early photograph by Henry Cornish, Crediton.)

quickly proved his mettle. He was at the storming of the Taku forts, and returned home with a medal for conspicuous bravery. Ten years elapsed before the young soldier tasted battle again. His next campaign was in connection with the Red River Expedition, led by Lord, then Sir Garnet, Wolseley against the rebels in Canada. Captain Buller led a battalion of the 60th Rifles through the western wilds of Manitoba, and during that march, when the officers, as well as the men, had to work like navvies lugging boats through muddy swamps and clearing the bush, he profited not a little by the hardening life and familiarity with various kinds of outdoor work to which he had been accustomed as a boy at Downes. Sir Garnet noted the intrepid soldier, keen of eye, taciturn, and resourceful, and ever since has invariably selected "Buller" when there was a bit of hard work to be done. Three years after his return from Canada, Captain Buller went on Lord Wolseley's staff to the Ashantee War, and was promoted to be Major.

It was in the Kaffir and Zulu Wars of 1878-9 that Sir Redvers came to the front as a soldier of exceptional resource and daring. Lord Wolseley was then Governor of Natal, and organised a force for the protection of the colonists. It was in this campaign that Sir Redvers won the Victoria Cross by a series of deeds almost unparalleled in the records of British heroism.

Colonel Buller returned home after the battle of Ulundi, which victoriously closed this Zulu campaign, covered with glory. In the Boer War of 1881 he was Chief of the Staff to Sir Evelyn Wood, and the knowledge he then gained must be serving him in good stead at the present crisis.

The scene of his exploits next changes to Egypt. He was at the head of the Intelligence Department of Sir Garnet Wolseley's army in the war of 1882, and took part in the victory of Tel-el-Kebir. A year later he was again in Egypt, fighting "Fuzzi-wuzzi" with the same fiery zeal that he had expended on the Kaffirs and Zulus, and did brilliant work in piloting General Graham's brigade across the desert, and was present at the engagements at El Teb and Temai. On his return home he was pro-

moted to be Major-General, and received a medal with two clasps or distinguished service.

Sir Redvers served in the Soudan campaign, 1884-5, as Chief of the Staff to Lord Wolseley, and with characteristic daring rescued Sir Herbert Stewart's Desert Column, and defeated the enemy at Abu Klea Wells. He received a medal and clasp after this campaign, which closes the record of Sir Redvers' active service in the field, military duties at home having occupied him until the present juncture. He has been successively Quartermaster-General of the Army, Adjutant-General to the Forces, in succession to Lord Wolseley, and in 1898 was appointed Commander at Aldershot, in succession to the Duke of Connaught. For a period he was Under-Secretary for Ireland.

When Sir Redvers Buller chose a military career he was a younger son, without thought of the responsibility of being a large landowner. On the death of his elder brother in 1872, Sir Redvers succeeded to the family estate, and has since fulfilled the double duties. He has been none the worse a squire for being an active soldier. For ten years he lived a bachelor at Downes, until in 1882 he married Lady Audrey, third daughter of the Marquis Townshend, and widow of Sir Redvers' cousin, the Hon. Greville T. Howard. Lady Audrey had two sons and two daughters by her first marriage, and these have found the kindest of step-fathers in Sir Redvers. Doubtless inspired by him, the two young Howards entered the Army. Only last July the elder, who had joined the 60th, died of fever in India. The second of Lady Audrey's sons is shortly expected home on furlough, and will probably proceed to join Sir Redvers' corps in Africa.

In evidence of the military enthusiasm of the General I may mention that he broke off his honeymoon to start for the Egyptian War. He and his bride were in Holland, a week after their marriage, when the tidings came of the outbreak of hostilities. At once Sir Redvers telegraphed to Downes that he and Lady Audrey would be home next day. There was no time to wait for the festive preparations which would in the ordinary way have been made for their reception. Sir Redvers arrived with his bride without



THE BILLIARD-ROOM—USED AS A MORNING-ROOM.



THE NURSERY, DOWNES.

