

waggons. In passing, De Nel's house, situated at the bottom of Schuin's Hooghte, was burnt by the soldiers, the owner, it was said, having joined the Boers and given them assistance and information. This was the only excess committed by the British troops in Natal, during this campaign at any rate. On the 24th, General Colley left Mount Prospect camp with all the cavalry and two 9-pounders, and ascended a high hill to the right of the camp, from which he obtained a good view of the Boer camp and defences. After his return the Boers sent a strong force to the same hill, but they were shelled off it by the two 9-pounders at 5,800 yards' range. Two Dutch farmers, named Niekerk and Adendorff, were arrested as spies, but released again quickly after being questioned. The day following scouts brought in a report that the Boers were in force to the rear of the camp; and a detachment under Major Fraser, consisting of a squadron of Hussars, two companies of the 92nd, under Major Hay, and part of the Naval Brigade, with a Gatling, under Commander Romilly, moved out in that direction, but came across none of the enemy, who, however, later on showed themselves in strength to the right of the camp, though at a considerable distance. Peace negotiations were still going on between the Home Government, President Brand, and General Colley, and a telegram was sent on the 25th as follows:—"From the High Commissioner, Mount Prospect, to President Brand, Bloemfontein.—Lord Kimberley desires me to thank your Honour for the friendly offer, which Her Majesty's Government will not fail to bear in mind, if the answer received from Kruger leads to the appointment of a Commission." Heavy fighting occurred at Wakkerstrom about this time, resulting in the British holding their own.

On Saturday evening, February 26, General Colley moved out of the camp at Mount Prospect on a secret expedition, taking with him a compact force consisting of two companies of the 58th Regiment, two companies of the 3-60th, two companies of the 92nd Highlanders, the Naval Brigade, two guns and some Hussars; two more companies of the 3-60th leaving later with more reserve ammunition, but they were not in the engagement. Their destination was kept quite secret until the

moment of starting, when it became known that the object of the expedition was the ascent and occupation of a high hill called the Amajuba or Spitzkop, to the left of the British camp, and completely overlooking and commanding the Boer camps and line of defences on the flat beyond Lang's Nek. The 3-60th were left at a difficult pass, on a ridge at the bottom of the mountain, together with all the horses, reserve ammunition, and the Hussars; and the guns were sent back to camp, as it was seen that it would be impossible to get them up to the top by any means whatever. The force had with them three days' rations and seventy rounds per man, and great things were expected to result from the success of the expedition. Guided by Kaffirs, the troops in single file toiled up the hill, which was in parts so steep and difficult that the men had to crawl on their hands and knees, and in others across deep dongas and over great boulders. The top was only reached just before daylight, after six hours' hard and dangerous climbing. Major Fraser, R.E., who had been appointed second in command under the General, was the first man up, and was followed by the General and his Staff. When daylight broke, the men began to get their breakfasts and dig wells for water. Down below great excitement was seen among the Boers, and at a very early hour they removed a waggon laager, which lay well under fire from the British, away from the bottom of the hill to a position out of range, as they thought the troops had also big guns with them.

Recovering from their surprise an attack was soon decided upon by the Boers, and a strong mounted force was told off by Joubert to ascend the hill. They rode up to the bottom in their appointed places, and there dismounting, spread out in skirmishing order, and began to ascend the hill in three columns, from the North, East and West; while a larger body remained below, firing at the soldiers who showed themselves on the crest, and another was despatched round the base of the hill to cut off the retreat, and force the position held by the companies of the 3-60th, at the bottom of the Amajuba on the road to Mount Prospect camp. Firing began about 5 A.M., and continued steadily from both sides until about 11.30. A com-

pany of the 92nd Highlanders, left on a lower plateau, who had entrenched themselves, were also early engaged with musketry fire; and the small force, holding the top in extended order, hastily collected together a few rocks and stones, and made a kind of parapet round the front of the North crest of the hill, in order to gain a little protection from the heavy and accurate fire kept up by the Boer sharpshooters below, which was intended to cover the silent and gradual advance of the three storming parties, who got up almost unseen on the right and left flank by means of dongas or ravines and rocky bush-covered ground. Communication by signalling was kept up all the while by General Colley with the camp, and most hopeful telegrams were transmitted. Commander Romilly, of the Naval Brigade, was the first officer wounded, being shot in the abdomen while reconnoitring the attacking parties with General Colley. All the Staff, including Colonel H. Stewart, Major Fraser and Captain MacGregor, were most active and inspiring, and kept the men's firing steady and their spirits up. The further details of the fight were so ably and vividly given by Mr. Carter, in his telegram to the *Times of Natal*, that I cannot do better than reproduce them here. After describing the start, arrival at the top, and subsequent events up to noon, he continued:—

“It was about one o'clock that of a sudden a most terrific fire came from our left. Immediately every available man of reserves was hurried up to meet it, and they answered it well for ten minutes. There were men of the Naval Brigade, Highlanders, and 58th Regiment all firing as best they could—perhaps fifty in all against 200 Boers. The Boer fire was now very telling; our men were shot right and left at this point as they exposed themselves. No man could show his head without a dozen shots being fired at him. In ten or fifteen minutes the men wavered and broke, but in answer to shouts of officers—‘Rally on your right!’ (that would bring them more to the left rear, where the General and about fifty men were)—they did rally and came up to the crest of the hill at the point I indicate. Colonel Stewart, Major Fraser, Captain MacGregor—Staff officers—and indeed every officer present, now, revolver and sword in hand, encouraged the men by word and action. The whole of the Boer fire was now concentrated on our present and last point of defence on the left rear. Crowded as our men were by the necessity of finding cover at all behind this small clump of stones on the ridge, the officers called and directed them to deploy slightly right and left, to prevent us being flanked on our direct rear. The other side of the hollow basin was at this time only held by some fifteen or twenty men, our direct front by a score more, but they sent word to say that there were not many Boers there.

In our direct rear the ground was so precipitous that no one could scale it. To the front it was also free to a certain extent of cover for the enemy. The Boers had evidently made up their mind to take points of the crest in detail, and now all their efforts were concentrated on the left. Major Fraser sang out, 'Men of the 92nd, don't forget your bayonets!' Colonel Stewart added, 'And the 58th;' and 'the Naval Brigade' came from another officer—Captain MacGregor, I think—the General at the same time directing movements as coolly as if at a review. The men did fix their bayonets, and standing shoulder to shoulder in a semicircle, poured volleys back for the volleys fired by the enemy. Numbers of our poor fellows now fell, and they could not be carried far, for there was no shelter of any great safety to take them to. The stand made at this last stage lasted perhaps ten minutes, and then our men fell short of ammunition. It must be remembered that there were only the seventy rounds carried by our men in their pouches (the reserves being below and unavailable). At the same time a party of Boers crept up to the two score of men holding our true front and extreme right and rear, and they poured in volleys at the little band of defenders, who fixed bayonets and charged down on the enemy. Perhaps not more than three or four ever came within thrusting distance, so hot was the fire on them as they charged the twenty yards separating them from their foes. To return again to where the General and Staff and main body were, now not more than 100, of our men, the officers still encouraged the men 'to fire low,' and only when the Boers jumped up to pour a volley in. 'Give them the bayonet next time after they have fired,' was the last command I heard given, and in a moment our poor fellows broke and rushed for the crest in our rear. I ran with them, being only four or five yards behind the line that had made the last stand. How any one gained the ridge at the rear and escaped to camp, down the precipice there, a fall of thirty feet clear, and then on and over enormous boulders and bush, a good quarter of a mile further yet to go before the foot of the hill was reached under the bullets that rained on us from all sides—I don't know. Four men dropped by my side as I ran with the crowd across the basin, before even reaching the head of the precipice. Fortunately there was a kind of heather growing out of the side of the precipice. I can now only speak for myself, and I managed to save myself from injury in jumping down by catching at this herb. Then immediately I found I was with two or three others, who came after me, exposed to a dreadful fire as we scrambled over the rocks. The bullets rained on the stones, and several poor fellows, panting and bleeding, were struck as they tried to scramble away. I determined to give up running, as I could tell by the way the bullets came that Boers were all round us, though I could not see them myself, having thought best to follow a donga shrouded in bush, taking shelter as best I could in a dry gully covered with slabs of rock. I determined to wait till nightfall, and then try to reach camp. All the while, and for at least half an hour after we had made a rush away, the bullets of the enemy pelted incessantly in the bush and on the rocks in every direction, as I could hear by the sound; then I heard big guns firing, and took hope, thinking a party from camp with artillery had been pushed to the base of the hill to cover the flight of the fugitives. Half a dozen shots from big guns, and the fire of the Boers above my head and right and left ceased, and I heard a voice speaking in English and several others in Dutch close round us. Knowing that they must be searching for their enemies, I came out of my hiding-place and sang out to them. They asked, 'Have you any gun?' My reply was, 'No,

I have no gun, I am no soldier.' 'Then come up here, we will not shoot you.' I accepted the invitation, and clambering back up the rocks through the bush, saw a gentleman who said he was a Field-Cornet. I told him my business, and asked to see the General. Hearing an English voice, a dozen of our poor fellows who had been hiding within twenty yards of me sang out for help, and I told them to come out, as the Boers would not hurt them. Crawling as best they could (every one was wounded), they clambered up, delivered up their arms—those that had them—and we all went to the crest again, finding on the way Lieutenant Hill, of the 58th, with his arm injured by a bullet wound, but as cheerful under the misfortune and as quiet as though nothing was the matter. This is the gentleman who distinguished himself by carrying wounded from under fire at Lang's Nek. Seeing Mr. Smid, their General, I told him who I was. He said there had been six correspondents to him already. But there happened to be only a correspondent of the *Daily News*, *Standard*, and myself in this action. I showed my pass and got leave to return to camp, on condition I would send them a copy of my account of the fight. First he asked, 'Who is the officer killed?' I said, 'Take me to him, and I will tell you if I can.' I accompanied him to the spot where our final stand was made. There lay a body—its face covered with a helmet—but by the clothing I recognized it at once. Lifting the helmet up, I made sure that it was our poor General, the bravest of the brave; a gentleman who had shown me many kindnesses since I have been in camp here; and a Commander who was loved and admired by every man under him, from highest to lowest. Knowing I would be first to carry this sad news back to camp, I wanted some token to bear out my information, but could find none about the body, save a white handkerchief, and that not marked. The Boers doubted me when I said 'It is the General.' But when they questioned me again and again, 'Do you know him? Are you sure you know him?' I replied, 'I give you my word of honour it is General Colley,' they were satisfied. No word of exultation escaped their lips when they learnt this. I said, 'You have killed the bravest gentleman on this field,' and they answered, 'Yes, he fought well.' One man said, 'He was a very nice gentleman; he dined in my house when he went to Pretoria;' and said another, 'He did not think we were wrong, but he was a soldier and he must obey orders.' Others remarked, 'It was no use fighting against men who had right on their side.' Round the General lay the dead and wounded, Commander Romilly, Naval Brigade, and Captain Maude (lately joined the 58th) were among the former; but I hurried away with the guide and the white flag past the enemy's vedettes, and accompanied by Cameron, of the *Standard*, whom we picked up on the way down. Our guide took us safely outside the Boer lines, down the road we came up previously. Before we got far, we saw the Boers on horseback, to the number of 200 or 300, galloping round the base of our hill to the laager made by the Highlanders at the foot. Shots were exchanged, and then the guns at camp opened on the Boers, and kept them in check until the garrison of the laager had fallen back on camp, defiling through a narrow pass. This we saw as we descended the rocky slope. And also, still more painful, we saw at every twenty or thirty paces our poor fellows either dead or wounded. They dotted the ground as far as the last ridge we passed. Poor Captain Morris, of the 58th, attended by his servant, was wounded in the shoulder. Cameron and I hurried on, anxious to give the information we had, so that help might be sent to the suffering. A mile from camp, Cameron knocked up, and I trudged on, promising

to send a horse for him. Close to camp an artilleryman coming out gave me his horse to ride, and so I arrived at camp."

The same Correspondent telegraphed later on, after revisiting the field of battle :—

"Sir George Colley was shot just at the close of the engagement, while giving orders to cease firing. The bullet struck him on the forehead. His helmet has been brought to camp, but the body is supposed to be still lying where he fell. No reliable news yet of the Staff officers. None have returned to camp, except Major Fraser, R.E. Rain now falling heavily for hours, and sufferings of wounded lying on the field something indescribable. I met Major Hay, who was shot through the leg and arm. He was got into camp with great difficulty. Our loss must be very heavy indeed, because the number returned is so small. I think there must be at least 300 killed and wounded. The Boer loss is admitted by our officers to have been slight."

