

MAY 29/66

# WON VICTORIA CROSS 52 YEARS AGO

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## DISTINGUISHED CAREER IN THREE SPHERES

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### VALUABLE WORK FOR COUNTY

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**IT** is with deep regret that we record the death, which took place to-day, of Colonel Sir Percival Scrope Marling, Bart., V.C., of Stanley Park, Stroud. Sir Percival was the oldest living V.C., having won the decoration 52 years ago in the Suakim Campaign for saving the life of a private.

Soldier, sportsman, and ardent public worker, Sir Percival found fame and respect in each of these three spheres of activity. He was 75 years of age.

The third Baronet of the line, Sir Percival was a true Gloucestershire man, having been born at Stanley Park, Stroud. Throughout his life he served his county well in official capacities, by his practical help for agriculture, and by his generosity to countless organisations.

Sir Percival first became ill during the voyage when he was returning from South America this spring. He reached England in March, and shortly afterwards entered a London nursing home. He returned to Stanley Park about a month ago, and died at 8.45 this morning. Although Sir Percival was seriously ill, there was not thought to be any immediate danger as late as yesterday afternoon. The cause of his illness is said to have been heart trouble.

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**THE** eldest son of the late Sir William Marling, Sir Percival succeeded his father in 1919.

Thirty-seven years ago he married actress Caroline, eldest daughter of the Mr. F. H. Beaumont, of Buckland Court, Surrey. Lady Marling became as well liked and respected throughout Gloucestershire as her husband. She shared his kindly manner, thoughtful sympathy and generosity of nature during all the years she has been his partner, and she was at his bedside at the end. The deepest sympathy of the whole country will be extended to her in her great loss.

They had no children and the heir to the title is Sir Percival's nephew, Lt. John Stanley Vincent Marling, of the 17/21st Lancers. He is 25 years of age, and the son of the late Sir Charles Murray Marling.

## Military Career

Sir Percival had had a distinguished military career. Educated at Harrow and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, he was gazetted to the 60th King's Royal Rifle Corps in 1880 as second lieutenant in the 3rd battalion. He served throughout the Boer War in 1880-81, and was present at the battles of Laing's Nek and Ingogo. Serving also in the Egyptian campaign of 1882, he took part in the engagements round Alexandria, the action at Kassassin, and the battle of Tel-el-Kebir and the occupation of Cairo, for which he received the medal with clasp and the Khedive's Star.

Sir Percival served with the Mounted Infantry in the Suakin campaign in 1884, and was present at the battle of El Teb, the relief of Tokar, the battle of Tamai and the affair at Tamanib. He was mentioned twice in despatches, was awarded two more clasps to his medal and the Victoria Cross.

## Conspicuous Bravery

The act for which he was awarded the greatest honour which a soldier may gain was described in the "London Gazette" as follows:

For his conspicuous bravery at the battle of Tamai, on March 13, 1884, in risking his life to save that of Private Morley, Royal Sussex Regiment, who, having been shot, was lifted and placed in front of Lieut. Marling on his horse. He fell off almost immediately, when Lieut. Marling dismounted and gave up his horse for the purpose of carrying off Private Morley, the enemy pressing close on to them, until he succeeded in carrying him about 200 yards to a place of comparative safety.

Sir Percival served in the Camel Corps in the Gordon Relief Expedition in Khartoum in 1884-5, and took part in all the desert operations under Sir Herbert Stewart. He was present at the battles of Abou Klea and El Gubat, and the reconnaissance before Metemah. Sir Percival was again mentioned in despatches, receiving two further clasps to his medal, and was promoted to a troop in the 18th (Queen Mary's Own) Royal Hussars, with which regiment he served in South Africa from 1899-1902.

## In South Africa

He was at the battle of Talana Hill, the retirement from Dundee, the action at Lombard's Kop, and the siege of Ladysmith, and took part in many operations in the Transvaal, the Orange River Colony and the Zululand border of Natal.

He was promoted major in 1896, he commanded his regiment in the field April 1901 to June 1902, was twice mentioned in despatches, and promoted lieutenant-colonel in February, 1902, and made a Companion of the Bath. He received the Queen's Medal with five clasps, the King's Medal with two clasps, and was made a full colonel in 1906.

In 1904 he served on a Royal Commission for the re-organisation of the Army Veterinary



SIR PERCIVAL MARLING, BART.

