TWEEDE VRYHEIDSOORLOG

UITKNIPSELS UIT 'N ENGELSE DAGBLAD:

10 OKT. 1899 – 14 NOV. 1900

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TWEEDE VRYHEIDSOORLOG.

Uitknipsels uit 'n Engelse
dagblad: 10 Okt. 1899 - 14 Nov. 1900.

Band I.

THE TRANSVAAL CRISIS.

TEXT OF THE BRITISH REPLY.

We have received the following from the Colonial Office :—

"Telegram. Mr. Chamberlain to High Commissioner Sir Alfred Milner.

"(Sent, 10 45 p.m., 10th October, 1899.)

"10th October. No. 8. Her Majesty's Government have received with great regret the peremptory demands of the Government of the South African Republic conveyed in your telegram of 9th October No. 3. You will inform the Government of the South African Republic, in reply, that the conditions demanded by the Government of the South African Republic are such as her Majesty's Government deem it impossible to discuss."

THE ORANGE FREE STATE.

We understand that, in answer to inquiries as to the attitude of the Orange Free State made by Sir Alfred Milner, President Steyn has formally stated that it will make common cause with the Transvaal—a declaration hardly needed, perhaps, in view of the action already taken by the Free State authorities.

October 28th 1899.

THE ORANGE FREE STATE AND THE WAR.

From "the Orange Free State Envoy Extraordinary, and Consul-General for Holland," Dr. Hendrik Muller, The Hague, we receive for publication the full text of the proclamation of the State President of the Orange Free State, extracts from which appeared in *The Times* of Oct. 20, telegraphed by Reuter's Agent at Bloemfontein :—

Burghers of the Orange Free State !

The time which we had so much desired to avoid, the moment when we as a nation are compelled with arms to oppose injustice and shameless violence is at hand. Our sister Republic to the north of the Vaal river is about to be attacked by an unscrupulous enemy, who for many years has prepared himself and sought pretexts for the violence of which he is now guilty, whose purpose it is to destroy the existence of the Afrikander race.

With your sister Republic we are not only bound by ties of blood, of sympathy, and of common interests but also by a formal treaty which has been necessitated by circumstances. This treaty demands of us that we assist her if she should be unjustly attacked, which we unfortunately for a long time have had too much reason to expect. We therefore cannot passively look on while injustice is done her and while also our own dearly-bought freedom is endangered, but are called as men to resist, trusting the Almighty, firmly believing that He will never permit injustice and unrighteousness to triumph, and relying upon our good right in His sight and in the eyes of the whole world.

Now that we thus resist a powerful enemy, with whom it has always been our honest desire to live in friendship notwithstanding injustice and wrong done by him to us in the past, we solemnly declare, in the presence of Almighty God that we are compelled thereto by the injustice done to our kinsmen and by the consciousness that the end of their independence will make our existence as an independent State of no significance, and that their fate, should they be obliged to bend under an overwhelming power, will also soon after be our own fate.

Solemn treaties have not protected our sister-Republic against annexation, against conspiracy, against the claim of an abolished suzerainty, against continuous oppression and interference, and now against a renewed attack which aims only at her downfall.

Our own unfortunate experiences in the past have also made it sufficiently clear to us that we cannot rely on the most solemn promises and agreements of Great Britain when she has at her helm a Government prepared to trample on treaties and to look for feigned pretexts for every violation of good faith by her committed. This is proved, among other things, by the unjust and unlawful British intervention, after we had overcome an armed and barbarous black tribe on our eastern frontier, as also by the forcible appropriation of the dominion over part of our territory where the discovery of diamonds had caused the desire for this appropriation, although contrary to existing treaties. The desire and intention to trample on our rights as an independent and sovereign nation, notwithstanding a solemn Convention existing between this State and Great Britain, have also been more than once and are now again shown by the present Government, by giving expression in public documents to an unfounded claim of paramountcy over the whole of South Africa and therefore also over this State.

With regard to the South African Republic, Great Britain has, moreover, refused until the present to allow her to regain her original position in respect to foreign affairs, a position which she has lost in no sense by her own faults. The original intention of conventions, to which the Republic had consented under pressure of circumstances, has been perverted and has continually been used by the present British Administration as a means for the practice of tyranny and of injustice and among other things for the support of a revolutionary propaganda within the Republic in favour of Great Britain.

And while no redress has been offered, as justice demands, for injustice done to the South African Republic on the part of the British Government ; and while no gratitude is exhibited for the magnanimity shown at the request of the British Government to British subjects who had forfeited under the laws of the Republic their lives and their property ; yet no feeling of shame has prevented the British Government, now that gold mines of immense value have been discovered in the country, to make claims of the Republic the consequence of which, if allowed, will be that those who or whose forefathers have saved the country from barbarism and have won it for civilization with their blood and their tears, will lose that control over the interests of the country to which they are justly entitled according to divine and human laws. The consequence of these claims would be, moreover, that the greater part of the power will be placed in the hands of those who, foreigners by birth, enjoy the privilege of depriving the country of its chief treasure, while they have never shown any loyalty except loyalty to a foreign Government. Besides, the inevitable consequence of the acceptance of these claims would be that the independence of the country as a self-governing, independent, sovereign Republic would be irreparably lost. For years past British troops in great numbers have been placed on the frontiers of our sister Republic in order to compel her by fear to accede to the demands which would be pressed upon her and in order to encourage revolutionary disturbances and the cunning plans of those whose greed for gold is the cause of their shameless undertakings.

Those plans have now reached their climax in the open violence to which the present British Government now resorts. While we readily acknowledge the honourable character of thousands of Englishmen, who loathe such deeds of robbery and wrong, we cannot but abhor the shameless breaking of treaties, the feigned pretexts for the transgression of law, the violation of international law and of justice, and the numerous right-rending deeds of the British statesmen who now force a war upon the South African Republic. On their heads be the guilt of blood, and may a just Providence reward all as they deserve.

Burghers of the Orange Free State !

Rise as one man against the oppressor and the violator of right !

In the strife to which we are now driven have care to commit no deed unworthy of a Christian and of a burgher of the Orange Free State. Let us look forward with confidence to a fortunate end of this conflict, trusting to that Higher Power without whose help human weapons are of no avail.

May He bless our arms. Under His banner we advance to battle for liberty and for fatherland.

Given under my hand and the great seal of the Orange Free State at Bloemfontein.

M. T. STEYN, State-President.

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4th November 1899.

THE SITUATION AT KIMBERLEY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

KIMBERLEY CAMP, OCT. 7.

It is impossible to ignore the responsibility that must attach to the Bond Government at the Cape for the situation in which a town that has contributed such large sums to the revenue of the colony must find itself on the outbreak of hostilities. Not only has the Ministry delayed the measures which it ought to have taken itself for the protection of Kimberley, but it has done its best to suppress any private action which might have remedied its own dilatoriness. Setting aside the representations of Kimberley with arguments that are more specious than loyal, Mr. Schreiner refused to grant leave for a number of machine guns, rifles, and ammunition, which the De Beers Company had imported for use in the defence of their property, to be shipped *via* the Cape Railway to Kimberley. For many weeks, owing to the indifference of the Cabinet to the total absence from Kimberley of any means by which its effective defence might be maintained, the town lay exposed to any expedition which the rough-bred spirits from the western areas of the Transvaal might have chosen to despatch. The local authorities appealed loudly to Cape Town to preserve them from Boer invasion, but no help was forthcoming from without, and they were themselves apparently incompetent to formulate any definite scheme of their own. Nothing, perhaps, so much as the condition of the frontier illustrates the fatal supineness which Sir William Butler and the Bond Ministry displayed throughout the earlier stages of the crisis. Up to the departure of the late Commander-in-Chief from the Cape command no perceptible measures of defence had been taken at any point along the entire thousand odd miles which constitute our western border line between the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and ourselves. With the change of command came a change of policy, which brought Imperial troops to the diamond city, and by this time Kimberley does possess some admirable fortifications, some most serviceable artillery, trained fighting men, and a composite local force. To these should have been added a reinforcement of eight Maxims had Mr. Schreiner applied to the De Beers mines the same liberal treatment which he extended to the Orange Free State in the matter of importation of war material. De Beers have permitted the 14,000 natives in their employment to assist in fatigue duties; and since the arrival of the Imperial troops these *employés* of De Beers have been throwing up earthworks and general defences under the supervision of officers from the Royal Engineers. The action of placing native labour in such numbers at the disposal of Colonel Kekewich enabled the plan which this officer had conceived for the defence of the diamond fields to be speedily realized, and work is progressing that bids fair to convert Kimberley into a miniature Sevastopol. The industry which centres upon Kimberley has created an artificial rampart round the town of extraordinary toughness. At a close distance to the place huge mounds, caused by the accumulation of the *débris* from the mines, engirdle the greater part of Kimberley like mammoth ramparts, which require but little to be turned into a magnificent chain of redoubts needing but to be efficiently equipped and manned to protect the town from any assault—save the miraculous. In addition to these minor forts, intrenchments and gun emplacements have been incorporated into its system of defence by the efforts of the small detachment of Regulars that have been packed off to Kimberley by the Castle authorities.

The physical configuration of the area beyond the outskirts of the town, and between it and the boundary, make the service and utility of a mounted infantry corps of extreme importance. The Imperial service has, therefore, requisitioned horses, train mules, and cattle for its town transports. De Beers have equipped the Diamond Fields Artillery, and are maintaining—since the colonial Government declined to recognize the force—the entire strength of the Diamond Fields Artillery upon active service, providing all payments and the entire complement of stores so long as it is necessary for the defence of the town to keep the artillery in camp; they have supplied weapons of precision for the defence of the town and mines; they have built in part, or indirectly contributed to in past days, the theatre, the hospital, the sanatorium, and the schools and chapels at Kenilworth. Their annual disbursements in the town aggregate one million sterling. But with such a record of gigantic expenditure it might well be thought that the townsfolk themselves, as a noteworthy exception, might have contributed to the expense of the mounted infantry of the Kimberley Volunteers.

P.S.—The rumour of an impending attack by the Boers drew me, as the mail closed, to Mafeking in a hurry, and I found that Commandant Cronje had massed his 6,000 men upon the border, and yesterday Colonel Baden-Powell had issued the following general warning:—

It is considered desirable to state to the inhabitants of Mafeking what is the situation up to date.

Forces of Boers are now massed upon the Natal and Bechuanaland borders. Their orders are not to cross the border until the British fire a shot, and as this is not likely to occur, at least for some time, no immediate danger is to be apprehended. At the same time a rumour of war in Natal, or other false alarm, might cause the Boers upon our border to take action, and it is well to be prepared for eventualities.

It is possible they might attempt to shell the town, and although every endeavour will be made to provide

shelter for the women and children, yet arrangements could be made with the railway to move any of them to a place of safety if they desire to go away from Mafeking, and it is suggested that some place in the Protectorate at a distance from the Transvaal border, such as Palapye Siding or Francistown, might be more suitable and less expensive places than the already crowded towns of the colony. The men would, of course, remain to defend Mafeking, which, with its present garrison and defences, will be easy to hold.

Those desirous of leaving should inform the station-master, Mafeking, their number of adults and children, class of accommodation required, and destination.

14th November 1899

WITH THE NATAL FIELD FORCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, OCT. 13.

A strict censorship over the wires prevents any detail of the distribution of the forces on the Natal frontier from being furnished by cable. I therefore seize this opportunity of sending an outline of the military situation in Natal as it was when war was declared, and as it is at the present moment when an action seems imminent. General Symons, whose efforts are responsible for the present distribution, which is the best that could have been made in the circumstances, chose to abandon the actual frontier and to hold a fairly defined line extending from Estcourt, 30 miles south of Ladysmith, to Dundee-Glencoe on the Buffalo River frontier. This line was approved by Sir George White, and at the present moment is the defensive line of the Natal Colony. At Estcourt are stationed the Natal Royal Rifles and a detachment of Naval Volunteers with Maxim guns. The next post is Colenso, with the railway bridge over the Tugela River; here are posted the Durban L. I. Volunteers and detachments of the Naval Volunteers and Natal Carabineers (mounted volunteers). At Ladysmith is the advanced base depôt of the force and the brigade of Imperial troops, which to-day has moved out to intercept the invading burghers from the Free State. Besides the Imperial brigade, the headquarters of the Volunteer force are here, including the Natal Carabineers, the Natal Mounted Rifles, the Border Mounted Rifles, the Natal Field Artillery, and a further detachment of the Naval Volunteers. The composition of the Imperial forces will be shown later, when the first forward movement is described. The next post in the line is Dundee and Glencoe, which is held by Brigadier-General Yule's Brigade, General Symons at the moment having his headquarters here. At Dundee are detachments of the Umvoti Volunteers and Natal Carabineers. Turning south, opposite to Rorke's Drift, we find Helpmakaar held by local Volunteers, but the defensive line, as will be seen by a glance at the map, practically terminates at Dundee.

The strategical move which General Symons made when he occupied Glencoe with Imperial troops must be considered masterly, as by holding both ends of the Biggarsberg mountains he secures the railway communication in a country where it would be most difficult to repair damage if the enemy had been allowed occupation, and there seems no doubt that Laffine's commando had received definite orders to make a dash for the Biggarsberg range as soon as war was declared. Thus it will be seen that, though the frontiers of the Drakensberg range, with the historical passes and drifts, have been abandoned to the enemy, the Imperial forces now hold with 17,000 men a line which includes all the most vital strategical points in the Klip River and Biggarsberg districts, and stands with its right flank protected by Zululand, and its left by Basutoland. From the situation it would seem that the Boers are inclined to underrate the strength of these flanks, and I cabled a few days back that the information received at headquarters led them to suppose that the united Boers would make an attempt against both these flanks. The events of the last 48 hours would seem to prove that in the case of the left flank the information was correct, for at midday yesterday the Volunteer patrol towards the passes into the Orange Free State reported that a commando of Burghers with wagons was crossing by Tintwa Pass, which is equidistant from Olivier's Hoek and Van Reenen.

Information arriving at midnight last night brought the further news that a commando was invading Natal by way of Van Reenen, the strength of this column being stated at 3,000 men with 300 wagons. There being no doubt that the invasion had begun, Sir George White, who has had his headquarters at Ladysmith for three days, decided to make a move which would prevent the invaders from approaching Ladysmith without giving us battle, if this was their objective, and would prevent the Boers from outflanking the Ladysmith force, if it be their object to make an attempt upon the communications between this place and Pietermaritzburg. Last night, therefore, under the screen of the 5th Lancers, the Natal Carabineers and Border Mounted Rifles, the Devonshire Regiment, the Liverpool Regiment, the Gordon Highlanders, the Brigade Division of Artillery, and the Mountain Battery moved out with three days' rations by the Van Reenen road. A regiment was wired for to Dundee, and, as the Royal Irish were expected to arrive in the morning,

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the Manchester Regiment was ordered to hold itself in readiness to support the reconnaissance as soon as it was relieved. The Royal Irish, direct from Durban, came into camp about 7 a.m., and the Dublin Fusiliers arrived by train from Dundee by 1 o'clock. Sir George White's force in the field was reinforced by the latter battalion and the Manchester Regiment. At midday the column had advanced nine miles in the direction of the Drakensberg and was halted at the foot of a ridge, awaiting reports from the cavalry outposts. The country is open rolling veldt, undulating in the vicinity of several spruits tributary to the Tugela, chief of which is Sandspruit; the plain surface is broken with constant kopjes and ridges of rock varying from 500ft. to 50ft., but standing more or less in isolation, with a fire zone of perhaps 2,000 yards between each ridge. On the whole, it is an excellent country for a force to operate in, provided they have sufficient cavalry to protect their flanks. Undoubtedly, it is a country suited to Boer tactics, but it is much less enclosed than their favourite hunting-grounds towards Langs Nek. This description will hold in the main for all the country lying between the Western Drakensberg and Ladysmith and the theatre in which the garrison of Ladysmith may be called to operate.

This is the outline of the situation with the Ladysmith force up to the present moment, when the English mail bag is being closed. The British force is nine miles outside Ladysmith, prepared to give the invader battle if his object be Ladysmith. Those who know the Boer say that Ladysmith is his object; otherwise he would be without wagons. But this letter will be forestalled by cable.

14th November 1899.

THE TRANSVAAL CRISIS.

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, Oct. 25.

That the dispute between the Imperial Government and the Transvaal could only be settled ultimately by force of arms should have been made clear by the conference at Bloemfontein. In retrospect it is only too evident that the difference there disclosed between the two parties was one that could hardly have been bridged over, even if both had made what from their point of view had been great concessions. Probably in Sir Alfred Milner's eyes the conference was a last attempt to secure by peaceful means some settlement of a situation that had been getting more and more impossible for many years past. The object of the conference was to make clear to President Kruger in as friendly a manner as could be that either he must set his own house in order at once or have it set right for him by force. The franchise proposal was a suggestion as to the means that might be adopted to the former end. In itself the alienation of a large body of British subjects was not a thing her Majesty's Government particularly desired; it would have been equally ready to discuss any other method of solving the Uitlander difficulty. But such as it was, the suggestion was for acceptance or refusal. To President Kruger and his burghers the franchise proposal presented itself not as a suggestion, but as a demand. After innumerable irritating interferences with their untrammelled right of misgovernment, the British Government was now proceeding to claim the jealously-guarded privilege of the franchise. Throughout the months that followed the conference the Boer attitude towards the question was that an entirely unwarranted demand was being made upon them which Great Britain wished to extort while refusing to give anything in exchange. Each step nearer to the "irreducible *minimum*" was regarded by them as an entirely fresh concession wrung from them by force, till at last by dint of never satisfying Sir Alfred Milner's original demands they began to persuade themselves that those demands could never be satisfied, and were actually being increased. After a while a strong reaction began to set in at Pretoria against conceding anything. Mr. Smuts's proposal of August 19, which practically conceded the Bloemfontein *minimum*, was nullified by his note of August 21 penned under the influence of the more reactionary members of the little circle who have hitherto controlled the affairs of the Transvaal. From that moment the reaction proceeded steadily, helped later by the officially disseminated story that Mr. Conyngham Greene had only decoyed Mr. Smuts into his proposal in order to reject it as an insult to the suzerain Power—a story which Mr. Smuts himself did not pretend to uphold, but which Mr. Steyn set forth in the most unmeasured language in his address at the opening of the Free State Raad and which Mr. Reitz has since repeated in his notorious manifesto published after the declaration of war. Though politicians in England and even at the Cape believed President Kruger to be still playing his old game of "bluff," it was evident enough at Pretoria from the end of August onwards that the Boers would sooner fight than concede a hair's breadth further. The Transvaal reply of September 15 was still moderate in tone,

but the spirit that lay behind it was absolutely uncompromising.

With the despatch of September 25 a further change came over the situation. It was evident that the Cabinet would not hurry to formulate its new proposals for a general settlement of the position of the Transvaal till it was in a position effectively to enforce them. A strong agitation for immediate aggressive action sprang up. The President and those of his advisers who were eager to throw the responsibility of forcing the rupture upon England were forced to yield as soon as they had satisfied themselves that the Free State would not hesitate to take part in the attack. From the Boer point of view there was, it must be admitted, a great deal to be said for the policy of taking the bull by the horns. If they were determined to fight sooner than make the least concession it was evidently better to fight with 15,000 men than with 50,000. They were confident they could crush the small force in Natal long before reinforcements could arrive, and could raise a vast region of Cape Colony in revolt by the mere presence of their invading commandos. Mr. Reitz's ultimatum, which was not handed in to the British Agent till October 9, was decided on and actually framed before the end of September. The intention of the Transvaal Government was to present that ultimatum on October 1 or 2 and commence hostilities at the expiration of the 48 hours. At this moment a hitch occurred which temporarily upset the whole arrangement. In the evening of September 30 and the morning of October 1 the Executive made two unwelcome discoveries. The first was that their forces were not ready. They had mobilized almost the whole male population of the country, supplied them with arms and ammunition, and sent them to the front in the remarkably short space of four days; but they had done so only by dint of neglecting all arrangements for transport and commissariat. The men, and with them the rolling-stock, had all gone off to the borders of the Republic, while the food was left in Pretoria without means of conveyance. The other unwelcome discovery was that the Free State army was equally unready. Accordingly, on October 1, the uncompromising attitude of Pretoria was slightly modified. Rumours of some last attempt to make peace, of an impending visit to Pretoria of Messrs. Schreiner and Hofmeyr, of divisions in the British Cabinet, were given free play. After the lapse of another week the mobilization had been really as well as nominally carried out, and the Transvaal was ready to come out and challenge the British Empire to battle. But in that short interval over 5,000 troops from India had landed in Natal, and the policy of attack had already lost some of its justification.

The desire not to estrange sympathy in Cape Colony and in England was one of the chief reasons which made the Transvaal Government hesitate before deciding on opening the war itself. But it seems as if, once having surmounted its initial scruples, that Government threw all further consideration of the effect of its action to the winds. The sympathy felt by some persons for the Transvaal might not have been much affected by a manifesto explaining that the Republics being forced into war preferred to fight while they still had some hope of success. But nothing could have been more ill-advised or have served better to unite all parties in England, and make even the friends of the Boers realize the nature of Transvaal ambitions, than the startling ultimatum for which Mr. Reitz was responsible. It is a well known psychological rule that in moments of high excitement men unconsciously reveal thoughts and aspirations they would otherwise keep back. The rule has been well illustrated by Mr. Reitz's ultimatum and by the last few published utterances of himself and of President Steyn. That ultimatum reveals in almost every line the aspiration of the Transvaal to be the paramount Power in South Africa. The Transvaal "feels obliged in the interest not only of this Republic, but also of the whole of South Africa, to make an end as soon as possible" of the existing crisis, and practically orders the Imperial Government to disarm throughout the whole of its South African dominions. The nature of Afrikander ambitions comes out in still more violent and emphatic language in President Steyn's and Mr. Reitz's manifestoes issued after the declaration of war. Such manifestoes may, perhaps, have had an effect in stirring up warlike feeling in the Republics; they certainly have also had their effect on public opinion in England. The rulers at Pretoria and Bloemfontein have shown their hands too clearly, and made people at home realize the narrow escape South Africa has had from the development of their ambitious plans.

In Cape Colony itself the declaration of war by the Transvaal was received by an outburst of patriotic enthusiasm by the English part of the population. There was a deep satisfaction that it was no longer the question of the Uitlander grievances but of British supremacy that was to be settled, and settled in such a way as to put an end to the humiliating conditions under which they had lived for so long. As for the Dutch, it was impossible that the mere wording of the ultimatum or the fact that the Republics were the first to take action should do much to alter their sympathies. At the same time they felt that the Republics had made all demonstration against the policy of the Imperial Government impossible, and so they kept quiet. That they have done so hitherto is also in no small measure due to the exertions of Mr. Schreiner and his Ministry. As long as the issue was still open Mr. Schreiner did what he could to thwart the policy of the High Commissioner, and it would be hard now to expect enthusiastic co-operation at a moment's notice. Certainly Mr. Schreiner's declaration that he would keep Cape Colony as far as possible neutral and out of the vortex of war must read strange to people in England. But they should not forget

that at this critical period the leaders of the Bond party have at least loyally done their duty even if they have done nothing more. It is a mistake to call the whole Dutch population of our colony and its leaders disloyal. Active disloyalty has hitherto been confined to a small though growing section. But there has developed a great mass of potential disloyalty, of a disloyalty that looks to the future without contemplating any treasonable action in the present, a disloyalty entirely created by the conviction that the Transvaal is near and strong and England weak and far off. It is no use being bitter about the existence of such a state of things. We ourselves have created it by our mistakes in the past. It is a direct consequence of Mr. Gladstone's policy in 1881. Whatever settlement the Imperial Government may make after this war it is to be hoped that the mistake of 1881 will not be repeated, and that no independent nucleus will be left for the growth of disloyal and impossible ambitions. There may, or rather must, be some large measure of autonomy granted to the conquered territories in the future, but there is no room in South Africa for independent States with separate national aspirations. With their disappearance the disloyalty of the Dutch—a disloyalty based on no real and tangible grievance, but on mere political speculation—will vanish altogether. Even at this moment the news of our victories in Natal is producing a most beneficial effect, which could only be counteracted by a successful raid of the Boers into the western part of the colony; and for such a raid the time has almost passed.

Having incurred the odium of declaring war, it was the obvious interest of the Republics to make the best use of the month that must elapse before any large reinforcements could arrive from England. Of that month a fortnight has already passed. In that period the Boers have invaded Northern Natal and, though defeated in several engagements, have by their superior numbers forced the British troops to concentrate into a single force at Ladysmith to avoid being cut up separately. On the western border they have invested Mafeking, though not without receiving an unexpectedly warm reception at the hands of the brave little garrison, broken up a good part of the railway line between Mafeking and the Orange river, and temporarily isolated, but by no means completely invested, Kimberley. Along the southern frontier of the Free State they have as yet done absolutely nothing. It is not altogether easy at first sight to understand why, instead of concentrating their energies upon attacking Sir George White in Natal, the Boers did not make their main attack on Cape Colony. By leaving a sufficient force at Langs Nek and in the Drakensberg passes to prevent actual invasion of the Republics from that side it might have been possible to send a force of 15,000 men, if not more, down the railway through the Free State upon Burghersdorp, Naauwpoort, and De Aar, and thus simultaneously threaten East London, Port Elizabeth, and Cape Town. There were not 3,000 men of Regular troops and no artillery in the whole of Cape Colony when the war broke out. The Boers might possibly have in a month swept over the whole western half of Cape Colony, everywhere enlisting recruits to their victorious standards, and imposed on Great Britain the task of reconquering the greater part of her South African possessions. But several reasons prevailed against the adoption of this policy. In the first place, the Transvaal and the Free State, though allies, are still separate States. The plan described above would have required an undivided control of military affairs, and made Bloemfontein the base of operations of the combined forces for the whole campaign. It probably seemed much easier and more natural to the various commanders in consultation to leave each State free to conduct the operations on its own borders. And the same principle of local operation was really also carried out within each State. There has been very little moving about of burghers from one part of the Transvaal or Free State to the other. Natal was chosen for attack by the Transvaal because there was a large burgher population already within short reach of that frontier which had only to be supplemented by the various commandos along the railway line from Volksrust to Pretoria to convert it into a formidable force. Similarly the burghers of the eastern part of the Transvaal have gone to defend the Portuguese and Swazi border, while those on the west have attacked Mafeking. In the Free State the eastern commandos have gone to Natal, the western ones to Kimberley, and the southern ones, numbering probably less than 4,000 men altogether, have been left the double task of invading Cape Colony and keeping off the Basutos; and, as the ordinary Free State burgher is much more anxious about the safety of his farm than about turning Cape Colony upside down, the result is that practically nothing has been done to attack the most vulnerable point in our defence. It is always difficult with an undisciplined force of volunteers to induce them to fight well at any great distance from their homes, especially when they believe that those homes may be threatened by invasion. Another reason for choosing Natal as the chief battleground lay in the fact that the whole northern half of that colony is rough and broken ground, offering every opportunity to the Boer methods of warfare. It is just possible, too, that with some of the more ambitious men in the councils at Pretoria the idea may not have been altogether without influence that in the event of a great success some portion of Natal, if not the whole, might be incorporated with the Transvaal.

If the war policy of the Boers as a whole was probably mistaken, the actual invasion of Natal was not unskilfully planned. The plan was to

bring together all the Boer forces on the eastern, northern, and north-western portions of Natal on Dundee, cut off the small British force of 4,000 men from Ladysmith, and crush it by the attack of some 12,000-14,000 men. Ladysmith was meanwhile to be kept occupied by the Free State troops coming down Van Reenen's and Bezuidenhout passes. But the plan, though well conceived, was badly carried out. Impetuous Lucas Meyer began by attacking Dundee camp with the Vryheid and Utrecht commandos before slow-moving General Joubert had come up, and met a severe repulse. The next day the attempt to cut off Dundee from Ladysmith was frustrated by General French's victory at Elandslaagte, a victory only made possible by the complete inaction of the Free State forces to the west of Ladysmith. General Joubert has thus succeeded in carrying on the war for a fortnight in Natal without any very solid success, and with but slender prospect of achieving any now in face of the united British force under Sir George White, before the main army comes out from England. And on the other frontiers even less has been done.

The one serious danger that remains is the possibility of a native rising, especially among the Basutos or Swazis. Nothing could do such incalculable mischief to the Imperial Power as to tolerate even for a moment the possibility of a native attack upon the Boers. Nothing in such an event as an invasion of the Free State by the Basutos could prevent the Dutch in the colony from going to the help of their kinsfolk, and nothing could do more to alienate the sympathy of all colonists, English or Dutch, from Great Britain than any weakness or hesitation in dealing with such an issue. It is the absolute duty of the Imperial authorities to do all in their power to avert such a rising, by sending up troops, if need be, and to that duty all purely military considerations must for the time give way.

21st November 1899.

THE NATAL FIELD FORCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, OCT. 17.*

Dusty little Ladysmith is now the centre of all that the British Empire can do for the immediate defence of Natal. This all not being sufficient to guarantee the security of the country against invasion it is impossible not to appreciate the confidence which the colonists have placed in the military authorities. If it was not for the military occupation of the camp and the turmoil of the arriving "supply" of an army, the casual visitor would never realize that the township was controlled by martial law, that a town guard of citizens mounted every night, and that an enemy was actually at the gates. Business proceeds as usual, ladies give and attend tea parties, and the majority of men and women perform their duties just as they would do in ordinary circumstances. It is a quaint little place, Ladysmith, just a little tin town nestling in one of the dips of a vast rolling veldt; hugging a kopje and a rivulet, and growing a few green trees where the rest of the plain is bare and brown —a town of one street and a few detached houses, that is all. Yet it would seem that within two months it will have become a township with a history. For it is impossible to foretell what a week or ten days may bring forth. Now it is the living centre of the force in Natal. Every hour trains roll into the sidings of the little station laden with every conceivable assortment of war store. Dutch wagons with spans of ten to 14 oxen, mule trollies, water carts and pack trains throng the two-mile thoroughfare to the military camp. Every solid public building in the valley has been requisitioned as a store or hospital. From the compounds of churches and schools rise pyramids of beef boxes and flour sacks. The iron walls of hired houses are bulging with blanket bales and ordnance stores. Field ambulances and commissariat parks are billeting in every spare yard of shaded ground that can be found. Already three months' stores have arrived, and in another week the supply arrangements will be such that Ladysmith could stand a four months' siege. Not that such an eventuality is seriously expected, but in war all things are possible.

On the morning of October 12 the Transvaal and Free State burghers invaded Natal. According to official information three columns of Transvaal Boers occupied the approaches on the Charlestown border. The main column, consisting of a mixed force of Transvaalers, Free State Boers, under Piet Joubert, with the Hollander and German legions occupied Charlestown and then pushed on to "Colley's Camp" at the foot of Mount Prospect, where it bivouacked on the night of October 14. Two smaller columns violated this border, one from the direction of Wakkerstroom, the other joining the main column at Ingogo.

From information received from fugitives it would appear that an advance guard of about 1,000 men with some field artillery was detached under Commandant Ben Viljoen, who occupied Newcastle yesterday. They had pushed patrols past Ingagane and almost as far as Dannhauser, a

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matter of 16 miles from Dundee. As the Boer forces advanced a quiet and orderly evacuation of Newcastle and the railway stations above Dannhauser took place, the line being demolished half-way between the latter place and Ingagane. The occupation of Newcastle appears to have been as quiet and orderly as the evacuation, the Boer commandant intimating to the inhabitants that receipts would be given for all foodstuffs and supplies taken. The flag of the South African Republic was solemnly hoisted over the principal official building. So far no news of any excess on the part of the invaders has reached headquarters here.

One or two residents against whom some of the Boer leaders have particular animosity state that they found it necessary to leave in haste, but there is little to show that the threatening attitude of the Boers was not purely imaginary. While these three columns have been advancing southward the commando which for some weeks has been at Doorn Berg watching De Jaager's Drift over the Buffalo has also shown activity. De Jaager's Drift is about 16 miles north-east of Dundee, and is the point from which it is anticipated the invaders will attempt to turn the right flank of the defensive line held by the British force. It is in the vicinity of this drift that the invaders scored a small success on the day succeeding the declaration of war. A post consisting of five of the Natal Border Police was watching the drift, and, not being warned of the outbreak of hostilities, they allowed themselves to be captured by a party of mounted Boers. Some little skirmishing has also taken place in this direction between patrols of the 18th Hussars and Boer outposts. But up to date these have been insignificant. Yesterday I had an opportunity of visiting Glencoe and Dundee. An armoured train was carrying up a detachment of the Irish Fusiliers and I was able to accompany them. As I pointed out in a preceding letter, Major-General Sir W. Penn Symons occupied Glencoe and Dundee with the object of preventing the Boers from establishing themselves on the Biggarsberg range and thus commanding a further 40 miles of railway communication. Strategically the move was an excellent one, and if the general officer commanding in Natal had a division of cavalry at his disposal instead of a brigade the move would have been a secure one. As it is, the patrols of the Dundee force are not in touch with those of Ladysmith, and although the Boers in force could not hope to evade Dundee without exposing one or both flanks to attack, it would be difficult to prevent a mobile and enterprising enemy from cutting the communications between Dundee and Ladysmith every night.