And again :—

"Mount Prospect, February 28, 5.20 p.m.—Dr. Mahon, just returned to camp, says, as an eye-witness, that the General was first wounded, then a Boer, within four paces, shot him through the head. The sight presented to my view confirms the statement that the shot was fired close. I had an interview this morning at the Nek with President Joubert and his Staff. With him was Aylward, late editor of the *Natal Witness*. Cameron, of the *Standard*, who was with me, gave Aylward advice not to get caught, or it would be an unlucky day for him. This was after words had passed between Aylward and Cameron, the former making himself the mouthpiece of Joubert. I asked Aylward his capacity; he said he was Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* and Surgeon to Wounded there. Joubert told us he had nothing to say that he wanted publishing. He had for three years been writing to England to prevent war, but it was useless. He was quite willing that the Transvaal should be a party to Confederation, but they must have their liberty. Now they must fight for it. The English would, no doubt, fight to show their supremacy, but they must first kill all the Boers. Joubert confirmed figures already given by Boers as to killed and wounded and fighting men on their side at Schuin's Hooghte. He said yesterday Boers only had one killed and five wounded. Nothing known at Nek of either Colonel Stewart or Major Fraser. Note from Ritchie received while we were there, asking for body of General. Advised by Aylward, Joubert thought Ritchie not proper person to make request, and sent back message by us to say if body was sent for by Head Officer of the Camp it would be delivered up."

Upon seeing the melancholy result from the camp at Mount Prospect, the camp was hastily fortified at every corner, under command of Colonel Bond, 58th, the senior officer, and the news sent off to Newcastle, when the 2-60th was ordered out at once to the front without baggage. Captain Vibart began firing on the pursuing Boers with his 9-pounders, thus being of great service in protecting the retreat of the company of the 92nd, left below, the two companies 8-60th, who had also to fall back from their temporary laager, as well as the numerous

stragglers coming from all parts of the mountain. At five P.M. the firing ceased, the remaining troops having got back to camp; and Surgeon-Major Babington went out, with a flag of truce and a small hospital party, to succour and bring in the wounded, who were well treated by the Boers themselves. Rain came on during the night and lasted until next day. Meanwhile the Medical Staff had established a temporary hospital at a farmhouse at the bottom of the mountain, and throughout the wet dark night never ceased to search for and bring in the wounded. Captain Romilly, R.N., was found not dead, but on being brought to Mount Prospect, he died the next day; as also did Surgeon-Major Cornish and Surgeon Landon. All Monday and Tuesday burying parties were out doing their sad work; and the wounded were brought back to Mount Prospect, the lighter cases being sent on to Newcastle, whence, immediately on receipt of the news of the fight, Surgeon-Major Roe, S.M.O., had despatched six ambulances, with Surgeons Gormley, McGann, and Smith, six A.H.C. men, and a large supply of stores, to Mount Prospect. For several days the exact loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners could not be ascertained; but of those who did not get away unwounded or were taken prisoners, only Major Fraser, R.E., escaped, after two days' adventurous travelling, without food, and a narrow escape from capture. The following official notice was issued on March 1, 1881:—
“Number of troops engaged in action of 27th ult. : 35 officers, 693 men. Casualties. Officers—killed, 3; wounded, 9; prisoners, 7; missing, 1. Non-commissioned officers and men—killed, 82; wounded, 122; prisoners, 50; missing, but believed to be wounded not yet brought into camp, 12. Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart is a prisoner—not wounded. Surgeon-Major Cornish died this day; also Surgeon Landon and Lieutenant Trower, R.N.” The list of the killed, wounded and prisoners will be found in Appendix I.

Subsequently a party was sent with a note from the Commanding Officer to the Boer camp, and the body of poor Sir George Colley was brought into Mount Prospect Camp on the morning of March 1st, and, after identification, was buried, near to Colonel Deane, with full military honours. The body was conveyed from camp on a gun-carriage to the Military Cemetery;

General Order on Sir G. Colley's Death. 207

followed by all the officers in camp and detachments from all the regiments. The service was conducted by the Rev. M. Ritchie—the pall bearers being Colonels Bond, Ashburnham, and Parker, Majors Ogilvie and Elmes, Captains Vibart and Smith, and Lieutenant Brotherton. The loss of the General in action was deeply felt by the troops, and even throughout the Colony of which he had been so popular and able a Governor. Addresses of condolence were sent to Lady Colley by the Town Councils of Pietermaritzburg and Durban, and also by the Boer leaders themselves.

General Sir E. Wood, immediately on the receipt of the news of this reverse, on the morning after the engagement, left Pietermaritzburg by special conveyance, and reached the camp on March 8rd. And a few days afterwards the annexed appeared in General Orders:—

“Head-quarters, Pietermaritzburg, 10th of March, 1881.—The following General Order, dated Army Head-quarters, Newcastle, 8th of March, 1881, is published for information:—The Major-General Commanding Her Majesty's Naval and Military Forces in South-East Africa has only this day received an official report of the events of the 26th and 27th of February, from the Senior Effective Officer, Major Fraser, Royal Engineers, who accompanied the late Major-General Sir G. Pomeroy Colley, K.C.S.I., O.B., C.M.G., to the Majuba Mountain. Her Most Gracious Majesty and Her Government have fully acknowledged the heavy loss sustained by the nation in the death of our General and of the many noble sailors and soldiers who fell with him. His temporary successor records the conviction that the fall of a valued and distinguished friend is deeply mourned by all who have ever served with him. Had Sir G. Pomeroy Colley lived he would have explained to those under his command the causes of our repulse, and would have eulogised the conduct of those who bore themselves bravely in a disastrous fight. This duty now devolves on Sir Evelyn Wood. It appears to him that some three hundred of our men, exhausted by a long and very difficult night march, were assailed by overwhelming numbers. Nevertheless, the fighting line did not retire until it had lost heavily, and had nearly expended its ammunition. The General died with his face to the foe, then only twenty yards distant, and many of his comrades of all ranks evinced conspicuous gallantry. (Signed) EVELYN WOOD, Major-General Commanding Forces.”

Here I may be permitted to add that a memorial stone was prepared in Natal, by Messrs. Jesse Smith & Son, by Lady Colley's orders, in the shape of a plain cross, about three feet high, on a pedestal and steps, and was taken up and erected over the grave of Sir George, as he had previously expressed his wish that his body should be allowed to remain where he

fell if fated to die on the battle-field. The inscription on the pedestal runs—

IN MEMORY OF

SIR GEORGE POMEROY COLLEY, K.C.S.I., C.B., C.M.G.,

H.M. Commissioner for S.E. Africa,

Major-General Commanding Forces.

Born 1st of November, 1835,

Killed in Action on the Amajuba Mountain, Sunday, 27th of Feb., 1881.

On the right side are the words—

“ This Cross is placed here by his Wifa.”

And on the left side of the stone—

“ Oh! for Thy voice to soothe and bless,
What hope of answer or redress,
Behind the veil, behind the veil!”

On the back of the stone are the words—

“ Interred here, 1st of March, 1881.”

The following lines, written at the time and published in a local paper, form an eloquent requiem to Sir George Colley's life, and therefore need no apology for their insertion here :—

GEORGE POMEROY COLLEY,

GOVERNOR OF NATAL.

Killed in Action, Sunday, February 27, 1881.

“ Yes, he fought well.” So spake the little knot
Of foemen, gathered round an outstretched form,
Which on the blood-stained turf lay motionless
Where the last stand was made, and where—at length—
The few survivors of his gallant band
Cast down their useless rifles in despair.
’Twas here God's angel, with a hand of ice
Touched him, and said: “ Thy Master calleth thee.”

But six short months ago we welcomed him,
Trusting—for all was calm before the storm—
His stay amongst us might be fraught with good
For us, and happy for himself and her,
With whom, alas, we mourn! In that brief space
He gained the hearts of many, the esteem of all.
And now the whirlwind, which deceit did sow,
Hath him for victim and hath lain him low.

* * * * *

He needs no tears, who in the van
And fore-front of the fight
Met death as should a gentleman
Upon Majuba's Height.

Critics (he's dead) will carp and hiss,
Show how he failed, and why;
But when they prate, bethink you this,
" Could they like Colley die ? "

Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, sent a telegram to the Colonial Secretary of Natal, saying :—" Monday, February 28.—I have heard, with every regret, of the death of Sir George Pomeroy Colley, whose administration of the Natal Government, during his tenure of office, has been most able and judicious."—And Her Majesty the Queen also herself telegraphed personally to Lady Colley.

Sir Evelyn Wood was at once proclaimed Administrator and Deputy High Commissioner; and strong reinforcements were ordered from England and India, while Sir Frederick Roberts was appointed to the Command-in-Chief, and sailed on the Friday following. Colonel Redvers H. Buller, V.C., C.B., C.M.G., who had previously been appointed Chief of the Staff to General Wood, arrived in Natal at this time, and hastened on to Newcastle to join his chief. The 7th and 14th Hussars were ordered out, the first from home and the last from India; while the 99th, 85th, five Companies of the 102nd, three other Infantry Regiments, 10th, 26th, and 41st, a Battery of Artillery, and another Cavalry Regiment were ordered from home to Natal; and a Naval Brigade of 1,000 men from the Detached Squadron at the Cape was also promised if necessary. Sir Evelyn Wood was made a Major-General; and it was announced that Major-General Newdigate would accompany General Roberts out to Natal, to command a Brigade.

Having only recently had the opportunity of interviewing many of the officers who held minor commands of the detached posts on the fatal day of Amajuba, I am now enabled to add, to the official and personal statements of the actual occurrences at the top of the mountain, a clear and consecutive account of what took place below on the Inquela Ridge and the intermediate plateau; and in justice to those among them who deserve the credit, I am only too glad to be able to relate the truth, as proved by the corroborative statements of nearly all, both officers and men; with whom I have talked on the subject. The night

march having been arranged on the Saturday evening, the troops chosen for the little column—unfortunately detachments from three Regiments instead of one battalion of any one regiment being taken—fell in at the time appointed; the two companies of the 58th leading, then the Naval Brigade, the three companies of the 92nd, and lastly, the two companies of the 3-60th. They took a southerly course for a time, and then turned to the right or westward, until reaching a small Kaffir track which wound along the East side of the Inquela range. On arrival there, at about 10.30 P.M., the two companies of the 3-60th, under Captains Smith and Henley were dropped, *with no orders* or idea of the plan of the march, beyond the fact that they were told to stop there, keeping a careful look-out. The rest of the force then proceeded in total darkness and over a very rough road, until about midnight the plateau under the Amajuba Mountain was reached. A short halt was here made in order to allow a company of the 92nd (the rear one) to come up, having fallen behind. It having been determined by the General to leave a company here in charge of the Staff horses, spare ammunition and mules, carrying about fifteen to twenty thousand rounds, Captain Robertson's company was called out for the purpose, and they were moved about 100 yards to the right of the path by Major Fraser, R.E.; the General giving the orders himself to Captain P. F. Robertson that they were to remain there, and "dig as good a trench as time would permit of," selecting a good position so as to afford cover for the horses and ammunition left in their charge. Captain Robertson, upon trying to get some idea of the plan of action, did not succeed, and naturally enough felt somewhat in the dark as to the "why and the wherefore." He did the best he could under the circumstances, throwing out a large chain of sentries right round the position, and a patrol of four men and a non-commissioned officer on the path leading back to the camp in order to look out for and guide in a company of the 60th, which was to come on later, though for what purpose was not stated. The column then moved on again, with the General and his Staff in front. The men left behind were of course tired and sleepy, but had immediately to start working

at the entrenchments, and succeeded in a few hours in throwing up an earthwork or laager facing the mountain, with the entrance at the rear and a slight flank trench thrown out on the left front extending only a few yards. Just before daylight the other company of the 3-60th arrived, under the command of Captain Thurlow, with Lieutenants Pigott and Howard-Vyse. Surgeon-Major Cornish accompanied them with some mules laden with hospital requirements. Captain Thurlow had also received no orders, beyond being told to go to the plateau, and had brought out his men without either greatcoats or rations. A comparison of commissions took place, when it was found that Captain Robertson was the senior officer, and he therefore took command of the two companies. Captain Thurlow, his officers and men, were of great assistance in completing the little laager; and that done, the men awaited daylight and further enlightenment, with some little anxiety.