Department, and from 1905-6 commanded the York Garrison and district. He was Brigadier-General, Potchefstroom district, South Africa, from 1909-10, when he retired from the Army following a bad fall from his horse.

At the outbreak of the Great War, although considerably past military age, Sir Percival at once volunteered for service and served on the headquarters staff of the Indian Army Corps in France, receiving the Mons Star and clasp, Victory and General Service Medals. In February, 1915, he was invalided home from the front suffering from congestion of the lungs, and three months later was appointed General Staff Officer at Windsor.

In recent years Sir Percival, accompanied by Lady Marling, had visited many of the battlefields where he had fought, including that of Tamai, where he gained the V.C. On his return home, after a visit to Tamai, Sir Percival, in an interview, said: "When I was in those battles I never thought I would return some 50 years later in the comfort of a motor car and with whisky and soda to drink instead of water which had been carried in goat skins for days."

## His Reminiscences

In 1931 Sir Percival, who, like Lady Marling, was frequently to be found in Royal circles, being personal friends of the Royal family, published his reminiscences, and in his widely read book, "Rifleman and Hussar," he told an amusing story of how when he was one of an escort for Queen Victoria some foam from his horse's mouth fell on the Queen's veil.

"She gave me a look," he wrote, "which made me wish I had never been born, and the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Alexandra, and the lady-in-waiting began mopping her with their handkerchiefs."

"Two days afterwards a furious memo came down from the Horse Guards saying that all commanding officers detaching Royal escorts were to take particular care to see that their horses did not foam at the mouth."

(Continued in Page 6)

## CABINET MEETING

A meeting of the Cabinet was held at the House of Commons to-day. It is understood that it was called to finish off that part of the agenda which was left over from Wednesday's meeting, and to clear up matters before the Whitsuntide Recess.

# SIR PERCIVAL MARLING

## STRIKING INCIDENTS IN CAREER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Despite the time and energy which he spent on his military career, Sir Percival bore his share in important public work in Gloucestershire, and in Monmouthshire, for before he went to Stanley Park, he lived at Sedbury Park, Chepstow. He was appointed County High Sheriff in 1923 and as the holder of that office was always willing to contribute liberally to any worthy cause, and to do all in his power to add to the successful organisation of any fund likely to benefit those in need.

Fifteen years he was a county councillor, representing the Tidenham division. That was from 1907 to 1922. He held the seat unopposed and although he was pressed to stand again he resigned when he disposed of the Sedbury Park estate on the death of his father. It was a big loss to the Council for his wide experience gained in all parts of the world was invaluable in administering public business.

He was a member of the Standing Joint Committee and a Justice of the Peace not only for Gloucestershire but for Monmouthshire as well. As chairman of the Whitminster and Stonehouse Bench thousands will remember his scrupulous fairness, and in the opinion of the magistrates justice warranted punishment he saw to it that the penalty was such as would prevent a repetition of the offence and serve as a warning to others. He was Deputy Lieutenant for the county and also for the city and county of Bristol. At the time of his death he was a member of the Severn Fishery Board.

As President of the Stroud General Hospital and President of the Stroud Nursing Association, Sir Percival has done much valuable work, and here again his never failing generosity has been greatly appreciated by those responsible for the successful organisation of the institutions. Lady Marling succeeded him as President of the Hospital and she was the first woman to hold the office.

Naturally a man who had spent a large part of his life soldiering would have an inherent sympathy with the work of the British Legion, and Sir Percival for a long time has been President of the Gloucestershire Branch of the Legion and also of the Stroud and District Branch. His work on behalf of ex-Servicemen is almost a by-word in that part of the county. The grounds of his estate were often thrown open for fetes in aid of the Legion, and many branches have been entertained there.

Other bodies which have claimed his attention are the Gloucestershire Society in London, of which he had held the Presidency, the Stroud Mutual Provident and Sick Benefit Society, of which he was a trustee, and the Buseage Home of Mercy, for which institution he held a similar position.

A keen educationalist, Sir Percival took a great interest in the welfare of children. The Marling School, Stroud, was founded by his father, and Sir Percival was a governor of the school, and contributed liberally to the prize fund. He was also a governor of Lydney Secondary Schools, and chairman of the Selsley School Managers. He further showed his interest in the activities of youth by holding the office of Commissioner of Boy Scouts for Stroud and District.