From photographs taken especially for THE LADY'S REALM by Henry Cornish, Crediton.

ceremony, stayed one night at Downes just to collect his war "kit," was off to London next morning and *en route* for Egypt. It was certainly not the case with Sir Redvers, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come"; and Lady Audrey showed herself a fitting mate for her gallant husband in relinquishing him without a murmur. At the end of a few months he was home again, with more glory attached to his name. One of our illustrations shows Downes House decorated to receive him. "After the battle a peaceful home awaits thee," was the motto over the doorway.

No happier home could have been found in England than was seen at Downes in the years which followed. Though the appointment held by Sir Redvers obliged the family to spend many months of the year in London, the holidays were always spent at Downes, and were enjoyed as much by Sir Redvers

as any one. The merry Christmas parties and the dances and theatricals will long be remembered by rich and poor in the district, who all shared in them.

The birth of a daughter to Sir Redvers was an occasion of great rejoicing at Downes, and the distinguished soldier probably thought more of the first baby caress than of all his war medals put together. Perhaps I may be permitted to say that he was almost absurdly fond of his infant daughter. As a tiny child Miss Buller was very like her father, and now that she is grown up the resemblance is very striking. They are

inseparable companions when the General is at home. Miss Buller is an expert typist, has inherited her father's business faculties, and is of great assistance to him with his correspondence. She is often to be seen riding at his side during the manœuvres at Aldershot. Miss Joyce Howard is, however, the great horsewoman of the family; she is always in the saddle, and sure to be the first lady in at the death in the hunting-field.

Lady Audrey and her three daughters are greatly beloved in Crediton for the interest which they take in the people of the district. If there is any one ill, little delicacies are sure to be sent from Downes, and it is no unusual sight to see invalids taking the air in Lady Audrey's carriage. In 1885 Lady Audrey started the Crediton Sick Nursing Association, one of the first institutions of the kind, and which has been carried on with unvarying success. But



From a photograph by Bullingham.

LADY AUDREY BULLER.

it is not only the sick who are cared for: it has been Lady Audrey's aim to bring interest and amusement into the lives of the people. A few years ago she started a series of penny readings, at which the Misses Howard and Miss Buller helped in the entertainment; also a Girls' Club, which has been a great help in forming a pleasant social centre for country girls. Miss Howard takes a special interest in the Girls' Club, and when at Downes no engagement prevents her from attending it and helping to instruct and amuse the members.

It is quite astonishing how Sir Redvers has

managed to find time for so many local duties when one considers the large amount of work which has fallen to him of late years in London and at Aldershot. He is a Governor of Crediton Church and of its Grammar School, a Justice of the Peace, and Chairman of the School Board. He makes a point of attending most of the meetings. It has been no unusual thing for him to leave London for Crediton by an early train in the morning, do a day's business, and return to town the same evening. He has a wonderful faculty for getting through work.

Without having any pretension to being an orator, Sir Redvers makes an excellent chairman at public meetings, saying in a few well-chosen words the right thing for the occasion. He personally looks after every part of his estate, knows all his tenants and workpeople, and has himself planned the cottages built during recent years. He is fond of farming, knows the value of stock as well as any farmer in the West Country, and has been a successful prize-winner. The gardens at Downes have been laid out under his direction, and he has a great hobby for tree-planting and the culture of fruit-trees. Of late he has been collecting choice apple-trees from abroad, and watches over their growth with as keen an interest as if he had been engaged in the culture of fruit all his life. Not a tree or shrub must be interfered with at Downes without Sir Redvers' permission. An old axe, with which he has done execution in former years, always hangs in his room, and with it he still marks the trees which are to be felled.