At about 5.30 o'clock Assistant-Commissary General Elwes returned from the General's party on his road to the camp, and promised to send out their rations; and quickly afterwards a Conductor Field arrived from the camp with a led mule, laden with stores, &c., for the Staff; and having received his orders (a peculiar circumstance that day), was determined to proceed to try and reach the top of the mountain at once. He was naturally enough dissuaded, as day was breaking and they were close to the enemy. However, he went on, and a short time after a shot was heard, and it turned out that Conductor Field and his mule were captured by the Boers. When day had thoroughly broken figures of men were seen moving about on the top of the Amajuba, distant about fifteen hundred yards, and with the aid of glasses they were made out to be part of General Colley's force. On looking round another party was seen on the Inqela Ridge, signalling to Captain Robertson, who at once asked, "Who are you?" and the answer came back, "Two companies 60th, left out all night." They were asked with what orders? and they replied, "None." Dropping shots were occasionally heard from the mountain, and later on small bodies of mounted Boers were seen reconnoitring the British positions. After ten o'clock the firing increased, and

then up came a troop of the 15th Hussars under Captain G. D. F. Sullivan and Lieutenants Pocklington and Hopkins (9th Lancers, attached). They brought with them the rations of the company of the 60th, but *no orders*. Again were commissions compared, and again was Captain Robertson the senior; so he ordered the men to dismount, and placed them under cover on the slope to the rear of the laager, until after-events justified a movement. After midday the firing and excitement on the Amajuba increased rapidly, and figures were seen running down the Hill towards the laager. Some Hussars were mounted at once, and pushed forwards to find out what was going on. Presently one of them came back with a wounded soldier of the 58th, who said the Boers had captured the position, and either killed or taken prisoners nearly all the men. He also added that the General was dead, lying on his back with a bullet through his head, and his revolver, with one barrel empty, lying beside him.

His words were quickly borne out by several other wounded men being rapidly brought in by the Hussars, who either dismounted themselves, giving their horses to those retreating, or carried the fugitives in front of them. The services thus rendered were incalculable, and deserve every credit. Surgeon-Major Cornish had now plenty of work, and the wounded were laid down and attended to as quickly as possible. One of the first into the laager was an officer, who apparently seemed badly wounded, but who, on examination, was found quite unharmed, and was very anxious to return to the camp. Captain Robertson, after some persuasion, which was, however, of no avail, let him go, and saw no more of him that day.

It was becoming evident that the position of the little garrison which held the laager was precarious, as they were too far off to assist those on the top of the mountain, and not near enough the camp to move without some assistance from there; while, as to the two companies of the 3-60th, left on the Inquela Ridge, it was thought best to send over to them and acquaint them with what had happened, so that they might strengthen the laager and assist in keeping back the now fast advancing Boer ranks, and help to secure the retreat of the wounded, until orders were sent to them or could be obtained

as to what combined course of action was necessary, and the best. With this view, and not knowing whether the officer in command was senior to him or not, Captain Robertson sent Lieutenant Pocklington, of the 15th Hussars, to explain matters and ask for assistance; for, from their position, the retreat of the 60th was not cut off, nor their post likely to be attacked. However, Lieutenant Pocklington brought back the reply that the two companies of the 3-60th could not move from their position, having no orders—as if, under the then circumstances of the defeat of the main column, the fact of their having, or not having, orders ought to have made any difference, or prevented their taking such individual steps as would best help to protect the retreat of the wounded, check the Boer advance, and assist their own company, then being attacked by a large force of the enemy. It was, undoubtedly, a great opportunity lost of giving the Boers a severe check; for, had this laager been held by the four companies until the guns and cavalry could have been brought out from camp to their assistance, the moral effect of the defeat of General Colley's force on the mountain top might have been, to a great extent, counteracted, if not effaced.

After this refusal to come to their assistance, Captains Robertson, Thurlow, and Sullivan, and their officers, prepared for a vigorous resistance. The left and rear faces were given to the 60th, and the front and right to the 92nd, while opened ammunition-boxes were placed at equal intervals behind the men right round the laager, and orders were sent out to the advanced sentries to hold any advancing force of the enemy in check as long as they could, until absolutely driven to fall back on the entrenchment. Meanwhile, the mules, with the spare ammunition, were sent off quietly, one by one—not together, with an escort, as laid down by the Rules and Regulations—so as not to draw the attention of the enemy, down the ravine to the right of the laager, where they were almost out of sight, and from the bottom of which, where a little stream flowed across, the camp could be easily and quickly reached. Thus, through Captain Robertson's foresight, care and skill, the whole of the spare ammunition was saved, and

got back to camp all right. The firing on the top of the hill ceased almost suddenly, when a large number of Boers was seen on the top, waiting for something, and not descending at once to the attack of the laager, as was expected. This, however, was only a momentary lull in the storm, as the quickened firing from the sentries on the left flank showed; and the outposts were soon driven back on their supports by the advance of a large body of mounted men, to the number of several hundreds, who were evidently co-operating with those on the Amajuba, and with another body which showed itself towards the right front, coming on so as to cut off the retreat of the men to the camp. The firing now became really heavy and sustained, and the men began to fall fast; while the Hussars were sent out on the right flank to check the Boer flank movement. In this state of things, and seeing no evidence of a supporting movement from the camp, Captain Robertson telegraphed for orders, and received the answer, "If no orders from the hill above (Amajuba), retire, watching from left flank." Nothing could be more absurd and inexplicable than such an order; for if Captain Robertson retired, he would naturally do so fighting, and with his men's faces to the enemy; and in that case his left flank would be to the rear of the laager, from which point no attack was ever attempted or made.

Upon receipt of this order, Captain Robertson decided to send off the company of the Rifles, with orders to draw up at the bottom of the ravine before mentioned, and there await the coming of the 92nd Highlanders, who would then fall back further and await in their turn the retreat of the Rifles, thus, as it were, retreating and covering by alternate companies. The order to retire came almost too late, as the Boers were approaching very close, and in increasing numbers. Some of the men lost their presence of mind, and a few of the Naval Brigade, who had retreated from the Amajuba, would not move for some time. These men, I may mention, on arrival at the laager, were offered ammunition by Captain Robertson, but declined, saying they had plenty. This was a fact, for their pouches were nearly full! The wounded were also got off, as well as could be done, previously to the retirement. But

after the 60th had left, Captain Robertson found he could hardly check the Boer advance much longer with his few men; so at last he gave the word to go, having previously explained to them that the 60th would cover their retreat upon arrival at the bottom of the ravine. A murderous fire followed the men, for, so soon as the Boers got to the laager, they could look down the donga and pick off the men as they liked. Captain Robertson was the last to leave, and then volley after volley was poured down on the retreating men, so that it is a wonder to those who escaped that day how they managed it. It was in this retreat that poor Cornish was killed, for, seeing a man struck dead who was carrying one end of a stretcher upon which was a wounded man, he took his place, the piper to the company being the other man. The Boers called out to them, "Who are you?" and he foolishly answered wounded men, instead of saying a doctor; upon which, and seeing him carry a rifle (which belonged, however, to the wounded man he was assisting to carry), the Boers fired on them, and killed Surgeon-Major Cornish and the wounded man. The piper escaped to tell the story. Upon the arrival of the fugitives at the bottom, much to their disappointment, nothing was to be seen of the company of the 60th, who, it came out afterwards, could not be controlled or kept together again during the retreat by their officers. It now became a case of *saave qui peut*, until the Artillery opened from the camp and some more Hussars came out. One of the shells burst among the Highlanders and killed four or five before the right range was got. Second Lieutenant Staunton, of the 92nd, was captured by the Boers, together with twenty-two others, while four were killed in the defence of the laager and eleven wounded. Captain Robertson only got back to camp at about five o'clock, P.M., and there found the other companies of the 60th had been in some time. Further comment on the above facts is useless. Captain Robertson's important report of that day's work was duly handed to the Staff officer at Mount Prospect Camp, but was never sent in to the General until enquiry was made for it, when it was found carefully pigeon-holed — of course, forgotten by mistake! It is, however, a singular

fact that the Staff officer concerned—and who was spoken of in the report—was shortly afterwards sent to another station, and that, even up to this time, no word of thanks or reward have been given to the gallant conduct of the commanding officer, who held his post so well, and saved all the spare ammunition, which the Boers afterwards said they felt perfectly sure of capturing.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ARMISTICE.

Joubert's Telegram to Brand—His Report of Amajuba—Major Frazer's Escape—General Wood and Swazie Envoy—Joubert and Brand and Wood—First Conference—Armistice and Terms agreed upon—Details of Interview—Boer Demands—Troops moving up—Changes at the Front—Lady Colley comes up—Interviewing General Joubert—Special's Arrival in Boer Camp—His Reception—Joubert's Views—Treatment and Departure—Extension of Armistice—Arrival of Paul Kruger—Interview on 18th—President Brand's Arrival—Meetings of the 21st and 23rd—Peace Made—Boers Trek—Return of Sir Evelyn Wood and President Brand to Newcastle.

In the previous chapter I have given, as concisely as I could, the actual occurrences from the British side in the Amajuba fight; but, before proceeding with the conclusion of peace and after events, I think it both fair and interesting to reproduce a telegram sent from Joubert to President Brand, and also a report of the former to Vice-President Kruger, after the fight. The telegram was as follows :—

“Your letter received about peace negotiations nearly lulled me into unwise unsuspectingness. General Colley attacked on Sunday morning whilst we were writing to you and him. He attacked on our right, and got possession of high natural fortress, built schanzes, and dug walls. The Boers gallantly stormed, and in five hours totally defeated the British forces. The Governor was shot dead; seven officers and one company of soldiers are in our hands. The prisoners will negotiate, but not make submission or cease opposition.”

And the report :—

“I was sitting writing copies of President Brand's letters and also a letter to (Colonel) Herbert Stuart. At four o'clock I woke every man up to his position, and I commenced a report for General Cronje. I was still sitting writing, and the sun had just risen, when it was reported to me that the troops were coming up the right-hand hill. Then it was 'to saddle, to saddle,' but to our astonishment we saw that the enemy had entire possession of the hill, and that already a considerable number were on the summit. Apparently, one would have thought that everything

was lost to us, and so it would actually have been if they had retained possession of the hill; but, beyond all our expectations, the Lord assisted us, and we all ascribe it to the most wonderful deliverances and help by an all-governing and mighty God. Our men climbed the mountain with a courage and energy beyond description. The troops, under the personal command of General Colley, would not surrender the position. They fought like true heroes, but our God gave us the victory, and protected us, and we excelled gloriously in acts of courage and tact. The most wonderful thing to us is that on our side only one was killed, and so far as it has come to my knowledge one severely wounded, and four slightly. The one killed is Johannes Bekker, Middelburg District. The wounded are Groenwold—who died afterwards—Van der Merwe, Muller, Labuschagne, and Vermaak. The dead on the other side are not accurately known, through the unevenness of the ground, but can be estimated at more than 100. It is unknown how many officers fell with General Colley; nearly twenty severely wounded, and more slightly. Seven officers, forty-five men and a sergeant have been made prisoners, which prisoners I have been compelled to send to you at Middelburg. I hear that the English have been reinforced by 2,000. The soldiers who fought against us were—part of the 92nd Highlanders, two companies of the 58th Regiment, and some of the 60th Rifles. The cannon were not brought within range, but fired upon our men from the camp when they stormed the last schanz. I have now so much to do that I cannot write more. Therefore I conclude with wishing your Honour joy at the successful issue of to-day's battle, and that this day may be considered for the future a day of thanksgiving and prayer."