The camp at Dundee is situated in a fine open plain, two miles from the town, and 5,000 yards south of the Imparto range. The ridges of the latter mountain affording a position which, if held, the Boers will be very chary of attacking. Three miles west of Dundee is Glencoe, the junction of the Newcastle line. This is held by a battalion and a battery. Behind Glencoe lies the Biggarsberg range with the railway communication to Ladysmith. The pass over which the line is constructed is not a difficult one ; far from it, the valley which is skirted throughout is a broad and open one and is wooded and well cultivated. It lies between the Hlatikulu and Indumeni ranges, and is a valley down which it would be difficult for a hostile force to march without an action with the Glencoe garrison. But with insufficient cavalry the line of communication is vulnerable. The bluff ridges of the Biggarsberg tend to make it so, for as far as can be learned from the disposition of the forces there is nothing to prevent the enemy from detaching a portion of a commando from the western border, which, evading the semi-loyal outposts of Helpmakaar, could sweep unseen along the southern fringe of the Biggarsberg and strike the railway without opposition at any point between the Waschbank and Elandslaagte Stations, a matter of 12 or 14 miles. Neither is this part of the line secure from attack from the Free State invaders. The commando from Van Reenen or Nelson's Kop, now in the vicinity of Besters Station on the Ladysmith-Harrismith line, could without opposition cross the Klip River Hills and make the Glencoe line somewhere about Modder Spruit. This manœuvre would only entail a ride of 16 miles. Consequently it does not require great foresight to realize that within a few days, a few hours perhaps, we shall find that direct communication with Dundee is closed. From Ladysmith to Waschbank—that is, to the foot of the Biggarsberg—there exists an open undulating plain, crossed by about 30 miles of permanent way. It is this 30 miles of rail that is the weak link in the British line. It is not even patrolled. So much for the position of the Dundee garrison. It should never be a question of a siege ; if, as I anticipate it will be, it is cut off and surrounded, it is compact and strong enough to fall back upon Ladysmith and to brush out of its way whatever opposition it may meet.

The military situation of the Ladysmith garrison is not simple. A retrograde movement on the part of the Dundee force, though not to be desired, would not have the same moral effect as a general evacuation of the whole line upon which our defensive strategy was based when war was declared. And moral effect will play a considerable part in the future development of the campaign. Yet there cannot be a a soldier in camp who can consider the present situation in any way satisfactory. The united Boers, having thrown down the gauntlet, have determined to pursue their own peculiar strategy.

Thus we find that they have invaded Natal with at least seven different commandos, each having entered the colony by a different route. Starting from the left we find that columns have crossed the Drakensberg by the passes Olivier's Hoek, Tintwa, Van Reenen, Nelson's Kop, Botha's, Langs Nek, Meyer's and De Jaager's Drifts. The subsequent movements of these columns have clearly indicated that the prearranged plan of the Boer leaders is to effect as complete an envelopment of the British position as we will allow. For this reason the columns advancing through Newcastle and Besters have hitherto avoided battle, preferring to keep us occupied on our front while the outlying commandos work round both flanks, doubtless with the object of completely isolating the Natal garrison. A glance at the map will show how easily this end under existing circumstances may be carried out. The commandos which have crossed by the Tintwa and Olivier's Hoek passes and occupied Acton Homes on Venter Spruit have a clear and easy line of advance to Colenso on the Tugela River. The strategical point of Northern Natal, as far as Pietermaritzburg is concerned, thus practically lies in their hands, for it is not only possible, but probable, that when the Free State columns arrive within striking distance of Colenso a column from the Buffalo River frontier may be there to join hands with them. So serious is the menace on the lines of communication that to-day a flying column consisting of the 19th Hussars, a battery of Field Artillery, and the Liverpool Regiment were detached from Ladysmith to cover the line of communication at this point or lower if required—an inadequately small force, but all that could be spared. Colenso, which is the point where the Tugela River is bridged for the Newcastle-Durban line, has hitherto been held by a battalion of Natal Volunteers. But even if this battalion, supported by the column from Ladysmith, is sufficient to save the bridge from destruction, it is too small to prevent the enemy from striking lower down. Thus, while our patrols are skirmishing with the enemy in the vicinity of Ladysmith and Dundee, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that at any moment we may have to realize that we have been surrounded; and we will then possibly lie beleaguered until the time when a relieving force is pushed up behind us, or relieves the pressure by an invasion of the enemy's territory, or the Boers choose to give us battle.

Circumstances, chief of which is the numerical superiority of the enemy, have forced the present situation on the army of occupation. As far as the troops themselves are circumstanced there is no cause for alarm. The supply officers at a pinch could ration the force for four months from to-morrow if our communications were severed. But what would happen in Natal behind us it is difficult to surmise. The majority of colonists seem of the opinion that having surrounded the force the invader would be content to remain without furthering this advantage—that the Dutchman would not trust himself so far removed from his base as to descend upon Pietermaritzburg. But this, of course, is but conjecture, and from my personal observation of the last few days, I am inclined to believe that a better military organization exists among these farmer-soldiers than most people are prepared to credit them with. There is not the smallest doubt but that they are working out their campaign upon skilful and carefully-designed plans not devoid of rough-and-ready strategy, and if the leading in the field can inspire cohesion between the commandos, the situation may develop badly if they refuse Sir George White battle in the open.

18th November 1899

THE BATTLE OF ELANDSLAAGTE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, Oct. 25.

Stirring events have followed each other here so rapidly that it has been almost impossible to cope with them. The sudden development came when on Wednesday evening, October 18, it was known in Ladysmith that a Transvaal commando under General Koch had moved down the Biggarsberg Pass, and, after evading the Glencoe patrols, had established itself at Elandslaagte, 16 miles from Ladysmith. Not that such a move was considered improbable. With the small British force in the colony, as long as there were no connecting posts along the railway communication between Dundee and Ladysmith, it was only to be expected that the Boer leaders would attempt to isolate the former force in order to attack both posts in detail. But it was a surprise to find that a compact commando, complete with artillery, had evaded Glencoe, dropped down the Biggarsberg almost parallel with the railway, and had so far established itself that it was able to capture an unprotected train. It was rather anticipated that a commando would make the attempt upon our communications from the right flank—that is, by way of Helpmakaar—or that the Orange Free State force, which had for some days past been in possession of Bester's Railway Station on the Free State-Ladysmith extension, would attempt to cross the high auxiliary spurs of the Biggarsberg which lie parallel to the railway line in front of Elandslaagte.

The incidents in connexion with the capture of the train and the attempted capture of a preceding train are interesting. The advanced guard of General Koch's party arrived at the hamlet of Elandslaagte as a train stood in the station. Grasping the situation the driver turned on steam, and under a running fusillade forced a passage, eventually arriving safely at Dundee. The second train, which arrived later, was less fortunate, and the Boers having occupied the station-yard turned the signals and points against the train and easily "held it up." It was a good prize, as it was a "supply" train with several wagons of live stock. In the passenger compartment were two special correspondents, who were made prisoners of war. As can easily be imagined Thursday was an exceptionally anxious day in Ladysmith. Advices from General Penn Symons showed that the enemy had gathered in force before Dundee, and an attack was hourly expected. The movements of the three Free State commandos before Ladysmith were wrapped in such mystery that it was feared that they were working south towards Colenso, that flank being indifferently protected. On Friday morning a reconnaissance in force under Major-General J. T. P. French, who had arrived from England on the preceding day, was sent out towards Elandslaagte, and as the troops left the environs of the town it was known that the attack upon Dundee had commenced. General French moved his cavalry out as far as Modder's Spruit, 12 miles along the Dundee road. From a knoll overlooking the flag station of Modder's Spruit, we caught a glimpse of the Dutchmen. The day was overcast and misty, in fact, a drizzling rain was falling, consequently the reconnaissance was not as successful as it might have been, and the two battalions of infantry and the battery supporting the cavalry were able to make but little progress. But from the knoll we were able to make out horsemen upon the low ridges a couple of miles in our direct front. They were not in force, and appeared to be a foraging party. A squadron of the 5th Lancers was sent forward to reconnoitre, and pushed on to within two miles of the Elandslaagte coalfields. That the horsemen seen were enemy was proved by a subsequent capture, for a patrol of the enemy, consisting of two men, rode into us, having mistaken the squadron for their own people. The information drawn from this patrol was not reliable, but it localized the enemy, for they allowed that they formed part of an outpost of 50 men occupying Elandslaagte. They seemed eminently pleased at being captured, and scouted the suggestion that they should be escorted back, being willing to come alone to camp. The capture of these men and another vedette of equal strength proved the sole incidents of the reconnaissance, and the force returned to camp in pouring rain. On returning to Ladysmith I met Sir George White and staff, and heard from them the news of the successful engagement at Dundee. But the elation at the splendid feats of the British infantry was tempered with the sad news of the General's dangerous wound. The information concerning the affair was meagre, but the effect on Ladysmith was magical, and in a moment the heavy weight of anxiety had been lifted from the little station. The first great test had ended in our favour, and for the moment the tension was relieved.

On Saturday morning another reconnaissance was made towards Elandslaagte. General French was again in command, and had with him the Imperial Light Horse, under Lieutenant-Colonel Scott-Chisholme, and the Natal Volunteer Artillery (six guns), supported by half a company of the Manchester Regiment in a train, the latter being piloted by the armoured train.

The advanced guard pushed on quietly, and crossed the low kopjes which the enemy had occupied on the preceding day. There was no sign of an enemy until the column was within a couple of miles of the Elandslaagte coalfields, when a scout was sighted, and, I believe, shot by the advanced patrol. Having reconnoitred and discovered the direction in which the Elandslaagte Station lay, General French brought up the Volunteer battery, and at 8 30 a.m. slowly advanced along a low tableland which terminated suddenly in a cliff. Below this cliff stretched a plain for two miles, or perhaps two miles and a half, forming a gentle depression in the centre. In its centre lay the station and settlement of Elandslaagte. In our direct front appeared a group of tin houses, surrounded by trees, while to the left stretched away the goods extension leading to the coalfields. The northern slopes of the valley stood out marked black with smoke-stacks and pit-mouths. But our attention rested on other matters than tin dwellings and colliery clumps, for the place was alive with Boers. It was evident that our appearance upon the skyline of the tableland had taken the enemy completely by surprise. Mounted Boers could be seen all over the settlement. As soon as they realized that a force was upon them they turned their horses' heads towards the hillslopes behind the line and evacuated the settlement at their best pace. They all seemed to be making for a slope which lay at the foot of a kopje taller than the surrounding country, about 5,000 yards from where we stood. As there were many men still in the station, as soon as our advanced guard spread out in the plain below the tableland General French ordered up the Volunteer Battery. It came into action on the edge of the tableland against the principal buildings in the railway yard. Two shells were fired, both taking effect. The sequence was unexpected, for barely had the smoke of the second round cleared when two shells dropped in rapid succession into the battery groups. Both missiles exploded, and one

so damaged the team and gear of an ammunition wagon that subsequently it could not be moved. Having established their range, the enemy began to shell the battery heavily. They were using a smokeless explosive, but their battery stood declared by the flash of the guns against the shadow of the hillside. They appeared to have two guns in position at the foot of the slope beforementioned, while with strong glasses it could be seen that the hilltops and a ridge in the background were covered with men. The Volunteer Battery attempted to return the fire, but, as they are equipped with 7-pounder screw guns on wheeled mountings, there was little chance of their subduing the fire of a battery of superior calibre at a range of 4,000 to 5,000 yards. But the enemy's practice was a revelation. With their first three rounds they found the range to a nicety, and for the space of ten minutes their projectiles practically fell on the edge of the tableland. The shooting was wonderful, but not being well fused many of the shells buried themselves in the soft earth before bursting. General French saw that there could be no question of occupying Elandslaagte with the small force with him, so he moved his guns back to a position circling the armoured train and quietly withdrew his force out of range. The enemy fired a few rounds at the trains, but these fell short. As the General and his staff left the tableland, a shell burst amongst them, but, beyond scattering a shower of mud over them, did no damage. The overturned ammunition wagon had to be abandoned. The telegraph wire was tapped, and the General communicated with headquarters, Ladysmith, with the result that we learned that we were to be reinforced by two regiments of British cavalry, two field batteries, and two and a-half battalions of infantry, the latter to arrive by train. On receiving this information General French withdrew the whole force to the vicinity of Modders Spruit.

As we fell back we could see parties of mounted enemy leaving their position and pressing at a gallop round the reverse of a hill on the far side of the railway line. They evidently hoped to work round the trains, doubtless with the object of removing rails behind them. The supposition that we had completely surprised them was confirmed later in the morning, when a batch of Europeans who had been detained as prisoners by the Boers joined us. They included the manager and officials of the principal coal mine and the captured correspondents. The story which Mr. Harris, the manager of the Elandslaagte mine, had to tell was interesting. Anticipating that the Boers might make an attempt upon Elandslaagte, Mr. Harris had taken the precaution to bury all his specie, blasting gunpowder, and spare ammunition, but he had kept his mines open to the last moment. He was having his dinner when the Boer commando rode up on Wednesday. The commando consisted of about 800 Transvaal Boers, in chief from the Johannesburg district. There were also 200 Free State Boers and 80 trained gunners of the German legion. The contingent was under the command of General Koch, and in its ranks were Colonel Schiel, the chief gunnery instructor, Judge Koch, Count Zipplein, Commandant Pienaar, Dr. Coster, Landdrost Maré of Boksburg, Captain Figulus von Leggelo, Public Prosecutor, and many other high officials. There were two quick-firing field guns with the column, directly under the command of a Captain Schultz. On arrival at Mr. Harris's mine, the Boers, after rifling his cash safe, had left his other property untouched, placing him on parole to appear at an inquiry on the following day. The only loot of importance besides the trains which fell into their hands was 300lb. of dynamite. As soon as they were in possession of the station and train the Boers chose the position from which they had shelled the head of General French's column, and there established their laager and camp, this camp being the scene of the final action which broke up the commando. On the Friday the prisoners were brought up before General Koch, who examined them in the station, sitting at a bare table munching a mutton chop, which he ate without table appointments. After this inquiry the prisoners were handed over to a German officer, who treated them with every courtesy, and even hinted to them early on Saturday morning that the opportunity for escape had arrived. Mr. Harris also stated that the commandant anticipated a reinforcement both from Joubert's force at Dundee and from the Free State commando in the vicinity of Besters. The news of the battle at Dundee had arrived, but had been given to the Boers as a British defeat.

About 11 o'clock the first reinforcements began to arrive from Ladysmith—the 5th Lancers under Colonel King, and two batteries of artillery, the latter having come out at a gallop with double teams. Then the infantry arrived under Colonel Ian Hamilton, the second half-battalion of the Manchester Regiment, seven companies of the Devonshire Regiment under Major Park, and five companies of the Gordon Highlanders under Lieutenant-Colonel Dick-Cunyngham, V.C. Pending the arrival of these reinforcements, and even while the infantry was detraining, some desultory skirmishing took place upon the flanks. It will be remembered that a party of Boers had been seen leaving their laager with the supposed object of cutting off the train. A squadron of the 5th Lancers and of the Imperial Light Horse had been sent out on the right of the railway to cover the flank, which would be exposed to any attack from them. From 10 to 2 the squadron was in contact with the enemy, and, though the Boers fired many shots, they were always careful to keep at a respectful distance and invariably fell back when our patrols advanced. On the left of Modders Spruit the situation was somewhat different. About 3 o'clock a squadron of the 5th Dragoons was

pushed forward, to the base of a big hill over which there is a pass leading to the Free State railway connexions. As this squadron stood halted and extended in the plain, Maxim fire was suddenly opened upon it at an absurdly short range. The direction of the fire was inaccurate, as no casualty occurred, and, one of our batteries coming into action, this party of enemy speedily withdrew into the hills and took no further part in the day's fighting. It is believed, but not verified, that this contingent with the Maxim gun was the Orange Free State reinforcement which General Koch expected. Whoever they were they remained content to view the battle of the evening without taking part in it. About 3 o'clock all the reinforcements were up, and in spite of the few hours of daylight left General French determined to attack the position. The field of operations here requires description. The enemy were in position on a ridge about 800ft. above the level of the railway to the north of the Ladysmith-Dundee road. This ridge makes almost a right angle with the permanent way, but stands away from it about 2,000 yards. At the railway end rises a conical hill covering the whole top of the ridge, this kopje is connected by a nek to another hill, which absolutely sweeps the table summit of the ridge for 700 to 1,000 yards. These two kopjes and the nek were the main position held by the enemy, their laager being in the nek and their guns intrenched on the smaller hill. In front of the ridge extends an open valley of veldt, gently sloping upwards for 4,000 or 5,000 yards in the direction of Ladysmith, where it merges into a succeeding ridge. A few of the enemy held this succeeding ridge, doubtless the men that had been seen leaving the laager in the morning. These were turned out as the infantry advanced across another stretch of open by dismounted squadrons of the 5th Lancers and Imperial Light Horse. At 4 p.m. the infantry, the Manchester Regiment leading, supported by the Devonshire Regiment, with the half-battalion of Gordon Highlanders in reserve, began to form on the flat eminence, which I have called the succeeding ridge. As soon as they appeared on this exposed plateau the Dutch guns opened with common shell. Their ranging again was good, but the fire was ineffective. As the Manchester Regiment moved to the right and the Devonshire Regiment deployed on its left the 21st Field Battery galloped up and came into action against the enemy's artillery at about 4,500 yards, being forced to unlimber without cover in the open space between the Devonshire and Manchester Regiments. For six minutes the enemy returned the fire, laying their guns with great accuracy on our battery in action. As an effect of this shell fire Captain Campbell, R.A., was wounded in the leg, an ammunition wagon upset, and several men and horses killed and shattered. Just as the 42nd Field Battery came into action the enemy's guns ceased firing. But the position of their battery being declared, the artillery preparation on our part commenced. Sir George White and staff had arrived, and Sir George remained throughout the engagement without relieving General French from the direction of the operations. The scene during the short artillery preparation was a weird one, even for a battlefield. A huge bank of thunder cloud formed a background to the Dutch position, one dense pall of cloud fringed with the grey of a setting sun. So dark was this background that every puff of bursting shrapnel showed distinctly to the naked eye. Ever and anon a blinding flash would momentarily chase the gloom away, causing the saw-edged limits of the ridge to stand out sharp and clear against the evening sky. The detonation of the guns and crashing of the galloping wagons seemed in harmony with peals of thunder which at periods dwarfed the din of battle. But the light was failing, night being hastened by the gathering storm clouds, and after half an hour of preparation the order was given to Colonel Ian Hamilton to set his infantry machine in motion. Shortly previous to this parties of mounted Boers could be seen galloping down the western slopes on the ridge on the right of our line, and apparently doing their best to leave the field. They were pursued by the squadron of 5th Lancers and Imperial Light Horse on that flank. It is not certain if this flight was real or a ruse to draw the cavalry into an ambush. It seems incredible that mounted men desirous of quitting a battlefield should choose to gallop across part of the attacking front when they could have secured ample cover by slipping down the reverse of their own position. Personally I believe it to have been a ruse, and that these men, failing to embroil the cavalry covering our right in advance, returned to their own fighting line by galloping round the shoulder of the ridge.

The order of the infantry attack was as follows :—The Devonshire Regiment was ordered to deliver a frontal attack, which necessitated their crossing the open plain of rolling veldt to which I have already referred. The Manchester Regiment was detailed to turn the enemy's left, and, advancing along the summit of the ridge, drive the Dutchmen back upon their main position ; they were to be supported by the five companies of Highlanders. The two batteries were to support the infantry advance, moving in to closer ranges as the attack developed. In the first instance it will be better to follow the fortunes of the frontal attack. Major Park placed three companies in the firing line in the following order from the right :—F Company (Lieutenant Field), G Company (Lieutenant Caffin), D Company (Captain Lafone). These were extended over a front of 400 or 500 yards and formed their own supports. The remaining four companies were in reserve under Major Currie, being in single rank, in column, with about 50 paces interval, which was increased when the enemy's guns came into action. As

soon as the battalion was well over the plateau and descending into the valley, the enemy found them with shrapnel, but the missiles went high, or with extraordinary precision burst in the intervals between companies. The casualties from shell fire were therefore slight, three men only from A Company being hit. When the regiment had advanced to about 1,200 yards from the position, Major Park, who commanded his battalion with great coolness, halted it and opened fire, the only cover available being the ant heaps with which the plain abounded. The battalion now came under a severe infantry fire, but nothing could have surpassed the steadiness with which this south country battalion moved forward. It had the admiration of all that day; its advance throughout was slow, deliberate, and irresistible. After firing a few volleys the firing line was reinforced with supports, and again steadily advanced. Though men were dropping fast and the air whistled with Mauser bullets there was no sign of streakiness, and though there was no cover the men stepped on undaunted until they were within 800 yards from the summit of the hill. The fading light and the colour of their uniforms probably saved them from the slaughter that one imagined must be in store for them, as they lay at the bottom of the depression, waiting for the flank attack to develop. Here, with the guns thundering above them and the soil torn with incessant rifle fire, they lay for over half an hour waiting for the moment when the advance should sound. Rarely has a regiment been so severely tried, never has one acquitted itself better.

While the Devonshire Regiment was lying in the valley taking advantage of what cover the ant-heaps could afford it, the flank attack on the enemy's left was developing. The Manchester Regiment had moved past the batteries, had been joined by a dismounted squadron of the Imperial Light Horse under Major Woolls Sampson and Captain Mukins, and was pushing round to the lower summit of the range. The Gordon Highlanders followed in support. Just as the latter reached the foot of the ridge the storm, which had been threatening so long, burst, and in a few moments every one was drenched to the skin. The shower was sharp and short, but by the time it was over the Gordon Highlanders were among the stones which covered the crest of the ridge. Dropping shots were falling about them, a couple of men were hit, another shot dead, and then the supports were into the firing line and filling up the gaps in the line of the Manchester Regiment and the Light Horse. There was a short plateau to cross, then a saving dip, with a climb to the main plateau again. Cheerily the men responded to their officers, and wave after wave of kilts and khaki swept up to the skyline. Here they wavered and dropped, for of the first sections only one in four could pass. A moment they checked, dead, wounded, and quick seemed sandwiched together amongst the boulders. Then their officers shouted them up. Again the sky-line darkened with lines of men bent double. Again they seemed to melt away; still were they fed from below. And then all were over, but not all, for 50 stout fellows lay prostrate in the clefts of the rain-washed stones. And when the dip was passed, what a task lay before them! They were called to face 600 yards of rough, rock-strewn open—intersected at intervals with barbed-wire fences. At the end rose a kopje, which commanded the plateau from end to end, as a butt would command a rifle-range. No one could be seen, but all could feel that that final kopje was alive with small-bore rifles. Stumbling forward among the stones, blundering over the bodies of their comrades as they fell before them, the men pressed on. It had ceased to be a moment for regimental commanders. Even sections could barely keep together; it was the brute courage of the individual alone that carried them on. Men stopped, lay under stones and fired, were shot as they lay or rose from cover to rush another dozen yards. Men and officers were slaughtered in batches at the fences. But here in places the rain of bullets had done the work of wire-cutters. More than halfway was won, and yet, though the summit of the kopje seemed one continued burst of shrapnel, the fire from it in no wise slackened. It seemed that the men had done all that could be done. Colonel Dick-Cunyngham was shot in two places, half the officers of the Gordon Highlanders were down The level crest seemed strewn with countless casualties. The critical moment had arrived. It was to be victory now or never; Colonel Ian Hamilton ordered a bugler to sound the "Charge." Out rang the bugle, such buglers as were unhurt took up the note; Drum-Major Lawrence, of the Gordon Highlanders, rushed out into the open and headed the line, playing the fateful call. The sound of the Devonshire bugles came up from the valley bottom, and the persistent rythm of their firing gave heart to the flank attack. Waves of glittering bayonets danced forward in the twilight. Twenty determined men still held the final kopje. Again the bugles sounded "the advance," then the "cease fire" rang out. There was a lull in the firing; men stopped and stood up clear of cover. In a moment the Boers reopened and swept away a dozen brave men. But the dastardly ruse was a last and futile effort to save the day. Lieutenant Field, at the head of his company of the Devonshire Regiment, was into the battery with the bayonet; the men who had served the guns till the steel was 6ft. away from them were shot or bayoneted. Devons, Manchesters, Highlanders, and Light Horsemen met and dashed for the laager in the dip below. It was a wild three minutes; men were shouting "Majuba!" Then in honest cadence the "cease

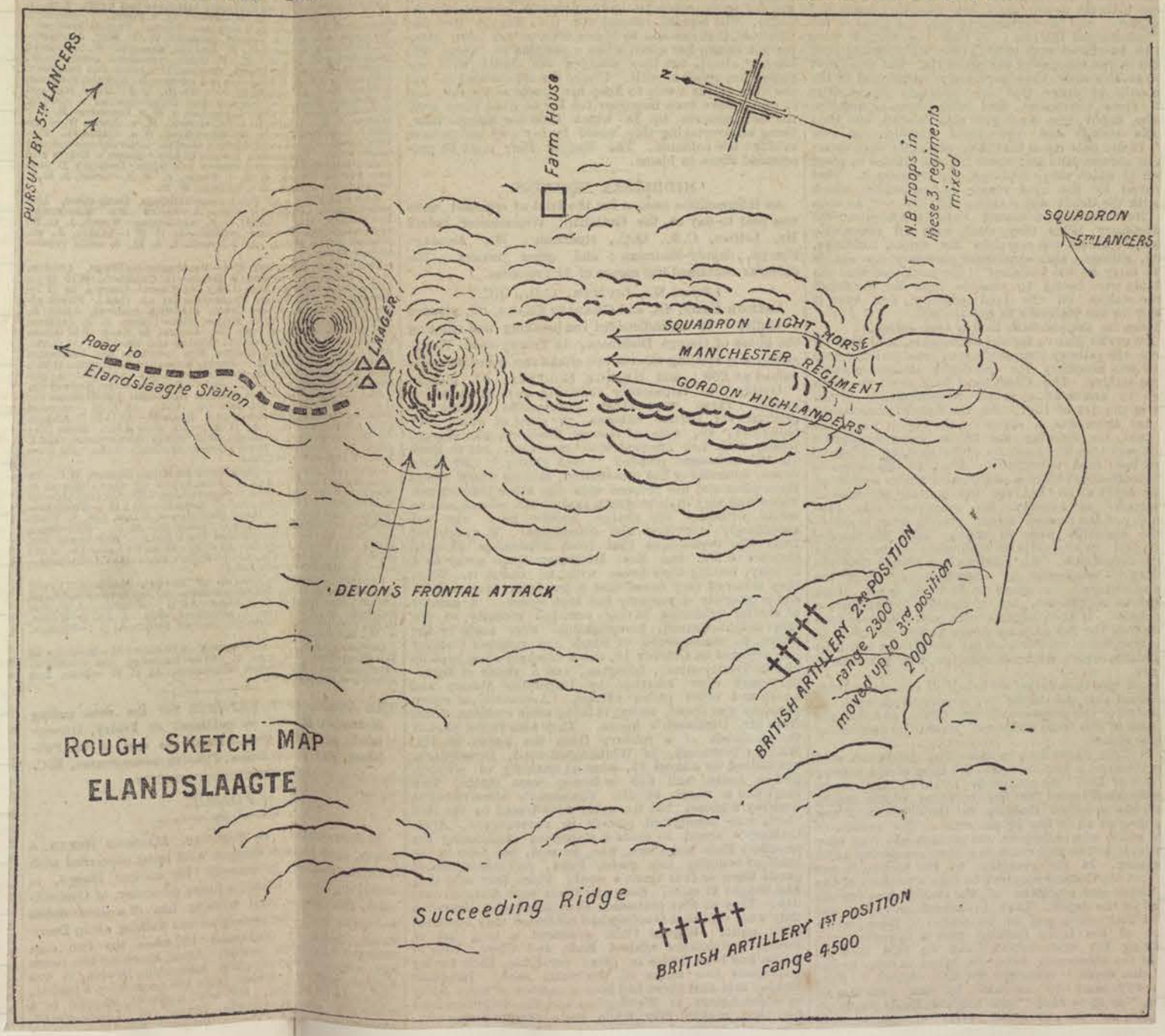
fire " sounded, the pipes of the Gordons skirled the regimental quick step, and we saw a sight which thrilled us all, the white flag fluttering from a Mauser carbine held by a bearded Boer.

The Boers were beaten and driven from a strong position of their own choosing. Some half-dozen men stood in the laager on the nek holding a flag of truce to stay the fire of the despised Rooinek. In the meantime fugitives were streaming down the reverse of the position. Firing will never on these occasions stop automatically, and a smattering musketry still took place and continued on into the night. But before darkness became absolute the mass of Dutch fugitives were overtaken by the 5th Lancers, kept in leash on the left for this purpose. Their work was simple, and the infantry success on the hilltop was rendered complete by a cavalry pursuit pushed home. But there had been a price upon the victory. It has been said that infantry would never in the face of modern arms be called upon to deliver an attack such as was made at Elandslaagte. But having done so, the price of necessity must be heavy. We lost in the action against Commandant Koch's commando four officers and 37 men killed, 31 officers and 175 men wounded, and ten men missing. What the enemy's losses were it is hard to estimate, as early in the day they had made arrangements to remove their killed and wounded. But a British burying party subsequently sent out from Ladysmith interred 65 dead Boers found lying on the field alone, so that, with the 50 odd for which the Lancers were responsible, it will not be far wrong to estimate their losses in killed alone at 150. As for their wounded, but few of those that have surrendered have escaped. Amongst the dead upon the field were found Leggelo, Public Prosecutor, Dr. Coster, Bodenstein, Judicial Magistrate, Krugersdorp, Maré, Landrost Boksburg, Captain Figuius, Krugersdorp. Commandant Ben Viljoen is reported to have been present, and to have died of his wounds. Lying on the hillside were Commandants Kock, Pienaar, and Pretorius, Colonel Schiel, Judge Kock, De Witt Hamer, Volksraad member for Barberton, and many other prominent Hollander and Dutch officials.

The British force was compelled to bivouac on the position it had won. Then began the sad and gruesome task of searching for the wounded in the dark. It was impossible to find all in the evening, but numbers were carried down, as were the breech blocks of the two captured guns, which, according to the Intelligence Department, proved to be the identical guns captured at Krugersdorp. The reverse of the position was littered with Mausers, and for the trouble of seizing their bridles Boer ponies became individual property. Koch's commando was completely broken up. Three hundred wounded and whole prisoners remained in our hands, and all the equipment of 1,200 to 1,400 men.

Taking a compass bearing, at a quarter to 7 I started across the veldt to return to Ladysmith, where I arrived shortly before 11, after having been in the saddle since 3 o'clock in the morning.

SKETCH MAP OF THE BATTLEFIELD OF ELANDSLAAGTE.



14.
18th November 1899.

THE DUNDEE COLUMN.

THE BATTLE OF TALANA HILL.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, OCT. 27.

When the history of the second Boer war comes to be written the story of the Dundee column will probably stand out as one of the most brilliant episodes—brilliant yet tragical—in a campaign which is sure to be full of incident. The storming of Talana Hill will always be remembered as one of the greatest achievements in the long roll of the great achievements of British infantry; while the death of the distinguished general who created the column and formed the plan of the battle and the subsequent retreat of the victorious army from an untenable position add the touch of pathos which so greatly enhances the human interest of a military record.

About five weeks ago South Africa was startled by the announcement that a force consisting of two battalions of infantry, a regiment of cavalry, and two field batteries had been moved forward with great celerity and secrecy to occupy Dundee, an important coal-mining centre 48 miles north-east of Ladysmith, which was then, as it is now again, our advanced post. The movement, whatever its strategic import, proved at once of considerable political importance. The diplomatic situation at the moment was highly critical, and it was known that the Boers were considering the advisability of taking the initiative and striking a sudden blow before the reinforcements from India arrived. The forward movement on our side, entirely legitimate as it was, as it still left us 70 miles from Charlestown, afforded to the war party in Pretoria the excuse they desired, and large commandos were at once assembled around the frontier of the northern angle of Natal and the situation created which immediately afterwards resulted in war.

