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HENTY, GEORGE ALFRED (1832-1902)

The eldest son of stockbroker James Henty and Mary Bovill, George Alfred Henty was born 8 December 1832 in Trumpington, near Cambridge. Educated at Westminster School and Caius College, Cambridge, Henty left without his degree and volunteered with his brother Frederick for active service in the Crimean War. Both Henty brothers served in the hospital commissariat in the Crimea until an outbreak of cholera killed Frederick and invalidated George, who returned to England to work as purveyor of the forces, and was later responsible for organising the Italian hospitals during the war with Austria. After his first marriage in 1857, Henty resigned from the army and went to assist his father in managing a Welsh coalmine. He travelled to Sardinia to manage a mine briefly, before the premature death of his wife prompted his decision to concentrate on his special correspondence. Henty's career as a special correspondent began with his 1855 series of Crimea letters published in the *Morning Advertiser*. After this stint, Henty's journalism was published almost exclusively with *The Standard*, to which he contributed general articles from 1855-59 before turning to war and special correspondence in 1859. Henty's notable contributions as a special included his coverage of the Austro-Italian war in 1866, notably Garibaldi's campaign in Tyrol during which Henty was arrested as a spy and his journalist's credentials confiscated before he escaped to report the battle of Lissa from aboard a frigate. It was also during this time in Tyrol that Henty met (and famously participated in a boxing demonstration with) George Meredith who was a special for the *Morning Post*. Henty then covered Lord Napier's Abyssinian expedition (1867-68), the Suez Canal inauguration (1869) and the Franco-Prussian War, during which he suffered through the difficult winter and aftermath of the Paris Commune (1870-71). Henty covered most major conflicts of the 1870s, from the Russian conquest of Khiva in 1873, the Ashanti war that same year, the Spanish Carlist insurrection in 1874, the Serbian war of 1876 and the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. One peaceful event covered as a special during this time was the Prince of Wales's tour of India in 1875. In later life, Henty's career concentrated on editing. He co-edited *Union Jack* with W.H.G. Kingston in 1880, before continuing as solo editor from 1881-3, and was editor of *Beeton's Boys Own Magazine* from 1888-90. This experience influenced his later-life authorship of adventure books and novels for boys, and his collaborative production of a boy's annual *Camps and Quarters* with Archibald Forbes. Henty's imperialist boys' stories drew on his experiences as a special correspondent and included *In Battle and Breeze* (1896), *Through Fire and Storm* (1898), *Brains and Bravery* (1903), and *Gallant Deeds* (1905). Henty died 16 November 1902 aboard his yacht in Weymouth harbour, and was buried in Brompton cemetery. **AD**

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