These reports from the Boer side, together with the following details from Major Frazer's description of the battle, will be found all that is necessary to perfectly understand and follow the fight on both sides from beginning to end. From Major Frazer's statement it appears that, when daylight broke, the Boers discovered the position, and opened fire, but of a desultory character, which our men returned quietly. About noon it became evident to the General that the Boers meditated attacking the position we then held by a rush similar to that made at the Ingogo fight. Colonel Stuart, with Major Frazer, and Lieutenant Lucy, of the 58th, who behaved splendidly, took the reserve forward into shooting line, whence, after a short time, it had to be returned back to the central ridge, where it was arranged to make a final stand. The Boers came on in large numbers, keeping up a steady fire, which told heavily among our forces. When this detachment retired back to the central ridge, General Colley stood in the right centre, with Stuart next to him, and Frazer on the left. The firing became so heavy that the men fell away from the position. This was not to be wondered at,

considering the tremendous volleys the enemy kept pouring in upon them. Stuart ran back to rally the men on the last ridge of the hill, and succeeded well. The men kept together, and made a most determined stand, but to no purpose. They were flanked and shot down on all sides. Sword in hand stood the General, who fell, shot fair in the centre of the forehead. Major Frazer then moved to the south-west corner of the ridge, the Boers continuing heavy firing. The distance between them then was certainly not more than fifty yards. Our men retiring towards the camp suffered heavily beneath the continuous fire the enemy kept up. Major Frazer suddenly lost his footing, slipped, fell, and rolled down a sheer rock, nearly 200 feet, into a thickly-wooded kloof, where he lay until night fell. Then cautiously he felt his way towards where he imagined Mount Prospect was. The heavy mist and rain combined prevented all possibility of his finding the path, but hoping by some lucky chance to hit the road, he kept on all through the night, falling over rocks, getting into streams, and soaked to the skin with rain and mud. In consequence of the ironstone which abounds in the neighbourhood, the compass he had with him got out of order, leading him straight towards the Boer position on Lang's Nek. When day broke, discovering this, he kept close in a donga to prevent discovery. Towards night he moved in the direction of our camp, watching Boer vedettes, and seizing every opportunity of concealing himself. Although bruised and sore in every part he managed to reach the camp about three o'clock on Tuesday morning—when his first words were, "I am all right; we'll beat them yet"—having suffered great hardships; narrowly escaping falling into the hands of the enemy, and being about forty-eight hours without any food.

General Wood returned to Newcastle on the 4th of March, and took up his quarters at Fort Amiel. The 58th Regiment, or rather what was left of them (about 200), were sent back to Newcastle, and the whole of the 92nd moved up in their place, as was also done later on with the 2-60th when the 83rd had reached Newcastle. The 97th replaced the Highlanders, and constructed a fort on a hill near Schuin's Hooghte. An envoy from the Amaswazi tribe had an interview with General Wood

the same day, relative to the action of the Boers, whom the envoy represented as endeavouring to coerce the Swazies into joining them against the British. General Wood, however, informed the man that they must remain quiet; but that, if the Boers interfered with them, he looked to the Swazies to defend themselves. Heavy rains succeeded, and the telegraph wire between the camp and fort became disconnected. The General was meanwhile in constant communication with General Joubert, President Brand, and the Home Government, as to peace negotiations, as is evidenced by the following:—"From General Wood, Newcastle, to President Brand, Bloemfontein, March 2, 1881.—P. Joubert requests me to send you the following telegram:—Your telegram received. In reply, the Government and the people of the Transvaal fully agree with you in the wish that no further blood should be shed. It is alone in the power of the English Ministry to prevent, against whose attacks we defend ourselves. We are willing to accept every offer made by your Honour that peace may be, as far as it is not in direct opposition to our liberty. Will forward your telegram at once to President Kruger."

In consequence of communications which passed on the 5th, General Wood left Newcastle with his Staff next day to meet Joubert and the Boer leaders, between Mount Prospect camp and the Boer lines. The news of the object of his visit was disbelieved by many, and ridiculed by more. The idea of an English General, with 10,000 troops at his back, after the British forces had been thrice beaten in open fight, going to an interview with the leaders of the enemy, for the sake of gaining time to negotiate peace proposals, was thought to be too absurd to be credited; and yet it turned out quite true, and further astonished the sceptical, whose name was legion. On the General's return to Fort Amiel the next morning, all the Press representatives interviewed him, and obtained the details of his meeting with Joubert, and the arrangements come to for an eight days' armistice. The meeting took place half way between the lines. The English were represented by Sir Evelyn Wood, Major Frazer, R.E., Captain Maude, A.D.C., and Mr. Cropper. The Boers were represented by Piet Joubert, D. C. Uys, C. J.

Joubert, and C. H. Fouchée; and A. J. Foster acted as interpreter. Sir Evelyn Wood stated that the object of the armistice was to allow time for Kruger to reply to Sir George Colley's communication; and for any further communications that might pass between Joubert and himself, in the view of a peaceful settlement of the questions at issue. With this view they mutually agreed to a cessation of all hostilities from noon on the 6th to midnight on the 14th. The conditions were:—

1. That both parties promised not to make any forward movements from their positions; but each party retained the liberty of movement within his own lines.
2. General Wood was free to send eight days' provisions, but no ammunition, to the Transvaal garrisons, the Boer officers undertaking to pass the provisions to such garrisons.
3. Commandant-General Joubert undertook to send notice of the armistice conditions to the respective garrisons and the Boer commanders at once; and would use his influence to induce the Boer commanders to allow the withdrawal of British wounded from all Transvaal garrisons into Natal.

On the subject of the reinforcements, the Boers at first suggested that the troops on the road should halt. Sir Evelyn Wood could not agree to this proposal, and pointed out that he had all his infantry with him, and that only mounted men and guns were on the road, and their arrival was but a question of two or three days. The Boers did not press the point, and made no further suggestions. The interview lasted an hour and a half, the Boers saying very little, and General Wood occupying the greater part of the time in argument. On the subject of peace the Boers were explicit, and demanded:—Complete amnesty of all leaders; Entire freedom of the Transvaal from British government, except suzerainty; No interference in its internal affairs, and the Province to be free and unfettered. That night waggons with supplies were despatched to Potchefstrom, Standerton, and Wakkerstrom.

On the 8th of March the 83rd Regiment, Mounted Infantry, and a Battery of Artillery arrived in Newcastle; and, on the day following, the remnant of the 58th Regiment was sent

down to Ladysmith to meet their drafts. Authentic news reached the authorities that President Brand had at last left Bloemfontein, to visit the British and Boer camps during the armistice. The 6th Inniskilling Dragoons had also reached Ladysmith at that time, and were rapidly being pushed on. The 10th and 11th of March were passed in suspense. Heavy rains came down, detaining the President and the troops; and reports of all kinds were circulated as to the threatening attitude of the Boers, and their action to loyalists in Utrecht and elsewhere, while one report stated that they had prevented the waggons, despatched with provisions under a pass to Wakkerstrom, from proceeding, and had captured and looted the stores. Colonel Buller arrived by Post cart at Newcastle on the evening of the 11th; and on the same date Lady Colley and Mrs. Montague reached Ladysmith, *en route* to visit the grave of poor Sir George. They did not make a long stay, but reached Mount Prospect two days afterwards.

A message from the Home Government was received by General Wood on the 11th, to the effect that Government authorised the prolongation of the armistice if necessary. Severe rains continued, and necessitated a gang of 300 men being put on the roads, to repair them between Newcastle and Mount Prospect. On the 13th General Wood and Colonel Buller went to the advanced camp, for the purpose of holding another conference with the Boer leaders, in order to prolong the armistice until President Brand's arrival. The same day the enterprising Special Correspondent of the *Natal Witness*, Mr. F. Watson (who was representing the *Daily Telegraph*, with the *British Column*), visited the Boer head-quarters, to see General Joubert, by previous arrangement made the day before. General Joubert expressed himself to the following effect:—

“We have only one demand, and on that we have taken our stand, and will keep that stand to the end. That demand is, that we get our freedom back again. Nothing else will satisfy us; we must have it before we do anything else. The Transvaal must be given back to us, and until we get it nothing but war must prevail. Peace is out of the question. Give us our independence, recall Shepstone's annexation proclamation, allow us to manage our own affairs as we desire, then we shall be prepared to act in friendly accord with Britain for the interest of British people in South Africa. But independence must come first. We took

up arms when everything else had failed, when we had exhausted all arguments, and we will not lay them down at the bidding of English politicians, and trust to them doing what is requisite. We have had enough of the promises of such people. They promise but don't fulfil, and we cannot any longer put faith in their promises; they are not carried out. We are determined to know exactly what is to be done, and what is intended before we make any final arrangements. We will on no account trust to the fine promises of English politicians, because our experience of the past makes us have no confidence in them. With regard to the alleged appointment of a Royal Commission in England, I am willing to agree to a further armistice if the English people will do as we will, and stop all movements of troops. If they won't do that, it is evident they only want an armistice to suit their own ends—to let them get a large body of men together, and we will never consent to that; we will fight to the end. We have believed in the righteousness of the British Government. We sent a deputation to the Queen of England to lay our case clearly before her, but all to no purpose. I want to know why Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister of England, has not carried out his promise to return the Transvaal to its rightful owners, seeing he considered the annexation a disgraceful act? When we read his words we relied upon the great English Statesman doing us justice. He has not done so. We desire to know why? With regard to the death of General Colley, we are all very sorry indeed at his death. He was a man I knew well, and all of us were grieved when, after the fight, news was brought that he was dead. We believed him to be an honourable, straightforward English gentleman, but he was deceived by the reports of his subordinates. They wilfully did all they could to deceive him, and, acting upon these reports, he, in his turn, unwittingly misrepresented our case to the people of England. Instead of being rejoiced at his death we were very sorry. I wish to contradict the statement that he was shot twice—the last at close quarters. That is utterly untrue. None of our men aimed intentionally at him, and the bullet which killed him struck the top of his forehead, and came out at the back of his head. It has caused us great pain to hear that in some newspapers it was reported that we had wilfully killed a man whom we all held in great esteem. Such statements are deliberate insults to us, and do more than you would imagine to stir up hatred between the Dutch and the English."

On the evening of the 13th General Wood and Staff arrived again at Mount Prospect, and at once communicated with Joubert about an extension of the armistice. The meeting was to have been held in the morning, but owing to the non-arrival of Vice-President Kruger (detained by bad weather), who desired to attend the conference, it was put off until the afternoon. At 3 P.M. General Wood, accompanied by Colonel Buller, Majors Clarke and Frazer, Lieutenant Hamilton, and Mr. Cropper, went to the meeting, which took place on the flat, half-way between the respective lines, where a tent was pitched. The Press representatives and others remained in the rear during

the interview, which lasted from 3.45 to 4.45 p.m. The Vice-President did not arrive in time, but the Boers were represented by General Joubert, Commandant Fouchée, D. C. Uys, C. J. Joubert, J. Coetzee, and Mr. Watkins, interpreter. The result was soon communicated as follows :—

“It is hereby agreed between Major-General Sir Evelyn Wood, K.C.B., Commanding Her Majesty’s Forces, on the one hand, and P. Jno. Joubert, Commanding the Boer Forces, on the other hand, that, in order to give time for the arrival of Mr. Kruger, delayed by bad weather, and for the receipt of a telegram expected from England, the armistice now existing between the aforesaid shall be extended to midnight of the 18th inst., that is to say, for four days longer. Conditions:—1. The conditions of existing armistice to remain unaltered, except that in consideration of this prolongation for four days General Wood has the option of sending four days’ more provisions to those garrisons which have already received eight days’, and twelve days’ provisions to those garrisons which have not yet received any provisions. 2. As provided in former agreement, hostilities will only be suspended at the several garrisons for the four or twelve days from the arrival of the provisions at the garrisons; also an officer may accompany each provision column, but he and the conductor and driver are to be strictly neutral. 3. This armistice is not to prevent General Wood from sending his post as usual. Agreed to at the tent under Lang’s Nek, this 14th day of March, 1881. Signed, EVELYN WOOD. P. J. JOUBERT.”

Lady Colley went alone to visit the grave of her husband that day, and left again after a short time. Mrs. Montague, who had come with her, spent some hours in visiting the wounded, for whom she had brought up some comforts. Under the armistice conditions, Wakkerstrom, Potchefstrom, Standerton, Marabastadt, Rustenberg, and Leydenberg all had twelve days’ provisions sent them in due course. Heavy rains still continued, detaining President Brand. Next day word was sent down that Vice-President Kruger had arrived at the Boer camp, and in consequence, on the 16th another meeting took place and lasted all day. General Wood was accompanied by Buller, Frazer, Clarke, and Cropper; and among the Boers were Joubert, Kruger, Jorissen, Pretorius, Uys, and Rev. Ackermann. The interview occurred at the same place as the last one. The meeting was a very stormy and unsettled one, and at midday it was officially reported that, in consequence of the Boer demands to be more directly represented on a Royal Commission, and their objection to any troops remaining in the country while its meetings were held, they were no nearer

peace than ever, and unless the Boers moderated their tone the negotiations could come to nothing. Late in the afternoon, while communication by telegraph had been constantly kept up with the Colonial Office in England, things were more settled, and by seven o'clock in the evening, when the meeting broke up, the General informed the "Specials" that the Boers had to a great extent accepted generally the proposals of the British Government, reserving only one or two points for further consideration and discussion at a future meeting.