Strategically the movement is open to criticism. As a glance at the map will show, the position of a detached force at Dundee must be very precarious, its communications with Ladysmith being open to attack from either flank; and in the light of subsequent events it is perhaps regrettable that the movement ever took place. But strategy can rarely find a clear field for its operations, and in this case political and economic considerations both intervened. The Government and people of Natal regarded it as of the greatest importance that the local coal supply of the colony should be maintained, and the abandonment without a struggle at the opening of the war of the territory as far south as Ladysmith might have had consequences far more serious than any likely to result from the subsequent withdrawal. Moreover, at the time of the occupation of Dundee it was by no means certain that the Free State would be a party to the approaching conflict, and with the Free State neutral the position both of Dundee and of its supporting base, Ladysmith, would have been incomparably stronger. However, when all explanations have been given it must probably be admitted that General Symons, who then commanded in Natal, underrated the strength of the enemy and overrated the capacity of the force at his own disposal. The error, if error there was, was nobly expiated on Talana Hill; and there were few in South Africa who in the beginning blamed the movement, few who foresaw the strength and power of initiative that the Boers have undoubtedly developed.

On the arrival of Sir George White in Natal Lieutenant-General Sir William Penn Symons was sent forward to take command at Dundee, and on the outbreak of war the forces at his disposal were the 1st Battalion of the King's Royal Rifles, the 2nd Battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers, the 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the 1st Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment, the 18th Hussars, the 13th, 67th, and 69th Field Batteries, and small detachments of Natal Mounted Police and Carabineers. A few days after the war began the Boer forces occupied Newcastle, and our patrols began to come into touch with small parties of the enemy. On Wednesday, October 18, it was found necessary to withdraw a picket which had been posted five miles away at Glencoe, the point of junction of the Dundee branch line with the main line to the south. On Thursday the mail train from Ladysmith was fired upon at Elandslaagte, and a second portion of the same train, which was running in two sections, was a little later captured by the Boers. Nothing, however, seemed as yet to portend a serious attack upon our position at Dundee, and General Symons, though fully prepared to meet such an attack, certainly did not expect it; though, curiously enough, Mr. Escombe, who was staying at Dundee, told me on Thursday that he had received information from a friendly Dutchman that a commando of 7,000 Boers from the east and a large commando from the north were to make a simultaneous attack upon the following day, information which, in the light of subsequent events, can be seen to have accurately reflected the intentions of the Boer commanders.

As a matter of fact, a large commando from the east under Lucas Meyer, Chairman of the First Volksraad and founder of the new Republic, now the Vryheid district of the Transvaal, crossed the Buffalo River at Landman's Drift on Thursday evening and pressed forward towards Dundee. At half-past 2 on the morning of Friday, Octo-

ber 20, a mounted infantry picket of the Dublin Fusiliers was driven in across Smith's Nek, where the road towards the river passes between the hills on the east of the town, a private being wounded. Nothing was known as to the strength of the enemy, and a company of the Dublins was sent forward to support. On the east of the town the ground slopes down for half a mile to a donga, or river-bed, from which on the other side the long ascent to the top of Talana Hill begins. In this donga the company of the Dublins took up position; hither when the battle began the infantry were pushed forward, and here they were formed for attack. As the dawn grew into daylight we could see the Boers all along the sky line on the top of Talana Hill, which lies on our left of Smith's Nek, and also on another kopje to the right of the Nek. About half-past 5 the Boers opened with their rifles on some of our men who were visible above the banks of the donga, and a few minutes later, to our great astonishment, and to the still greater astonishment of the camp, where nothing serious apparently was expected, the sound of a big gun was heard and a shell passed over our heads and made its way to the camp. Another shell speedily followed and a vigorous bombardment of the camp, at a range of 3,000 yards, at once began. It was now evident that the Boers were in force, their guns appearing to be about half-a-dozen in number. Presently the cheerful sound of our guns replying reached us, one battery, the 67th, firing from the camp, the others coming into action in forward positions on the high ground to the east of the town, the 13th on our right, the 69th on our left. Later on, as the Boer fire slackened, these two batteries moved down to positions immediately on the town side of the donga, firing at a range of about 2,000 yards. For two hours the battle consisted of a sharp artillery duel, till at 7 30 the Boer guns went out of action, whether disabled or not it is impossible to say. Their range had been excellent, but their shell fortunately defective, never bursting, so that our losses at this stage were insignificant, while our shrapnel, beautifully aimed at the crest of the hill and bursting on the flat summit alive with Boers, must have been very destructive.

Meanwhile, three regiments of infantry—the Dublins, the Rifles, and the Irish Fusiliers—had been moved forward to the donga, the Leicesters and 67th Field Battery being left to guard the camp against a possible attack from the north, and as soon as the Boer guns were silenced General Symons gave the order to assault Talana Hill. The hill rises about 800ft. above the level of the donga, and the distance to the top was more than a mile. The first portion of the ascent is gentle, over open ground, to a homestead known as Smith's Farm, surrounded by a broken wood. Above the wood the ground is rough and rocky, and the ascent steep, and half way up from this point a thick stone wall runs round the hill, the fringe of a wide terrace of open ground. Above the terrace the ascent is almost perpendicular, and at the end was the Boer position on the flat top so characteristic of South African hills. Altogether the position seemed impregnable, even if held by a small body against large forces; and General Symons must have had extraordinary confidence in his men when he ordered 2,000 to take it in the teeth of a terrible and sustained fire from superior numbers of skilled riflemen. His confidence was fully justified. It is said that he deliberately resolved to show the Boers that Majuba was not the measure of what British infantry could do, and if so he more than succeeded. To find a parallel for the endurance, tenacity, and heroic determination to press forward over all obstacles and at all hazards one has to go back to Wellington's invincible infantry in the Peninsula.

The morning was dull and cheerless, with drizzling rain, and the men had to go through their eight hours' fighting without their breakfast. The wood was the first cover available after leaving the donga, and in the rush for this position the Dublins led the way, though afterwards the three regiments went on practically side by side. The advance of the infantry was covered by a vigorous cannonade from our guns, but the appearance of our men in the open was nevertheless the signal for a storm of rifle fire from the Boers, though our losses at this stage were extraordinarily small. In the wood, which for some time marked the limit of the advance, they were considerable, and here about 9 30 General Symons, who had galloped up to tell his men that the hill must be taken, fell mortally wounded. Throughout the morning he had exposed himself perhaps unnecessarily, his position always being marked by the red flag carried by a Lancer orderly. By 10 o'clock our men, creeping up inch by inch and taking advantage of every available cover, had gained the shelter of the stone wall which serves as a parapet to the terrace, but for a long time further advance seemed impossible. As often as a man became visible the Boers poured upon him a deadly fire, while, whatever their losses from our artillery, they rarely afforded a mark for a rifle. About 12, however, a lull in their fire afforded our men an opportunity for scaling the wall and dashing across the open ground beyond, and then the almost sheer ascent of the last portion of the hill began. Here it was that our losses were greatest, the Rifles losing most heavily, and it would seem that if any distinction can be drawn to this regiment belonged the first honours of the day. Colonel Gunning, who was always in front of his men, was shot through the head near the top of the hill; Captain Pechell, who had only arrived two days before from the Sudan and had led his men splendidly throughout the fight, also fell; and out of 17 officers who went into action the battalion lost five killed and seven wounded. The Royal Irish Fusiliers also lost very heavily, the Dublins, more fortunate, appa-

rently, in their position, escaping most easily. As our men neared the top our guns were compelled to slacken fire, and the Boers, of course, were enabled to strengthen their rifle fire accordingly. The last portion of the ascent was rushed with the bayonet, but the Boers did not await the charge, the few who had stood their ground to near the end being seen flying precipitately across the top of the hill when our men reached the crest. About thirty dead and wounded were lying on the ground and cases of ammunition and Mauser rifles strewn about showed the hurry of the flight. Boer ponies were galloping about, and one of the humorous sights of the day was men of the Dublin Fusiliers gaily riding back from the battle on these captive steeds. The Rifles captured two Transvaal flags and a field hospital was found with 70 wounded Boers behind their position.

During the last stage of the fight our guns had been moved up from their second position behind the donga to positions on the flanks of the wood, and when our men emerged on the top of the hill a battery was pushed forward along the road to the top of the Nek. From here the Boer army was visible within easy range retreating across the open country below, and if the opportunity had been promptly seized the whole force could have been annihilated or compelled to lay down its arms ; but there was some unfortunate misunderstanding about an armistice and the opportunity was lost. The defeat of this commando has been a surprise and a salutary lesson to the Boers ; the results of its total destruction or surrender would have been incalculable. As it was, however, the victory was well worth the price that was paid for it. The impression made on the Boers both by our infantry and artillery was enormous. One wounded prisoner declared that he had had much experience of Kaffir wars, but this was quite a different business ; " it was awful !" Since Talana Hill Lucas Meyer's commando has disappeared and apparently ceased to be a factor in the campaign. The victorious force had afterwards to retire from Dundee, but their opponents of Friday last played no part in the operations that led to the withdrawal.

As we returned from the field rain came down in torrents. All day long we had expected an attack from the Newcastle road or Impati Hill to the north, which fortunately never came ; but in the course of the afternoon firing, whose reason no one could explain, was heard towards the north-east. The cavalry had been sent out in this direction in the morning to operate on the right flank of the Boer position, and as a squadron of the Hussars, accompanied by Colonel Möller and four sections of mounted infantry, disappeared and were not heard of by us again till we learnt in Ladysmith that they had been captured, it may be presumed that this firing marked the position in which they had been cut off and surrounded.

On Saturday afternoon the expected attack from the north came at last, but a day too late to be really effective. There had been a tremendous storm of rain, and soon after it ceased shells began to fall into the camp from two 40-pounders firing at a range of 6,000 yards from positions on the Newcastle road and the Imputi Hill to the north. The attack having been foreseen, the tents were down and the transport drawn back out of range. Our guns attempted to reply, but their shots fell far short. Fortunately the Boer shell, though their guns were well handled, did little damage ; only one burst, and it was by this that Lieutenant Hannah, of the Leicesters, was killed. At the end of an hour rain and mist stopped the bombardment, and that night the force, abandoning the camp, withdrew to some high ground two miles to the south out of range of the 40-pounders, and spent a comfortless night in the open under pouring rain. The town was at the same time evacuated by its inhabitants, most of whom took refuge in some farmhouses near the position occupied by the troops. Every one expected a hard struggle on Sunday, but after dawn hour after hour went by and no enemy appeared. About 9 o'clock General Yule, who had now succeeded to the command, received news of the victory at Elandslaagte, and, leaving a portion of the force with orders to reoccupy the original camp, marched with the remainder to Glencoe to intercept the fugitives. Our guns came into action on a body of the enemy, and the Hussars had an encounter with a small party ; but suddenly the 40-pounders, which we supposed had been withdrawn, opened again on the force drawn up at Glencoe and on the party which was reoccupying the camp. After a brief cannonade rain again intervened and we marched back to the position we had started from in the morning.

It was now becoming clear that, without reinforcements, Dundee was untenable, and reinforcements from Ladysmith could not be spared. The only reply to the 40-pounders was an attack upon the position, and our small force, exhausted with fighting, picket duty, marching and counter-marching, could not be asked, when practically surrounded by the enemy in unknown force, to undertake such a task, though the men, who never lost their spirits, were anxious to make the attempt upon the guns. There was no longer any motive for holding Dundee as the coal mines had ceased working and railway communication was cut off ; and in all the circumstances a concentration of all our forces at Ladysmith seemed the wisest policy. At 9 o'clock on Sunday night the column started, marched through the town, and took the Helpmakaar road towards the south. A retreat is always a dangerous operation, and this was particularly so with the enemy on both flanks as well as in rear ; and as it was necessary to get through the town and out of range of the enemy's guns under cover of the night the camp was abandoned as it was left on Saturday and the wounded

necessarily left behind under the Red Cross flag. All the transport, however, accompanied the column, and the march through the town was so quietly made that few of the townspeople knew next morning whither the troops had gone. The Rifles, under the able guidance of Major Campbell, who had succeeded to the command on the death of Colonel Gunning, acted as advanced guard, and before daybreak the column halted in a good position about eight miles from the town. In the afternoon we pushed on to a point called Beith, where a road diverges to the south-west following the Waschbank Pass through the Biggarsberg Range to Ladysmith. This was the really critical stage of the retreat, but by a long forced march on Monday night the range was successfully crossed, and Tuesday we spent encamped in an open position on the banks of the Waschbank river. Here we heard the guns of the engagement at Tinta Inyoni, and artillery and mounted infantry were sent out to take the enemy on the flank, but they had withdrawn in the opposite direction and none were seen. On Wednesday we set forth at dawn, crossed Sunday River, and, leaving the column here, some of us rode ahead and within six or seven miles came into touch with the scouts of the Ladysmith force. Yesterday the Dundee column arrived here after another forced night march, and without having been molested at any point in their journey, though as I write it is stated that Joubert has followed up, and is now on the east within striking distance of our forces.

A number of us only left Dundee at 8 or 9 o'clock on Monday morning, and rode after the retreating column. The Boers had not then entered the town, though it was reported subsequently that they arrived two hours later after firing some shells at the deserted town and camp. In spite of their gigantic army of spies their information seems to be very defective, and the withdrawal of a small column through a difficult country without molestation from superior numbers of the enemy is a greater reflection on Boer generalship than even the want of concert displayed in the attacks upon our camp on Friday and Saturday. The rank and file have shown fighting qualities surprising in a civilian army; the leaders have shown all their wonted capacity in the choice of position. But all this has been rendered of no avail by want of combination and lack of that prompt initiative which seizes every opportunity as it is presented.

General Yule is to be congratulated on the successful accomplishment of a difficult task, and to his name must be added that of Colonel Dartnell, of the Natal Police, whose knowledge of the country and experience of Boer tactics have proved invaluable. Through great labour, privation, and discomfort the men never lost their spirits for a moment or admitted a thought of defeat, but talked gaily throughout of a speedy return. On the day we joined hands with the Ladysmith force General Symons died in Dundee. No more gallant spirit or charming personality was to be found in the British Army, and though Dundee is for the moment in the hands of the enemy his work has not been in vain. Talana Hill was the first really great achievement of the British Army in South Africa; it has laid the foundations on which our military prestige, there alone non-existent, can now be reared.

11th December 1899.

AFTER ELANDSLAAGTE.

THE ENGAGEMENT OF RIETFONTEIN.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT AT LADYSMITH.)

It was not until I revisited the position of Elandslaagte on the day succeeding the engagement that I was able to realize the stupendous task which had been set the battalions told off to make the flank attack. As the position had not been reconnoitred on the reverse no one at the time was aware of the formation at the summit of the ridge. Once the tableland had been reached the attacking infantry had 600 to 800 yards of absolute open to cross before they could gain the foot of the kopje on which the enemy had intrenched. This open was one continuous litter of boulders, mainly jagged rocks, not of a size to give more than partial cover, and so frequent that they could not fail to destroy any attempt at cohesion on the part of the assaulting infantry. The battlefield, as it stood on the Sunday, conveyed sufficient proof of the severity of the fire. The wounded had been removed by daylight, but the burial parties had not arrived to perform the last duties to the dead. The men lay there as they had fallen, a sad, pathetic tribute to the courage of the British soldier. We followed this tragic trail, Highlanders, Manchesters, and Mounted Volunteers lay indiscriminately grouped. Then solitary figures under the stones showed how little the cover had availed them. There were places where wire fences had impeded the advance; here the carnage had been great, and one brave fellow stooped in death, cut off as he strove to wrench a post from its foundations. On the skyline of the tableland the dead lay thickest, this being the main spot where the attack had been checked, but the white flag was already here, and strings of coolies were digging the trench which too often is the soldier's resting place.

We rode back to the Boer position—the little kopje upon which Schiel and his 23 men had made their last stand. The bodies of the 15 that

had fallen of this little band were grouped as death had taken them. Some lay with heads sunken upon their rifle-stocks, fighting to the end, another had placed his hat upon a prominent stone five yards away, and had died with his fingers pressing a charge into his magazine. What remained of the laager was the litter of shell-fire. Tents were torn and burnt, wagons splintered and overturned, foodstuff, dead horses, and explosives lay in wrecked profusion. There remained no doubt that our shell-fire had played upon the position with full effect, and one could only marvel that the Boers had stood to their guns so long. But, as one of the wounded prisoners told me later in the day, there was no room to retreat, the extended files of the Manchester Regiment, overlapping the reverse of the kopje, swept the northern footpath, while the rain of shrapnel destroyed every living thing on the western slopes. And the scene at the farmhouse nestling at the foot of the ridge on the far side bore out this statement. It was here that the Boers had brought their led horses for cover, and carcases lay piled on every side. The slaughter amongst horses must almost have been as heavy as that of the men.

We returned to the station of Elandslaagte. Boer ambulances, consisting of the medical carts commandeered from the Johannesburg gold mines, were still coming in with wounded burghers, chiefly those who had been caught in retreat by the 5th Lancers. The platform was a pitiful sight. Wounded and dying men lay about waiting to be conveyed to Ladysmith. Many of them had been grievously hit and were past the aid of human skill. To add to this situation, a crowd of civilian refugees had just arrived at Elandslaagte from Dundee with the news that the Boers had brought a position gun to bear upon that town, that General Yule's brigade had been obliged to fall back from its original camp, and that the Boers were practically in possession of the town. On return to Ladysmith we received some trustworthy information with regard to the situation on the Biggersburg. It appears that on Sunday General Yule received news of the Elandslaagte affair, and moved out with his column towards Glencoe in the hope that he might be able to intercept some of the fugitives and thus complete the victory which the Ladysmith force had won. On arrival before Glencoe the column came under fire of position guns, at such a range that it was impossible for our artillery to reply. The column then returned to the vicinity of Dundee, as the Boers were in such force that it would have been hopeless to give them battle. After reviewing the situation, General Yule determined to concentrate with his whole force upon Ladysmith. To ensure the success of this manœuvre it was necessary to leave the wounded in hospital at Dundee and to abandon all military stores except ammunition.

An evacuation over the Biggersburg Pass by the Helpmakaar road was commenced at 3 a.m. on Monday, October 23, and was so well accomplished that the whole force was withdrawn down the most difficult of defiles without the knowledge of the enemy. So little did the enemy know of the movement that at daybreak they fired five rounds from their position gun into the evacuated camp, believing the British column still to be in possession.

The details of General Yule's retirement you have had from *The Times* Correspondent with that force, but it so far bears upon the operations of the Ladysmith column that it is necessary to follow its movements in skeleton. On Tuesday it was at Beith, with the intention of leaving the Helpmakaar road, making for the valley of the Waschbank river. This movement entailed the head of the column converging towards the Boer commando which had reoccupied Elandslaagte on the preceding day. As intelligence had arrived that the Free State commandos concentrated in the vicinity of Bester's Station had moved their artillery up into the spurs of Janono's Kop, with the unmistakable object of joining hands with the Elandslaagte Boers, Sir George White considered it expedient to take out a force and engage the enemy on the Elandslaagte line and prevent them from making any attempt upon the flank of Yule's column of route. With this object General French on the morning of Tuesday, October 24, took out the cavalry brigade and pushed up parallel with the railway line as far as Modder's Spruit. The cavalry were followed by an infantry brigade under Colonel Ian Hamilton. On arriving parallel with a spur of Janono's Kop, called Tinta Inyoni, two guns in position there opened fire upon the 5th Lancers. Practically at the same moment the cavalry flanking patrols became engaged with the enemy's outposts. The latter were driven in from the low spurs and dismounted cavalry pushed up and held the chain of minor kopjes which flanked the Boer position. The enemy's artillery then ranged the artillery and infantry coming up the Ladysmith road in column of route and succeeded in causing some slight casualty to a battery and ammunition column. Their shooting at 4,500 yards was wonderfully accurate. As the enemy used black powder, their position stood declared at once. They had occupied two high hills (about 1,000 yards apart, each approximately 1,200ft.) and the intervening nek which connected them, the height of the latter above the plain varying from 500ft. to 800ft. The ridge, as nearly as could be judged, lay parallel to the railway N.E.N.-S.W.S. Below it, and likewise parallel to it, was a similar ridge. Between the two ridges was a flat plane, perhaps 800 yards in width. The ascent of this latter hill from the direction of the railway was gradual, so gradual towards the summit that the top of the hill almost became a level table

land before dropping rather abruptly to the intervening plain. This ridge Sir George White determined to occupy with infantry and artillery in order to shell the enemy out of their position. The ranges from the north end of the nek (where the enemy's guns were) to the tableland were from 1,200 to 1,500 yards. At the south end of the lower ridge the centre plain became a valley circling between two smaller kopjes to Rietfontein farmhouse, from which homestead the engagement takes its official name, Protecting. Both flanks being protected by the cavalry, the 5th Lancers and 19th Hussars on the right, the Natal Carbineers and Natal Mounted Rifles on the left, the batteries were brought into action, while the infantry, the Gloucestershire and Liverpool Regiments in the firing line, were pushed up into the flat tableland.

Eventually two field batteries and No. 10 Mountain Battery were in action, and in a few minutes they drove the Boer gunners from their pieces. The infantry line then extended, being supported by the Devonshire Regiment, which came into action on the left of the original firing line. As the infantry slowly advanced by companies they were received with long range musketry fire. At these ranges it was impossible to make out the enemy's riflemen, extended as they were over a front of at least a mile; but No. 10 Battery, firing black powder, sufficiently disclosed our position, and the Gloucesters in the firing line suffered severely. They lost their colonel killed, and the tripod of their Maxim automatic gun being damaged, the group of men who removed it afforded the enemy an opportunity of which they took full advantage. At one period it seemed that the Boers were attempting to turn our left flank. The Natal Mounted Rifles, however, were equal to the occasion, and pushed boldly up the valley from Rietfontein farm, and prevented any Boers from "sneaking cover"—a manœuvre in which the mounted Dutchman excels. The infantry came into action about 8 a.m., and remained under long-range fire for about four hours, when the artillery practically silenced all opposition from the hilltops.

At midday Sir George White, having secured heliographic communication with General Yule's column, considered that he had attained his object, and under cover of the guns the infantry was withdrawn, a half battalion of the 2nd King's Royal Rifles, which had finally been ordered up in support, being withdrawn first. From a sensational standpoint there was little of interest, for the occasion was one when it became necessary to employ troops under trying circumstances, without giving them an opportunity of reaping any of the moral effect which attaches to a position carried by assault. The men had simply to attack a position the defenders of which they could not see; suffer casualties, without the gratifying knowledge that the enemy were losing as heavily as themselves. But from a military point of view it was an important engagement, the direct result being that Yule's column was able to march into Ladysmith 48 hours later without firing a shot. As far as the infantry retirement was concerned it was carried out without molestation. But the cavalry on the right experienced more difficulty. As long as they held the low kopjes with dismounted rifle fire they were secure, but as each vantage ground was evacuated the Dutchmen galloped into them, and poured a heavy fire into the retiring horsemen. The day's casualties were as follows:—Killed, 19; wounded, 91. Officers.—killed—Colonel E. P. Welford, Gloucestershire Regiment. Wounded—Second Lieutenant Holgood, 19th Hussars; Lieutenant S. W. Douglas, R.F.A., Major A. J. Abdy, R.F.A., Lieutenant A. M. Perreau, R.F.A., Lieutenant G. H. Hobart, R.F.A., and Lieutenant C. J. Hickie, Gloucestershire Regiment.

6th December 1899.

THE INVESTMENT OF LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, Nov. 5.

To-day one feels that we are in the hands of the Boers. On Thursday last the enemy closed in and cut our communication with the south, and, unfortunately, the train which was held up near Colenso carried my written despatches describing in full Monday's operations, the issue of which may be called the "plan that failed." Since the investment of the camp and town I have attempted to send off three messengers, but, I am afraid, without success. The first returned having lost heart in the enterprise before he came in contact with the enemy. Of the second I have had no news; he may, or may not, have succeeded in getting through. The third started last night, as I thought under the best conditions, as it was raining hard. But in the morning he was back again, with the story that he had run into the arms of a Boer picket, and, after having lost his papers, had succeeded in escaping back. The men, being Kaffirs, I fear have not had their hearts in the work.

There is nothing left but to go over the ground again in the hope that we may be able to get something through later. On the safe return of the Dundee force, Sir George White determined on a bold stroke to break the circle which was steadily drawing round Ladysmith. On Sunday the enemy could be seen from camp hard at work building gun emplacements on the summit of the ridge known as Peppworth Hill, about 8,000 yards north of our northern batteries. The heavy artillery from the Powerful not having arrived, the artillery in camp

were powerless with only 15-pounders to prevent this demonstration against the town. This being the case the only chance by which the total surrounding of the force and the bombardment of the town could be prevented was by delivering a decisive blow on one or more of the main positions held by the enemy. Even this did not present any real hope of a thoroughly successful achievement, as the front which the enemy had occupied was so extended that (and this was proved eventually) there was nothing to prevent them from turning the flanks of each of the attacking columns in detail. A reconnaissance conducted by General French on October 27 had shown that a large commando had installed itself at Farquhar's Farm and vicinity, this doubtless being the force directed by Lucas Meyer which had pursued General Yule's column. This farm is situated about five miles from, and commands the right rear of, Ladysmith, practically holding the railway communication. French's cavalry and an infantry column under Colonel Ian Hamilton so located the enemy's position that the latter received orders to laager for the night and at two o'clock in the morning to attempt to rush the position with the bayonet. But later in the day further information was received at headquarters concerning the movements of a supporting commando, and the original orders were cancelled, the infantry being recalled to Ladysmith. This brought the whole of the force back to Ladysmith on Sunday (29th), and on the evening of that day the enemy appeared to hold the following extended line. In the direct line north of Ladysmith camp they occupied the rocky spurs of the lower Biggersburg, as it overlooks the railway. This position, which I refer to as Peppworth, was well chosen, as from the summit of a flat-topped ridge, 7,500 yards from our centre battery, it could command the whole of the northern defences of the town. This flat ridge stands perhaps 800 feet above the level of the railway and is backed by a similar but higher ridge, the crest of which is quite 2,000 yards further north. The main laager of the enemy, it is presumed, lies encamped in the valley between these ridges. To the left, covering the line of the Van Reenen and Colenso roads, was situated a commando from the Free State ; but this, it was understood, was not in any considerable force, being rather an extensive line of pickets. On the right, beyond Farquhar's Farm and practically covering the right rear of the British position, lay the heavy commando under the direct command of Lucas Meyer, who we had believed had been hopelessly beaten at Dundee, but who in reality, on reinforcement from Erasmus, had pursued Yule at a 16 mile interval. Thus on Sunday morning the front against which Sir George White chose to operate covered, at an inside computation, 20 miles—a prodigious task when it is realized that the enemy were double our numbers, stood intrenched in positions of their own choosing, and were equipped with field guns using a smokeless explosive, an element absolutely new to modern warfare.

The plan of campaign which commended itself to headquarters was as follows. At half-past 10 on Sunday night (29th) Colonel Ian Hamilton left Ladysmith with a brigade of infantry consisting of the Manchester and Devonshire Regiments, the Gordon Highlanders, the Imperial Light Horse, and a brigade division of artillery. In the morning this column was reinforced by the Rifle Brigade, which arrived by train from the south, and was at once sent out into the fighting line. The objective of Hamilton's column was to make the main attack against Peppworth Ridge. The other infantry brigade, moved out on the right, with the intention of preventing Lucas Meyer's force from turning Hamilton's right. This brigade was temporarily under the command of Colonel Grimwood, and comprised the 1st and 2nd Battalions King's Royal Rifles, the Dublin Fusiliers, the Liverpool and Leicestershire Regiments, Colonel Coxhead's brigade division of artillery, and the Natal Volunteer Field Artillery ; again on their right, to check any turning movement of the whole line, General French took out the Cavalry Brigade, which with the Volunteer Cavalry and Mounted Infantry totalled six regiments. Thus the arrangements on the right seemed perfect ; but a movement on the left had to be provided against, and, as I have already pointed out, the information which was acted upon showed only a small force of Free State burghers on this flank. Consequently only a small column was ordered to operate against the enemy in this direction. The intention being that they should be in position to come into action against the Boer right when Hamilton delivered his main assault. This column consisted of half the Gloucestershires and half the Royal Irish Fusiliers and No. 10 Mountain Battery, the whole being under the command of Colonel Carleton, with Major Adye attached as intelligence officer. I will return to the unhappy history of this little column later ; in the present it will be necessary to follow the fortunes of the main force. All the infantry marched out of Ladysmith before midnight on Sunday, it being assumed that by dawn they would be in position to develop an attack. The cavalry followed the infantry out at 3 in the morning. On Friday I had climbed to the summit of Lombard's Kop, four miles south of Ladysmith and gained a very fair idea of the enemy's position on the right. I therefore determined to throw in my lot with the column detached to prevent an envelopment of our line from that flank. At daybreak Grimwood had taken up a line from Farquhar's Farm to the Maritzburg road. This line consisted in the occupation of a row of low kopjes, which in places ran into ribs of rock almost worthy of the name of ridges. Grimwood held these with the two rifle battalions, the Mounted Infantry and dismounted troopers of

the 18th and 19th Hussars holding similar rocky extensions on their right. The Liverpool and Leicestershire Regiments held various knolls in support. Three miles behind the line chosen the artillery had taken up a position from which at dawn they would be able to shell the low hill above Farquhar's Farm, where it was believed that the enemy had an intrenched position. At daybreak the whole position lay baldly before us. There appeared to be few enemy on the flat hill north of the farm, and certainly no guns or intrenchments ; while, instead of having the simple overflow of the Boer position on his front, Grimwood and the cavalry found that they had a much larger force of Boers than had been imagined, and that, if not intrenched, they were well equipped with artillery, and had carefully chosen their positions on the preceding day. From the moment that the Boers opened fire on the right, it was evident that the plan of the main attack could never be undertaken, and that the whole of our energy would be required to prevent the masses of mounted infantry from swamping our right.

At few minutes after 5 a puff of white smoke from Peppworth Hill declared the Boer battery there, and an explosion in Ladysmith showed that they had one of their position guns laid on the town. For some time the enemy failed to discover the position of our artillery on the right as it lay under the cover of a low kopje which jutted out into the plain from Lombard's Kop. But it discerned the infantry all along the line, and one battery opened from somewhere in the vicinity of Peppworth Hill, another from the rear of Farquhar's Farm. These batteries fired a smokeless explosive, and for a considerable period it was impossible to locate anything more definite than the direction from which the missiles came. This use of smokeless powder in artillery is, of course, an absolutely new departure in warfare, and has proved one of the most striking developments of the recent operations. About 7 o'clock our artillery came into action on the crest of the ridge which hitherto had concealed it. Two batteries ranged for Peppworth Hill, the other for the enemy's more southern battery. The Boer gunners returned the fire manfully, and in a couple of rounds practically found the range of our guns. Their practice was excellent, but the fusing of the shell indifferent, the majority of bursts, taking place underground. There was a patch of cultivated soil about 30 yards in rear of one of our batteries, and, as I sat on a kopje 100 yards away, I counted no less than 17 shells bury themselves harmlessly in the soft earth in a quarter of an hour. But this, of course, could not last ; although the actual discharge of a gun did not declare its whereabouts, yet, on a hot, dry day, the concussion raised a dust, especially after the gun had been served for some minutes. Guided by this dust our gunners were able to burst shrapnel with such effect that in half an hour the return fire slackened. But with the battery on Peppworth Hill it was different ; our range was 4,500, so two batteries were pushed forward into the open 1,000 yards nearer to the position. This movement at once attracted a concentrated fire from the Peppworth intrenchments, who on seeing the mark which our batteries afforded in the open at once changed the direction of the fire from Hamilton's infantry. About this period a weak fusillade was heard from the extreme left. It was conjectured from this that Carleton's column was in contact with the Free State commando. This subsequently proved to be the case, but it was not until the following day that we were to learn the full pathetic details connected with these muffled sounds of battle so indistinctly heard. But to return to our batteries in the open—they plied their guns with such good effect that in another 20 minutes they were only answered by desultory shots. The escapes had been miraculous, for although the enemy had burst shrapnel and common shell all round them there were not more than 15 casualties to men and horses.