In politics Sir Percival was an ardent Conservative and helped the cause to his utmost ability. He held the offices of President of the Mid-Gloucestershire Conservative and Unionist Association and President of the Mid-Glo'shire Junior Imperial League.

**Keen Interest In Agriculture**

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## Keen Interest In Agriculture

Sir Percival evinced a keen interest in agriculture, and was associated in a practical way with many organisations connected with that industry. For many years he was vice-chairman of the Chepstow Agricultural Society, had held the office of President of the Three Counties Show, was a generous supporter of the Gloucestershire Root, Fruit and Grain Society, and had also held the position of President of the Gloucestershire Chamber of Agriculture. He was, too, a member of the Committee of the Gloucestershire branch of the Central Landowners' Association, and as the first and only President of Stroud's annual show, inaugurated a few years ago, had played an active part in promoting the success of the exhibition.

Always a staunch churchman he was churchwarden of Selsley church which has greatly benefitted by his interest. He was a patron of the living and also of Woolstoncum-Alvington, and the rural decanal representative on the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance.

## Prowess At Sport

Never happier than when on the back of a horse, Sir Percival was an expert rider, and as recently as last year rode to hounds. He was a member of the Hunt Committee of Lord Berkeley's Hounds and a steward of the Berkeley Hunt Point to Point races. He was very fond of racing and had won a good many events both across country and on the flat in England, Egypt, Africa and India.

His prowess at sport in his younger days was well known, and at polo he had captained the 18th (Queen Mary's Own) Royal Hussars team, and played for the King's Royal Rifles.

Another sport in which Sir Percival found recreation and no small degree of success was cricket, at which he played for the M.C.C. and the King's Royal Rifles team, and captained the 18th Hussars for many years. In Gloucestershire he took a prominent part in connection with the game, and held the Presidency of the Gloucestershire County Cricket Club in 1922, and the Presidency of the Stroud and Selsley Clubs.

Sir Percival had shot big game in most parts of the world, especially Africa and India, and had a very fine collection of heads and sporting trophies at Stanley Park. He was a member of a number of clubs in London, including the Carlton, Cavalry, Bath, M.C.C. and Ranelagh, and also held a number of company directorships which included the Chanery Lane Safe Deposit Co. and Gloucester Docks Co.

## A Memorable Day

Sir Percival was held in the highest esteem by all sections of the community, and not without reason, for his co-operation and aid in any good cause was rarely sought in vain. His willingness to throw open his beautiful grounds at Stanley Park for the pleasure and enjoyment of others was demonstrated time and again. One of the most memorable days at the Park was Saturday, May 18, of last year—memorable for Sir Percival and Lady Marling and a day to be remembered by the tenants and employees on the Stanley Park estate. For all pleasant surprises were in store to mark not only the 36th anniversary of the wedding of Sir Percival and Lady Marling, but also King George's Silver Jubilee.

The first surprise was that which awaited Sir Percival and Lady Marling at 10.30 in the

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she had been attended on the spot by Dr. Strong.

The accident occurred near the spot where the evening before two Gloucester pedal cyclists were injured in a collision.

morning, when there was an unexpected call at the Park. On behalf of over 300 villagers, past and present, Mr. Sidney Hogue, the oldest inhabitant of Selsley, asked Lady Marling's acceptance of a diamond bracelet watch, and Sir Percival's acceptance of a set of collector's Silver Jubilee spoons in appreciation of many kindnesses to the villagers, whose affection and good wishes accompanied the gift. Sir Percival and Lady Marling were deeply touched by the presentations. The surprise which awaited the tenants was both practical and generous in form.

Sir Percival was one of the recipients of the King's Jubilee medals, and in commemoration of His Majesty's Jubilee, and the 36th anniversary of his wedding day, he remitted two months' rent to all the tenants of the Park estate. There are approximately 50 tenants on the estate, and the concession represented a gift which in the aggregate amounted to several hundreds of pounds.

Both Sir Percival and Lady Marling had many times declared that the years of their marriage had been the happiest of their lives, and those whose pleasure it had been to know them best knew that far from being a mere figure of speech there never was a more genuine claim to marriage bliss. Sir Percival and Lady Marling were always very devoted one to the other, and the deepest sympathy will be extended to Lady Marling in her irreparable loss.