Heavy rain still continued, but the 17th passed very quietly, excepting that troops were rapidly pushed on, to be handy in case of emergency; Barrow's Mounted Infantry reaching Mount Prospect on that date; the 83rd being on their way up from Newcastle; and C Battery 1st Brigade R.A., three troops 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, and four companies and drafts of the 97th arriving at Newcastle. At the Port of Durban the S.S. *Chupra* arrived, with part of the 14th Hussars and their horses, on the 15th, and was followed by the *Bheridama* two days after, with a second lot of the same Regiment, and the *Hankow* with the remainder. Brigadier-General Drury Lowe, in command of cavalry, with his A.D.C., Captain Swain, 17th Lancers, arrived at Cape Town in the *Durban*, and news was received of the departure and near approach of the other reinforcements.

On the 18th, and last day of the prolonged armistice, about 3 p.m., General Wood, Colonel Buller, and Staff, met General Joubert and his brother at O'Neill's farm, to discuss the terms which the Boer leaders were unable to agree to at the last meeting. President Kruger was too ill to be present. Dr. Jorrissen was also absent. At the close of the interview, which lasted about three hours, General Wood called up the Press representatives and informed them "that Kruger and Pretorius were unwell and unable to attend. A telegram had been received from Lord Kimberley, containing an answer to the requests of the Boers. Lord Kimberley had been unable to accede to the requests. Joubert had then asked for a prolongation of the armistice for three days, to enable the Boers to avail themselves of the advice of President Brand as to the attitude they

should assume, also that they may consider Lord Kimberley's message of yesterday, which does not meet their wishes. Joubert and I have had discussion respecting the provisions of garrisons. He holds that the word garrison includes only soldiers; I maintain it includes every one. It has been agreed that Mr. Brand should settle this point between us." The next day it was reported that President Brand was at Muller's Pass, ten miles from Newcastle, so the Resident Magistrate went over to escort him in, and arrived with him at Newcastle late that night; and the President left again early next morning for Mount Prospect and the Boer camp, having been thirteen days on the road from Bloemfontein.

On the 21st another important meeting was held, also at O'Neill's, at which President Brand came down with the Boer representatives. The meeting lasted all day; but about 6 P.M. matters, which had hitherto proceeded quietly, took an opposite turn, and a point of dispute arose in which neither party would give way. General Wood then intimated that another prolongation of the armistice for forty-eight hours had been mutually agreed upon, to refer the matter Home, and the Press Specials then left; the conference sitting all that night until late, when it was broken up and an adjournment made till the Wednesday. General Wood and Staff rode through to Newcastle next day and back the same evening. Most conflicting reports were prevalent both at Mount Prospect and Newcastle, and throughout the colony; but the general impression was that peace terms would be arranged, and that a Royal Commission would be appointed to settle the details. The final settlement was arrived at in two more meetings, held on the 21st and 23rd of March; and the result is shown in the annexed translation from the Dutch official report of the proceedings:—

REPORT OF MEETINGS AT O'NEILL'S FARM ON THE
21st AND 23rd MARCH, 1881.

Present: Sir E. Wood, Majors Clarke and Frazer, and Staff of the one side; and Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, P. Joubert, Jorrissen, Dirk Uys, C. Joubert, and Mare, of the other side. At the meetings on the 6th, 14th, and 16th March, 1881, between Sir E. Wood and the Boer leaders, it was agreed to enter into an armistice, whereupon the Boer leaders generally

accepted the terms laid down in Lord Kimberley's telegrams of the 8th and 12th of March, as communicated by Sir E. Wood, excepting the two points objected to—(1) Direct representation in the Royal Commission; (2) The expression of a hope that the English garrisons in the Transvaal should be withdrawn when the Boers dispersed. In their desire for peace, the Boer leaders have since withdrawn these two points, when the following were agreed to:—I.—I, Sir E. Wood, accept the Boer leaders, Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, Joubert, and others who were present at the meeting, as the lawful representatives of the people of the Transvaal, now under arms. II.—We, Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert, declare ourselves prepared to accept the reigning Sovereign of Great Britain and Ireland as suzerain, after the manner explained by Sir E. Wood, and noted down in the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th of March. We likewise agree to acknowledge a British Resident in the future capital of the Government, with such functions as the British Government may decide, on the recommendation of the Royal Commission. We also agree to leave to the Commission the consideration of providing for the protection of interested natives, and boundary questions relating to the possessions of any foreign power must be reserved for the suzerain. III.—I, Sir E. Wood, acknowledge the right of the Transvaal people to their entire self-government subject to suzerain's rights. IV.—We, Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert, shall co-operate with Her Majesty's Government to punish those who have committed such deeds, or who are directly responsible for such, as are against the laws of civilized warfare. V.—I, Sir E. Wood, in the event of the position at Lang's Nek being evacuated by the Boers, and that they disperse to their homes, declare, in the name of Her Majesty's Government, that I will not take possession of the position, nor follow them up with troops, nor send ammunition into the Transvaal. (At a meeting on the 18th of March, a telegram from Lord Kimberley, dated 17th of March, addressed to the Boer representatives, was handed over, being a reply to Sir E. Wood's telegram of 16th of March, containing the points objected to by them on that day.) VI.—The Boer leaders accept the terms offered in the telegram of 17th of March. They declare: "We trust that the British Government will entirely give us our own Government as soon as possible, and at the furthest within six months, with this understanding, that no civil action shall be instituted with regard to deeds done during the war or relating thereto. And likewise no action shall be instituted with regard to taxes, until our own Government has been restored. We further trust, that should the Royal Commission deem it necessary to cut off any territory to the eastward of the 30th deg. long., such Commission shall not order or advise more territory to be ceded than may be required to meet the demands of the English policy set forth in the telegram of the 17th of March." VII.—I, Sir E. Wood, undertake, in the name of the British Government, that the Royal Commission shall sit as soon as possible, and that the Government of the country shall be given back within six months from this date. VIII.—Under these circumstances or conditions we agree on behalf of the Boers under arms immediately to disperse our forces, and to await the decision of pending questions that are handed over to the Royal Commission. After the completion of their work the country will receive the promised self-government. IX.—We, Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert, undertake in the name of the Boers to give back all British properties now in possession of the Boer authorities, and taken during the war. And Sir E. Wood agrees to give back all property

belonging to the Boers, now in possession of the British Government, taken during the war, or taken over from the Republic at the time of the annexation; the exchange to take place when the new Government has been ultimately sanctioned.—(Signed) E. Wood, General, High Commissioner; S. P. J. Kruger, M. W. Pretorius, P. J. Joubert.

“O’Neill’s Farm, 1 p.m., March 23, 1881.—Present: Sir E. Wood, Majors Frazer and Clarke, Lieutenant Hamilton, and Mr. T. Cropper, aides-de-camp; and from the Boer side, Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, P. Joubert, C. Joubert, Jorrissen, and Mare. Sir E. Wood stated that he had received power to ratify the preliminary treaty entered into on the 21st ult. Wherefore Sir E. Wood agreed, to prevent future misunderstanding, that, whereas the British Government has guaranteed immunity from civil prosecution for any actions done during the present war, or relating to it, alike to the leaders, personally, collectively, and individually, or to all those who acted under their orders; the Boer leaders, Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert, should on their side agree, that to the Royal Commission must be left all questions for indemnifications or other affairs on either side, in so far as the Commission may consider such acts to have been justifiable by the requirements of the war, and are reasonably certified for indemnification. With regard to the provisions made for civil actions, it is naturally understood that nobody shall be prosecuted on either side, on account of political thoughts or deeds relating to the war. Since the meeting of the 21st of March, it has been brought to Sir E. Wood’s notice that the arms taken over at the annexation have been taken since by chances of war, and to prevent further discussion for the present, it is agreed to modify Schedule 9 (nine), in so far as relates to arms taken at the annexation by the British Government; which, be they serviceable or unserviceable, must be handed over, when entire self-government is re-established. And further, that the order of any money indemnity that may have been paid for them by the British Government at the annexation must be left to the decision of the Commission. With these exceptions Sir E. Wood herewith ratified the terms of the agreement entered into on the 21st of March, and he and the Boer leaders affixed their names hereto as a proof of their ratifying the same.—(Signed) E. Wood, Major General, and Acting High Commissioner; S. J. P. Kruger, M. W. Pretorius, P. J. Joubert, C. J. Joubert, C. J. P. Jorrissen, J. P. Mare.”

On the evening of the 23rd, at 6 o’clock, General Wood informed the “Specials” that peace terms had been made, and the Boers were to evacuate the Nek on the morrow. The following official telegram was sent down to Pietermaritzburg:—“From General Wood, Mount Prospect, to Colonial Secretary. March 24, 1881. Terms of peace have been signed, and the Boers have all gone away. Free trade intercourse is permitted throughout the Transvaal. A Royal Commission is to assemble at once to consider all points left in abeyance, and recommend to the Imperial Government what, speaking generally, shall be the Eastern boundaries of a self-governing

republic, which is to have a British Resident and be under a British protectorate. No one is to be interfered with by either side on account of political opinions or action during the war. Make this public."

Thursday, March 24th, saw the break-up of the Boer camps and evacuation of Lang's Nek, the return of President Brand to Newcastle, *en route* to Bloemfontein, and the utter surprise and disgust of the greater portion of the military and inhabitants of Natal. The loyal refugees, of whom there were numbers in Newcastle, could not find terms strong enough to denounce what they deemed the unwise and cowardly policy of the Convention; while many of the officers resigned their commissions, and others tried to obtain leave, the moment the terms of the settlement became known. No one was to be allowed to go over the Nek until the 25th, so as to avoid any chance of a collision between the soldiery and the younger Boers; but notwithstanding this prohibition many did go through on the same day, and those who went saw the last of the Boers and picked up much information. General Wood went early up with his Staff to the top of the Amajuba, and was there met by some of the Boers, who explained to him the positions of both sides and the course of the fight. The General then returned to the Boer camp and saw the men paraded, addressed by their leaders, told the terms of peace, and then dismissed. I reached Mount Prospect that morning to breakfast (as has been described in Chapter XVIII.), and immediately sent off this telegram:—"Thursday morning.—Just got through from the Boer laager; nearly all the waggons are trekking home to-day. Younger Boers much dissatisfied with terms; older men, though doubting the good intentions of the British Government, yet seem to place confidence in President Brand and General Wood. Not much sickness in their camp. Numbers of Free State Boers came in during the armistice to help, in case peace was not concluded. Two Red Cross men, who have been with me in the Boer camp, left this morning for the Cape. Mount Prospect was to have been attacked by a large force of Boers early the first misty morning if peace had not been concluded."

Next day I was the first from Newcastle able to telegraph and give the terms of the peace settlement, which were kept very secret by the British officials.

In Appendix K will be found the correspondence between General Sir G. P. Colley and the Boer leaders, which was in progress at the time of the Amajuba fight and Sir George's death; as also extracts from the British official telegrams, showing the course of the subsequent negotiations which resulted in the preliminary Convention and the Royal Commission. From the above-named letters it will be seen that the proposal for negotiations emanated from the Boers; and that the unfortunate resumption of active hostilities by Sir George, and the consequent disaster at the Amajuba, resulted simply from the unfortunate delay in Kruger's reply of the 28th of February to Sir George's letter of the 21st, owing to Kruger's absence.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BESIEGED TOWNS.

Pretoria—Its Garrison—Forts—Defence—First Shot—Patrols—Springhaasfontein Fight—Colonel Anstruther's Death—Zwaart-Kopje Engagement—Elsandsfontein—Defeat at Red House—Last Skirmish at Wonderfontein—Potchefstrom—Preparation—Defence of Court House—Clarke and Raaf—Death of Captain Falls—Final Surrender—The Fort and its Defenders—Want of Water—Lieutenant Lindsell's Pluck—Gallant Charge of Lieutenant Dalrymple-Hay—Sickness and Want of Provisions—Surrender—Alleged Treachery of Commandant Cronje.