As the frontal artillery attack dwindled away into occasional shots of little or no direction, suddenly a heavy burst of firing developed on the right. For a moment it was simply a rattle of musketry fire, then shrapnel commenced to burst upon the batteries with direction both from their flank and rear. It was evident that the enemy were attempting a heavy and well-conceived movement on our right. One of our batteries changed front to meet the artillery attack, the Leicestershire Regiment pushed forward to support the left of the firing line, and word was sent to Colonel Hamilton to reinforce both with guns and infantry. From the moment that this order was despatched the whole complexion of the operations changed, and all chance of carrying out the original scheme of attack vanished. Hamilton reinforced with Colonel Pickworth's brigade division of artillery, the Gordon Highlanders, the Rifle Brigade, and the Manchester Regiment in the order given. The Devonshire Regiment remained behind to hold the position behind which the brigade had been massed since morning. The whole of the interest now centred on the right of our line, as it was evident that the Boers were pushing their attack in earnest, and from the position which I had taken up on the lower slopes of Lombard's Kop it seemed that they were making a bold bid to turn the left of Grimwood's infantry and to penetrate our line between the right infantry supports and the artillery in action in the centre. If this was their object, it was prettily frustrated by the timely action of the officer commanding the 53rd Field Battery. The 5th Lancers had attempted to form on the left of the Rifle Regiments. The country which they chose was extremely tricky, and suited to the system of attack adopted by the Boer. It was a succession

of stony kopjes. The Boers lay well concealed until the ground scouts sent out by the cavalry were almost among them, and then opened a heavy fire upon the leading squadron. A machine-gun, which from its effects must have been one of the 37mm. automatic guns which were supplied to the Transvaal early in the year, was also brought to bear. It fired very rapidly, its projectiles bursting amongst the horses on impact with the ground. There was only one course open to the cavalry, and that was to retire. This they did at a gallop with wonderfully little casualty. The 53rd Battery pushed up at a gallop, and coming into action in an absolute plain so saved the situation that the enemy were not able to reap any results from the temporary advantage which they had gained. All this took place between 7 and 8 o'clock.—[Our Correspondent was obliged to break off his letter here as a runner was starting immediately.]

continued below.

11th December 1899. (this letter continued)

THE INVESTMENT OF LADYSMITH.

THE STORY OF NICHOLSON'S NEK.

The following is the conclusion of the letter from our Special Correspondent at Ladysmith, of which we published part on Wednesday last. It was, it will be remembered, broken off in the middle because a runner was just leaving to make his way through the Boer lines. Our Correspondent had brought the story of the engagement of Sunday night, October 29, and Monday, October 30, down to between 7 and 8 o'clock on the Monday morning. His account continues :—

We now had six batteries in action. Their formation for the moment was peculiar, but as it will give some idea of the strange developments of the day I will describe it. One battery remained in action in the second position into which Grimwood's artillery had moved when they limbered up to get within striking range of the battery on Peppworth Hill. With this as the left point of the artillery position, the remaining batteries were thrown out in a formation which practically made a semi-circle to the right. There were two isolated batteries on the right, and in the centre a group of 12 guns. They must have been in action against a front which covered at least three parts of a circle. Each detached group appeared to be engaging a different object, and in the majority of cases the guns were firing over the heads of our infantry. In the meantime the enemy were massing on the front of the ridges which fronted Grimwood's brigade and the dismounted cavalry. But our position was a good one and the enemy able to make but little impression. The Gordon Highlanders and the Manchester Regiment were steadily pushing forward, and it looked as if all anxiety for the right had passed and that the action was about to develop into a second defeat for Lucas Meyer. About 9 o'clock there was a further cessation in the firing, and if the enemy had not withdrawn their guns they considered it expedient to moderate the energy with which they served them.

It was at this period that Sir George White received an urgent message from Colonel Knox, commanding in Ladysmith, to the effect that the enemy were shelling the north camp, and that it looked as if they intended a determined attack upon the town and camp. This, of course, was serious news, as every available man, except those necessary to furnish a skeleton manning of the defences, had been withdrawn to take part in the operations. However reluctant the General may have been to change his plans, upon this information it was imperative to order a withdrawal. Orders to this effect were sent to Colonel Grimwood and the retirement began at once. The two rifle battalions were the first to fall back, and unfortunately they made the movement without that due deliberation which is necessary to secure the full success of such a difficult manœuvre. As long as Grimwood's battalions had remained under cover their losses had been trivial ; but on receiving the command to fall back a line was chosen over a level plain leading to a low nek through the nearer ridges. Consequently the regiments retired exposed to a searching and disastrous fire. If they had waited for ten minutes part of a supporting battalion would have been in position to have reduced the enemy's rifle fire. As it was the retreating battalions came on the top of the supports and for the moment the situation appeared hopeless. The enemy again brought their field artillery and automatic guns into action and the jumbled battalions lost heavily, especially in officers. But again the Field Artillery were equal to the occasion, and Abdy's Battery galloped up into the straggling infantry and opened with such good effect that it drew the enemy's gun fire upon itself, and the dismounted cavalry still holding their ridges were sufficient guarantee that the enemy's riflemen would not occupy the position the infantry had recently relinquished.

It is almost impossible to write temperately about the part which the 53rd Field Battery played in this retirement. They were ordered up at General Hunter's express command, and they had barely fired a round per gun when an automatic quick-firer opened upon them with a cross fire.

Absolutely exposed, the men stood pluckily to their guns; a section was swung round to meet the cross fire, while the remaining pieces continued to cover the withdrawal of the infantry. In such a situation it was impossible that they could escape injury, and at one moment I thought that the battery was to be sacrificed to save the infantry. Men and horses fell fast, shell after shell burst between the guns, and the little percussion missiles from the automatic guns raised a dust about the battery which well nigh hid the guns from view. But their fire never slackened, and, after as severe a half-hour as guns have ever had, the infantry were safe and covered by the newly-arrived regiments. Abdy's battery then fell back, but with only five guns, as the limber of one was smashed, and five out of the six horses from the team of another shot. On seeing the smash Captain Thwaites sent back to the wagons for a team and wagon limber. The battery deliberately fell back to a second position to cover the retreat, and just after it came into action the limber under Bombardier Saunders, driven by Drivers Macpherson (lead), Darcy (centre), Stodderd (wheel), Limber Gunners Bright and Barron, dashed back through the infantry and under a concentrated fire brought out the abandoned gun.

The 13th and 53rd Batteries were now retiring, alternately covering the general retirement along the plain. Never have British batteries behaved better; they fell back generally at a walk, never more hastily than a trot; yet the only support which these two batteries received was the little which they could afford each other while covering the withdrawal of the whole. During the first retirement of Abdy's battery a gun and limber overturned in a nullah within 400 yards of the enemy's position. Lieutenant Higgins and the detachment righted it under fire in time to come into action with the battery in their second position in retirement. By midday the withdrawal upon Ladysmith was practically completed. The enemy, after the infantry were clear, showed little enterprise, and it is evident that they have a wholesome dread of our artillery fire. Just about 9 o'clock the battalions in retirement were somewhat in difficulty, but after that everything was clear and orderly. If the enemy had been Afridis the history of Monday's fighting would have been very different.

On return to camp we found that early in the morning two trains had arrived from Maritzburg with a detachment of naval gunners from H.M.S Powerful, under Captain Lambton. This detachment was about 280 strong, and brought a battery of two 4·7 guns, four 12½-pounder Elswick guns, and two field guns. Never had guns arrived more opportunely, as the position gun from Peppworth Hill had already fired over a dozen shells into the town. It was found that the reported attack upon Ladysmith from the north was but a demonstration, possibly effected by a large body of Boers which about 7 o'clock had been viewed streaming down into the valley beyond Peppworth. Except for a small exchange of shots and the shells from Peppworth there had been little to disturb the peace of Ladysmith.

Now we come to the sad story of what befell Carleton's column. As I have said already, this column, consisting of six companies of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, four and a half companies of the Gloucestershire Regiment, and No. 10 Mountain Battery, left camp on Sunday night at 10 30 with the object of occupying a position from which it would be able to operate upon the right of the Boer position on Peppworth Hill. The column was guided by Major Adye, of the Field Intelligence, and a staff of the headquarters' guides. Their destination was Nicholson's Nek, a position which when reconnoitred from this side appeared to possess the necessary tactical advantages for a detached force. Nicholson's Nek lies about four miles up Bell's Spruit, a donga due north of Ladysmith. The men blundered along in the darkness, the Irish Fusiliers leading, the battery in the centre, the rear being brought up by the Gloucestershire Regiment. There seems no doubt upon one point, and that is the enemy were aware of this part of the movement from the beginning. Probably they were aware of the whole of the plans for Monday, for in Ladysmith it was impossible to say who was a Boer agent and who not. However that may be, it is certain that the enemy were on the flanks of the column all night, one of the survivors positively stating that he constantly heard the snapping of breeches, and once the peculiar noise which a rifle makes at night when it is dropped.

Two hours before daybreak, while the column was in enclosed country, either a shot was fired or a boulder rolled into the battery in column of route. The mules stampeded and easily broke away from their half-asleep drivers. They came back upon the Gloucestershire Regiment, the advance party of whom fired into the mass, believing in the darkness that it was an attack. This added to the chaos; the ranks were broken by the frenzied animals, and they dashed through the ranks of the rear-guard, carrying the 1st and 2nd reserve ammunition animals with them. It became a hopeless panic, the animals, wild with the shouting and the turmoil, tore down the nullah into the darkness, and the last that was heard of them was the sound of ammunition-boxes and paniers as they were splintered against the boulders. The hubbub of those few minutes was sufficient to have alarmed the enemy. By a strenuous effort the officers succeeded in getting the men again under control, and when daylight came they seized the first position which presented itself, and which was about two miles short of the original goal. They were forced to take advantage of the first kopje, as Boer scouts were all round them, and the day was ushered in with desultory

19th December 1899.

firing. It was a sorry position which they had chosen, and the men were in a sorrier plight. All their reserve ammunition was gone, and, though they had saved pieces of the screw guns, they were not able with these pieces to patch up a single mounting.

The position itself was a flat kopje commanded on the south by a self-contained ridge. To the east was another kopje, which commanded the top of the position at about 500 yards. On the west were two similar spurs also commanding the position at short ranges. The summit of the kopje was a plateau, all the sides being gradual slopes except the eastern, which was almost sheer, this latter being the side from which access had been gained. From below it appeared a defensible position, but when once the top was reached it was evident that it was commanded from all sides. The men busied themselves attempting to build breastworks. The Gloucestershire companies, with their Maxim gun, were given the northern face to hold, two companies being detached on to a self-contained ridge of the position which lay on the south side. The Irish Fusiliers had the precipitous flank to defend.

From earliest daybreak Boer scouts were reconnoitring, and about 8 o'clock mounted Boers could be seen galloping in small groups to the cover at the reverse of the hill on the west. Later two strong parties of mounted men took position on the far side of the two hills commanding the kopje from the west. About 9 o'clock these two parties had crowned the hills and opened a heavy fire at short ranges right down upon the plateau. Our men made a plucky attempt to return this fire, but it was impossible, they were under a cross-fire from two directions, flank and rear. The two companies of Gloucesters holding the self-contained ridge were driven from their shelter, and as they crossed the open on the lower plateau were terribly mauled, the men falling in groups. The Boers on the west had not yet declared themselves, but about 200 marksmen climbed to the position which the two companies of the Gloucesters had just vacated. These men absolutely raked the plateau, and it was then that the men were ordered to take cover on the steep reverse of the kopje. As soon as the enemy realized this move the men on the western hill teemed on to the summit and opened upon our men as they lay on the slope. They were absolutely hemmed in, and what had commenced as a skirmish seemed about to become a butchery. The grim order was passed round—"Faugh-a-Ballaghs, fix your bayonets and die like men!" There was the clatter of steel, the moment of suspense, and then the "Cease fire" sounded. Again and again it sounded, but the Irish Fusiliers were loth to accept the call, and continued firing for many minutes. Then it was unconditional surrender, and the men laid down their arms.

continued on page-

THE BATTLE OF BELMONT.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

ON THE ROAD TO THE MODDER RIVER, Nov. 25.

Huge bonfires of scented mimosa scrub and night-long choruses with spasmodic instrumental accompaniment hailed the order for a 4 o'clock parade on Tuesday morning in marching order. Life in camps that had been monotonously alike and varied only by the nature of their discomforts suddenly received an impetus, and the welcome with which the men received at last the order to begin the march on Kimberley was universal.

In the earliest grey of the morning the camp was astir and the clanking wagons of the transport were already being shouldered through the deep ruts of the sand by the mules before 4 o'clock. The latter body was sent to our first halting place, Witteputs, by the north-western route, which struck the high road from Hopetown four or five miles out of Orange River. The troops, headed by the Grenadier Guards, wound out of camp in a long sinuous line some three miles long, and followed the line of the railway for some eight or nine miles. A sharp turn to the left brought us to Finchams' Farm, a small oasis of green, with plenty of water, in the wilderness of karroo. Here we encamped and spent the night, starting in the early part of the following afternoon for Belmont, where a reconnaissance a week earlier had assured us that the enemy was to be found. Later in the day the sound of guns was heard two miles off, and upon arriving in camp at sundown we found the place deserted and the enemy reported near. *Reveillé* was ordered for half-past 1 on the following morning, and the two brigades under General Methuen moved out in silence in the darkness. As soon as the railway was reached the Northumberland Fusiliers moved off to the left, the Northampton men and the Yorkshire Light Infantry occupying the central position of a line of attack two miles long, the right of which was occupied by the Brigade of Guards. One of the features of the attack was the silence with which this extended body moved over the veldt without a word spoken or a verbal order given, in excellent dressing, and without a stumble or a careless clank of a bayonet or rifle to give an alarm. Perhaps the extreme caution was, in this case, superfluous. It became necessary, about a mile from the kopjes occupied by the enemy, to cut the wire fencing of the railway, the same fence that later in the day interfered fatally with the movements of our pursuing cavalry. This was done with a few sharp blows of an axe, but the sound must have been audible for a long way. Some time before I had ridden forward some two miles,

crossing the railway near the platelayer's cottage, and listened. The utter silence was broken only by a few distant croaks from a buzzard ; the strokes of the axe must have been as audible as pistol shots. The Boers had no pickets or patrols, and as the thin attacking line drew nearer and nearer uncertainty as to the presence of the enemy mingled unpleasantly with the feeling that if the Boer of the western border reserved his fire until his enemy was close he was a different and a more dangerous foe than the Natal sharpshooter at 2,000 yards. Still there was complete silence until we were within 250 yards of the line of kopjes. Then a star of white flame and a "phit" in the ground behind us told us that the hills were indeed occupied. The whole line from left to right broke at once into rifle fire together, and a series of flashes, poured out without intermission of time or space, outlined the crest of the enemy's position, now faintly discernible in the growing dawn.

The fire was indeed hot and was answered as long as our men were on the flat, but when the rocky ascent of the kopjes was reached there was no chance of returning the fire, as hands and knees and feet were alike used in the climb. Here the severest loss of the day was suffered, the Grenadier Guards in the centre of their brigade losing here some 40 or 50 killed and wounded.

When we reached the top the enemy had retreated to their second position, and were pouring bullets into their late stronghold. Lieutenant Russell's was only one example among many. Seeing that half his face was covered with blood I moved up to him and asked him where he was hurt. "Mere scratch," he answered, and went on. I passed a sergeant in the Scots Guards limping down hill as hard as he could ; I wondered if he could keep it up much longer. Here and there were Boer wounded lying in pools of blood, but, according to their custom, the enemy had carried off most of their losses. The right of the line had also been carried by this time, and the Fifth were carrying on a sturdy assault on the left, where they were losing a good many under the well-covered fire from "Table Mountain." The Yorkshire Light Infantry moved up between the two positions to the relief of the Fifth and of the Guards, who were moving off the right hand spur of the second position to take the third. Here the fire was very severe ; from every side the bullets were showering upon them, and of cover there was practically none. At this point the artillery opened fire, and with comparative ease the last third row of kopjes was taken, though the steepest and actually the most defensible position of any, was very ramarkable. Here I noticed that the Guards were delivering volleys, the only instance of a variation from independent firing that I have yet noticed. On the left and centre the shooting was steady on both sides, one small sangar with about 30 men in it keeping at bay half a battalion. Eventually the usual white flag trickery was repeated, but a storm of British bullets greeted the treacherous fire of the Boers, who soon surrendered and crawled out unarmed. One of the saddest incidents of the fight was the death of Lieutenant Blundell, of the Grenadier Guards. Seeing his men firing at a man above him whose foot had been broken by a bullet, he called out to them to cease firing and went forward to help the Boer. The latter's only answer was to raise his rifle and shoot him through the body. An incident like this makes it hard for the officers to keep a hand over the men in battle, and these incidents have occurred in every fight of the war. Colonel Crabbe was wounded in a similar way, and Mr. Knight, correspondent of the *Morning Post*, suffered for responding at once to a flag of truce by standing up out of cover. Of individual gallantry there was much. The cool courage of both General Fetherstonhaugh and Colonel Arthur Paget deserves more than this passing mention. The quiet obedience to orders of the men was most striking, and the courage of the men then for the first time under fire promised much for the success of the march. In truth the division created by brigading together the Guards with such old campaigners as the Fighting Fifth and the Yorkshire Light Infantry possesses every possible advantage that prestige, experience, and pluck can give, and the hard fight they had is witness to the tough nature of the assault.

At 8 15 the firing, which from 4 o'clock had been incessant, showed some signs of decreasing, and bodies of mounted Boers crept away from the fighting line and galloped away northwards. The white flag was at last shown in earnest, and a burst of cheering greeted the first success of our journey. Details as to the numbers engaged have long ago been telegraphed home. Casualties, too, have been recorded, and there is perhaps no better summing up of the chief lesson of the fight than that of a corporal I heard expressing, in other words, his opinion that the rules of war had not been invented to be used as weapons by unscrupulous combatants. Admiration at the pluck of men who stand up against us, sympathy with an out-of-date but undoubtedly genuine national spirit, however badly expressed, even a willingness to give them the advantages of an etiquette they in turn are certain to deny to us vanish before the actual presence of these outrages, however we had come to expect them, and the actual sight of a dying officer butchered in return for his own eagerness to help the wounded is an argument that would convince the most sceptical that the Boer race is unfit for the ascendency it claims.

From a military point of view the experiment of carrying strong positions without previous shelling is, especially in view of recent losses in Natal, open to criticism, in spite of the fact that

in this case the inevitable loss has been cheerfully accepted. Also the cavalry was not in a position to turn the defeat into a rout when called upon. Having said this much by way of criticism, it only remains to put on record the redoubled confidence in themselves with which the general's division resumed their march on the following evening, the last offices for the dead having been performed, and the last of the mimosa bonfires stamped out on the camping ground one mile south of Belmont.

13th December, 1899.

NATAL AND THE WAR.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

ESTCOURT, Nov. 16.

No feature in the great crisis through which South Africa is passing has, from the Imperial point of view, been so satisfactory as the attitude of Natal. Without hesitation or reserve, without counting the dangers and sacrifices involved, the brave little colony has thrown in its lot with the Imperial Government, and used its utmost endeavours to help the work of the Imperial authorities. That help, whether in the shape of the facilities offered by Colonel Hime's Government, or in the shape of the aid given on the field of battle by Natal's gallant volunteer forces, has been invaluable. The merit of Natal's services has already been eloquently acknowledged by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons, and the events of the past month can only have served to strengthen the feeling of gratitude every Englishman must cherish for his kinsfolk across the sea who hitherto have borne the whole brunt of the enemy's attack. That feeling could only be strengthened if those at home fully realized the extent of the sacrifices Natal has made and is making for the sake of British supremacy in South Africa. For many months past the carrying trade to the Transvaal, the chief source of the colony's revenue, has been completely disorganized. The occupation and devastation of Northern Natal by the Boers means not only incalculable loss and hardship to individual proprietors, but also a loss of revenue to the colonial Government which may continue to be felt for years. In sending her volunteer forces to the front Natal has staked the lives of a very large proportion of her scanty white population. One need but see the anxiety with which every one in Maritzburg or Durban scans the lists of casualties reported in the newspapers to see how nearly this war touches every English family in the colony. The honour, the very position of the Imperial Government is involved in seeing that the services rendered and the sacrifices undergone by Natal shall not go unrewarded. The whole British Empire owes a vast debt of gratitude to Natal, and if, when this war reaches its inevitable conclusion, that debt is paid in nothing more substantial than flattering references in public speeches and leading articles, a blow will have been struck at the credit of the Empire which may have the most far-reaching consequences in the future of South Africa. How seriously that credit was impaired by the events of 1881, by the shameful neglect shown towards Natal and the loyalists in the Transvaal after Mr. Gladstone's surrender, people at home can hardly understand. That surrender left behind it a feeling of contempt and dislike among the English in South Africa that it will require much on our part to remove. Even now Natal has no small cause to complain of the Imperial Government. It would, perhaps, have been difficult for the British Government to have incurred the expense of sending a whole army corps to South Africa before war was certain, and have justified that expense to the irresponsible criticism of the country, but as things have turned out our policy has now in the eyes of people out here all the appearance of having been a mere policy of bluff.

One must admit, at any rate, that when the war did break out it found the Imperial Government quite unable to carry out its promise to Natal to secure the defence of her territories. But for the timely arrival of the Indian contingent—itself in time only because of the delays which occurred in the Transvaal and Free State mobilization—the whole of Natal would have been a hostage in the hands of the Boers. Even up to a few days ago there was a doubt whether the position at Estcourt could be held and whether Maritzburg would not be attacked. No wonder that colonists should be getting somewhat impatient and begin freely to criticize the conduct of operations up to the present time. That is a point which it would be unwise to prejudge before all the facts are known, but mistakes have certainly been made in several instances, mistakes which colonists insist were made because insufficient attention was paid to colonial experience. The secrecy with which the military authorities have enveloped all their proceedings has only added to the critical spirit which is beginning to manifest itself. A Press censorship

is a necessity in time of war, but it is difficult to reconcile with democratic institutions in a colony like Natal, even more so than in England. The only way to make it work without creating the liveliest dissatisfaction is to enlist the co-operation of the Press itself. And it is to be regretted that, in some instances at least, the military authorities have adopted a rather brusque attitude towards the local Press that has given no small offence to an influential, and at the same time highly irritable, section of the public.

But one may fairly hope that as the war proceeds, and proceeds successfully, these trifling signs of dissatisfaction will pass away. The important thing is that when the time for the resettlement of South Africa arrives Natal shall receive the reward due to her splendid loyalty. In the first place, there must be full and generous compensation to those whose property has been injured and destroyed. The whole of Northern Natal, almost down to Estcourt and Weenen, has been swept by the war, and there are few farms or shops in it that have not been looted. The looting has been done not only by the Boers, but also very largely by Kaffirs, and in one or two instances by our own soldiers. But whoever may have been responsible for the actual damage in any particular case the Imperial Government is responsible for seeing that the harm done during the continuance of a state of war is duly remedied. There must be no unfair haggling or quibbling with regard to the claims of loyal farmers for compensation. Of course, there must be a Court of inquiry, composed jointly of Imperial and Colonial officials, to examine into claims, or else every disloyal Dutch farmer who has sold his cattle or stores to the Boers at a profit will come and file his claim to be compensated for their disappearance. But the Court must not proceed on the principles of the Court that professed to compensate the Transvaal loyalists after the events of 1881. It must examine closely to make sure that it is not deceived, but with all deserving cases it must deal generously and promptly. There should be equal promptitude and generosity in the granting of pensions to the relatives of those colonists who have fallen in action, and to those who have been permanently disabled by their wounds. The money to provide this compensation would, naturally, like the rest of the war indemnity, be found in a loan raised under the guarantee of the Imperial Government and chargeable on the revenues of the Transvaal. Some of it, too, may be provided by the confiscation of the properties of those Dutch farmers in the colony who have openly taken up arms with the Boers or been convicted of carrying on treasonable negotiations, of whom, it is to be feared, there have been only too many.

But in compensating individual citizens of Natal the Imperial Government will only have performed half its duty. Natal, as a State, must also claim her share of reward for her loyalty and self-sacrifice in this war, and in others that have been before. In a few years, no doubt, the proper settlement of the Transvaal will do much to recompense Natal by the natural growth of trade with a prosperous neighbour. The development of the Transvaal under good government means the opening of a market for the Natal farmer, and a constantly increasing revenue to the Natal Government from its railway carrying traffic. In the meantime, however, there has been a great loss of revenue that can only be righted by a substantial war indemnity to Natal, to be raised, like the main cost of the war, by a loan chargeable on the new Transvaal Government. But Natal deserves something more than can be given by pecuniary compensation. What Natal wants above all is such an addition to her limited territory as will afford an opportunity for her expansion in the future, and, when the Dominion of South Africa is at some future date realized, will secure her that influence in its councils which she has so well merited in her stormy half-century of existence. That Natal has been so limited in her territorial development has been partly due to natural causes, to the great mountain barrier that hems in the colony on the west. But it has also been very largely due to the apathy and neglect of the Imperial Government in the past. When the Zulu power had been overthrown, in no small measure owing to the help given by Natal, Mr. Gladstone's Government, too slothful and weak-spirited to intervene, allowed the Boers to raid over all northern Zululand and there to establish an independent Republic, the union of which with the Transvaal was formally acknowledged in 1887. To all that territory Natal had as good a claim as the Cape Colony had to Bechuanaland, which was only saved by Sir Charles Warren's expedition from sharing a similar fate. But while the larger colony succeeded in forcing its claim upon the attention of the Imperial Government, the interests of the smaller colony were neglected, its territory diminished, and its frontiers rendered indefensible. From the Imperial point of view, too, there is everything to be said for adding to Natal as large a Dutch population as is compatible with the maintenance of an English majority in the colony. Hitherto the distribution of population has been such that the English, while forming half of the total population of South Africa, have only been the political majority in one out of its four self-governing States. In the interest of the future peaceful development of South Africa it will be the duty of the Imperial Government to arrange a settlement which will make the recurrence of such a state of affairs impossible. By increasing the territory of Natal at the expense of the Republics the task of governing the latter will be made easier, and the time when self-government may be safely entrusted to them brought nearer.

The very least Natal can claim for her services is Swaziland together with the tongue of territory

jutting out into Zululand between Swaziland and the Natal border, including the districts of Piet Retief, Wakkerstroom, Utrecht, and Vryheid—almost all territory that but for the neglect of the home Government would long ago naturally have been incorporated in Natal. Swaziland might perhaps for some time have to be under a partly separate administration, but it is quite possible that the Swazis, who value their autonomy chiefly as a means of protection against the Boers, will be ready to come directly under British colonial government. The new northern border of Natal would then run from the Portuguese frontier along the present northern border of Swaziland to Steynsdorp, and thence along the mountainous ridge which forms the continuation of the Drakensberg to Volksrust. But a better frontier would be formed by taking the line of the Vaal river from the point where it approaches the mountains west of Amsterdam, thus rendering the Transvaal strictly the land beyond the Vaal. On the Free State side, too, Natal deserves compensation, at least as much as will secure her the full control of the Drakensberg mountains. The western frontier of the colony might in that case be drawn from Mount Aux Sources, or even from Thlotse on the Caledon river, to Bethlehem in the Free State and down the Liebenberg's Vlei and Wilge rivers to the Vaal. The districts of Vrede and Harrismith, as well as part of the district of Bethlehem, would thus be included in Natal. The Natal Government has already a certain claim on that district by the construction of the Ladysmith, Harrismith, Bethlehem Railway. The whole scheme of territorial rearrangement thus described would probably add some 4,000 or 5,000 Dutch and perhaps 1,000 English voters to the Natal electorate, and swell the Dutch element in Natal to perhaps one-third of the whole. It would not affect the supremacy of the English element in Natal in any degree, while it would help very materially to maintain that supremacy in the Transvaal and to reduce the Dutch majority in the Free State. With the opportunity for development offered by such an enlargement of her cramped frontiers, and with the steady growth of trade with the Transvaal, Natal ought within a very few years not only to make up for the losses inflicted by this war but to rise to that prosperity and influence which she has so well deserved.

11th December 1899.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN NATAL.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

ESTCOURT, Nov. 17.

The military position in Natal in the first days of November after the complete investment of Ladysmith was one of considerable anxiety. The Boers were believed to be intending to detach a considerable force, perhaps 5,000 or 6,000 men, from the siege of Ladysmith and advance on Maritzburg. The only troops in the colony were the small force at Estcourt composed of the Dublin Fusiliers, the Durban Light Infantry, a mounted company of the 60th Rifles, a squadron each of Natal Carabiniers and Imperial Light Horse, and a battery of the Natal Field Artillery, who had been squeezed out by the Boers from communication with the main body at Ladysmith, and subsequently forced to retire from Colenso by the approach of a large Boer force with artillery on Grobler's Hill, which commands that village from the north. These were strengthened by the battalion of the Border Regiment which had been hurriedly sent round from the Free State border of Cape Colony. The total force assembled at Estcourt was scarcely 2,000 men. Besides these there were no troops in Natal whatsoever, though additional volunteer forces, Thorneycroft's Light Horse, Bethune's Horse, Murray's Horse, and Imperial Light Infantry, were being hastily raised in Durban and Maritzburg. The call for volunteers was readily responded to, but a force raised in a few days could hardly be considered sufficient for the protection of so large a tract of country. Even Durban was felt to be not altogether free from danger. On November 6 the Terrible arrived and Captain Scott at once prepared to assume the direction of the land defences of Durban. It was due to Captain Scott's energy and initiative that successful experiments had been made some weeks before with the mounting of naval guns on improvised carriages which led to the sending up of the Powerful's guns under Captain Lambton in time to save Ladysmith from being overpowered by the superior artillery brought down from Pretoria by General Joubert. Preparations had already been begun in Simonstown, and on the voyage round the Terrible had been converted into a regular arsenal, where the construction of axles and bolts and the fitting together of gun-carriages went on night and day in spite of the most boisterous of south-westerly gales. Within a few hours of arriving outside Durban the Terrible landed one 4·7inch 48-pounder gun with a range of 13,000 yards, 16 naval 12-pounders with a range of 9,000 yards, two ordinary military 12-pounders, and a number of three-pounders and Maxims. Other guns were landed from the Thetis, which had come round the east coast of Africa, as well as from the Tartar and Forte. All the men-of-war in the harbour likewise landed detachments of bluejackets in khaki, with khaki-painted straw hats, and in two days

Durban was made strong enough to resist any force that could be brought to bear against it. So strong, indeed, was the force, and so unlikely the prospect of an attack on Durban by any large army, that there was a general feeling of disappointment among the representatives of the Navy that Admiral Harris's orders strictly prevented any moving of the guns beyond Durban. If the sailors on the spot had been allowed their own way they would, no doubt, have taken most of the guns straight up to Estcourt, with the determination to hasten on the relief of Ladysmith the moment a sufficient force of infantry could be collected together.

Arriving in Maritzburg on November 7 I found the town still in a state of considerable anxiety. Colonel Noel, who was in command, though with no troops at his disposal, was busy making every preparation for the defence of the camp above the town, constructing earthworks, shelters composed of bales of compressed forage, and barbed wire entanglements. A detachment of 25 men from her Majesty's ship Tartar, with two 12-pounders and one 7-pounder, were the whole artillery force at his disposal for the defence of the capital of Natal. Even these Admiral Harris had only consented to send up with great reluctance and at the earnest request of the Governor. No one knew precisely how long it would still take before the expected relieving division would reach Durban from England. The news from Ladysmith was reassuring, but nevertheless there was much anxiety felt as to the possible consequences of any disaster to Sir George White's force.