Needless to say, Sir Redvers has been a keen sportsman all his life, and his shooting- and hunting-parties are a great feature in

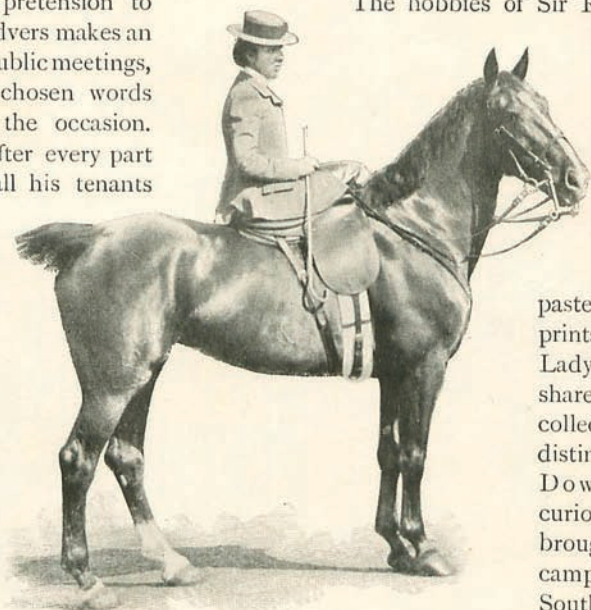
the social life of the county. He is fond of salmon-fishing in Scotland, but of late has had little time to indulge in it.

Lady Audrey has always been extremely fond of field sports, especially of hunting, and often says that the highest compliment paid her was by one of the oldest tenants at Downes, who said that Lady Audrey was "equally at home in the cottage or the hunting-field." Although she no longer hunts, Lady Audrey, when at Downes, often walks all day with Sir Redvers when he is out shooting.

The hobbies of Sir Redvers are not

confined to country pastimes. He is an enthusiastic collector of antique furniture, and of

pastels and old prints, a taste which Lady Audrey fully shares. Sir Redvers' collections are of two distinct kinds: at Downes are the curios which he has brought from his campaigns in China, South Africa, and Egypt; while at Government House, Aldershot, are his



From a photograph by C. Knight, Aldershot.

MISS BULLER.

prints and antiques which he has picked up from dealers at home or on the Continent. Before going to Aldershot Sir Redvers had his town house in Bruton Street, and it was there that the collection was formed. His beautiful pastels now cover the walls of the drawing-room at Government House; prints illustrating battle scenes hang around the dining-room; while the walls of the spacious staircase and corridors are hung with a valuable collection of mezzotints.

The General has been described so exclusively as a soldier, grim, fierce, and courageous, that the more winning traits of his character have been lost sight of. His

family and intimate friends know him as a genial host, delighting in hospitality, a lover of literature, an enthusiastic art collector, a man who delights in having pretty things about him, and who is extremely kind and indulgent to the weak. He is devoted to the horses which have carried him in his various campaigns. "Gambler," his favourite charger, a gift from his great friend, General Sir Thomas Baker, is now being tenderly cared for at Aldershot.

with him, thinking that he might like to again behold his native Africa. Unfortunately he sickened and died there. During Tumi's illness Sir Redvers sat up several nights to nurse him, and tenderly soothed his last hours. So deeply attached was he to Tumi that he has never had a pet dog since he lost him.

One might multiply little incidents to show what a really kind, tender heart beats beneath the stern, outward exterior of the soldier. Sir Redvers dislikes anything in the way of



From a photograph by Henry Cornish, Crediton.

SIR REDVERS' RECEPTION IN 1884 ON HIS RETURN FROM THE WAR.

During the Kaffir War Sir Redvers received a present of two Zulu dogs; one, however, was killed in battle, but the other, Tumi, came home with him to Downes, and was for some years his inseparable companion. He was a very gentle dog, with a head like a greyhound. He would never jump a hedge or a gate—that being against etiquette with dogs in Zululand, I suppose; and it was no uncommon thing for Sir Redvers to open the gate for his dog. When Sir Redvers went out to the Soudan War he took Tumi along

fuss and sensation, but he was most deeply touched by the magnificent "send-off" which the people gave him when he started on his present campaign.

Lady Audrey Buller succeeded H.R.H. the Duchess of Connaught as President of the Aldershot Branch of the Soldiers and Sailors' Families Association, and is now, with her daughters, busily engaged in helping the women married without leave (and therefore unhelped by Government) by means of this Association.

Sarah. A. Tooley