It is time now to give some little attention to and description of events at the various besieged towns throughout the Transvaal, of which the inhabitants and garrisons had, for three months or more, during the course of the fighting on the Border, had anything but an easy time, as they were captured or surrounded and besieged, being cut off from all resources or communications in Natal. The towns which held out were Pretoria, Potchefstrom, Standerton, Wakkerstrom, Leydenberg, Rustenberg, and Marabastadt. Heidelberg and Middleberg, having no defences or garrison, were helpless from the first. Pretoria, being the capital, comes first on the list. After the news reached Sir Owen Lanyon of the *émeute* at Potchefstrom, a few days were spent in anxiety and doubt by the Pretorians, who were aware of the fact of an ultimatum having been sent to Sir Owen, and were desirous of learning his answer. On the 20th of November, 1880, Mr. Egerton and Sergeant Bradley, of the 94th Regiment, brought into the city the news of the disaster at Bronkhorst Vlei, and on the following day the Executive Council agreed to the Proclamation of Martial Law, which was at once done. Colonel Bellairs, C.B., was Commandant, and the first thing decided upon by the military authorities was that the town must be abandoned, as, owing to

the large surface covered, it would have been impossible to protect it effectually with the limited number of men in Pretoria. A military camp was therefore formed just outside the town, and by the following day hardly a person was left in the town. The number of the inhabitants in the camp were: Europeans—men, 975; women, 676; children, 718; servants, natives, &c., 1,381; total, 3,700. All the horses were taken for the volunteers, who, numbering about fifty on the morning of the 21st, had reached a muster roll of 150 by the 23rd. As it was impossible to receive everybody into the military camp, the gaol was prepared for the reception of a number of the women and children, and Loretto House, Convent, and grounds were enclosed, and a laager, of which these two points were the two southern ends, was built up with wooden barricades and sand-bags. The defence was entrusted to the infantry volunteers, consisting of six companies Pretoria Rifles under Major Le Mesurier, R.E. The gaol and convent adjoin each other, and were distant from the military camp about a third of a mile. A little further from the camp was Fort Royal, with one gun, commanding the immediate approach to the town from the south, and on the summit of two hills to the south two forts—Tullichewan and Commeline, the former named after the castle of Sir George Campbell, father-in-law of Colonel Gildea, and the latter after its constructor, Lieutenant Commeline, R.E.—were built, which, with their guns, commanded the Heidelberg and Potchefstroom roads. Fort Campbell, named after Captain Campbell, of the 94th, and commanded by him, lay still further to the south and east. The main camp was to the south-west of both the Convent Laager and Fort Campbell. Here a strong position was defended by the 21st Fusiliers under Colonel Gildea, the guns being distributed between this fort, Fort Campbell, and Fort Tullichewan. The total number of effective fighting men was about 1,000, made up of the following:—2-21st Scots Fusiliers, four companies, headquarters, Staff and band; a company of the 94th; Davey's Horse or Pretoria Carbineers (which increased from the time of the Proclamation of Martial Law from about 70 to about 140); Nourse's Horse, 100; Pretoria Rifles, 500. Among the

defenders of Pretoria were two detachments of the 94th Regiment, which arrived just in time to participate in the defence.

The first shot that was fired near Pretoria occurred on the 19th of December, when Colonel Gildea personally conducted a reconnoitring party out some fifteen miles on the Potchefstrom road, consisting of the Pretoria Carbineers under Captain D'Arcy, and the Mounted Infantry under Lieutenant O'Grady; and although shots were exchanged there were no losses on either side. On December 28th, some mounted men had a brush with the enemy at Six-mile Spruit—Hennop's or Erasmus River. One prisoner was taken and several Boer saddles emptied. Corporal Norman, Pretoria Carbineers, was dangerously wounded in the right knee. The following day, December 29th, a strong force went out in the same direction, and had an engagement at Springhaasfontein, on the other side of the Six-mile Spruit. The force under Colonel Gildea's command was as follows:—Royal Artillery, 2 guns, 2 waggons, 1 officer, 36 men, with four spare horses; 2-21st Royal Scotch Fusiliers, Mounted Infantry, 20 men; 2-21st Royal Scotch Fusiliers, Infantry, 2 officers, 196 non-commissioned officers and men; 94th Regiment, Mounted Infantry, 2 officers, 34 men; Pretoria Carbineers, 5 officers, 80 non-commissioned officers and men; Nourse's Horse, 2 officers, 15 non-commissioned officers and men; Mounted Natives, 10 non-commissioned officers and men; 1 ambulance, 1 surgeon, 3 non-commissioned officers and men; 10 waggons. After a sharp engagement, in which, owing to a misapprehension of certain orders, the Volunteers advanced and recklessly attacked a strong position unsupported, and had to retire with a severe loss, the force fell back, unmolested by the Boers. In this engagement Captain D'Arcy and Trooper Melville were wounded, and their gallantry received high praise from the commanding officer.

The death of Colonel Anstruther, from the effect of his wounds received at Bronkhorst Spruit, caused a gloom over all; but their thoughts were soon diverted to other things. By the end of New Year's week the first serious engagement had been fought at Zwaart-Kopje, on the 6th of January. Colonel Gildea

left early in the morning with a mixed force of about twenty officers, 450 men, one gun, fifteen waggons, and one ambulance, to bring in some forage, and attack a Boer position at Piennaas River, about twelve miles off. Captain Sampson, with Nourse's Horse, was sent in advance with orders to scout in the direction of Struben's farm, and then take up a position on some heights about a mile off the Kopje to be attacked. The Pretoria Carbineers, under Captain Sanctuary, were detached to occupy some koppies in the rear, and remain quietly in position so as to cut off the retreat of the Boers. Leaving a signaller and forty volunteers to hold a hill about three miles from camp, Colonel Gildea proceeded with the rest of his force, and reached the neighbourhood of the Kopje about 6 A.M.; when he heard the Volunteer Cavalry already engaged, and pushed on to help them. Then occurred another case of firing upon a flag of truce, which is best told in Colonel Gildea's own words, which, however, I may add, are amply corroborated by the statements of many others present:—

“After I had been engaged about twenty minutes, Lieutenant Stanuel, 2-21st Royal Scotch Fusiliers, who was on the extreme left in command of the skirmishers, signalled to me that a flag of truce had been put up on the kopje. I at once ordered the cease-fire to be sounded, when all the Fusiliers at once stood up and ordered arms. Up to this not one of the Fusiliers had been killed or wounded. I went to the left of the line, taking my orderly and Lance-Corporal Burns, Mounted Infantry, 2-21st Fusiliers, as he could speak Dutch, and advanced to a drift about 200 yards from the kopje. I was standing with a flag of truce in my hand, and sent Corporal Burns forward with one on the end of his lance. Lieutenant Stanuel had advanced in front of his men, also recognising the flag of truce by holding one in his hand. All this time the enemy were riding away in threes and fours as fast as they could go. I sent three of my scouts on the left to tell them they must not go away while their flag of truce was flying; these men were fired on by the enemy. My orderly having got within about sixty yards of the kopje was received with a volley, and almost at the same moment two shots were fired at me, followed by several others. Seeing the treachery intended, the men along the line took up the fire, and steadily advanced. I galloped to the extreme right of the line, which I reinforced, and ordered them to advance and turn the left of the kopje. This was effected in first-rate form by the Engineers, under Lieutenant Littledale, about ten of the 2-21st Fusiliers, under Lance-Corporal Hampton, who was conspicuous for the gallant way in which he led his men, some of Nourse's Horse, dismounted, under Captain Sampson, and some volunteers, under Captain Palmer. When the right had turned the enemy's position and held the houses on the left rear of the kopje, I ordered the Fusiliers' regimental call and

charge to be sounded. As the men began to charge and were cheering, the white flag was again hoisted, and for the second time I ordered the cease-fire to be sounded, the action having lasted close on one hour. Riding at once up to the kopje, I received the flag of truce, and the enemy surrendered unconditionally. With the exception of the flanking parties and the Carbineers, whom I left to hold the kopjes in my rear, I assembled the whole force at the drift, where we collected our dead and wounded."

From this point Colonel Gildea returned to the camp, but was attacked again on the road by the Boers, who had been largely reinforced; and after some shell practice he managed to turn them out of the Kopje they held, and retired with his force, having lost four men killed and one officer (Captain Sampson) and fourteen men wounded, but capturing sixteen prisoners. With reference to the firing on the flag of truce by the Boers in the Kopje, they said that it was put up by one of their number without authority, and was ordered to be taken down again. The prisoners, who were all from the Waterburg District, one and all declared that they were forced to fight; their leader, Hans Botha, also affirmed that he was commandeered, and he denied that he gave orders to fire on the flag of truce.

On the 15th of January the Lady Superior of the Roman Catholic Convent, sister of Bishop Jolivet, of Natal, died; and the following day another attack in force was made on a Boer laager at Elaandsfontein, and was again unsuccessful. The force paraded included twenty-four officers and 565 non-commissioned officers and men, with two guns, two ambulances, and fifteen waggons. They started away at 4 A.M. in two bodies. The enemy began the fight at once; and shortly afterwards Colonel Bellairs himself arrived at the scene of action, and a general attack was made, but again, through some misapprehension of orders, attributed, unjustly it is thought, to Captain Sanctuary, the whole force had to retire in the face of a hot flank attack. The enemy were strongly reinforced from all points, and attacked the retiring force for some distance. The losses in this engagement were very slight, considering that the troops were under fire for over six hours. On the 23rd of January another smart skirmish took place between fifty mounted Volunteers, under Captain Sanctuary, who were patrolling out by Wonderboom Poort,

close to a Boer laager, and some of the enemy, with, however, no direct loss on either side, Captain Anderson, of the Pretoria Carbineers, being only slightly wounded. Colonel Gildea went out and shelled the place next day and again on the 7th of February, but with what effect is not known. Then followed on the 12th the most disastrous of all the actions round Pretoria, as far as regards the casualties, in the ineffectual attempt to take the Red House and destroy the Boer laager. Colonel Gildea started at 2 a.m., with Royal Artillery, two 9-pounder guns, two waggons, one rocket, one officer, and thirty-six non-commissioned officers and men, and a mixed force of Infantry and mounted men, consisting of twenty-two officers and 533 non-commissioned officers and men, with contingents from the Medical and Transport Departments. The Red House Kraal is seven miles from Pretoria on the road towards Heidelberg, and Colonel Gildea arrived at daybreak with his men at the Six-mile Spruit. Some of his force crossed and took possession of a house on the other side, while Captain Sanctuary, with the Carbineers, had advanced a mile ahead to the ridge above Springhaasfontein. Colonel Gildea led, with Nourse's Horse under Captain Sampson; a party of the Fusiliers under Captain Dunn, and two 9-pounders under Lieutenant Hare, following Nourse's Horse. The Carbineers, under Captain Sanctuary, were ordered to advance and occupy a large stone kraal about 1,000 yards to the left of the Red House Kraal farm. Riding boldly up to it, they were met by a very heavy fire from Boers concealed behind its walls. The guns then advanced and shelled the kraal, but the left flank of the Carbineers was turned by the enemy, and in spite of the heroic efforts of their brave Captain, who was dangerously wounded, they had to retire. The Boers, advancing to within 400 yards of our main body, kept up a hot fire on them, so that they had to fall back, and it was here that Colonel Gildea was so severely wounded as to be incapacitated from maintaining the command. Covered by Nourse's Horse and the Carbineers under Lieutenant Walker, they reached the Six-mile Spruit; some say the Infantry never having fired a shot. Major Le Mesurier, R.E., with the Volunteers, checked the advance of the enemy; the Artillery also now

coming into action. Surgeon-Major Geogehan, two Army Hospital Corps, and six wounded, with an ambulance, had been left behind—or rather so much to the front—that they were captured. The losses were one officer killed (Captain Sanctuary), one wounded (Colonel Gildea), eight men killed or died from their wounds, and eight severely wounded. Another skirmish took place on the 8th of March at Wonderboom Poort, again with no result; and this was the date of the last fighting. The following District Order by Colonel W. Bellairs, C.B., Commanding Transvaal District, speaks for itself:—

“Pretoria, 22nd of March, 1881.—Three months passed in a state of siege has not damped the courage and determination of the brave little garrisons of Potchefstrom, Rustenberg, Marabastadt, and Leydenberg, widely isolated and closely invested though they be. According to information which has reached the Colonel Commanding, these posts continue to hold their own as confidently as at the beginning of hostilities, and with uniform success to beat off the enemy’s attacks with slight loss themselves. The garrison and people—men, women, and children—of Pretoria, during this lengthened period of trouble and suspense, have behaved with remarkable coolness and endurance. Their situation is almost unique. Rarely indeed has a whole town been called upon to abandon its dwellings and withdraw to a military camp, and well have the inhabitants in this case responded and acquitted themselves of the grievous task imposed upon them by the stern necessities of this war. The troops, largely composed of Volunteers, have performed excellent service, each encounter telling its tale of greater loss inflicted on the enemy than on themselves. The Colonel Commanding now calls upon all to bear for a short time longer the privation, discomfort and suspense attending their present situation, in the assurance that their deeds will hereafter live in the memories of their children and countrymen, and that, though for the moment out off, they are certainly not forgotten by England, who has such good reason to be proud of her sons and daughters in this land. Colonel Bellairs begs that all classes, and especially those officers, civil and military, who have had the onerous duty of supervising and organising the successful arrangements carried through during this war, will accept his hearty thanks for the cordial co-operation given by all.”