The whole burden of a possible defence of Maritzburg lay on the little force at Estcourt. For this task it was but poorly qualified, not only by its smallness, but by its composition and the character of the country. It was almost entirely an infantry force. The three small mounted detachments that had come down with it from Ladysmith were insufficient even for scouting purposes. The antiquated 9-pounders of the Natal Field Artillery with their limited range of less than 4,000 yards could hardly be reckoned capable of meeting the guns that the Boers might bring against them. Estcourt, like every other town or village in Natal, lies in a hollow surrounded by hills, and can only be safely held by a force large enough to occupy the whole range of encircling heights. But there was no other position that could well be taken without abandoning the protection of the railway, and endangering the line of retreat on Maritzburg which it was essential to keep open. At any rate, it was not so completely dominated by surrounding heights as Colenso, and it was sufficiently advanced to keep to some degree in touch with the movements of the Boer forces, and whenever possible to secure communication with Ladysmith by heliograph or by means of native runners. Accordingly the small force at Estcourt was instructed to remain there as long as it could do so with safety, but to fall back along the railway line if there was any danger of its being surrounded. The task which General Wolfe Murray and, after November 10, Colonel Long had to carry out was not a very satisfactory one. The force was too small to venture on an effective attack on the Boers, and not mobile enough to harass them or even to keep properly in touch with them. The mere task of furnishing pickets for the numerous roads leading out of Estcourt absorbed a very considerable portion of the men. It was impossible to do anything heroic, and General Wolfe Murray probably did the best thing possible in taking his men and transport on route marches to get them into proper trim by the time reinforcements should arrive. The only other active operation was the daily expedition of the armoured train up the line towards Colenso. What the object of these expeditions was it really is not quite easy to discover. Every one in camp from the very first predicted the disaster which eventually occurred two days ago, but with strange *insouciance* a new officer and another company or two of our overworked little force were dragged out for several hours every day in the stifling boxes of boiler iron. The construction of the train was of the simplest character. It consisted merely of open trucks with walls of thick boiler plate all round to a height of about 7ft. from the floor of the trucks. In these walls were three rows of loopholes, and outside were a few handles for climbing up. The trucks had no sliding doors, and the only method of getting in was by clambering over the sides, a feat quite impossible to do with a rifle in one's hand and very difficult and slow without. No more admirable target could be devised than a soldier climbing in and out of one of these death-traps. In a perfectly flat country a properly constructed armour train may be of some use for reconnoitring purposes. But between Estcourt and Colenso the line was like a regular switchback railway up and down a number of narrow valleys, and there is not a point for 20 miles up from which an unbroken view of 500 yards can be obtained on both sides of the line. For scouting purposes the armour train was perfectly useless. It could see nothing itself, while the puffing of its approach could be heard miles off. It had not even the advantage of speed A few days before the disaster I rode 12 miles out to Frere, starting from Estcourt at the same time as the armoured train, and arrived just ahead of it. I had gone into Colenso once before with the train when we had been fired on at long range by a small party of Boers from Fort Wylie, but had not felt very inclined to submit to the discomfort and danger of such a mode of reconnaissance again. To sum up, the armoured train was about as useful as one singularly inefficient scout, while, at the same time, it daily endangered the lives of 100 or 150 of our men.

About November 11 the Boers, who had been

perfectly inactive on Grobler's Hill for the whole preceding week, began to show signs of advancing. Skirmishing parties entered Chieveley, the next station south of Colenso, while others were reported to be advancing east of Estcourt towards Weenen, and it was feared that an attempt might be made by them to march south of Estcourt and destroy the line between Estcourt and Mooi River. On the 13th the battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment arrived, and was followed early the next morning by the naval detachment from the Tartar which had been sent up from Maritzburg. On the morning of the 14th it was reported that the Boers were advancing in some force along the Colenso and Weenen roads, and on the firing of an alarm gun at about 11 o'clock the camp was mobilized. Almost the whole force was sent out on to the hills east of the town, while at the same time tents were struck and the wagons packed, so that everything should be ready for an immediate retreat if a serious attack by any very large force should be contemplated. The Boers, however, who probably did not number much more than 200 men, and were a scouting and foraging party rather than an attacking force, made no attempt to advance after having exchanged a few rounds with the mounted detachments which Colonel Long had sent to the front, but remained on the hills behind Hodgson's farm about five miles north-east of Estcourt. Heavy rain fell in the afternoon which made things very uncomfortable for the soldiers. For though it had been decided not to retreat that night it was thought wiser to let the men bivouac out in the open and not to pitch the tents again until sufficient reinforcements arrived to render Estcourt absolutely secure. On that same day a mounted patrol advanced beyond Chieveley and found the Boers had tried to blow up a culvert without doing more than bending the rails upwards, and drove a party of them who were engaged in breaking up the line in headlong flight. The next morning the armoured train went out at 5 o'clock, this time with a naval 7-pounder and six men of the Tartar's gunners on an open truck in front of the train. Behind the gun was an armoured truck, then the engine, then two more armoured trucks, and an open wagon containing platelayer's materials. Captain Haldane, of the Gordons, was in command, with one company of the Dublin Fusiliers and a company of the Durban Light Infantry. The train went nearly as far as Chieveley, where a party of some 200 Boers were observed watering their horses. On its way back, about 1½ mile from Frere, it was fired upon from rising ground on both sides of the line, and a perfect shower of bullets and shells from three guns poured into it at some 800 yards distance with an accuracy which evidently showed that the range had been marked beforehand. Full speed was put on, but shortly afterwards the platelayers' truck and the two armoured trucks which were now in front ran off the rails at a curve and toppled over. I was told by a platelayer I met shortly after the disaster making his way back along the line that the Boers had loosened the rails by taking the bolts out of the chairs, but it seems most probable that the train simply derailed in running too fast round the curve. The version I cabled to *The Times* that the naval truck was in front and was upset by a shell is, I now have reason to believe, inaccurate. The 7-pounder fired three shots after the train stopped, but was then struck by a shell and disabled. The Dublins scrambled out of their trucks and spread out into skirmishing order, and a running fight was carried on by them and some of the Durbans with the enemy, who kept carefully under cover on the surrounding kopjes, at from 800 to 1,500 yards away. Our men endeavoured subsequently when the engine got off to get back towards the bend in the Blaauw Krantz river towards Frere, but it is evident that they failed to escape being surrounded.

Meanwhile, an attempt was made to get the derailed trucks in front off the line so as to allow the engine to escape. It was here that Mr. Winston Churchill, who was in the train as correspondent of the *Morning Post*, distinguished himself by his courage and presence of mind, superintending the moving of the trucks and taking over the control of the engine from the wounded engineer. After nearly an hour's hard work and harder fighting the line was cleared, but the wagons behind had to be uncoupled and left. As many of the wounded and non-combatants as could be found were picked up by Mr. Churchill and a few other courageous volunteers and put on the engine and tender, which then steamed off towards Frere. Captain Haldane and Mr. Churchill, however, got off again to take part in the fighting, and are missing with about 130 others. Captain Haldane was reported to have been wounded in the shoulder and Mr. Churchill in the hand. The rest of the force must have surrendered soon after, as the Boers told Dr. Bristoe, when he came out yesterday to ask for information about the casualties, that there were only three killed and ten wounded. Colonel Long on receipt of the news had at once sent out all available mounted men, about 180 all told, in Estcourt, to try and relieve the force that had thus been caught in a trap, but they came too late. When I reached Ennersdale, at about 11 o'clock, the cavalry were carrying on an engagement with a very much superior force of Boers, perhaps 900 strong, who had advanced beyond Frere. At first they succeeded in surprising the Boers, and drove them off, capturing several Mausers. But by midday they were forced to retreat. They had no casualties, however, except one young Australian trooper in the Imperial Light Horse, who was shot in the thigh, and whom I helped get on to a railway trolly and push back to Estcourt.

The news of the disaster created a profound gloom in the camp, which was somewhat relieved in the evening by the arrival of General Hildyard and the welcome news that reinforcements were on the way up and that it was determined to hold Estcourt at all costs. Yesterday morning the Queen's and East Surrey arrived, and have been followed to-day by the Irish Fusiliers and many trains full of transport and artillery horses. The 7th, 16th, and 66th Batteries are expected every minute, and with them the whole of Thorneycroft's and Murray's Light Horse. The moment the fine body of infantry now collected here receives this necessary addition of artillery and cavalry it may be hoped that the period of retreat and discomfiture will come to an end, and the first necessary step in our advance, the relief of Ladysmith, will be taken firmly in hand.

19th December 1899. continued from 11/12/99 - page -

THE BATTLE OF NICHOLSON'S NEK.

The following is the conclusion of our Special Correspondent's account of the Nicholson's Nek disaster, continued from our issue of December 11. Our Correspondent was obliged to break off to send as much as he had written by a despatch runner :—

It is impossible to describe the feeling in Ladysmith when the news of this disaster to our arms arrived. Stragglers from the stampede had made their way into camp about 8 o'clock in the morning, but for some reason, probably the want of men, no relief column had been sent out at a period when it would have been possible to extricate the force from its unfortunate predicament. In fact, until the evening of October 30, although it was known that the battery had been lost, a hope still existed that the infantry would be able to make its way back into camp under the cover of darkness. This hope was a shadowy one, it is true ; but it was rudely dispelled when on Tuesday morning a message came in from Joubert stating that two battalions had fallen into his hands, and that we might send out ambulances for the wounded. The Boers, apparently, as soon as the surrender had become complete, treated the wounded and prisoners with every courtesy, but they stripped the dead of boots and valuables. They had been anxious to show solicitude to the wounded, and even brought blankets to cover those seriously maimed. Though exultant, they had not been insulting, and my informant, who was one of the few who evaded capture, stated that only once did he hear an objectionable sentence, when an excited youth remarked, "Will you say now that the young Boer cannot shoot ?"

Ambulances were sent out from the camp, and 80 odd wounded were brought in, 44 dead being buried on the field. A review of the situation showed that from the first the position was absolutely untenable for infantry, even if it had been supported by artillery fire. But that the men had made a good bid for freedom, and that the surrender is in no wise a blemish on the traditions of British arms, is proved by the heaps of burnt cartridges with which the plateau was strewn.

During the night of October 30 the naval detachment from her Majesty's ship Powerful had been hard at work fixing the emplacements for their two position and four quick-firing guns, with the object of returning the fire of the big gun on Peppworth Hill. The enemy commenced to bombard early on Tuesday morning, and as soon as the discharge was seen the sailors replied with the 12-pounders. Our shooting was good, and shell after shell threw up dust from the earthwork which defended "Long Tom," as the Boer position gun on Peppworth Hill had now been named. But, the range being 7,500 yards, it was more than could be hoped that our light weapons would be able to keep down the fire. As soon as Joubert's letter was received and answered a temporary cessation of hostilities set in, for it transpired that the Boers had many wounded from Monday's engagement to bring in on their own account. Seeing that the enemy invariably prevaricate when questioned as to their losses in battle, it is impossible to form any correct estimate of their casualties. But they admit that they suffered severely, and that their losses were mainly due to our shrapnel fire, the effect of which they term "diabolical." After Rietfontein it was officially stated that they had lost 70 killed, 200 wounded, and 300 horses hit.

The effect of Monday's engagement on Ladysmith was wonderful. Train accommodation could not be found for the crowds desirous of going south. This clearance was desirable, for the town was now no place for women and children ; besides, the camp was flooded with crowds of loafers, who, if harmless sightseers themselves, gave cover for dozens of Boer agents. In fact, the state of affairs became so intolerable that on Tuesday the military authorities instituted rigorous measures to clear Ladysmith of the mass of undesirables which the exodus from Johannesburg and Dundee had brought into the place. Never, since the siege began, have the scenes been so pathetic as they were the few days before communication with the south was closed. Hundreds of loyal farmers had trekked with their wives and families into the town for security against the invader. These wretched people had piled into wagons all that they could save from their homesteads, and, with women and children crushed into the few square feet beneath the tilts, stood outspanned in the slush and dirt of Ladysmith. Some of the weaker women had sought

shelter in the already packed railway buildings, doubtless trusting that flimsy tin would be some protection against a 6in. shell. Here were gathered a motley crowd waiting until a train could be found to carry them somewhere, anywhere, for they had no destination. Their homes were in the hands of the enemy—their future resting-place would be where chance might take them. The condition of the women, wan and weary with waiting, was pitiful in the extreme. Their only desire was to escape from the terror of the shells now bursting in the town in regular monotony. These were the horrors of war, not, perhaps, so gruesome as the scenes upon the battlefield, but far more moving. The barbarity of war was more marked in the horror written upon those pale faces herding in the station yard than in the mangled frames borne to the hospitals. Here are families, destitute and almost starving, which, in the first instance, had been robbed and driven from the Transvaal. The temporary haven afforded by Dundee had been denied them. Driven by the dread of siege artillery, they had fled south, and now in Ladysmith the terrors of violent death were still hounding them on into deeper destitution.

19th December 1899.

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT AT LADYSMITH.)

Wednesday, Nov. 1.—Although the communications with the south are still uninterrupted to-day, the town was practically in a state of siege. The commissariat department have been busy commandeering foodstuffs from all the stores, the banks are closed, and bread has risen to 1s. a loaf. The unofficial armistice has continued, as the ambulance parties of both forces were still out searching for wounded. One battalion (the Dublin Fusiliers) was despatched to Colenso with the Natal Field Battery, as it was reported that the enemy were moving down upon the Tugela in force. The situation had proceeded so far that in Ladysmith it was accepted that the closing of all communication could only be a matter of hours. The situation in which Sir George White found himself was this. He had at his disposal to defend Ladysmith a force of 9,000 men, 36 field guns, and a naval contingent with two heavy position guns. Of foodstuffs and small arm ammunition he possessed a supply which would not, under ordinary circumstances, become exhausted in three months. But the artillery were not so well placed. The supply of shell worked out to a little over 300 rounds per gun for the field batteries and, even with the naval guns, it was evident that expenditure would have to be made with a sparing hand. Ladysmith does not lend itself readily to defence. Roughly, the town lies in the bend of a horseshoe. But the hills which make this formation are disconnected, and the ranges and spurs straggle over a large area. Not only are they uneven, but their continuations stretch away in every direction, and form positions which in the majority of cases actually command the town. With the force at his disposal it was, of course, absolutely impossible to hold every hill, and, even contracting his front so as to hold the majority of strategical points, Sir George White found his 9,000 men, of which only 5,000 odd were infantry, holding a line of posts extending over 11 miles. Against this the enemy have brought at least 20,000 men, this being the very lowest figure at which the estimate can be placed, there being every reason to believe the combined force under Joubert, now occupying Natal, to be between 25,000 and 30,000 men.

But this is not all; the experience of the last three weeks has shown the enemy to be not only numerically superior, but also possessed of arms which outrange anything that we can bring against them. If it had not been for the timely arrival of the naval guns it is impossible to conjecture what the consequences would have been. Take, for instance, the most important arm—the artillery. We have 36 guns of the best-manned artillery in the world, but at the very outside, however well served our guns may be, they have not an effective range above 4,500 yards. Against this the Boers have brought into the field guns fitted with the latest telescopic sights, and having a range of 7,000 to 8,000 yards. However devotedly our gunners may manœuvre their weapons, they cannot dislodge an enemy in action against them whom they cannot see. This of the field artillery; and while I write a 6-inch position gun is shelling the town and defences from about 8,000 yards. If the naval guns had not arrived, if the Boers had cut the communication three days earlier, we should have been powerless to reply. As it is we have been forced to take most of their bombardment sitting. With regard to the infantry arm, the discrepancy is not so great. But the Mauser rifle with which the Boers are armed is the better weapon, and has a greater range. With a good pair of glasses and a Mauser it is possible to make tolerable practice at 3,000 yards. No British infantry is trained to these ranges. Our men know nothing of glasses; yet the farmer-soldier, our enemy, would not think of taking the field unless one man in four possessed powerful binoculars. Thus, at first sight, the task set Sir

George White and his little force seemed stupendous. But there are saving contingencies, the first being the dislike which the Boer has ever shown to take the offensive. He will defend a position stoutly, but until he is absolutely certain of the success of a forward move he is loth to undertake it. This was proved in the engagement on Monday (October 30), and at Rietfontein, when opportunities were given to the enemy to follow up a retiring force. It has been proved in the half-dozen outpost affairs which have taken place throughout the campaign. Moreover, the South African Republic has been served badly by its agents, for if their ammunition had been as serviceable as their guns our casualties would have been three times as heavy as they have been. Their shrapnel is poor. On Monday, when the 42nd Field Battery moved up to within 3,000 yards of the enemy's position, well-fused shrapnel burst in front of the battery time after time. If these missiles had been from our own arsenals it would have been impossible for the men to have faced them and worked their guns. As it was, though they lost severely, they were able to make the enemy's position untenable. Since the bombardment shell have been picked up filled with extraneous matter, proving the duplicity of the contractors who supplied the war material.

To-day the loyal town guard of Ladysmith was disbanded. A fortnight ago the members of this corps were enrolled, and the youth of the town embarked upon their duties with great enthusiasm. But when once the Boer guns found the range of the town, the majority of the Town Guard removed to Maritzburg.

Thursday, November 2.—At dawn the enemy recommenced to bombard Ladysmith from Pepp-worth Hill. They only had one large calibre gun in position, "Long Tom," who is destined to be famous. The first shell fell into the town, and a fragment killed a Kaffir. Shortening their range, they continued to play with this solitary gun upon the Naval Battery, which was our nearest artillery defence. The sailors replied shot for shot, but the enemy had utilized the delay caused by the armistice in strengthening their redoubt, and it is doubtful if our return fire was very damaging. Our own men, as soon as they had laid their guns, retired to cover on the reverse of the hill, one man remaining to fire each gun. In all probability the enemy's gunners did likewise. Unfortunately, Lieutenant Egerton, R.N., while directing the guns, was hit by a shell, losing both his legs. He succumbed in the evening.

The enemy had not closed in on the west, and Brigadier-General J. F. Brocklehurst was sent out to make a reconnaissance with the 5th Lancers, some Volunteer Cavalry, and the 69th Field Battery. To the west of our position stretches a large rolling valley, covering the Maritzburg and Van Reenen's pass roads, a country eminently suitable to cavalry. This reconnaissance was successful, for it came upon a Free State laager, and so surprised the enemy that the battery was able to shell them while they were at breakfast. The Boers streamed out from the wagons and made for the hills under which the laager lay. We were not in sufficient strength to dislodge them, but the Volunteer Cavalry succeeded in rounding up about 50 of their ponies, which were brought into camp.

Trains were still leaving for the south as fast as the railway officials could get them clear. Major-General J. D. P. French and staff left in one about midday, General Buller having summoned the general to join at the Cape. This was the last train that succeeded in getting away. Subsequently we learned that it was fired upon by the enemy in the vicinity of Pieter's Station, but, running the gauntlet of this fire, reached its destination. About 3 o'clock the telegraph wires were cut, and from that moment the siege proper of Ladysmith may be said to have commenced. Hundreds of inhabitants who had been patiently waiting for accommodation in the downgoing trains were thus cut off, for when it was found that the hospital train, which had been due to arrive at Ladysmith in the evening, did not arrive no more trains were despatched.

In the afternoon the firing slackened, and a Boer ambulance came in under a flag of truce, bringing Major Riddell, of the K.R.R., and other wounded. The Boer doctor brought a letter from Joubert asking for an exchange of prisoners. This was allowed, and every courtesy was shown to the Boer hospital assistants who accompanied the ambulance. They freely entered such stores as remained open and made considerable purchases. One tendered Transvaal gold in payment. On being told that it was not current coin he replied laconically, "It soon will be."

There was a very grave subterfuge in connexion with this ambulance. Unfortunately the discovery was made too late to prevent the harm. It appears that the Boer commandant, Van Dam, who despatched the ambulance, sent as the driver one of his artillery officers. This man was allowed the freedom in the town which is extended to those who claim the protection of the Red Cross, and he deliberately spent his time in taking note of various vulnerable points. On the morrow, when the bombardment reopened, there is no doubt that, influenced by this man's information, the fire was directed upon the ordnance park and the house occupied by the Headquarters Staff. This is not the first history which I shall have to relate of Boer juggling and duplicity in connexion with the Geneva flag.

Friday, November 3.—As I said before, the hills which enclose the valley in which Ladysmith lies roughly form a horseshoe. It might, perhaps, be better said that Ladysmith valley is a triangle, with our northern picket as its apex and the M'Bulwana range as its base. This base and

apex are joined by ridges varying in altitude above the plain of Ladysmith from 300ft. to 500ft. The centre of M'Bulwana, where one of the enemy's batteries is situated, has been ranged by our gunners as 11,500 yards from Observation Hill, our most northern post. M'Bulwana itself is a tableland about 1,100ft. above the level of Ladysmith. The Klip river cuts through the triangle about three miles from the apex, and it is in the small triangle thus made that the town lies. Halfway between the river and the most northern posts runs a low range of stone kopjes. This is Convent Hill, and on its western slopes are the Naval Batteries and Cove Redoubt, the main positions of our heavy guns. North of Convent Hill lies a large plain, a square mile in extent; this is known as the old camp, while right in the apex of the triangle are the corrugated iron huts which constitute the lines of the permanent garrison of the station. South of Convent Hill, nestling well into its side, is the town proper, the railway station being on the east, with the principal street running west. The eastern side of the hill triangle continues south of the town for a matter of two miles, when it abruptly dies away into the bush-covered veldt which leads up to Lombard's Kop. Lombard's Kop is a conical hill with a flat top, standing detached from M'Bulwana range, but making the eastern angle in the imaginary triangle. Between Lombard's Kop and the end of M'Bulwana passes the Helpmakaar road. On the west the side of the triangle is made by a bold, even ridge, known as Cæsar's Camp. It does not stretch quite so far south as the eastern side, but branches out into another heavy spur, which is the first of a succession of hills which bound another valley somewhat similar to that in which Ladysmith stands. Between the termination of Cæsar's Camp range and the western limit of M'Bulwana are a number of low ridges occupied by the enemy, covering the Maritzburg railway in the vicinity of Pieter's Station. The Maritzburg-Ladysmith line passes out of the valley at the point of the left angle of the triangle.

As near as can be judged, a line drawn from the apex of the triangle to the centre of the base, M'Bulwana, would measure 8½ miles. The base itself being practically the same length, some idea of the area of the valley can be formed. With the present garrison it is impossible to hold more than a portion of the triangle, and our infantry is distributed along a line commencing from the abrupt termination of the Cæsar's Camp range on the left, right round the old camp, including the detached post known as Observation Hill, to the point overlooking the Helpmakaar road where the eastern ridge drops into the veldt before rising again to form Lombard's Kop. This gives us a very fairly defensible front of ten or 11 miles, which the defending battalions themselves have intrenched as necessary. But, though the front as it faces the lower spurs of the Biggarsberg and the intrenched position on Peppworth Hill is strong enough, the rear and both flanks of the line would be exposed to artillery fire if the Boers occupied M'Bulwana and succeeded in getting artillery into position on its summit. The extensive plain saves us from infantry fire, and the Klip River from direct assault. At the present moment the main strength of the enemy seems to be concentrated at Peppworth Hill, where it is believed that Joubert and Erasmus have their camps. The Peppworth guns have been ranged at 7,500 yards from our batteries in position on Convent Hill, and, taking this as a centre, it may be said that there are no Boer guns within that range. But, of course, this brings many of the Boer positions to within 4,000 yards of our posts. For instance, field guns placed on outlying kopjes constantly drop shell into the old camp, while other artillery engages the posts on the Helpmakaar road and Cæsar's Camp at ranges suitable to our own field artillery. But, as a rule, the Boer gunners are quick to gauge the capabilities of the 15-pounders, and retire to positions from which the superior range of their own weapons gives them the advantage. With the exception of Peppworth Hill and the nek between Lombard's Kop and M'Bulwana, it is impossible to say which are the Boer positions, for they have proved a mobile enemy, and each day they open upon the town or posts from positions newly occupied during the night. So well do they choose their ground that, as they use smokeless explosives, it is often several hours before our men are able to mark down the exact knoll or eminence on which the guns are placed. This morning the Boers began a desultory shell fire into the town from three batteries. Peppworth Hill still fired "Long Tom," the high velocity field battery from the nek below Lombard's Kop entertained itself with the picket posts of the Devonshire Regiment and the balloon, while a second field battery about 3,000 yards to the right of Peppworth dropped common shell into the open plain constituting the old camp. The effect of this shelling was more disastrous to the town than it had been on previous days. The field gun from M'Bulwana had found the range and wrecked the front rooms of two private houses. A projectile from Peppworth exploded in a house a few yards from the Royal Hotel during luncheon. The dining room was crowded with guests, windows were shattered, splinters fell upon the tables, and the room was filled with smoke, but no one was hurt. If the shell had fallen half a dozen yards further the results would have been appalling.

We were not yet tied up altogether, and a strong cavalry reconnaissance went out early in the morning under the command of Brigadier-General Brocklehurst. The column consisted of the 18th and 19th Hussars, two squadrons of the Imperial Light Horse, under Major Davis, commanding in the place of Colonel Scott Chisholme, killed at Elandslaagte, some mounted infantry, and the

53rd Field Battery. The cavalry found the enemy with one gun in position, about four miles north-west of Ladysmith. The battery came into action, and the cavalry, dismounting, lined the crests of the range of kopjes which run parallel to Cæsar's Camp on the far side of the Van Reenen's road valley. The battery silenced the enemy's solitary field gun with half a dozen rounds of shrapnel, and also succeeded in checking the head of a large column of mounted enemy who were seen working southwards. But while the position taken up by our cavalry precluded any chance of a frontal attack, the enemy brought artillery to bear on their left flank from the succession of high knolls which jut out for about five miles at right angles from Cæsar's Camp. General Brocklehurst sent in to Ladysmith for reinforcements. The 5th Dragoon Guards, one squadron each of Natal Carabineers, Natal Mounted Rifles, and Border Mounted Rifles, and two more batteries of artillery were sent out to support the column. Sending one of the new batteries of artillery to cover the position which the 53rd Battery was holding, General Brocklehurst withdrew the latter and brought it into action against a low knoll on a ridge to the left from which the enemy had opened with a field gun. The position which General Brocklehurst found threatening his left flank was peculiar. The enemy were in possession of three flat-topped hills, each with a valley between them, covering a front of about two miles ; at right angles from the most western of these kopjes ran the low knoll against which our battery had come into action. Between the kopje and this knoll was a valley, perhaps 1,500 yards across, leading, it was believed, to a large Free State laager. General Brocklehurst brought two batteries into action against the knoll, and their fire speedily silenced the gun in position there, which, it is believed, was abandoned by the enemy. In the meantime the Mounted Infantry had been sent to scale the centre of the kopje on the left, two squadrons of Royston's Volunteer Cavalry being deputed to turn the enemy out of the main and largest kopje. The men were forced to gallop under fire before they could dismount. This they gallantly did, and, leaving their led horses in various kloofs, worked up to the summit of the hills, driving the enemy before them, with trifling loss to themselves. The Imperial Light Horse and 5th Dragoon Guards remained as escort to the guns. As the movement developed the firing on all sides subsided. The two cavalry regiments and battery on the right sufficiently secured that flank.

Thinking that the enemy had evacuated their position, Major Davis sent a squadron of the Light Horse up the valley before mentioned, doubtless with the object of securing the laager presumed to be there. The squadron gaily trotted across the veldt to find itself suddenly in a *cul de sac* ; for, waiting until they were conveniently within 1,200 yards of two fires, the enemy opened on them. The Light Horse appeared to be absolutely caught ; to turn was out of the question, and they were forced to gallop forward for shelter, the hill side itself and boulders giving partial cover. From the position of the guns and the intensity of the fire it seemed that the squadron must be annihilated. Artillery fire was directed against the surrounding hills, and under its cover a squadron of the 5th Dragoon Guards, under Major Gore, was despatched to extricate them. In the meantime the mounted infantry and dismounted Volunteers had made the summit of the kopjes on the left and were engaging the enemy, whom they had driven out of the position into the succeeding hills. This distraction on the left, with the concentrated fire of two batteries, enabled the squadron of the 5th Dragoon Guards to extricate the Imperial Light Horse, and both parties galloped back across the enemy's front by troops in extended files. Marvellous to say, the losses were trifling. Captain Knapp, of the Light Horse, was killed, and there were half-a-dozen minor casualties. During the return gallop a troop horse was shot, throwing its rider. Lieutenant the Hon. R. L. Pomeroy pulled up and, taking the dismounted man up behind, brought him safely out of range—a plucky action, since for 300 yards the fire was heavy. It was now 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and the enemy having been driven from his original positions there was little left to be done. The Brigadier-General did not think that he was justified in ordering a dash for the laager. The price in casualties so late in the day would have been too great. A general retirement was therefore ordered. As Royston's Volunteers led down from the hill-top, the two long-ranged guns which had been in action on our far left earlier in the day again reopened, but their fire was practically harmless. There were no further casualties until close to camp, when the troops returning from this reconnaissance were accurately shelled by the guns which the enemy had now got into position at the foot of M'Bulwana. It has been suggested that the artillery officer who entered Ladysmith with the ambulance had marked down the range of the bridge over the Klip River, on the Van Reenen road, for the enemy had shelled the ammunition train which had followed the batteries out, and on the return of the column succeeded in causing a few casualties by well-burst shrapnel.

From M'Bulwana the enemy had perceived the column and its reinforcements leaving along the Van Reenen-Maritzburg road, and doubtless believed it to be a column moving to reinforce Colenso. Seeing the garrison thus weakened a considerable body came forward to within range of the pickets on the Helpmakaar road. But when they realized how strongly these pickets were held they immediately fell back. It has been characteristic of the Boers until the present that they will not close to the attack of a position unless they are confident of success. Time after

time have they had opportunities in which bold enterprise might have been crowned with success. But on every occasion they have received our offers of battle with extreme caution.

It has been necessary to make mention of the dishonest use to which the Boers have put the white flag. At Talana Hill they are reported to have saved their guns by displaying it. At Elandslaagte they treacherously fired upon the Highlanders and Light Horse after having shown it and caused the "cease fire" to be sounded. The incident of the artillery officer has already found mention. The following letter marks the culminating point :—

Naval Brigade Camp, Ladysmith, Nov. 3, 1899.

Sir,—I have the honour to report that about 2 15 p.m., the Boer large calibre gun having been struck by one of my small 12-pounders, a man jumped on to the parapet of the gun and vigorously waved a white flag which he kept displayed for at least 15 minutes. My gun immediately ceased fire. To my astonishment this Boer gun had the wickedness to recommence firing, and as I write is throwing shells with great accuracy into the cavalry camp. I desire that you will communicate this cowardly breach of warlike etiquette to that noble and high-minded officer, General Joubert. By all the rules of civilized warfare this Boer gun and the officers and men working it are my prize ; the gun should be dismantled and the officers and men sent into Ladysmith as prisoners of war.

I have the honour to be, &c.,
(Signed) HEDWORTH LAMBTON, Captain Royal Navy.

To H. E. Lieutenant-General Sir George White, V.C., K.C.B.

Monday, Nov. 6.—On Saturday, Sunday, and Monday there was practically an armistice. The bombardment of Friday, small as it was, had thoroughly unnerved the civil inhabitants of the town, and induced the Mayor to address Sir George White on the subject of the removal of non-combatants, women, and children to some place of greater security. Sir George White, on consideration, despatched a letter to General Joubert under a flag of truce suggesting that hospital trains, conveying the wounded and all non-combatants, should be allowed to proceed south unmolested. A reply to this letter was received to the effect that it would be impossible to permit any one to pass through the Boer lines, but that the wounded and such non-combatants as had never borne arms against the South African Republic might be removed to a place of safety in the plain in front of M'Bulwana, where they would remain unmolested under a neutral flag. On the receipt of this news the Mayor convened a meeting of residents at the Town-hall. It was a strange crowd which attended. Every denomination of South African white man was represented. The Church sent a heavy contingent ; half a score of women with blanched faces swelled the gathering. Respectable merchants, casual loafers, trembling natives of India all jostled each other to hear the words of wisdom which dropped from the lips of his worship the Mayor. Never before have I seen a crowd into the hearts of which terror seemed so firmly struck—terror bred of modern explosives. The most piteous face in the throng was that of a Maritzburg barrister, who had visited Ladysmith with the view of seeing war as one attends a picnic. A bursting shell unnerved him, and to complete his misery the enemy cut communication. The Mayor opened the meeting ; men roused to a patriotic fervour hurled heroics to the crowd. The only dignified speaker was Archdeacon Barker, who closed his address with the peroration, "that if he was to die, he would die under the Union Jack in preference to the white flag." The crowd applauded ; some one suggested the National Anthem. It was sung in chorus over and over again. Not a man would flinch from his post, the townsfolk of Ladysmith were of one mind. The meeting closed with a bar of "Rule Britannia," and then every one dispersed to pack his bag and to accept Boer magnanimity.

Thus it was resolved, and on the following morning Colonel Ward arranged for a camp at Intombi, about four miles south of the town, on the railway. Trains were run down to a convenient point, hospital tents pitched, and dur ng Sunday and Monday the majority of wounded were transferred from the town. Men with families carried their homes out in wagons, and, I regret to say it, dozens of able-bodied men accompanied these caravans who might have borne arms in the defence of the town. The camp was placed under the control of the resident magistrate of Ladysmith. Hitherto the Boers have respected the camp, none but medical officers being allowed passes to visit the neutral zone. A train leaves every morning to ration the refugees. On Sunday Joubert sent in about 90 of our wounded from Dundee. They were trained down to Modder Spruit, with their attendant medical officers. All windows in the train were shuttered to prevent the passengers from realizing any of the enemy's movements. These officers report that they and the wounded have been treated with every courtesy by the Boers, Joubert himself having constantly made the round of the hospitals. The details of General Penn Symons's death show that he met the end calmly, dictating a last message to Lady Symons half-an-hour before he died. Few realize the serious effect which General Symons's loss had upon the early issues of the campaign. His services were lost to the country just at the moment they were most required. A victory won is a little thing in comparison with a victory driven home.

Although a number of the residents of Ladysmith sought the protection of the neutral flag, yet there were quite a number who remained. These people spent the three days of armistice in discovering situations which promised to secure them against shell fire. The Klip River which encircles the town with many bends commended

itself to most, and by Sunday night its shelving banks presented a pathetic, yet almost amusing, spectacle. Every civilian adult, white and black, capable of wielding pick or shovel had bent his back in honest toil, and the gravel cliffs of the streamlet will remain a lasting testimony to what man can do when moved by a sense of physical danger. The majority of delvers were able to secure some mining talent to aid them in their work. Others with longer purses enlisted the services of soldiers, who brought the rudiments of military fortification to bear upon their labours. Others, imbued only with the instinct of self-preservation, burrowed shafts perpendicular to the bank, so that the cliff face bore the appearance of a nesting home of mammoth sandmartins. On every hand were gabions, sandbags, and sangars. But the greatest defence of all was that of the Imperial Light Horse. The majority of these men are Johannesburg miners, and they at once began to undermine their camp with shafts and galleries. Commandeering every coloured man that ventured near their camp, they cut ten shafts in the river cliff, and working night and day for 48 hours constructed an underground gallery capable of holding half the garrison. The sequel to their industry was amusing, for as soon as the last barrowful of earth had been thrown to the surface, down came a staff officer, and the regiment was sent to support the Manchester Regiment on the most exposed crest line of the defences. But there was a pathetic side to all this labour. The poor women and children were terrified out of their lives. Exposed to the most erratic climate in the world, old dames, young mothers, and delicate women left their homes to grub out an existence in damp holes and dirty subterranean passages; conscious of the din of arms above them, their anxiety for the safety of fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands was intensified by the lying reports which reached and circulated even in the level of the river bed. Such is the history of a beleaguered town.

But while the civilian population were hard at work upon their private defences, the military intrenchments were being pushed forward with wonderful despatch. The three days of grace were a godsend, for, if the Boers had chosen to hurl an organized attack upon any of our most vulnerable posts, it is doubtful whether, during the first four days of the investment, we should have been strong enough to have prevented them from occupying positions from which they could have dictated terms. The post known as Wagon Hill, is extremely difficult to defend, and, if it were once occupied by the enemy and intrenched, their guns would have town and garrison at their mercy. But, happily, as well as being a slow thinker, the Boer is a slow mover, and, while the enemy was occupying himself in completing the investment of the place and building gun emplacements at distant ranges, the defending units worked night and day to place their posts in a thoroughly defensive state. The commissariat and ordnance departments between them were able to supply 12,000 sacks. These were divided between battalions defending posts. Most of the troops, having come from India, had knowledge of the value of stones for building breastworks, and by Tuesday night the defences were so far perfected that every one was confident that the place was secure against infantry attack. The only anxiety lay in the extended front which it was necessary to occupy. Roughly from left to right it covered 11 miles. This used up every infantry battalion, leaving nothing to support a threatened post except cavalry. But as during this campaign cavalry armed with a long-ranged weapon has proved itself quite a new arm, and has constantly been employed as infantry, dismounted cavalry is not to be despised. The defence programme provides dismounted Lancers and Hussars to support the infantry line. On Sunday morning a general commandeering of horses for remounts for the Volunteer Cavalry took place. My animals were seized to make part of the bunch of 300 animals which made the first day's haul. On representation to headquarters my property was released, but the Carabineers succeeded in securing the 100 animals which they required. It was not surprising that there was casualty in the ranks of the Volunteer Cavalry, for ever since Natal was invaded on October 12 this arm has been worked day and night, and practically has been solely responsible for keeping touch with the enemy.

It is impossible to say what the real objective of the enemy is at present. As far as we know they have not detached a very large force to attack Colenso. Probably they hope to reduce Ladysmith before making a definite move southwards. This theory is supported by the intercourse which our medical men have had with groups of the enemy while tending the wounded. A doctor who mixed with the Free State commando on Friday said that the burghers on that side were confident that our garrison lay in the hollow of their hands. These burghers were big, fine men, travelling light, but there was a brightness about them which gave colour to the confidence which they expressed. They were perfectly friendly and outspoken, and greatly elated over the misfortune which had occurred to Colonel Carleton's column. They maintained that the 870 men who surrendered and were trained to Pretoria surrendered to an inferior force. But, however confident of success they may be, they are distressed at the effects of our artillery fire. They openly allowed that they could not face it, but had faith in the guns they were bringing from their base to reduce or silence all the advantage which our gunners possessed.

Of the 5th Lancers they spoke in great wrath, but with bated breath. They aver that they gave

no quarter after Elandslaagte, and slaughtered men suing for mercy. The element of a cavalry pursuit was new to them, but they promise no quarter to any Lancer who may fall into their hands. This threat would probably be carried out, for three days after Elandslaagte we had the melancholy incident where a party of Boers allowed a 5th Lancer patrol of five men to ride into their midst, and then, instead of calling upon them to surrender, shot them down. One trooper only managed to escape to tell the story.

To-day, Second Lieutenant Hooper, of the 5th Lancers, arrived in camp, having come through the Boer lines from Estcourt to join his regiment—a very plucky exploit. He brought the first definite news from below. Our force at Colenso had had a brush with the enemy, and had fallen back on Estcourt. It seemed to bear out the impression that the force detached south by Joubert at present is inconsiderable. In the evening there was a report in camp that the Boers were trekking north. This report is said to have originated from the balloon section, who have done excellent work during the investment, in spite of the fact that they are certain to draw the enemy's fire as soon as they attempt an ascent. But a balloon affords a hard mark, and only once has it been damaged, when a shrapnel burst succeeded in spoiling an ascent.

Tuesday, November 7.—At 7 o'clock in the morning the enemy began an organized fire on the town and defences. The Peppworth heavy calibre gun opened with solemn regularity. A 4·7 howitzer found the town from Surprise Hill, while on the north a battery of high-velocity field guns burst shell in the old camp and Rifleman's Range. It was found that another 6in. gun had been placed in position on M'Bulwana, which, with two 4·7 howitzers and a battery of field artillery on the nek below Lombard's Kop, divided their attention between the Devonshire Regiment's pickets on Helpmakaar and the body of the town. Efficiently served and with sound ammunition this armament should have been sufficient to render the town unsafe. But, though the Boers opened with a heavy fire, the return from the only guns with which we could cope with them, the 4·7 naval guns, seemed a sufficient reply, for after two hours the firing slackened and practically ceased, the net casualties resulting from it being two cows and three horses. One or two buildings were struck. Towards evening a similar desultory fire was again opened, which wounded two men in the breastworks. These two casualties cost the enemy about 400 rounds of shell. The Boer small-calibre guns fired for the most part shrapnel. The position artillery fired common shell with a bursting charge of 50lb. of melinite and an occasional shrapnel in a very thin casing. Occasional pieces of ring and segment shell were found, showing that the enemy varied the missiles which they hurled against us. When the first burst was heard in the morning there was a general rush to earth amongst the civilians; for five minutes the main street was alive with a scurrying crowd. Ten minutes later Ladysmith was clear, except for an occasional staff officer or mounted orderly. In the evening the enemy made a half-hearted attack upon Cæsar's Camp and Wagon Hill. But by this time everything there was snug and such of the enemy as came within twelve hundred yards of the post were speedily dislodged. But as it appeared that the Boers had discovered the advantage which would be theirs if they could gain Wagon Hill, Sir George White considered it advisable to support the Manchester Regiment and Gordon Highlanders with the Imperial Light Horse. As an attempt to rush the post at night was anticipated they were hustled out immediately.

Wednesday, November 8.—The bombardment burlesque was deferred until 9 o'clock. It then recommenced in the same desultory way as on the previous afternoon. By the aid of the balloon and the powerful telescope of the Naval Brigade, the majority of the enemy's positions had been located. But it was with extreme difficulty that some of the batteries using smokeless explosives were discovered. The high velocity battery on a spur of Lombard's Kop, which had been spitting shell into the Devonshire Regiment and the town for 48 hours, was marked down. The sailors plied it with a charge of lyddite. The second burst was accurate, for the guns remained silent, and through our glasses we distinctly saw a group of mounted Boers ride up to the battery, then gallop away as if a cavalry brigade was behind them. The battery never fired again that day, and on Thursday its position had changed. Each day intermittent firing takes place between our cavalry and the enemy's outposts. But it is generally at impossible ranges, and the effect is rarely worth recording. The Boers about this period daily sent in large gangs of Indian coolies. As these men had been employed in working the Dundee and Elandslaagte coalfields, and the Dutch had taken the trouble to rail them down to Modder Spruit, it is probable that they despatched them in the hope that they would help in the reduction of the town by further exhaustion of the food supply. The send off which was given to these wretched Indians was typical of the Dutchman; they were told that "the British flag was lost in Natal, and that they had better go and look for it." To a certain extent they have a right to this pleasantry, as the annexation of all Natal above the Tugela River has been declared by the South African Republic, and Dutch magistrates have been appointed to all the districts occupied.

THE FIRST ATTACK ON THE TOWN.

Thursday, November 9, was the most eventful day that we have had since communication was cut. It was the day on which Joubert selected to attempt to force the position. It was also the seventh day of the investment and the Prince of Wales's birthday. At 5 a.m. the

enemy commenced the orthodox artillery preparation which should precede an assault. The two heavy calibre guns pitched their 94lb. projectiles into the town at regular intervals of seven minutes. The batteries on Lombard's Kop turned their attention to the Helpmakaar road posts. Surprise Hill and Bell Hill dropped missiles into the old camp, and the bombardment proceeded merrily and harmlessly for about an hour. Our naval guns replied at dignified intervals, and sections of a field artillery battery on Rifleman's Range and King's Post were sufficient restraint for the gunners preparing the position for assault from the north. There is no doubt that Joubert had prepared a simultaneous attack from three points. A pretence at two of these attempts came together, the third, that on the Helpmakaar posts, coming later. It cannot be said that any attack was severe, but, the heaviest firing being directed against Observation Hill, it shall be honoured with the title of the main attack. Early in the morning the 5th Lancers, as usual, patrolled in the vicinity of Observation Hill, which is a detached post held by two companies of the Rifle Brigade 2,000 yards to the direct front of Cove Redoubt. The country in front of Observation Hill is typical of the theatre of the operations. It is approached by rocky succeeding spurs, such valleys as there are abounding in dips and kopjes, affording admirable cover to a skirmishing enemy. But there are certain folds of veldt which it was necessary for the enemy to cross before they could occupy positions within damaging range. The passage of these folds entailed exposure, and it was this exposure that the Boers would not face that morning. The attempts were made in a very creditable manner. Peppworth Hill from 6,000 yards furnished artillery support, and M'Bulwana even from 11,000 yards made excellent practice against the reverse of Observation Hill. A heavy rifle fire was also brought to bear upon the sky-line of our position. But, if theoretically correct, it availed them little. Practice is teaching our men the best methods of meeting an attack of modern arms. The men lay snugly among the boulders while a tempest of lead passed over their heads, and the furious fusillade of the attack was answered by single aimed rounds from between the clefts of cover. Groups of the enemy made repeated bids to reduce the range of the attack. But it is just that discipline and leading necessary to induce men to cross the open under fire that the Boers lack, and time after time they were driven back. So effective was our fire that I can safely say that I never saw a Boer that morning within a thousand yards of our firing line. The expenditure of Dutch ammunition was prodigious ; the enemy must have fired 100 rounds to every single round burnt by our men. So heavy was the fire that Sir George White reinforced Observation Hill with four companies from the Rifle Brigade. But this reinforcement was never needed.

The simultaneous attack was made on the western defences, Wagon Hill, Range Post, and Rifleman's Post appearing to be the objective. It succeeded no better than the attack upon Observation Hill. In fact, the well-directed fire of the two field guns on Rifleman's Post were of themselves sufficient to dispel it. The Boers had taken advantage of one of the deep folds in the big open plain which faces our western line, and here two shrapnel found them in rapid succession. In a moment the veldt was alive with galloping burghers putting distance between themselves and shell-fire. The Dutch artillery was more stanch than the riflemen, and for a considerable period an automatic gun and a field battery played on Cæsar's Camp. But it made no impression, and the damage to town and earthwork was immaterial. The attack on the Helpmakaar posts came later in the day, and at the best was only a half-hearted movement. If the enemy had been aware of the small effect which their shell-fire had made upon the shelter trenches of the Devonshire Regiment they would never have attempted to attack. Though the most exposed of all our defences, and exposed to artillery fire at short ranges from three points, this battalion have so converted the hillside that they are proof against all attack. The officers and men have grown cunning in the art of war, and, though shell after shell has displaced the earthen dressing of the breastworks, the siege casualties have not yet reached one per company. The enemy came down into the scrub-veldt which fronts the Devons' Post. The one squadron of the Imperial Light Horse which is permanently on patrol on the Helpmakaar road was reinforced by two squadrons of Natal Carabineers,and a battery of artillery stood to arms in camp in case the attack should develop.

But no development took place, and, after an exchange of long-range shots, the great attack of Thursday, which Joubert had promised the President would succeed, dwindled into the usual monotonous artillery duel. When the earnest nature of this attack is considered, a little incident which took place at noon is distinctly humorous. It was the Prince of Wales's birthday, and in orders for the previous day had appeared a paragraph to the effect that a Royal salute would be fired in honour of the Prince and that every man would receive a ration of rum in which to drink his Royal Highness's health. At a quarter to 12, when the artillery fire on both sides had somewhat slackened, Sir George White and staff climbed to Cove Redoubt. Precisely at noon the Naval Brigade fired a salute of 21 guns, directed in turn upon each of the enemy's known works, a percentage of rounds being fired with guns so elevated that they might fall into the valley beyond Peppworth Hill, where it was calculated

Joubert and Erasmus had their camp. Immediately after the last round of the salute had been fired, Sir George called for three cheers for the Prince. The sailors jumped to their feet and cheered in ringing chorus. Picket after picket caught up the cry until the whole of Ladysmith was one shout of jubilation. Not content with this, post after post burst forth in the National Anthem. What the feelings of the enemy must have been it is impossible to imagine. They must have interpreted the clamour as resulting from contempt for their concerted effort to reduce us. A pigeon was then despatched conveying a telegram of congratulation from the garrison to the Prince. It was a pleasantry which cheered us all.

Our total casualties throughout the day were three killed and 17 wounded. Five men were hit by the burst of one shell ; the remainder of the casualties were mainly rifle wounds. The result of the day's fighting was a great relief to all, for it again proved the estimate which we had formed of the Boer—that if he has the heart to come on, he has not the organization and discipline which can turn this courage to account.

Friday, November 10, opened with a heavy thunderstorm, and the Boers made no attempt even to shell the town. In fact, it was at one time supposed that the enemy had drawn off, as the squadron of Imperial Light Horse on the Helpmakaar Road were able to patrol nearer to Lombard's Kop than upon previous days. The patrols also found evidences of a hasty withdrawal of the enemy, saddlery and camp furniture lying about in some profusion. But there had been no change in the main artillery positions, and the 37mm. gun sputtered into groups which advanced incautiously. A report was current in the morning that the Boers were engaged in damming the river above us. This mattered little, as the river came down in spate from the night rains. This rise was not an unmixed blessing, as the rise washed out many of the dwellers in caves in the river bed. But during the last 48 hours a great change had come over the townspeople. They had become reconciled to the screech of shrapnel and faced the bombardment, if not with contempt, at least with composure. When the weather became heavy, such civilians as remained congratulated themselves in that they had not migrated to the refuge camp at Intombi.

An Indian coolie came in in the afternoon from Joubert's camp. He had been detained there eight days. His information was not valuable, but he informed us that the Boers were living chiefly upon slaughter cattle and that three of the shells from the Royal salute had fallen in the vicinity of the camp. He also reported having seen 50 wounded Boers as the result of Thursday's fighting.

Saturday, November 11, the ninth day of the investment, opened with considerable excitement, as a European called Brockie, having evaded the Boer outposts, brought news into camp from Estcourt. On Thursday, just before sundown, heliograph communication had been established with Estcourt, but it was but a flash of a few moments' duration. Headquarters knew nothing of what was passing below beyond the fact that we still held Estcourt The man Brockie brought the tidings that three brigades under General Clery had left Cape Town to relieve us, that General Sir Redvers Buller had relieved Kimberley, and that there were no Boers south of the Tugela. This news gave us great impetus, for it was felt that the colony was safe and that Sir George White had fulfilled his mission, which was to save the colony until Buller's forces could take action. This messenger had experienced great difficulty in forcing the lines. It had taken him 36 hours, and when travelling by night he had constantly passed through the enemy's picket camps, and on one occasion had been forced to brain a sentry. He reported that the Boers had armed their Basutos and Kaffirs for outpost work. These he had been able to pass by pretending to be a Dutchman, but this native cordon accounts for the difficulty we have had in getting our Kaffir messengers through. I have sent a man out every day, but I fear with but slight success. Two have come back having been captured and their messages taken from them. This point is certain. At the present juncture the Boers find it politic to treat the native of the country well.

About midday the heavy guns opened on the town and shelled for about an hour. Mr. Carter's house was again hit, this making the fifth time ; a store in the main street was also damaged. But the net result in loss of life was two mules belonging to the team of an ambulance wagon. A siege baby was to-day born in one of the subterranean passages in the river bank. In the evening a deserter came in from the enemy. He was a colonial born Irishman belonging to the Irish brigade. His information was of some value, and proved that our estimate both of the enemy's positions and of his strength had been comparatively correct. He stated that the Boers expressed great dissatisfaction at the result of Thursday's attack, but were still confident of bringing about the fall of the town. The deserter also reported that the Irishmen were being employed in hauling the ammunition for the big guns up the hills—a risky proceeding, as our shrapnel searches the reverses. One shrapnel alone had killed and wounded 17 of his comrades. His further information was that it was published in the Boer camp that Mafeking had fallen and that Commander Cronje was due in a day or two to arrive before Ladysmith with a reinforcement of over 5,000 burghers.

Sunday, November 12, was another quiet day. Some exchanges in wounded were made, and Joubert sent an apology to General White for his

men having fired on an ambulance. The sappers went out to Lombard's Kop and destroyed with dynamite a farmstead which had given cover to the enemy. An occasional exchange of shots took place as usual between patrols.

20th December 1899.

WITH GATACRE'S FORCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

QUEENSTOWN, Nov. 18.

The last mail had scarcely left here when the news of important developments began to arrive. The commando which has for so long been lying inactive at Rouxville crossed the Orange River on the 13th inst., and occupied Aliwal North with 450 men and one gun. Commandant Olivier lost no time in issuing a proclamation declaring Aliwal and district to be Free State territory, and detailing the obligations and penalties attached to the performance or neglect of burgher and civic duties. The Transvaal and Free State flags were hoisted with due formality, and British subjects were given 14 days' grace in which to swear allegiance to their new masters or to quit the country. In actual fact, the 14 days referred to represented a paper arrangement only, since in the case of all prominent citizens 48 hours appears to have been the period generally enforced, either by official notice or by private intimation that it would be wiser to clear forthwith.

The magistrate, Mr. Hugo, seems to have behaved exceedingly well, and, indeed, to have shown not only a strict regard for his duty, but also a courageous determination to brave all the risks that his conduct might involve. Accordingly, he circulated notices calling a meeting of prominent loyalists with the double purpose of discouraging the enemy by an expression of adverse opinion, and, secondly, of giving the farmers a chance of formally recording their choice in favour of the Imperial Government by a united decision to resist, by force if necessary, any attempts to "commandeer" them for service with the invaders. This most excellent intention was frustrated by the shameful conduct of two Dutch "loyalists," one a member of Parliament and the other a justice of the peace. These gentlemen, who had hitherto been loud in their protestations of unswerving loyalty to the Crown, most shamefully betrayed the proposed meeting, which they themselves had promised to attend. Mr. Hugo was given two hours to clear out, and his assistant, Mr. Van Reenen, the same time. Both arrived at Queenstown on Friday, November 17. Mr. Hugo was obliged to leave his wife and children behind him and simply flee for his life. The English refugees, of whom I have now met many, are unanimous in their praise of Mr. Hugo, whose conduct they declare to have been most plucky. The magistrate's first adventure with the Boers was really a rather amusing one. It appears that the enemy have for a long time been firmly persuaded that Aliwal Bridge had been mined or otherwise prepared for destruction. In order, therefore, to frustrate any British intention of blowing them into the air along with the bridge, the astute burghers caused the magistrate and assistant magistrate of Aliwal to stand in the roadway in the centre of the bridge whilst the invaders defiled by them. The scene was much enjoyed by the Boers and by their sympathizers—more especially by the latter, who are invariably most malignant and insulting in their behaviour to the loyalists. These consist almost entirely of genuine Britishers. The colonists of Dutch extraction consist, to the extent of one-half, of persons who are openly in favour of the enemy, whilst, of the other half, the majority are "sitting on the fence," and the small remainder are really loyal to the Crown because they are able to see that the interests of South Africa at large can best be served by supporting British supremacy.

Mr. Hugo has hitherto been suspected of entertaining Afrikander tendencies, and there is no doubt that up to a certain point his countrymen have commanded his sympathy. He has deprecated every step that seemed likely to provoke a warlike solution of the South African question, and has consequently performed his duties hitherto with less firmness than some of the supporters and *employés* of Government considered desirable. Perhaps in the past he may have been wrong, but, at all events, he has since made it perfectly clear that under the conditions which have since arisen his loyalty is beyond question. It would have been easy for Mr. Hugo to retire from Aliwal before the climax was reached, or, even remaining at his post to the last, to take his departure then without any specific demonstration of his opinions. By following either of these courses he could have avoided estranging himself from the Dutch or compromising his official relations with the British. He seems, however, to have preferred acting precisely as might have been expected of him had he been an Englishman. The assistant magistrate, Mr. Van Reenen, has acted in similar fashion, standing loyally by his chief to the utmost extent of his power and opportunities. It should not be forgotten that, acting as they did, these two gentlemen made themselves liable, under Commandant Olivier's proclamation, to the penalty of death. The stand which they made was, therefore, specially meritorious.

The occupation of Aliwal was followed next day by that of Burghersdorp, the forces employed con-

sisting of contingents from the Bethulie and Rouxville commandos, reinforced by not less than 100 colonial Boers drawn from the Aliwal district. The rebel Boers have adopted colours of their own, blue badges with a thin yellow stripe. The forward movement of the enemy seems now to have been temporarily arrested, for what reason no one seems able to explain. Disturbing rumours from Basutoland are plentiful enough, and, if the half of what is alleged be true, quite sufficient to account for the delay. Upon the other hand, it is not impossible that the reconnaissances carried out with the armoured train may have led the enemy to imagine that strong forces are on the move from Queenstown to oppose them. Be the cause what it may, the fact remains that, although Stormberg junction lies at the mercy of the Boers, they have so far refrained from occupying, or even approaching, that station. Scouts, indeed, have been seen, but no signs of a commando.

On Wednesday last, the 15th inst., Major Maxwell, R.E., conducted a reconnaissance with the armoured train as far as the broken railway bridge about half-way between Stormberg and Burghersdorp and kindly permitted me to accompany him. The train consisted of two trucks only, and conveyed a detachment of the Royal Berkshire Regiment under Lieutenant Gossett, together with sundry engineers and railway men. We saw no sign of the enemy, with the exception of a single scout, who was prowling about near the bridge, and galloped quickly away as soon as he saw the train approaching. The men were much disappointed at the enemy's failure to put in an appearance. I was particularly struck by the quiet, businesslike conduct of the detachment and had every confidence that, in case of a fight, they would give a good account of themselves, It was my good fortune to see the Berkshire men in action at Tofrek (McNeill's zariba) in the Suakin campaign of 1885, and I feel confident that the battalion now in South Africa is made of the same sterling stuff.

All our attention is at present fastened upon the absorbing question of when an advance will take place. General Gatacre arrived this morning with his staff and a portion of the Royal Irish Rifles. More troops are immediately expected, and before many days have passed I fancy that we shall be in the thick of it. Delay is very dangerous, since it must tend to encourage the colonial Boers to cast in their lot with the enemy. We hear on good authority that at Barkly East 800 colonials are in laager, but it is not known with absolute certainty even that such a laager has been formed ; consequently rumours as to intended movements by the rebels are generally treated as untrustworthy. That something is doing in the Barkly district is clear, but the exact nature of the disturbance has not yet transpired. The departure of the Naval Brigade, who were withdrawn on Thursday night to East London for re-embarcation, was no doubt necessary, since otherwise it would scarcely have been permitted, but it is none the less most regrettable. With the reinforcement received to-day and the Naval Brigade still at his disposal, General Gatacre might safely have advanced forthwith to Stormberg. Such a forward movement is now impossible, but a few hours may render it once more feasible. The moral effect of leaving the invaders in undisturbed possession of Burghersdorp, and with no opposition to their further advance, is distinctly prejudicial to our interests.

Yesterday I attended the machine-gun practice of the Cape Mounted Rifles, who have a battery of six Maxims. The guns, I understand, have been but recently received, and the detachments, consequently, were perhaps not quite at home with them. At all events, although the shooting appeared to be accurate, the practice was interfered with more than once by "jams." Of the Cape Mounted Rifles themselves I can only say that the more I see them the greater becomes my admiration for them.

QUEENSTOWN, Nov. 24.

On the morning of Saturday, the 18th inst., as I have already recorded, Sir William Gatacre and the staff of the Third Division arrived at Queenstown, as well as the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles, who furnish a welcome accession of strength to the garrison. An attack, although perhaps no longer probable, is by no means impossible. Sir William has most evidently lost none of that boundless activity which earned for him in Egypt the nick-name of "Back-acher." Since his arrival the General has not permitted the grass to grow under his feet and is very much *en évidence*. He showed himself to the troops at church parade on Sunday, and in conclusion of a speech, in which he introduced himself in characteristic fashion, he communicated the good news of the highly successful action at Ladysmith on the Prince of Wales's birthday. He has had an opportunity of making friends with the small body of troops that at present represents his division, and he has made the most of it. Cheerfulness at all times and a spice of dry humour upon appropriate occasions will always appeal to the soldier, and, although the men know their future commander, by repute, to be a hard task-master, it is very evident that they have unanimously elected him a popular favourite. This popularity will do much to ensure willingness and zeal in the execution of the stiff programme of work which will most certainly be proceeded with until the day comes for a forward movement.

The country round Queenstown is exceptionally well adapted to furnish opportunities for studying the tactical use of ground, and without doubt these advantages will receive due attention during the time that remains for seizing them.

On Tuesday, November 21, Sir William Gatacre went by rail to the front to reconnoitre the posi-

tion on Bushman's Hoek now occupied by a detachment of the Kaffrarian Rifles, and said to be the appointed place of concentration for the Free State commandos about Burghersdorp and their colonial adherents now assembling in the district of Barkly East. The General also visited *en route* the camp at Sterkstrom, where the bulk of the Kaffrarian Rifles under Major Cuming is now stationed. The result of this expedition has been the despatch of the Royal Irish Rifles, the Berkshire Mounted Infantry, and the detachment of Cape Mounted Rifles to Potter's Kraal, about eight miles south of Sterkstrom. The infantry proceeded by rail and the mounted troops by road on Wednesday, the 22nd inst. The object of this movement is clear. The colonial rebels must fall foul of the force at Potter's Kraal if they march direct on Bushman's Hoek, whilst, if they make a detour northwards in order to avoid contact, they must lose time in any case, and not improbably offer their flank to a timely attack before effecting a junction with the Free State commandos. The Bushman's Hoek position is one of great strength, and if it fell into the hands of the enemy would prove a most disagreeable obstacle to our advance. Moreover, the railway there climbs the hill by a winding track in which are many works that would give great trouble to repair should the enemy be enabled to demolish them. The Kaffrarian Rifles are fairly well posted, and would assuredly give a good account of themselves, but it is doubtful whether their numbers are sufficient for a prolonged resistance if stoutly assailed. The presence of the force at Potter's Kraal will enable support to reach the Kaffrarians long before any real danger can have been incurred. The Cape Mounted Police have six 7-pounder screw guns and six Maxims. The force thus forms a compact little column of all arms, and is composed of excellent material. I noticed that the physique of the Royal Irish Rifles is excellent. During the night following the departure of the troops for Potter's Kraal about 300 mounted infantry arrived here from East London, and before many days have passed quite a respectable force will have assembled. Ignorant people are clamouring for the immediate reoccupation of Stormberg as a prelude to offensive action against the invaders ; but General Gatacre seems wisely determined to await the arrival of sufficient reinforcements to ensure his being in a position to deliver a really hard blow. Half measures would not do at all. When we pass from the defensive to the offensive we should be strong enough to drive home the first thrust and chase the enemy over the frontier.

Refugees from the districts occupied by the invaders or threatened by colonial sympathizers are arriving in great numbers, and many have suffered immense hardships. For example, one old couple who had secured an ox wagon to convey them from Aliwal were compelled to walk, as the Boers ruthlessly commandeered the wagon. The wife of an Aliwal doctor, being unable to procure a conveyance of any sort, rode the whole 120 miles, under the broiling sun and over execrable roads, on a bicycle. She was subjected, moreover, to a shower of brutal and disgusting insults whilst passing a Boer commando on the road. Similar incidents appear to have been scandalously frequent.

There is just one satisfactory point to be noticed in relation to the present invasion. The colonial Dutch were eager in their invitations to their kinsmen in the Free State, supposing that no more would be expected of them than that a general welcome should be accorded and that a few young men should volunteer for service. Instead of this the luckless people find that their allies are ruthlessly " commandeering " in every district occupied ; and the joys of rebellion are being very much modified in consequence. Other districts equally disaffected are remaining quiet, for no other reason than the knowledge that, if the inhabitants introduce the enemy, they themselves will be commandeered to serve in his ranks. The wire to Barkly East was cut on the 22nd inst., and we are without much information regarding the whereabouts or intentions of the colonial commando, but it seems far from improbable that it may melt away without doing much. The fact that reinforcements are really arriving is becoming known, and Boer sympathies are commencing to be regarded as distinctly dangerous if openly expressed. The meeting at Dordrecht held on Wednesday the 22nd, under the auspices of Mr. Sauer, passed a resolution in favour of remaining " loyal," but this " loyalty " expresses no more than discreet abstention from actual co-operation with the invaders in the field. Mr. Sauer left Dordrecht on Thursday with the intention of holding a meeting at Barkly and subsequently returning to Dordrecht in order to hold a second at that place. It seems, however, to be questionable whether the Boers, who have now occupied Barkly, will permit any meeting of real or pseudo-loyalists to be held.

Sir William Gatacre has been ubiquitous ever since his arrival, and the number of persons, places, localities, and positions that he has visited is quite wonderful. This morning, however, he took what he regards as a rest. Having no expedition in view by road or rail, he mounted his horse at 4 45 a.m. and spent his time until 8 a.m. watching the troops at their exercises and inspecting various arrangements at the camp. On Wednesday, when visiting the camps of the Kaffrarian Rifles at Sterkstrom and Bushman's Hoek, the General paid some well-deserved compliments to that excellent corps and has thereby pleased them greatly. Really the Kaffrarians have done plenty of hard work during the past three weeks, and they have, moreover, been exposed to no inconsiderable danger, holding as they do the post of honour at the head of the division, and, until Thursday, being wholly unsupported by any other troops nearer than Queenstown.

It is very remarkable that, although the Boers have for ten days or more been within easy reach of Stormberg Junction, they have not yet taken possession nor even made a dash to break up the railway. It is said that they are afraid of some "trap" having been set for them, but meanwhile we remain in possession of the great advantage of an uninterrupted lateral communication with Lord Methuen's column on the Orange River. Late last night a telegram arrived here announcing the successful action at Belmont.

24th December 1899.