On the 23rd of March three officers from General Wood’s column arrived bearing despatches, and next day the Proclamation of the terms and conditions of peace was fully made known, much to the indignation of all. Martial Law was done away with, and on the next day Piet Joubert, with an escort of twenty men, and two other parties of about 200 Boers also, were riding into the town, when they were warned not to do so until the excitement had somewhat subsided. The Government

rationed every one for some time longer, the provisions having held out well, and all the townspeople returned to their houses, in many cases wrecked and robbed. During the whole siege the following were the total casualties:—Killed—one officer, fifteen non-commissioned officers and men; wounded—four officers, thirty-three non-commissioned officers and men; while the Boer losses are put down at six killed and five wounded.

Potchefstroom next merits attention, and although second in my list, for actual fighting and sufferings must undoubtedly be placed first. Its stubborn resistance under such difficulties will long be remembered as a bright spot in an otherwise rather tarnished campaign. After the meeting between Mr. Hudson, the Colonial Secretary, and Mr. Paul Kruger, it was seen that matters were serious, and Commandant Raaff advised them to take every precaution. Meanwhile Major Clarke, C.M.G., arrived from Pretoria, to act as Special Commissioner. Two men, Vander Linden and De Woite, were sent by Commandant Raaff to attend the meeting at Paarde Kraal, and report thereon. Both went independently, and when similar reports came from both that the Boers were determined to fight, and proclaim the Republic again, every precaution was taken, and the Court-house and gaol were fortified. On the 14th of December it was reported that the Boers were in large force some five miles off, and Raaff rode up to camp and warned Colonel Winsloe, who sent down Captain Falls with twenty soldiers, and these with twenty-six of Raaff's men and sixteen civilian volunteers garrisoned the Court-house. With them was also Mr. A. Goetz, the Landdrost. The garrison in the camp consisted of 140 men of the Fusiliers, a proportion of Artillerymen to the two Armstrong 9-pounders, under Major Thornhill, with Colonel Winsloe as chief in command. The gaol was occupied by about twenty of the Fusiliers; in this there were some twelve or more prisoners undergoing sentences. The prison, which is a stone building, was barricaded at weak points by sand-bags, and the Court-house, which is brick-built and had a thatched roof, was also put in a fair state of defence. The fort—an earthwork nearly thirty yards square, and about 1,000 yards from the Court-house—was, with the other strongholds, as well supplied with

provisions as the limited time at disposal would admit, and from the magazine, a separate enclosure between the fort and graveyard, the ammunition was removed and distributed; the magazine itself was occupied as an outpost by a party from the fort.

Among the townspeople who took shelter in the fort were the Portuguese Consul-General, Mr. Forssman, with his wife and family, Dr. and Mrs. Sketchley, Mrs. McIntyre and her children, Mrs. Palmer, and two ladies engaged as teachers in Potchefstrom. After the siege had been kept up for some time, the ladies wished to go back to the town, and Colonel Winsloe on three separate occasions made the request to the Boer Commandant, but only Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. McIntyre, and the two lady teachers were granted permission to return. Then all the ladies who remained in the town came and petitioned the Boer Commandant to allow the others, with their children, to come out, but Cronje was obdurate; he replied, they had sought the protection of the British, let the British protect them if they could. Mrs. Sketchley died in the fort not long after the refusal of the request, also one of Chevalier Forssman's sons; of Mrs. McIntyre's children, one little girl was killed, and the other was wounded by a bullet. To add to the list, on the day the garrison surrendered, two of Chevalier Forssman's daughters were stricken with fever.

On the 15th 500 mounted and armed Boers entered the town, and took possession of Borrius's printing office, the buildings adjoining, and Mr. Forssman's house. These places formed the head-quarters of the Boers. They also took possession of the entrance of every street in the town, threw out scouts to the entrances to the Market Square, and to the drifts leading to the town. The next day, the 16th, fighting began in earnest, and the firing was hot on both sides. Firing was kept up by the Boers very well that day. Brigade-General Jan Kock commanded the men firing at the prison on the right and Commandant Andries Oosthuizen on the left; those two flanks fired at the same time on the fort, about 300 yards' distance. About an hour after it commenced Captain Falls was killed. He was

leaning against the door inside the Landdrost's office, talking to Commandant Raaff, when a bullet came through the door and hit him. He ejaculated, "Oh, God!" and dropped dead. The bullet had gone right through his heart. The Boers by this time had possession of all the buildings round the Square, and the firing continued all that day and night. Wood, one of Raaff's men, was killed, and four others wounded. During the night the bodies of Captain Falls and Wood were buried in the hen-house attached to the Court-house. On the 17th the firing still continued as heavily as ever, and the booming of cannon was heard from the camp. On the night of the 17th they began to feel the want of water, and they started digging in the floor, finding water at eleven feet. By that night there were nine men wounded, and as there was no doctor their sufferings were very great. Nothing could be done for them besides bandaging their wounds as well as it was possible to do. During the night the Boers had broken the wall of the stable behind, and got into it. They were thus enabled to pour a heavy fire from a distance of about eight yards. Amid the greatest danger a hole was broken through the roof to enable them to signal to the camp where to send the shells. Colonel Winsloe signalled back "Retire on camp." This, of course, it was impossible to do, as they were completely surrounded.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 18th it was discovered that the Boers were setting fire to the thatched roof, and as nothing could then have saved them, Major Clarke and Commandant Raaff agreed to surrender, on the understanding that the lives of all those in the Court-house should be saved. This was agreed to, and they were then removed to Forssman's house, and then it was found that some of the men who had been stationed at Schikkerling's house and at the Criterion Hotel were prisoners. Included in the prisoners whom the Boers had were De Woite and Vander Linden, who had acted as scouts. Eventually they were both tried by the Kriigsraad and condemned to death. Vander Linden was shot on the 29th of December, but De Woite not till January 6th.

On the 21st of December the garrison of the prison falling short of provisions evacuated it, retiring on the fort without

loss. On the 22nd the Boers occupied the deserted stronghold, but were quickly driven out by the shell-fire from the fort. Mr. Nelson, J.P., was taken prisoner by the Boers and kept in close confinement. Three of his sons got into the fort and fought against the Boers. Two of them on a dark night (the 19th February) carried despatches through the Boer lines from Colonel Winsloe to his Excellency Sir Evelyn Wood at Newcastle, arriving there on March 5th, after many perils, one of which was swimming the swollen Vaal River, and much fatigue.

The history of the besieged in the fort is best told by one of them, who wrote :—

“ At about 9.30 A.M. on the morning of the 16th several armed Boers rode up to within 200 yards of the camp. Colonel Winsloe immediately ordered a small party of Mounted Infantry to ride up and inquire what they wanted. On Lieutenant Lindsell (who was in command) approaching them, one of the Boers fired at him at about five yards' distance; Lieutenant Lindsell then gave the order to his men to charge, which they did most effectually, cutting down two of the enemy, and driving the remainder back to the town amidst cheers from the fort and gaol. A general attack now took place on two sides of the fort, but the two 9-pounders and the effective and steady firing from the camp soon repulsed them; in fact, before the attack had time to properly develop. The Boers then lined the front walls of the town about 500 yards from the front, and kept up a continuous fire till dark, doing no damage. That evening the water furrow, from which the supply of water for the camp was taken, was cut off. In the meantime the well which had already been commenced was sunk to a depth of twenty feet, but no water was obtained. Affairs now became very critical, the water-barrels, which had fortunately been filled on the 16th, only contained sufficient water for two days, at the limited rate of two pints a day per man. The weather was fearfully hot, and the work of building the parapets terribly severe on the men. On the night of the 17th it was determined to take the water-carts to a stream half a mile away from camp and fill them; this difficult and hazardous expedition started soon after dark, under command of Lieutenant Lindsell, to whom the undertaking was entrusted, and who took with him twenty-five drivers of Royal Artillery acting as Cavalry, the Mounted Infantry, and one company of the 21st. The expedition was most successful, the Boers evidently not being on the look-out in that direction. This fresh supply, now at the rate of two pints a day, would only last a couple of days; but the hope of striking water in the well, which was now thirty feet deep, led us to trust that all would come right. In the meantime the Boers still kept up a hot fire on the fort, the gaol, and Landdrost office. On the morning of the 18th tremendous heavy firing was heard in the direction of the Landdrost's office. At about 9.45 A.M., to our dismay, we saw the white flag floating on top of the flagstaff above the Union Jack, and a quarter of an hour afterwards the flag of the South African Republic replaced the Union Jack. While all

this was going on the working of the well was still continued, till at least a depth of thirty-six feet was attained, with no result. We were now completely cut off from all water. It was therefore determined to cut all horses, mules, etc., adrift, which was done on the following morning. From that date the same desultory firing was kept up from behind walls, hedges, etc., with little or no variation, till the morning of the 1st of January. On the 19th of December, when the last drop of water was finished, a reward of £5 to the first party who struck water was offered by Colonel Winsloe. Several new wells were commenced, and at last, to everybody's joy and relief, the R.A. party struck water at nine feet; the well soon filled, and yielded plenty of water during the remainder of the siege. On the morning of the 1st of January heavy firing commenced at daybreak, the Boers being strongly reinforced, and an attack was expected. The extent of the firing may be imagined when one thinks of nearly 2,000 men within 500 yards of the fort firing as fast and as effectually as time would permit. Nothing of interest now occurred for several days, a slight desultory firing being kept up between the town and the fort. On the 5th of January the Boers occupied the cemetery, about 300 yards on our left front. Lieutenant Lindsell, with a party of Volunteers, made their way down by moonlight, and drove the Boers back to the town. The Boers themselves afterwards informed our men that they considered this expedition the most gallant feat we performed during the siege. On the 22nd our men, tantalized by the provoking 'digging' of the Boers, made a most gallant charge on the trenches. Lieutenant Dalrymple Hay led the attack, well supported by the selected men, and was successful in gaining possession of the troublesome position, with four prisoners, six guns, a lot of ammunition, waterproof coats, and trenching tools. The two worst wounded were not left even for an instant unattended to, for under the thickest of the fire Drivers Gibson and Martin, R.A., boldly carried in Walsh, thigh broken, and again Gibson, this time accompanied by Driver Pede, R.A., brought in Colvin, he being shot through the muscle of the arm with an explosive bullet, leaving a horrible wound. A short time afterwards and a flag of truce came from town and then an exchange of prisoners took place. It was nearly dark when the friendly relations were finished, soon after which a shot came from the prison, hostilities recommenced, and we were enemies again. From that date till the end of the siege nothing of much interest occurred; the Boers still continued sapping round us, but as they did us no harm, we interfered but little with them. Food now began to run uncomfortably short; we had been for some time on half rations, but now quarter rations were all that were allowed, except an issue of 1 lb. of mealies, which the men crushed and made porridge of. From the 1st of March all meat, tea, coffee, sugar, and biscuits came to an end, and now we had to rely solely on mealies and Kaffir corn for provisions. The young wife of Dr. Sketchley, who died on the 28th, was buried on the 1st of March. On the 4th of that month the rations had fallen to 4 oz. meat daily, no tea, $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. coffee, no biscuits, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of unground mealies. Dysentery and the deadly bullet continued to weaken the gallant defenders, but the struggle was bravely kept up. All this time, now over two months, not one word of news ever reached us from the outside world except on two occasions, when the Boers were 'kind' enough to send us in a copy of their *Staats Courant*, once after their victory over the 94th at Bronkhorst Spruit, and again after our defeat at Lang's Nek. On the 20th of March we had but four sacks of half-

rotten mealies left. Fever, dysentery, and scurvy had broken out. (The Army Surgeon and two civil doctors did their best to overcome the disease throughout.) Colonel Winsloe called for a consultation with his officers, and it was decided unanimously that it would be better to surrender with honourable terms than be forced to surrender in three days' time unconditionally. That same evening, curious to relate, a paper was received from some unknown person in Potchefstrom, smuggled into camp by a friendly Dutchman. In this paper we read of the defeat and death of General Sir George Pomeroy Colley. No news reached us of any armistice, no hope of any reinforcements reaching us in time. It was actually on the 17th and 18th of March that the heaviest firing was being brought against us, 150 round shot alone being fired into the fort on these days. The waggons with the eight days' provisions we never heard of, and when we did General Cronje denied any knowledge of them; thus, on the morning of the 21st, we decided, if the Boers accepted our terms, to surrender with all honours of war. The terms, after some discussion, were accepted by the Boer leaders, and so, exactly three months and five days from the time of the commencement of the siege, the garrison capitulated with all honours of war, personal property to be kept, also all ammunition, but guns and rifles to be given up. On the 24th the garrison evacuated their positions, and marched off direct for Natal *vis* Orange Free State. Our total casualties were eighty-three killed, wounded, and prisoners, out of 213."