WITH GATACRE'S FORCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

QUEENSTOWN, Nov. 29.

Early on the 24th inst. came the unwelcome intelligence that the Boers had at length done what they might have done any day for the past fortnight—cut the railway to De Aar. Stormberg Junction does not seem to have been interfered with, and the enemy has preferred to select a point between that place and Steynsberg. The latter town is the centre of a hotbed of disloyalty, and it is by no means improbable that the act of demolition was accomplished by rebel Boers without the aid of their Free State allies.

On Monday, the 27th, I got as far as Bailey, *en route* for Putter's Kraal, and on the following morning the station-master of Bailey told me that the Boer commando, which had meanwhile advanced from Stormberg as far as Molteno, had marched westwards in the direction of Steynsberg. It struck me at once that this movement might not improbably mean an attempt to cut General Gatacre's communications with Queenstown, by a movement thereon *via* Maraisburg and Tarkastad. Accordingly, I hastened on in advance of my wagon to report what I had been told. The report had, I found, already reached headquarters, and the same conclusion that I had myself arrived at had also been formed by the general. The situation really seemed rather serious. Upon the one hand the troops at Putter's Kraal, although quite strong enough to defeat any force that the Boers were likely to be in a position to bring against the camp itself or the advanced posts at Sterkstroom and Bushmans-hoek, could not at the same time defend the railway nor Queenstown itself, which has, practically speaking, been denuded of troops. The Queenstown garrison has been reduced to two companies of the Royal Berkshire Regiment and the local volunteers. In short, pending the arrival of reinforcements, the small force that represents the Third Division launched itself into the air when it marched from Queenstown.

The general was, I am sure, much averse to moving until strong enough to sweep the country to his front all along the line and drive the enemy over the Orange River. The recent developments, however, rendered further delay impolitic. It seemed imperative, even at considerable risk, to make an attempt to overawe the colonial rebels, and this object was at once effected to no inconsiderable extent. Trouble would have arisen by the 27th at latest had not General Gatacre already occupied Putter's Kraal with the Royal Irish Rifles and mounted troops, who proceeded thither on the 22nd inst. Strategically, considering only the military situation, General Gatacre was wrong to advance from Queenstown, since he lacked the tactical strength to support his strategical movements. But there are cases where ordinary rules must be broken through, and the present case is one of these. In short, the political considerations involved were of such importance that they compelled the action taken. In order to prevent any misunderstanding as to the great responsibility that General Gatacre thought fit to assume when he decided upon advancing, it seems desirable to remind your readers that, when the occupation of Putter's Kraal was ordered, the Third Division consisted of one battalion, the Royal Irish Rifles, and that when the general himself followed to the same place only one battalion, the 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers, had been added. Sundry Cape Mounted Rifles, mounted infantry, and volunteers, with two companies of the Royal Berks, amounting in all to, say, 1,100 men, were also available for duty at the front, but of the division itself only two battalions were under the general's command when he advanced his headquarters to the Putter's Kraal Camp; no Royal Artillery, no Field Company R.E., and no cavalry.

Doubtless the apparently all-absorbing need for troops with the Western Column has delayed arrivals for the Third Division. Yet I doubt whether the particular urgency in respect to the relief of Kimberley was actually greater than the general needs of this part of the country. The spirit of rebellion is certainly growing stronger, and simply because it has hitherto enjoyed entire immunity from physical restraint. The great majority of the Dutch Afrikanders are disloyal at heart, and, if their active opposition to her Majesty's forces does not equal the volume of intrigue and covert hostility, it is only because the entire number of disloyalists comprises a large proportion who have too much knowledge or too little courage to take up arms. Great Britain does not desire to exterminate the Boer population during the war, nor to resort to wholesale punishment hereafter. Consequently it is preferable that the very smallest number of disloyalists shall have opportunities to disclose their feelings by armed co-operation with the enemy.

THE SURPRISE OF GUN HILL.

Cable Gram

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, DEC. 8.

In consequence of information received yesterday, it was considered that it might be possible to capture at night the new heavy calibre battery recently erected by the enemy on a spur of Lombard's Kop, which had daily been raking the town with considerable effect. The scheme was one in which bold audacity was the chief factor of success. The battery was six miles from our camp and was erected on the summit of a flat-topped kopje, a sheer ascent of 500ft. General Sir A. Hunter had charge of the arrangements. He selected 100 picked men of the Imperial Light Horse, 100 Natal Carabineers, and a few sappers and gunners, with 300 mounted Volunteers protecting the flanks.

With the utmost secrecy the little column of resolute men was led out by Major Henderson. A party of his guides, by admirable leading, brought the force in a bee-line to the foot of the hill at 1 o'clock. It was pitch dark. The men extended and began to creep up. When they were a short way up, they were challenged by a Dutch picket. The challenge was answered by a cheer. In spite of the difficulties of the climb up an almost sheer ascent, the men raced up the hillside, and, time now being everything, rushed the picket, who began firing, giving the alarm to the defenders above. The very precipitous slope for a time gave cover; then, when our men were within 20 yards of the summit, the Dutch poured rifle fire into them. Colonel Edwards shouted "Fix bayonets; let them have it with cold steel." Though the whole force mustered only four bayonets, being mounted infantry, the ruse had its effect. Shouting "Cold steel!" the men breasted the crest, and the Dutch gunners fled into the darkness. Colonel Edwards, at the head of his men, was the first in the gun emplacement. There was no hand-to-hand fighting. The men formed a cordon round the gun parapet, and the sappers, under Captain Fowke, R.E., placed guncotton charges in the two big guns with two-minute fuses. In three-quarters of an hour the whole thing was done. Captain Fowke was the last man to leave the parapet, having waited to inspect the satisfactory results of the bursting charges. The casualties from fire were one severely wounded and eight wounded, including Major Henderson in two places. A 6in. Creusot and a 4·7in. howitzer were destroyed, and a Maxim was captured and brought away.

The men withdrew in perfect order, covering their retirement with volleys. The success of the action was due to the magnificent guiding of Major Henderson and the guides and the intrepid leading of General Hunter and Colonel Edwards. The gun parapet sandbags were 31ft. high. The "Long Tom's" breech block was brought away [illegible]

[illegible] nce to the north-east came weary with waiting, was pitiful in the extreme. Their only desire was to escape from the terror of the shells now bursting in the town in regular monotony. These were the horrors of war, not, perhaps, so gruesome as the scenes upon the battlefield, but far more moving. The barbarity of war was more marked in the horror written upon those pale faces herding in the station yard than in the mangled frames borne to the hospitals. Here are families, destitute and almost starving, which, in the first instance, had been robbed and driven from the Transvaal. The temporary haven afforded by Dundee had been denied them. Driven by the dread of siege artillery, they had fled south, and now in Ladysmith the terrors of violent death were still hounding them on into deeper destitution.

THE COLONIES AND THE WAR.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

The fact may not be generally known that, in addition to sending contingents of their troops to take part in the war in South Africa, the colonies are rendering a distinct service in the furnishing of supplies. The War Office shows a natural preference in giving out contracts to the mother country, but the colonies are not only receiving a due share for themselves, but, in helping us in matters which cannot be dealt with adequately in Britain, are facilitating in a very practical manner the elaborate arrangements that are necessarily involved. Australia has, for instance, already furnished no less a quantity than over 3,000 tons of compressed corned beef in tins ranging in size from 1lb. to 6lb. each. Indeed, the War Office has simply cleared out the available stores of this particular commodity in Australia, and, wanting more, has had to go to America for another 1,000 tons, pending the time when the Australian packers will have replenished their stocks. It must not be supposed, however, that the war authorities propose to feed our troops on compressed corned beef if they can help it. On the contrary, the 4,000 tons in question are regarded as only the reserve forces of the commissariat department in South Africa. They are wanted as something to fall back on when there is a lack in the supplies of fresh meat, which are kept up whenever circumstances permit. To this end the War Office makes contracts with wholesale dealers in South Africa for the supply to our troops of so many million pounds of meat which is absolutely fresh; and when a large force makes an advance it is the duty of the contractor to follow it up with a stock of live animals and a staff of slaughterers in attendance—keeping only such distance off as may appear discreet—so that supplies of fresh meat may be forthcoming on demand. In this way enormous quantities of such meat "on hoof" are now being sent all over South Africa, and it may be added that the contract prices which have to be paid for them are equal to the charges of the most fashionable butcher for the best sirloins in the West-end of London. There is, however, something to be said for the contractor, whose obligation to follow the troops wherever they go, and to provide slaughterers as well as cattle, should be recognized; but, all the same, the butcher's bill is certain to assume formidable proportions. The further

MAP OF LADYSMITH AND DISTRICT.

From a Map issued by the Intelligence Division, War Office.

RAILWAYS ——— ROADS - - - - TELEGRAPHS ———

Scale. $\frac{1}{31680}$ or 1 inch to 2 miles.

MILE ½ 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 MILES

on Hill, it shall be honoured with the title of he main attack. Early in the morning the 5th ancers, as usual, patrolled in the vicinity of bservation Hill, which is a detached post held y two companies of the Rifle Brigade 2,000 ards to the direct front of Cove Redoubt. he country in front of Observation Hill is ypical of the theatre of the operations. It is pproached by rocky succeeding spurs, such alleys as there are abounding in dips and kopjes, ffording admirable cover to a skirmishing enemy. ut there are certain folds of veldt which it was ecessary for the enemy to cross before they could ccupy positions within damaging range. The assage of these folds entailed exposure, and it as this exposure that the Boers would not face hat morning. The attempts were made in a very reditable manner. Peppworth Hill from 6,000 ards furnished artillery support, and M'Bulwana ven from 11,000 yards made excellent practice gainst the reverse of Observation Hill. A heavy ifle fire was also brought to bear upon the sky-line f our position. But, if theoretically correct, it vailed them little. Practice is teaching our men he best methods of meeting an attack of modern rms. The men lay snugly among the boulders hile a tempest of lead passed over their heads, nd the furious fusillade of the attack was nswered by single aimed rounds from between he clefts of cover. Groups of the enemy made epeated bids to reduce the range of the attack. ut it is just that discipline and leading neces- ary to induce men to cross the open under fire hat the Boers lack, and time after time they ere driven back. So effective was our fire that can safely say that I never saw a Boer that torning within a thousand yards of our firing ne. The expenditure of Dutch ammunition was rodigious ; the enemy must have fired 100 rounds every single round burnt by our men. So eavy was the fire that Sir George White rein- rced Observation Hill with four companies from he Rifle Brigade. But this reinforcement was ever needed.

The simultaneous attack was made on the estern defences, Wagon Hill, Range Post, nd Rifleman's Post appearing to be the bjective. It succeeded no better than the tack upon Observation Hill. In fact, the ell-directed fire of the two field guns on Rifle- an's Post were of themselves sufficient to dispel . The Boers had taken advantage of one of the eep folds in the big open plain which faces our estern line, and here two shrapnel found hem in rapid succession. In a moment he veldt was alive with galloping burghers utting distance between themselves and shell- re. The Dutch artillery was more staunch han the riflemen, and for a considerable eriod an automatic gun and a field battery layed on Cæsar's Camp. But it made no im- ression, and the damage to town and earthwork as immaterial. The attack on the Helpmakaar osts came later in the day, and at the best was nly a half-hearted movement. If the enemy had een aware of the small effect which their shell- re had made upon the shelter trenches of the

tending to be a Dutchman, but accounts for the difficulty we h our Kaffir messengers throug man out every day, but I fear with but sli success. Two have come back having been c tured and their messages taken from them. T point is certain. At the present juncture Boers find it politic to treat the native of country well.

About midday the heavy guns opened on t town and shelled for about an hour. Mr. Carter's house was again hit, this making the fifth time ; a store in the main street was also damaged. But the net result in loss of life was two mules belonging to the team of an ambulance wagon. A siege baby was to-day born in one of the subterranean passages in the river bank. In the evening a deserter came in from the enemy. He was a colonial born Irishman belonging to the Irish brigade. His information was of some value, and proved that our estimate both of the enemy's positions and of his strength had been comparatively correct. He stated that the Boers expressed great dissatisfaction at the result of Thursday's attack, but were still confident of bringing about the fall of the town. The deserter also reported that the Irishmen were being employed in hauling the ammunition for the big guns up the hills—a risky proceeding, as our shrapnel searches the reverses. One shrapnel alone had killed and wounded 17 of his comrades. His further information was that it was published in the Boer camp that Mafeking had fallen and that Commander Cronje was due in a day or two to arrive before Ladysmith with a reinforcement of over 5,000 burghers.

Sunday, November 12, was another quiet day. Some exchanges in wounded were made, and Joubert sent an apology to General White for his men having fired on an ambulance. The sappers went out to Lombard's Kop and destroyed with dynamite a farmstead which had given cover to the enemy. An occasional exchange of shots took place as usual between patrols.

CHRISTMAS CARDS AND CALENDARS.—Among the many suggestions that have been made of means to raise money for war funds, one of the best in a small way was that people should contribute to them the money they would otherwise spend on Christmas cards. Many would be glad of an excuse for not sending cards. However, there are many others who will still go through the usual form, and there is assuredly no lack of cards for them to choose from. No lack, that is, of the ordinary kind of thing. Very little ingenuity is shown in the manufacture of Christmas cards. Very few indeed have any artistic merit. Imagination and fancy are not qualities that can be hoped for, but surely it would pay some maker to introduce an occasional novelty. Among the brightest and smartest cards of this year are Messrs. Hills and Co.'s. They are printed in good colours and are not too gaudy. This firm's calendars too are of some interest. One is distinguished by reproductions of pictures by Morland, small, but well done ; another is called the Rossetti calendar, though it incongruously includes pictures by Albert Moore. Birn Brothers' cards are more restrained in style than most, and the firm makes good use of the photogravure process, which most makers appear to be dropping. The valentine style which Davidson Brothers affect is evidently still popular, but it looks trumpery beside respectable process work. Messrs. Misch and Stock and Messrs. G. W. Bu

rom the enemy's intrench- 20 casualties, but succeeded h of the enemy's telegraph

n a private letter of a Boer gunner we found it seems that the enemy are less ne of reducing Ladysmith. The writer that "our burghers are now a bit ned."

gether the garrison of Ladysmith is to-day in higher spirits than it has ever been before.

THE BATTLE OF NICHOLSON'S NEK.

The following is the conclusion of our Special Correspondent's account of the Nicholson's Nek disaster, continued from our issue of December 11. Our Correspondent was obliged to break off to send as much as he had written by a despatch runner :—

It is impossible to describe the feeling in Ladysmith when the news of this disaster to our arms arrived. Stragglers from the stampede had made their way into camp about 8 o'clock in the morning, but for some reason, probably the want of men, no relief column had been sent out at a period when it would have been possible to extricate the force from its unfortunate predicament. In fact, until the evening of October 30, although it was known that the battery had been lost, a hope still existed that the infantry would be able to make its way back into camp under the cover of darkness. This hope was a shadowy one, it is true ; but it was rudely dispelled when on Tuesday morning a message came in from Joubert stating that two battalions had fallen into his hands, and that we might send out ambulances for the wounded. The Boers, apparently, as soon as the surrender had become complete, treated the wounded and prisoners with every courtesy, but they stripped the dead of boots and valuables. They had been anxious to show solicitude to the wounded, and even brought blankets to cover those seriously maimed. Though exultant, they had not been insulting, and my informant, who was one of the few who evaded capture, stated that only once did he hear an objectionable sentence, when an excited youth remarked, "Will you say now that the young Boer cannot shoot ?"

Ambulances were sent out from the camp, and 80 odd wounded were brought in, 44 dead being buried on the field. A review of the situation showed that from the first the position was absolutely untenable for infantry, even if it had been supported by artillery fire. But that the men had made a good bid for freedom, and that the surrender is in no wise a blemish on the traditions of British arms, is proved by the heaps of burnt cartridges with which the plateau was strewn.

During the night of October 30 the naval detachment from her Majesty's ship Powerful had been hard at work fixing the emplacements for

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step has now been taken of importing into South Africa live cattle from the Argentine, with the double object of keeping up the supplies and, possibly, of keeping down the prices. Of a first order for 1,000 animals 400 have already arrived at Durban, and, if the experiment should answer, other orders will follow. The available supply of cattle in the Argentine is, of course, almost without any limit. Although, however, such earnest efforts as these are made for the provision of fresh meat, the War Office still thinks it desirable to have plenty of the tinned variety on hand, and that is the reason why it has bought up practically all the compressed corned beef that Australia had, for the time being, to dispose of. The frozen variety is quite out of the question, because, although there are freezing stores at Cape Town and in Natal where it might be kept, the frozen meat could not possibly be taken up country. Mutton, too, is not regarded as sufficiently nourishing for men to fight on, and even of tinned mutton only comparatively small quantities are bought.

New Zealand is supplying large quantities of oats, which are also being bought up in Victoria, though the preference is given to the former. Most of the oats, however, are bought in London, though no English-grown oats are sent to South Africa, as these are regarded as too tender and will not stand the tropics. The qualities chosen are, first, the Russian, which are the hardest and stand the journey through the tropics best, and then the American, though in either case the oats are not sent out until they have been officially inspected. Then there are thousands of tons of oaten hay which are being transferred from Australia to South Africa, while 2,700 tons of ordinary hay are being sent from Canada, *via* the American ports, and still more thousands of tons of hay, of the Alfalfa variety, are being taken from the River Plate to supplement the colonial stocks. Canada has likewise supplied 12½ tons of compressed vegetables for the troops, and Australia has furnished a large number of excellent horses. For saddles an order for 1,000 was given to Canada, but was reduced, by request of the makers there (who feared they could not execute it in time), to one for 500. This, however, was quite a small matter, and the chief reason for giving the order was the possibility of saving time, since the English makers—whose saddles are preferred to all others—simply cannot turn out all that are needed. They are supplying the War Office at the rate of 1,000 saddles a week ; but as it is no unusual thing for a requisition to be made by the high authorities for 4,000 saddles, if not all at once, then in the shortest possible time, those responsible must naturally buy or arrange as best they can. An attempt to get saddles from America was not successful, as the makers there could not provide them of the desired quality in the desired numbers.

The colonies, as the facts stated above will show, are having some pickings from the War Office contracts, but they are prepared to do a good deal more if it should be desired. New South Wales, for instance, has informed the War Office that it is willing to supply for the troops in South Africa any desired quantities of maize, lucerne, butter, bacon, canned fruits, frozen poultry, eggs, chaff, potatoes, flour, wheat, and cheese, in addition to the meat, oats, and hay already referred to, while other colonies are equally ready to render further assistance. It should be added that, by arrangement with the colonial Governments, all the supplies sent to South Africa from the respective colonies are officially inspected before leaving.

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26th December 1899.

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, Nov. 20.

The dull monotony of the twenty days of siege has furnished much food for reflection to artillery officers and will provide infinite study for those experts who may be held indirectly responsible for the present unsatisfactory situation—if not for the siege itself. If the Ordnance Committee had pressed its recommendations upon the Government, and had made it imperative that the Horse and Field Artillery should be rearmed with a weapon equal in range to that with which the other Powers were arming, we who are on the spot feel confident that, instead of being invested by a parcel of farmers, Sir George White's force would at least have been established on the Drakensberg. But, though our artillery has been devotedly served throughout, we have, whenever we have taken the field, been so outranged by the fire of the enemy's guns that it has been impossible to formulate any movement that would give us the advantage necessary to initiate a forward move. Thus we have found ourselves boxed up, exposed to the fire of 30 guns, to which, if it had not been for the timely arrival of the naval guns, we should have been powerless to reply.

As far as can be judged the enemy in its bombardment is employing two 6in. guns. These, as was stated in a previous article, are B.L. Creusot guns. They fire a large (20 pounds) charge of black powder and are consequently easily located. It would also appear that one of them—namely, that on Peppworth Hill—is mounted on a disappearing carriage. The range of these guns is great, as nearly all their shots are sighted above 7,000 yards and several discharges have been ranged at 9,000 yards and even more. Before the war these guns were supposed to be furnished with a travelling carriage of inferior make. Either this has been rectified or the Boer repository work must be excellent to have succeeded in mounting them on the two high hills which they now occupy. They fire both common shell and shrapnel. The common shell weighs about 94lb., but has either an unsatisfactory fuse, or, in many cases, an inferior bursting charge. The fuse is a metal direct action percussion fuse. The shrapnel which they use is a mixture of shrapnel and segment shell, and consists of a thin wall of steel filled in with alternate layers of segments and bullets with a solid base of metal (wrought iron badly coated with lead). It has not yet been ascertained what fuse is used with this shrapnel, but it must be a long one, as the shells have been seen to burst in the air after a range of 7,000 yards. Either the fusing is bad or shrapnel is of little use at long ranges, for many fragments and bullets from these shells have fallen on tents without penetrating the canvas. An opinion exists among artillerymen that all the heavy calibre shrapnel which has burst in the air has burst after ricochet and that this accounts for the seemingly abnormal length of fuse and the non-penetration of the bullets. The metal base flies at some velocity after bursting. Both shell are driven by a copper driving band about half an inch in thickness. From the "wobbling" sound which the shells now make during their passage in the air it would appear that the rifling of the guns is becoming impaired. They should, I believe, be examined after the first 150 rounds and every subsequent 50. Their life is computed at about 600 rounds. If this is the case both guns must be near the end of their tether.

The enemy also have in position four or five 4·7 howitzers. These are fired with some partially smokeless powder and do not seem to be well worked. They have an effective range of over 5,000 yards. On rainy days the flash on discharge is easily discernible, and a light smoke-like dust hangs about the muzzle. As far as I can learn these howitzers only fire a common shell weighing about 40lb. The wall of this shell is about an inch thick, made of cast iron, which breaks upon contact with a stony surface. The pieces from these breaks fly tremendously, and have a jagged crystalline fracture. The majority of these shell seem to have no bursting charge, or else only a small bag of powder insufficient to form a burst; consequently it often happens that the cylinder head of the shell or the fuse is simply blown out, the charge fizzling like a firework. These shell have a copper driving band and a metal direct action fuse which fits into a metal collar in the shell.

Common, segment, and shrapnel shell have been picked up which have been fired from a 2·7in. gun. This common shell is very short, has a copper driving band, and another copper band round the shoulder which does not take the rifling. These have also been found intact, and have the same fuse as the 4·7 howitzer shell. The range of this gun must be from 5,000 yards to 6,000 yards, if not more. The shrapnel is longer and consists of a base and wall of a quarter of an inch of steel and a nose which fits to the body by a screw thread, and presumedly, from the manner in which the envelope becomes bulged, has the bursting charge in the base. The bullets are small and have not much spread, as the envelope of the shrapnel has constantly been found lying on the ground with the bullets round it in little heaps. The fuse to

this shell consists of a pillar of metal with the scale marked round it in a spiral. The composition is encased in a leaden coating, which also "spirals" inside the pillar. The fuse is bored at the desired time. It scales up to 25sec., against the 18sec. in the British 15-pounders. The segment shell has a wall half an inch thick with projections round which the segments fit in rings. Each ring is intended to break up into little bits, but has generally failed to do so. The rifling of the gun firing this shell is polygroove, square section. It is a very high velocity weapon, and there are at least six, if not more, of them in position against us. They are believed to be Maxim-Nordenfelt guns with shell and cartridge in one envelope (fixed ammunition). The report of the shell and firing charge are simultaneous, and these are doubtless the weapons which have given rise to the rumour that the enemy is using guns fired by a noiseless explosive.

Four of our own 2·5in. guns are in action against us, but with indifferent success, as the shells for the most part have been found unburst. Probably the Boer gunners do not understand the setting of the fuse. Exploded sensitive wood time-fuses have been picked up, unbored and exploded by percussion. These fuses must have been used with shrapnel instead of with star shell, for which they are intended.

It would appear that the Boers have little system in ranging, as they send shot after shot further from the objective, or else, just when an English gunner would conclude that he had found the range and commence firing shrapnel they cease firing altogether. This they have done time after time. Of course it must be remembered that blind shell, of which they fire a considerable number, are very difficult to observe, and also in many cases the conformation of the ground must make it impossible for them to see where their projectiles are bursting. Moreover, they have but a limited supply of shrapnel, and it is evident that they fire common and shrapnel shell indiscriminately, a system which cannot give good artillery practice. There remains no doubt that the Boers have been a prey to the roguery and duplicity of dishonest contractors. To this, together with the fact that our lengthy perimeter has kept their smaller calibre guns at an extreme range, may be attributed the success which has attended the defence of the town.

To sum up, the Boer field pieces have a longer range and a longer fuse than the British. The mobility of their field guns is not worth consideration. It is noteworthy that when we tried to use the two Maxim-Nordenfelts captured at Elandslaagte like our own field guns, the wheels immediately broke up, being far too light for the gun or for rapid transit. The Boer system of fire discipline is poor. As seen through a telescope they appear to load and lay the gun in feverish haste; then all the group rush to cover except one who remains to fire. Having fired he also immediately takes cover. With such a system there can be no organized observation of fire. Rapid fire under these conditions is out of the question.

It is impossible to get away from the opinion that, if British gunners were in the Boer position, working the same guns, the loss of life and damage to property in Ladysmith would be ten times as severe as it is.

26th December 1899.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN NATAL.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.)

MOOI RIVER, Nov. 26.

The days following the disaster to the armoured train near here on November 15 were passed in comparative inactivity by the British camp. It was considerably strengthened, however, by the arrival on the 16th of the Queen's and East Surreys, and in the next two days by the still more welcome presence of two batteries of artillery and a corps of 500 mounted men in the shape of Colonel Bethune's mounted infantry. The lack of artillery and horsemen had hitherto hampered our successive commanders at Estcourt very seriously, and even after this reinforcement the deficiency has remained very considerable. It is quite impossible in an extensive hilly country like Natal to keep in touch with such a mobile enemy as the Boers without a very large force of mounted men. It is the absence of such a force to which we owe the fact that in the last week or so 3,000 or 4,000 Boers have freely moved at their pleasure through the rich grazing country on every side of Estcourt, looting cattle and collecting abundant supplies for General Joubert's army at the cost of the unhappy Natal farmer, and have succeeded in mystifying, separating, and almost investing British forces at Estcourt and Mooi River in each case very much larger than the whole of the Boer commandos south of the Tugela. The military authorities are now beginning to realize the need of more mounted infantry and of more effective scouting, and attempts are now being busily made to enrol the farmers into a corps of scouts. Till the arrival of Bethune's corps at Estcourt the whole of the work of keeping in touch with the Boers had to be done by small detachments of the Natal Mounted

Police, the Natal Carabineers, the Imperial Light Horse, and a mounted company of the King's Royal Rifles. The Natal Mounted Police are a corps whose services during the earlier stages of the campaign will, perhaps, never be adequately recognized in England. A finer body of troopers it would be difficult to find anywhere in the world. Without detracting from the splendid work done by the Natal Carabineers and the Imperial Light Horse, it must be acknowledged that the intimate knowledge of the country possessed by the police, and their proficiency in Dutch and Kaffir alike, have made them simply invaluable in this campaign. To Colonel Dartnell, of the Police, should belong almost the whole credit of the safe escape of our force at Dundee, which he practically directed. Nor is their courage inferior to their skill as scouts. Only a few days ago two of the police came upon two Boers at Gourton-road, 20 miles west of Estcourt. Boldly galloping up they presented their revolvers at the Boers' heads, disarmed them, and carried them off prisoners under a heavy fire from the main body of Boers only 500 or 600 yards away. The mounted company of the 60th have also become a most useful corps of horsemen, and it would be very excellent if the precedent could be followed and at least a company in every battalion converted into mounted infantry. The whole mounted force at Estcourt, amounting to 800 men, are now under the command of Colonel Cyril Martyr, and both corps and commander are pretty sure to distinguish themselves as soon as an opportunity is given them.

The deficiency in artillery is not so much in the quantity as in the quality. It is rather a pitiable confession to make, but the fact remains that the best artillery in the world has been completely outclassed by an artillery created in the last two or three years, simply because the Boers have gone to the expense of buying absolutely the latest guns with the longest range. It is only the fact that the Boer shells hardly ever burst—whether due to bad material, careless storage which may have rusted the pins of the time fuse, or inability to set the fuse properly—that has saved us from terrible disasters at Dundee and Ladysmith, and perhaps even at Estcourt and Mooi River. As it is, the situation at Ladysmith was only saved by the timely arrival of the naval guns. It is possible, perhaps, that, if Admiral Harris had consented a month ago to send up a few more guns from his ships, the investment of Ladysmith might never have been completed, and the Boer invasion might have been checked at a much earlier stage.

In the meantime, while Estcourt was being strengthened, the Boers were by no means inactive. They occupied Weenen, scattering freely all over the country between Weenen and Estcourt, taking tribute in horses and cattle from the farms, at the same time keeping Estcourt in continual anxious anticipation of an attack in force which they neither intended nor could have executed. Another force moved along to the west between Estcourt and the Drakensberg, equally busy about improving its own commissariat and equally indifferent to our preparations for defence. Both forces, however, were provided with several guns, two at least of these having a range of nearly 15,000 yards, being, it is believed by the military authorities, 3·7in. Creusots. On the morning of the 18th a party of two or three hundred Boers advanced along the railway from Frere beyond Ennersdale, and a few of them even went as far as the railway bridge over the Little Bushman's River just two miles outside Estcourt. The rest lined themselves along a stone wall which runs west for nearly two miles from a point on the railway three miles north of Estcourt. A shell very neatly dropped from the naval gun of the Tartar at 8,000 yards range burst right in the middle of a party of them who had advanced in front of the wall and sent them scurrying back in great haste. It is doubtful, however, if there were any casualties. Almost simultaneously a picket of the Dublin Fusiliers dropped a long-range volley into them, dropping at least one man from the saddle. After this the Boers took good care not to approach any closer, and in the course of the morning gradually shifted westwards from the end of the wall under the cover of rising ground to join a considerable force which occupied a long ridge, extending for several miles, about four miles west and north-west from Estcourt. On that day the scouts reported that the Boers had lifted over 2,000 head of cattle in the country near Ulundi, west of Estcourt.

The Boers on both sides of Estcourt now began moving southwards with the intention of converging upon the railway between Estcourt and Mooi River and breaking up our line of communications. It is probable that they were at the same time reinforced, at any rate on the western side, by a new force detached from Ladysmith and more guns. Several farmers even reported that General Joubert himself was with them, which may possibly have been true, or may also have been due to confusion with a commandant or field cornet of the same name. On Sunday afternoon, November 19, the mounted infantry, under Colonel Martyr, located a force of about 1,000 Boers with one or two guns camped on high ground about three miles east of Highlands Station, with whom they exchanged a few shots. Colonel Martyr applied for permission to make a night attack on this force with his men. The idea was approved of, but it was determined to send a rather larger force, including infantry and two guns of the Natal Field Artillery. On Monday night five companies of the Border Regiment, three of the East Surreys, and one of the Queen's, together with the Natal guns and about 450 mounted men, the whole under the command

of Colonel Hinde, of the Borderers, assembled at Willow Grange, eight miles south of Estcourt. Most of the infantry arrived about 1 o'clock in the morning, and bivouacked on the grass for an hour and a half till the time should come for marching the remaining six miles, which would take them to the Boer camp. But the march off was delayed from half-hour to half-hour till dawn began to appear in the sky, and the soldiers realized that the time for a night attack had passed away. The fact is that the scouts had reported the Boer force to be rather larger than was at first believed, and the commanding officer had hesitated and had lost his chance In the morning General Hildyard came over to Willow Grange, and, after having the position and the whereabouts of the Boers explained to him marched the infantry some five miles to within about two miles of the Boers. About 11 o'clock in the morning the mounted force under Colonel Martyr went out in the same direction, and met the infantry returning to Willow Grange for their lunch. The mounted force then took its turn of looking at the Boers. About three o'clock Colonel Martyr received information that a party of Boers from the west were approaching Highlands Station, and a mounted detachment was sent off to stop them. Seeing that there was no more prospect of an engagement with the Boers, I rode back to Willow Grange in time to find that a force of perhaps 200 Boers had just been seen on the crest of Brynbella Hill, a long mountain running east to west from about 2 miles west of Willow Grange Station. The infantry at once turned out, and rapidly lined a rocky ridge just above the station, which afforded excellent cover. A few shots were fired by our men, though the Boers were well out of rifle range. An attempt to bring the Naval guns up the steep slope to the ridge was unsuccessful. About 5 30 Colonel Hinde decided to retreat the whole force on Estcourt, as he was afraid that the two Boer forces might try to combine in an effort to cut his men off from Estcourt and surround them. The retreat was made in great haste, all the kit and belongings of the men being bundled into a train, while the mounted infantry which had just returned stayed behind to cover the retirement of the infantry. About 6 30 General Hildyard, who had been informed of Colonel Hinde's retreat, sent out the West Yorks and several companies of the Queen's and other regiments, together with a battery of field guns, to assist the retiring force, which, however, returned in safety without any effort on the part of the Boers to hamper or hurry their movements. The same night communication with Mooi River was interrupted, and the line broken up near Highlands. There was nothing now to prevent the two Boer forces joining hands. On the whole, the operations of that day, November 21, cannot be regarded as a success. They were marked by indecision and hesitation throughout, and ended in a rather undignified scuttle before a small force.