It were needless to repeat the fact that Colonel Winsloe surrendered to the Boer General under false statements, which have since then been repudiated by the Boer leaders and reparation made. Thus ended the drama of the siege of Potchefstrom. Mr. Mollet and Mr. Sluyman arrived from the Free State on March 11th, having been sent by President Brand with despatches for the officers commanding the English garrison and the officer commanding the Boers, informing them of the armistice of eight days, which was to begin from the date of arrival of waggons with provisions. Cronje allowed Mr. Mollet to see Commandant Raaf, but refused either to allow him to go to the camp or to send his despatches up to Colonel Winsloe, so that the troops knew nothing whatever about this armistice until after they had surrendered. The documents as to the disputed treachery of Cronje will be found in Appendix L, as also full list of British casualties. The Boer losses are stated at seven killed and fourteen wounded.

CHAPTER XXII.

BESIEGED TOWNS (*continued*).

STANDERTON—Number of Garrison—Preparations—Volunteer Forces—First Fight—Gallantry of Mr. Hall—Second Skirmish—Kaffir Bravery—Fight of 7th of February—A Perilous Attack—Raising of the Siege—Casualties—Leydenberg—Neutrality of Townspeople—Causes assigned—Moderation of Boer Commandant P. Steyn—Lieutenant Long's Defence—Arrival of A. Aylward—Summons to Surrender—Siege Incidents—News of Peace—Soldiers Rebel—Colonel Bellair's General Orders—Casualties—Marabastadt—Middleburg.

STANDERTON is the first town of any size on the main road from Natal to Pretoria, and is situated on the north bank of the Vaal River. On the outbreak of hostilities Captain Froome was sent down from Wakkerstrom with two companies of the 94th Regiment and one of the 58th, arriving there on the 21st December. Major Montague, 94th Regiment, author of "Campaigning in South Africa," and who served with his regiment throughout the Zulu War, was sent up from Pietermaritzburg in the Post cart to take command. He arrived there on the 24th December, established martial law the next day, and immediately commenced works for the defence of the town by forts, &c., and the organization and distribution of the forces necessary, ably assisted by the Landdrost, J. C. Krogh, Esq. The officers of the 94th comprised Captains Froome and Campion, Lieutenants Davidson and Massey, 2nd Lieutenants Swan (Acting Adjutant), and McLaughlin. Lieutenant Crompton was the only officer of the 58th. Surgeons-Major Parkinson and Fraser, and Surgeon Lloyd comprised the medical staff. In command of the Volunteers and Mounted Infantry was Conductor Cassell, of the Commissariat and Transport Staff, with Lieutenant Wright and Sergeant Juta, and the Irregular Foot were in charge of Lieutenant Grant

(civilian). Three forts were built on kopjes round the town ; two outworks were constructed, besides breastworks, rifle pits, &c. The site of the military camp was near a high kopje, called Stander's Kopje, about 2,300 yards from Fort Alice, the centre of the town being about 800 yards NE. of the fort. The Vaal River, which for long periods was in a flooded state, formed a natural protection south of the town and camp. In the town itself houses interfering with the line of fire were pulled down. Other buildings in suitable positions were barricaded and loopholed, rifle pits and small shelter trenches were dug. On Graveyard Kopje was also placed a fort. The hospital—a strong stone building at Fort Alice—was the one most sheltered by nature from the fire of any enemy outside the limits of the town. The total strength of the garrison, including town and forts, was about 350 soldiers and 70 civilians. One hundred men under Captain Campion occupied the town, round which, at places where the Boers were likely to make a charge, wire entanglements were put up. The Dutch Reformed Church, standing in the centre of the town, was mined, and connected with the Court House and the Post Office by electric wire. These places were again connected with the camp, where a battery, by means of which the charge could be exploded, was kept. Of gunpowder there was very little to be got—of dynamite none, though several efforts were made to obtain it. Owing to the scarcity of these explosives, the various outworks could not be mined. One stray building was set apart for the accommodation of the female population, numbering a score or more. All were well provisioned. Everything being thus prepared, on the 27th Major Montague received information that a meeting of the Boers had been held not far off, to discuss the method of attacking this town ; and on that day the Major sent two despatches to Colonel Deane, informing him also that the enemy contemplated attacking any relief force that might come up from Newcastle at Walters—that is to say near Lang's Nek.

Up to the 29th inst. both military and volunteers kept up a vigilant patrol day and night, and without seeing any alarming numbers of the enemy. On that day the military scout on a

kopje near signalled that a large number of Boers were coming from the Maritzburg side, towards Mr. Piet Erasmus's farm, across the Vaal River, and about three miles distant from Standerton. The Mounted Volunteers were at once assembled, and being joined by some of the Mounted Infantry, at once proceeded across the main drift over the Vaal to the number of sixteen, led by Captain Cassell, and went direct for Erasmus's farm to see what the enemy's movements were. Lieutenant Wright having to get arms for certain members, followed Captain Cassell with all haste. With scouts out, they arrived to within about 600 yards of Erasmus's House, and within sight of it, without any view of the enemy, when suddenly Mr. G. B. Hall, one of the Mounted Volunteers, who was scouting, gave the alarm of the presence of the enemy, and gallantly tried to cross the front of the Boers to warn his comrades of the impending danger. Hall achieved his purpose, but it cost him his life. Galloping in front of the Boers, his horse was shot under him. Taking shelter behind it, he opened fire on the enemy, and so attracted the attention of his party. One man against 300 could not long hold his own, and poor Hall was soon shot dead. The mounted men retired on the camp, exchanging shots with the enemy. The Boers, following them, came on in a most determined manner to a hill 600 yards from the camp, and kept up a heavy fire on the position. On the 30th December Major Montague was slightly wounded in the leg by a Boer bullet. During the whole of the siege their marksmen devoted a considerable amount of attention to him, easily recognised by his uniform. On the 4th of January the mounted men, starting early in the morning, went to Stander's Kop, where the Boers had begun to station vedettes, and at daylight drew the Boers on towards Stander's house at the foot of the hill, where a party of foot-soldiers had been previously placed in ambush. Some volleys were exchanged, and the Boers retired. The following day the Boers kept up a warm fire at long ranges on the laagers, but did no harm. The fire from Stander's Kop proving very annoying, Major Montague ordered a dummy gun to be made, mounted on two waggon wheels. This caused the Boers a good deal of alarm, whenever, with a great deal of ostentatious

loading and ramming home, the gun was prepared for action. To keep up the delusion, three or four rifles would occasionally be fixed under the gun, their triggers connected with a string, and their charges fired simultaneously. So soon as preparations with the dummy were commenced the Boers on Stander's Kop took to their heels, out of sight of the artillery. On the 7th January occurred a brave incident. The Boers built during one night an earthwork in the shape of the letter A on the other side of the Vaal River, 400 yards nearer the town. Close by stood a house known as Scheeper's Shanty, and this it was thought advisable should be destroyed. Among other volunteers for the duty was one Injofa, a Swazie, then undergoing a term of penal servitude for culpable homicide. With a party of Kaffirs he crossed the river, and the men began pulling down the house. Injofa, however, took his gun and marched boldly up to the Boer earthworks 400 yards away, and, to the astonishment of the spectators on this side of the river, reached the fort without a shot being fired at him. He then coolly began to demolish the earthwork by the aid of some tools he found inside it. That accomplished, he recrossed the river. The foregoing is not the only instance of daring he had shown during the war. This man was in the Secocoeni war, and by his bravery there brought himself under the notice of Sir Garnet Wolseley.

Of all the skirmishes that of the 7th February was the most successful. Seventy infantrymen were on that night taken out towards a house which had been occupied by the Boers some two or three miles distant from the town, and were concealed in the vicinity of the farm. Next morning our Mounted Infantry moved out to draw the enemy towards the ambush. For some reason or other this movement failed, and the Boers coming on in great force to where the infantry were concealed, our men had to make good their retreat under a hot fire. The retreat was made in a very cool manner, the enemy being kept at bay, and inflicting no loss on our side. Another gallant act was the following:—On the 24th February, Sergeant Conway, of the 58th, with a patrol, started at ten o'clock at night for Stander's Kop, and in the morning, when the Boers came up to

their usual positions, he and his half-dozen men shot three of the enemy. The Boers in force nearly surrounded the gallant party, who retired, fighting their way to the camp. A party from the garrison turned out and covered the retreat of the Sergeant and his band of volunteers. On the 4th March the enemy occupied another position 800 yards distant from the camp to the left. Out of that place they were driven by the fire of the company of the 58th from advanced rifle pits. Again on the 7th they took up the same position, this time in greater force, and kept up a heavy fire on the men, but again the 58th forced the enemy to abandon the hill. The defence altogether was most successfully and carefully conducted, and although the garrison were latterly put on short rations, yet they could have held out to the end of April. It will thus be seen that the siege of Standerton was by no means devoid of exciting incidents and perilous adventures. How well Major Montague handled his force is best told by the fact of the enemy being unable to gain any advantage during the two and a half months' investment, for it was not till the 11th March that a flag of truce was shown on the other side of the river by two Boers, and the garrison learnt that an armistice had been agreed to. The commander then informed the Boers who escorted the waggons containing supplies that he did not want any provisions and was indifferent whether the waggons discharged their loads at Standerton or not. The Boers were commanded by a man named Lombaard during the siege. The English officer, who came with the convoy, was allowed by his Boer companions to say that General Pomeroy Colley had been killed, and that General Wood was in command of the relief column. Further information regarding the war he was not allowed to give. The total casualties between the 18th December, 1880, and 31st March, 1881, were five killed and nine wounded, including the commandant, Major Montague (slightly).

Leydenberg, away in the North-east, is the next siege in my list. After the departure of the 94th, under Colonel Anstruther, for Pretoria, on Sunday, December 5th, as rumours of the rising of the Boers were prevalent, application was made to Lieutenant Long, commanding the detachment left in the fort, to join the

town in a system of general defence. Whether from misconception, or too strict and punctilious construction of his orders, Lieutenant Long refused assent, greatly to the surprise and discomfiture of the residents. The following telegram was then sent to Natal, *via* Delagoa Bay:—"Troops refuse to protect the town. Numbers hardly sufficient to protect themselves. Town decided to remain quiet." On December 13th a letter was written to Sir Owen Lanyon as follows:—"The fifty men left here are here, it is understood, simply for the protection of Government stores, not for the defence of the town. Were they here for the latter purpose, such a number is totally inadequate for any satisfactory protection." It was calculated that there were 220 women and children in the town, and only thirty-four men who could be relied upon. With no laager, no water supply, no chance of saving the property, estimated at over £100,000, the siege, all knew, must continue for three or four months; and therefore the townspeople being left entirely without protection, abandoned by the Government, were quite right in remaining neutral. They owe their safety from molestation, and the absence of looting stores or private property, to the Commandant of the Boers, Piet Steyn. The Boers were in possession of the town and besieged the camp, but Lieutenant Long held his own well. The inhabitants had no occasion to complain of the conduct of the Boers in this district, with the exception of the stopping of communication.

Early in March Mr. A. Aylward arrived in Leydenberg, and under a flag of truce he interviewed Lieutenant Long, 94th Regiment, Dr. Falvay, and the Rev. Father Walsh; he wanted Lieutenant Long to surrender, stating that it was madness in him showing further resistance, as there were no troops in the country to help him. Lieutenant Long replied that he would not surrender, he meant to fight and retain the fort as long as he had a man left him. Aylward invited Father Walsh to remain outside; he replied that the Boers must come and fetch him, he was not a coward, and would not quit the troops while there remained one alive. Messrs. Long and Walsh returned to the fort under escort of Boers, when, an hour after, both parties saluted each other with a shower of bullets. Lieu-