On Wednesday afternoon it was decided to do something more active in order to check the Boer advance and relieve the investment of Estcourt. The West Yorks, East Surreys, and Durban Light Infantry were sent out, together with the naval gun under Lieutenant James, towards Willow Grange. Just before sunset the naval gun was successfully dragged up to the summit of a high hill known as Griffin's Hill or Klobber's Kop on the right of the Willow Grange road, about five miles south of Estcourt. The Boers fired a couple of shells at it from their gun on Brynbella Hill facing it at a distance of about 5,000 yards, both flying wide of the mark. The troops had to lie out in a terrific thunder and hail storm, which raged for two or three hours that night. Later in the night towards morning the Borderers and Queen's and most of the mounted troops, as well as a battery of artillery, were also brought out. Just before daybreak the West Yorks and East Surreys, who had been moved along till just over Willow Grange, climbed up Brynbella Hill with fixed bayonets. The Boers, as soon as they saw our men approach, poured a volley or two into them and then turned and fled, remembering, however, to take their gun along with them, but leaving a good many of their ponies behind, some 30 of which were afterwards brought into Estcourt. The position our men had captured was, however, not a very strong one. The Boers had only retreated a thousand yards or so along the ridge of Brynbella upon a larger body of their own men, and now brought several guns into action against our force. The naval gun on Griffin's Hill was able to put one or two shells into the Boer skirmishing line on the north side of the crest of Brynbella, and effectually scattered them, but unfortunately the Boer guns, several Krupps and a Maxim-Nordenfelt, were all on the south side of the mountain and so protected from the only gun we brought into action that morning. At 8 o'clock Colonel Martyr and about half the mounted infantry were sent up to relieve the West Yorks and Surreys who were being pushed back over the edge of Brynbella. Riding three-quarter way up the mountain they dismounted and, advancing rapidly, took the place of the infantry in the firing line, and for the next three hours were vigorously engaged. Meanwhile we had several companies of the Queen's Borderers, and Durban Light Infantry along the west of Griffin's Hill, the centre of our position, while the rest extended under cover along the ridges running down west and north-west—*i.e.*, on our right—the rest of the mounted force moving round behind them towards the enemy's left flank on the hills due west of Griffin's Hill, and connected by a ridge with Brynbella. None of these troops got anywhere near rifle range of the Boers, and when the latter discovered their whereabouts they dropped shells into them at from 8,000 to 11,000 yards range, causing their hasty withdrawal behind Griffin's Hill. The marksmanship of the Boer gunners was excellent, the shells dropping

very close to our men as they retreated, but luckily very few of them burst. Our naval 12-pounder tried to reply, but its first shot, sighted at 7,800 yards, fell a good thousand yards or more short of the Boer guns, whose shells were flying over our heads and dropping into our men a thousand yards and more behind. As for our artillery it was never in action at all that morning, as it was completely outranged by the Boer artillery. At midday General Hildyard ordered our force to retreat on Estcourt, a movement which was carried out leisurely under the cover of the mounted troops and the artillery, which now at last had an opportunity of firing a few shots. Our total casualties during the day were four killed and 40 odd wounded, all received during the storming of Brynbella and in the subsequent fighting on the left flank. The Boer shells on our centre and right, though they spoiled the battle for us, did no actual damage whatsoever. As a whole the engagement produced little result, as such a very small proportion of the 5,000 men who brought out of Estcourt ever got into action.

Estcourt was now for the moment invested and completely cut off from the south, and it was quite possible that the Boers might proceed to plant their long-range gun on Griffin's Hill, from which it could easily drop shells into Estcourt. There was another heavy thunderstorm that night, so I decided to make my way out through the Boer lines in order to catch the mail. Under the guidance of a local farmer I managed to get out, passing within a few yards of two of their camps near Highlands, and reached Mooi River on the morning of November 24. Mooi River, I discovered, the Boers had been playfully shelling for the last two days, and a repetition of the performance was every moment expected.

But it was impossible that the Boers should keep up very much longer the farce of investing two large British forces with about 3,000 men. More aware of their own weakness than the British commanders whom they had so successfully deceived they decided that they had advanced far enough, and made good use of the quiesence of the British troops to get back on both sides of Estcourt towards Weenen and Ulundi, which places they are reported to have reached yesterday. The news that the Tugela was in full flood no doubt had its effect in hastening their retreat, for at such a time it is quite impassable, and their only line of retreat would be across the bridge at Colenso, which a rapid advance by General Hildyard might at any moment cut off. With the retreat of the Boers and with the arrival of General Buller at Maritzburg a complete change has come over the face of operations. The line has been cleared right up to Frere, and a scout from Estcourt reported this morning that a force is being hurried forward to Colenso as quickly as possible. Meanwhile the Fusiliers Brigade is marching forward to Estcourt this afternoon, and in a few days more the operations for the relief of Ladysmith may be said to begin.

MARITZBURG, DEC. 3.

The change that came over the aspect of the war in Natal between the 23rd and 26th of November was truly remarkable. The three days that intervened may well be regarded as the turning point in the flood of the Boer invasion. On the night of the 23rd I left Estcourt cut off on the south, expecting as the result of the morning's unsuccessful engagement to be bombarded the next day, counting up its provisions, and preparing for a regular investment. At Mooi River the next morning I found the whole force of 6,000 men lining the trenches close round the station on every side, determined to "die in the last ditch" before the onset of overwhelming forces. I went to Maritzburg for a day, returning on the morning of the 26th, and heard with no small surprise that the enemy had vanished on every side and were in full retreat towards Colenso, that railway communication had been restored to Estcourt and even to Frere, that part of the Mooi River force had already marched off to Estcourt, and that General Hildyard himself was pushing on as fast as he could towards Colenso to intercept the retreat of the Boers and recover some of the vast booty they were carrying away with them. This last report was, however, only partially correct, as I discovered on riding over to Estcourt that afternoon. The army had indeed gone forward, but only to Frere, and owing to lack of mounted infantry no attempt was made to catch the straggling parties of Boers as they made their way ro nd by Ulundi or Weenen with herds of lifted cattle and hundreds of wagonloads of miscellaneous plunder.

The fact is the Boers themselves had become rather anxious. They could hardly hope to be able to continue indefinitely between two British forces, each very much larger than their own, terrifying each into the belief that it was surrounded by superior numbers. Sooner or later their weakness would be found out and they would be crushed. The Tugela was in full flood after three or four days' almost incessant rain, and if the British were to cut off the retreat on Colenso bridge they were caught in a trap. Nor was their engagement at Willow Grange with General Hildyard on the 23rd, though strategically a success, a success of the kind that encouraged them to push home their advance on Estcourt. They must have lost at least 30 killed and quite two or three times as many wounded on that day, and they had little mind to wait for any more night attacks. So in the course of Friday and Saturday, 24th and 25th, the Boer

commandos divided again and hurried back severally by the ways they had come as fast as they could get along with the loot they had accumulated in their fortnight's raid from Colenso. They had ransacked the whole district north of Mooi River from Weenen on the east right up to the Drakensberg, and though in some individual instances (chiefly where the commandants happened to be close by or where the owners were Dutch) farm property was spared, on the whole it may fairly be said that they cleared out the whole rich countryside of all it contained. Several stores and farmhouses that I visited between Mooi River and Frere were absolutely gutted. According to the reports of scouts, 300 wagons full of plunder passed through Weenen alone on their way to Colenso.

Meanwhile the Estcourt force, after waiting all Friday, the 24th, expecting to be shelled, and discovering on Saturday that the enemy were on the move, advanced on the Sunday as far as Frere. The force as a whole could not very well advance further, as there is no sufficient water supply anywhere between the Blaauwkrantz and the Tugela for the wants of a large force, and also because it was difficult to do anything before the railway bridge over the Blaauwkrantz at Frere could be restored. This bridge the Boers had blown up with consummate skill in such a fashion that its rapid repair was quite out of the question. The railway engineers are at the present moment building a wooden trestle bridge alongside, which ought to be completed in another day or two. A large portion of the camp, however, was pitched beyond the river. On the 27th a few shells were fired from the rising ground about two miles north of the camp at parties of Boers passing by on their way to Colenso Bridge, and on Thursday Lord Dundonald, who is now in command of the mounted forces, went out with about 1,400 mounted infantry and a battery of field artillery in pursuit of a small party of Boers to within about two miles of Colenso, drawing upon himself the fire of the whole Boer position. Luckily his little force got off without a single casualty. That same afternoon the Boers blew up Colenso Railway Bridge, wrecking it completely—the wagon bridge over the Tugela will probably be spared till the last moment. The Boers hold a very strong position at Colenso with the Tugela and open flat country in front of them, and high hills immediately behind. As they have massed at least 10,000 men at this point, an attack in front could only be carried through with very heavy loss. It is therefore not impossible that Sir F. Clery, now in command at Frere, may decide to send the bulk of his force to cross the Tugela some ten or 12 miles higher up —while engaging the Boers at Colenso with his artillery—and advance to the relief of Ladysmith from the south-west by Dewdrop.

During the last few days the force at Frere has received the welcome addition of several of the naval guns from the Terrible, which for the last month had been on shore at Durban ready for the defence of the port. On Wednesday, the 29th, the two 4·7in. guns under Commander Limpus arrived, and were immediately unshipped and dragged by teams of 30 oxen across the Blaauwkrantz, not without sundry breakdowns, which the sailors promptly repaired with the energy and rapidity of which only British sailors are capable. Every possible credit is due to Captain Scott, of the Terrible, for devizing a simple means of putting these large ship's guns on moveable field mountings, and for the persistence with which he has urged their use upon Admiral Harris. The only pity is that his advice was not made use of in time to send a few more big guns to Ladysmith. Apart from the naval guns, we had absolutely nothing to meet the long-range siege guns General Joubert has been bringing down from the forts at Johannesburg and Pretoria. If the credit of the design belongs to Captain Scott, no little of the praise for its execution ought to fall on Commander Limpus and First Lieutenant Ogilvy, of the Terrible, for their energy in helping to carry it out. It is, perhaps, worth while to point out distinctly to what a large extent the whole credit of the sending of naval guns up country is due to her Majesty's ship Terrible, because most of the guns—even when actually belonging to the Terribe and mounted on board —have been taken up by detachments from other ships, the Tartar, Philomel, Forte, &c. Thursday brought to Frere another device of the inventive captain of the Terrible in the shape of a large electric signalling apparatus with gas engine and dynamo attached, with which Lieutenant Ogilvy began speaking to Ladysmith the moment the train conveying it reached Frere Station. The whole Naval Brigade at the front, now consisting of some 200 men with two 4·7's, eight (and probably in a few days 10 or 12) 12-pounders, is under the command of Captain Jones, of her Majesty's ship Forte.

Altogether the force that will be assembled at Frere in a few days' time cannot amount to less than 15,000 to 16,000 men. It is not quite certain yet whether General Buller will take over the command himself or leave it to General Clery. In any case, the battle, or series of battles, which are likely to take place between Frere and Ladysmith before Christmas will be among the most important and perhaps also the most bloody that British troops have fought in any war waged by Great Britain since the Crimea.

55.

26th December 1899.

THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, Oct. 25.

To-day is the third day of the bombardment by which Commandant Cronje is attempting to realize his threat of reducing Mafeking to ashes. Up to the present it has been impossible to consider very seriously the attempt of the Boers to besiege Mafeking. The earlier bombardment and the series of events which have occurred during the interval have not augmented the gravity of the situation. The Boer Commandant endeavoured to carry out his word by opening the second bombardment of Mafeking upon the day which he had notified Colonel Baden-Powell. We had been incredulous at the threat of the Boers to send to Pretoria for some siege guns. Monday, therefore, was a day of some anxiety for us, and each was curious to know what result the enemy's fire would produce. Upon this occasion, however, the townsfolk had reckoned without taking into account the intentions of Colonel Baden-Powell, and it was a very pleasant surprise to find that the bombardment of Mafeking by the Boers had been converted into the bombardment of the Boers by Mafeking. At a very early hour, two guns, which had been placed near the reservoir, opened fire upon the enemy's artillery in position at the water springs. The artillery duel which was thus started continued for some hours, and if it did not do much damage to either side it made manifest to the Boers that the defences of Mafeking were not altogether at their mercy. About noon, however, the Boers, who had been observed to place some guns in position upon the south-west side of the town, threw shells at Cannon Kopje. Here again, fortunately, no material damage was done.

Somewhat early in the afternoon, the look-outs reported tremendous activity in the Boer camp. Across the veldt those who cared might have seen the enemy engaged upon some enormous earthwork, which the general consensus of opinion very quickly determined to be the emplacements for the siege guns. They were at least three miles and a-half away from the town, and in a position different to that from which the guns had shelled the kopje in the morning. The frequency with which shells had exploded within the limits of Mafeking had rendered the people somewhat callous of the consequences, and despite an official warning which was issued to the town, a large number of people stood discussing in excited groups the value of this news. However, it was not to be confirmed that afternoon. An hour after noon on the following day the alarm rang out from the market place, the red flag was seen to fly from headquarters, and the inhabitants were warned to take immediate cover. Within a few minutes of the alarm, the proceedings for that day began, and the first shell thrown from the Boer battery burst over our camp. Presently on the distant sky line a tremendous cloud of smoke hurled itself into the air. The very foundations upon which Mafeking rests seemed to quiver, all curiosity was set at rest, and there was no longer any doubt as to the nature of the new ordnance the Boers had with them. With a terrific impact the shell struck some structures near the railway, and the flying fragments of steel spread over the town, burying themselves in buildings, striking the veldt two miles distant, creating a dust, a horrible confusion, and an instant terror throughout the town. In the course of the afternoon, after a rain of seven and nine pound shells, the Boers opened with this gun again, and although no loss of life happily occurred, the missile wrecked part of the Mafeking Hotel. With the curious inconsequence which has marked the Boer proceedings in their investment of Mafeking, the enemy threw no more of these heavier shells during the afternoon, contenting themselves with discharging at odd moments those of lesser calibre.

The two shells which had been fired during the afternoon gave the inhabitants of Mafeking some little ground by which to judge the nature of the bombardment on the morrow. After the cessation of hostilities word was passed round that the two shells which had been launched at Mafeking were a 64lb. howitzer and a 94lb. muzzle-loading siege gun, and that it might be reckoned that these were but the preliminary shots by which to measure the range. Officially it was notified that every precaution must be taken to remain within the bomb-proof shelters which the inhabitants of Mafeking had been advised to construct. It is the presence of these pits which explains the slight loss of life that has occurred during the Boer bombardment of Mafeking. Up to to-day the effect of the terrible hail of shells which has poured into the town has been but a few slight wounds. But there could be no doubt that the more serious fighting was at last to take place, and it seemed to us only natural to expect a general advance upon Mafeking in the morning. The night passed with every man sleeping by his arms and at his post. The women and children had been removed to their laager, the horses were picketed in the

river bed, and once again all preparations for defence, and all those measures which had been taken to secure immunity from shell fire were, for the last time, inspected. Firing began very early on Wednesday morning, a gun detachment under Lieutenant Murchison opening with a few shells from our position to the east of the town. When the light had become clear the Boers brought their new siege guns once more into play. We estimated at nightfall that the enemy must have thrown rather more than 200 shells into Mafeking, and if Mafeking be saved for future bombardment its salvation lies in the fact that it is, relatively speaking, little more than a collection of somewhat scattered houses with tin roofs and mud walls. Any other form of building would have been shaken to its foundations by the mere concussion of these bursting shells. Where bricks would have fallen, mud walls simply threw down a cloud of dust. But if Mafeking be still more or less intact, it can congratulate itself upon having withstood a most determined and concentrated shell fire.

After the early morning hours had been whiled away Commandant Cronje made preparations for a general advance upon the town under the protection of his cannon fire. This was the moment which each of us had longed for. As the Boer advance seemed to be concentrated upon the eastern side, I proceeded to the redan at De Kock's corner under Major Goold-Adams, and later on to another a little lower down in the same quarter of the town under Capt. Musson. At Major Goold-Adams's there had been stationed a Maxim detachment, and it was not long before its sharp rat-a-tat-tat was heard speaking to the enemy. The warm reception which was accorded to the Boers from this redan soon began to draw their fire. With Big Ben discharging its 94-pound shells in every quarter of the town, and a 12-pounder from the north-west dropping shrapnel with much discrimination over that quarter, the enemy upon the east side soon followed the example so shown them and discharged shells at the redans along their front. The range was singularly good, and in a very few minutes shells were dropping over and in very close proximity to our two redans. Between the two, and but a little removed from the line of fire, was the building of the Dutch Reformed Church, and several shells intended for the Maxim in Major Goold-Adams's fort found lodgment in its interior. The front of this church had been penetrated in several places by the shells, when the gun was slewed suddenly round upon the hospital and a shell fell in an outhouse attached to the monastery with disastrous effect. When the smoke had cleared away little was left of the building beyond a pile of smoking ruins. Above Captain Musson's redan our untimely visitors constantly burst and scattered, and we began to realize fully the value of the bomb-proof shelters. In a little while, however, the Boers relaxed their shell fire, and beyond maintaining sufficient fire to cover their advance the heavier guns were for the time silent. With this, the Boers began to open out in extended order upon the east side of the town, advancing on our west to within 900 yards of our defences. At each point the Boer advance was protected by the guns, the heavy artillery to the south-west seeming to be the centre of a circle of armed men, who were advancing slowly upon this gallant little town. At no time did the enemy however, beyond the few upon the west side, come within effective range of our rifles or our Maxims, contenting themselves with taking up positions at 2,000 yards, and dealing out to us prolonged rifle fire with some intermittent shelling. The firing was very rapid, very general, and more or less impotent. We have had two men wounded, while here and there it is believed certain of the enemy received their quietus. Whether we beat them off or whether they lacked the spirit to attack us it is impossible to determine, and it is enough to say that, whatever may have been their intention, Mafeking remains as it was before the first shot was fired. At night, after the attack, Colonel Baden-Powell issued a general order congratulating his forces and the people in Mafeking upon their calmness during the heavy fire to which they had been subjected.

As we are situated at present it is impossible for us to leave our trenches in order to give battle to the enemy, but we are still buoyed up by the hope of being able before long to take in our turn the offensive. In the meantime, most of us live with our rifles in our hands, our bandoliers round our shoulders, existing upon food of the roughest kind, peering over sandbags at the distant position of the Boers, or crouching in the shell-proof trenches as their shells burst overhead. There is much gravity in our isolated position; there is the danger that by good luck more than by skill Mafeking may be reduced, but there is no reason to fear that the determination and courage of the town will give way. Above all else that may be calculated to endure.

OCTOBER 28.

Last night there occurred one of those isolated instances of gallantry by which the British sustain their high reputation. For some days, in fact ever since the Boers secured their siege guns from Pretoria, the enemy has been building a circlet of trenches around Mafeking. At the least distance they are perhaps 2,500 yards, unhappily beyond the reach of our rifle and Maxim fire. We have seen them lounging in their breastworks, we have seen them gathered around their camp fires, and the inability of Mafeking to shake off these unwelcome intruders has been daily a source of irritation. We have not, of course, allowed them to enjoy undisturbed the seclusion of their own earthworks, and, as a continual goad in their side, little expeditions have

been despatched to make night fearsome to our besetting foe.

Another of these midnight sorties was undertaken last night, proving in itself to be the most important move on our side since Captain Fitz-Clarence and his men engaged the Boers two weeks ago. The same officer, 55 men of D Squadron Protectorate Regiment, with Lieutenant Murray and 25 men of the Cape Police, were the prime movers in an attempt to rush the first line of earthworks of the Boer position. Shortly after 11 o'clock Captain Fitz-Clarence and his men started on their perilous undertaking. In the faint light of the night we could see their figures from our own redans, silently hurrying across the veldt. In the blue haze of the distance a black blur betokened the position of the enemy, and it seemed that at any moment the hoarse challenge of the Boer outpost would give the alarm. The men crept on in slightly extended order, holding themselves in readiness for the supreme moment. Nearer, and yet nearer, they drew to the Boer intrenchments. The silence was intense. The heavy gloom, the wistful noises of the veldt at night, the shadowy patches in the bush, all seemed to heighten the tension of one's nerves. In a little while our men were within a few yards of the enemy; then furtively each fixed his bayonet to his rifle, and as the blades rang home upon their sockets the gallant band raised a ringing cheer. Instantly the Boer position was galvanized into activity, figures showed everywhere, shots rang out, men shouted, horses stampeded, and the confusion which reigned supreme gave to our men one vital moment in which to hurl themselves across the intervening space. Then there was a loud crash, for, as it happened, many of our men were nearer the intrenchments than had been anticipated, and their eager charge had precipitated them upon some sheets of corrugated iron which the Boers had torn from the grand stand of the racecourse for protection from the rain. With our men upon the parapet of the trench, a few rapid volleys were fired into the enemy, who, taken completely by surprise, were altogether demoralized. Those in the first trenches seemed to have been petrified by fright. Where they were, there they remained, stabbed with bayonet, knocked senseless with the rifle's butt, or shot dead. Captain Fitz-Clarence himself, with magnificent gallantry and swordsmanship, killed four of the enemy with his sword, his men plying their bayonets strenuously the while. This was the first trench, and as the fight grew hotter some little memory of their earlier boasts inspired the Boers to make a stand. They fought; they fought well. Their vast superiority in numbers did not enter into their minds, since Commandant Botha told Lieutenant Moncrieff, who had charge of the flag party that arranged for an armistice this morning, that he thought that at least a thousand men had been moved against his position. The long line of front held by the enemy flashed fire from many hundred rifles. Houses in the town caught the bullets, the low rises to the east of the position threw back the echo of the rifle shots. Our men became the centre of a hail of bullets. The Boers fired anywhere and everywhere, seeming content if they could just load their rifles and release the trigger. Many thousands of rounds of ammunition were expended in the confusion of the moment, the enemy not even waiting to see at whom or at what they were aiming.

After the first fury had been expended, our men charged at the bayonet point right across the line of trenches. It was in this charge that the Boers lost most heavily. So soon as the squadron reached the extremity of the Boer position they retreated independently, their movement covered by the flanking fire of the Cape Police, which added still further to the perplexities of the enemy. The galling fire of the Cape Police disturbed them for some time longer than was required in the actual retirement of the force.

The Boers had been completely unnerved by the onslaught of the Protectorate men, and a feature of the hours which elapsed between the final withdrawal of our force from the scene of conflict and the advent of dawn was the heavy firing of the enemy, who still continued discharging useless volleys into space. The loss to us in this encounter had been six killed, ten wounded, and two of our men taken prisoners, but the gravity of the loss which the enemy sustained can be most surely measured by the fact that until a late hour this afternoon they could not find the spirit to resume the bombardment. It is said in camp here that some two hundred Boers will have reason to remember the charge of the Protectorate Regiment.

OCTOBER 31.

In the small hours of Monday morning, when the cold mists of the African night were still down upon the horizon, the Boers made a desperate attack upon a fort manned by a detachment of the Frontier Police.

Sunday night the look-out from Cannon Kopje saw a body of 800 Boers making their way to a point somewhat nearer the town than had hitherto been their custom, and some little expectation was felt that the enemy might attack the following morning. The Boers to the south-west of the town had by no means despised the claims of Cannon Kopje upon their attentions, and to every three shells which had been thrown into the town during the siege one other at least had been fired at Cannon Kopje. It had gradually come to be considered that Cannon Kopje was a point against which the Boers would sooner or later direct an attack. Since its capture was necessary to the successful execution of any general movement against the town, the detachment of police who formed the garrison at Cannon Kopje upon this

day performed a most brilliant service for the town by their determined and gallant stand. Perhaps in war more than in anything else chance is a more decisive factor than we like to consider, and had it not been for the diversion of the Boer forces upon Cannon Kopje and their subsequent repulse Mafeking itself might have been invaded by the enemy. The reduction of this post was, however, of vital concern to Commandant Cronje, since it had been his intention to bombard the south-eastern portion of the town from its ramparts, carrying Mafeking with a large force which he had assembled in the night in the adjacent valley of the Molopo River. The look-out from Cannon Kopje had already reported to Colonel Walford that there was unusual activity in the Boer camp, and the fatigues for the night had barely been dismissed when a passing shell from the Boers opened the action. During the night, and about the close of Sunday, the enemy had shifted men and artillery to positions from where they completely covered the area of the fort. At least a third of the forces before Mafeking had been concentrated upon Cannon Kopje. Against a mere gun emplacement and a mere handful of men shell fire from four guns was directed, and the services of 800 men utilized. In the extreme west there was Big Ben and a 7-pounder. In the extreme east there was a 12-pounder. Within a circle from these two points and within effective range a 7-pounder and quick-firing Nordenfelt had been stationed. The big gun threw seven shells only during the attack upon the kopje, but at any moment that the enemy's shell fire lapsed the Boers opened with their Mausers. Their rifle fire stretched from the two extremities of their flanks, and enfiladed the interior trenches of the kopje.

Nothing perhaps in the history of their operations along this frontier was so calculated to prove successful as the Boer counter attack upon Colonel Walford. It would seem morally impossible that 44 men could withstand the unceasing shower of shells and hail of bullets which dropped in Cannon Kopje. Had our men wavered they might well have been excused ; had they fallen back upon the town their movement would have been in order. But they stopped at their posts, the mark for every Boer rifle, the objective of the enemy's shell, until so great had been their execution upon the enemy that the Boers themselves proclaimed an armistice under the protection of their Red Cross flag. When this was decreed one-fourth of the detachment in the kopje were out of action ; but, on the other hand, not 400 yards away, we could see the Boer ambulance picking up their dead and wounded. It has been stated that they lost 100 men, and that a further 50 were seriously wounded ; but it is exceedingly difficult to compute the losses which we may have possibly inflicted upon them. Though we saw two wagonloads pass from their firing line to their laager, I am inclined to doubt if we killed more than 47 of the enemy. Still, in the face of such a hail of bullet and shell, that is a wonderful achievement, since to every shot which we fired there were at least 400 barrels emptied at our marksmen. Such was the unfortunate construction of Cannon Kopje that it was not possible for the men to use their loopholes, and it was necessary for each to stand to his feet and to expose himself above the breastwork as he fired. We fired by six, we fired independently, and whenever it was possible the Maxims were turned on, but it remains almost a mystery how we could prevail against the Boer numbers. It was easy enough to hold them in check, since the first well directed volley made them fall back some few yards, but the heavy shell fire would sooner or later have told its tale. It had already claimed the majority of those who were hit, since if the shell itself did not burst within the area of the fort it splintered upon stone, thereby adding a fresh danger to the position of those who were crouching behind the parapet for shelter.

Cannon Kopje, in itself a mere cluster of stones, is a terrible lesson, and also a magnificent example of gallant conduct in the field. Captain the Hon. D. Marsham was killed, and Captain Charles Alexander Kerr Pechell died in the course of the morning from wounds received. Colonel Walford and Colonel Baden-Powell have each expressed their high appreciation of the conduct of the men ; and if, as befits their rank, the example of the officers was admirable, it was unhesitatingly followed by the men under them. Captain Marsham was struck by a rifle bullet in turning to render some assistance to a wounded comrade. As he attempted to do this a rifle bullet passed through his chest, and a moment later he was dead just as a second bullet passed through his shoulder. It was as fine a death as any soldier could perhaps have chosen, and it had the crowning mercy of being instantaneous. Captain Pechell was busying himself in directing the rifle fire from the fort, and thereby directly drew the attention of the enemy. He, with a detachment of six men, ranged up from time to time, and picked off the enemy with well aimed volleys. They had taken up their position behind the easterm arm of the kopje, engaging a body of the enemy, whose flank fire enfiladed our position. The first shell which came at these men fell short, but the second and the third, bursting together, scattered the outer covering of the breastwork. Pechell ordered his men to retire from the direct line of the shell fire, when just as they were shifting their position a shell struck the stone parapet, and burst among them. Private Burrows was killed at once, just as he had been admiring the shot from a comrade. Sergeant-Major Upton and Captain Pechell received some terrible injuries, poor Pechell being wounded from the thigh to the

shoulder. By the death of Captain Marsham and Captain Pechell, her Majesty loses two officers of exceptional promise and soldierly qualifications.

The casualties for this action alone were eight killed and three wounded—four being killed upon the spot, and four dying of their wounds within 12 hours of the action. Captain Marsham, Sergeant-Major Curnihan, Private Burrows, and Private Martin were killed in the fort; Captain Pechell, Sergeant-Major Upton, Private Nicholas, and Private Lloyd died from wounds; Sergeant-Major Butler, Corporal Cooke and Private Newton were the survivors and are progressing satisfactorily.

NOVEMBER 5.

The garrison here has paid its farewell duties to those gallant men who were killed at Cannon Kopje. Their interment took place at 6 o'clock in the evening of the day upon which they lost their lives (October 30). By the orders of the Colonel, those who were desirous of so doing were permitted to follow the remains of the men to the grave, and, although there was no little danger, a large proportion of the town attended their final obsequies.

With the solemn notes of the Last Call in our ears, we retraced our steps to the various trenches and earthworks, which for the moment were our shelters, little imagining that within a few hours those of us who were correspondents would follow the body of one from amongst ourselves once more upon this road. The following night Lieutenant Murchison, who was in charge of the guns, accidentally shot with his revolver Mr. E. G. Parslow, correspondent of the London *Chronicle*. The horror of such a mistake still hangs over us, and is not in any way diminished by the fact that the officer, who had already distinguished himself by his career, is now awaiting the verdict of a field Court-martial. Mr. Parslow had endeared himself to everybody by the genial sympathy which he extended to those who were themselves in trouble, and he had won the admiration of many by the calmness with which he conducted himself under the heaviest fire.

Up to the present we have some good cause to believe that when the Boers are particularly silent something ominous portends. Towards the close of this week we had observed the enemy moving their big guns to fresh emplacements, and although we explained their inactivity with a happy optimism which attributed the silence of their artillery to lack of ammunition, we were nevertheless prepared to receive another messenger from the Boer camp. When he came it was to intimate through a letter from Commandant Cronje that a most determined onslaught on the town would take place upon the Monday, and that it would be wiser for us to surrender at once. The messenger was bowed out with that cold and dignified courtesy which is so characteristic of our commanding officer. It was soon seen that the Boers had procured, as they affirmed, some further artillery supplies, since the noiseless one-pound Nordenfelt began to harass the eastern and western fronts. The aim was excellent and the range effective, and although no one was actually hurt, there were a few minor casualties and a good many buildings penetrated by the steel-capped shell.

It has become quite impossible to expect the Boers to make any judicious selection from the reserves of artillery in Pretoria, with which to assail the mud walled-houses of Mafeking. It would appear that they have yet to learn the first principles of artillery attack, although it would seem that the slight damage which has hitherto been done in Mafeking has not at present revealed to them the futility of their procedure. Ever since the siege began now we have been accustomed to shells coming from all quarters. The Boers have made no attempt to concentrate their fire upon one spot until they had effectually silenced its defence. Now, however, the big gun, which stood alone in its isolated glory, has been shifted, and it would seem from the nature of the Boer emplacements that Monday may witness an attempt upon the part of the Boers to consolidate their artillery. In the meantime, however, we have again drawn their attention to the Red Cross flag, against which with cruel persistence they still direct their heavier metal. With the pleasures of the general bombardment already arranged for Monday, the 6th, we did not expect a determined attempt to blow up Mafeking with a load of dynamite. Nevertheless, between 6 and 7 on Saturday night the town was shaken to the uttermost depths of its foundations by a tremendous explosion. A ruddy glare which covered the sky led us at first to believe that a powder magazine had blown up, and it was not until the following morning that we found out that the Boers had endeavoured to push into Mafeking along the railway two trolly loads of dynamite. The concussion of this explosion, which was two miles off, broke several windows, shook buildings, and threw a few people to the ground, and had it not been that it prematurely exploded the official opinion here prefers to believe that Mafeking would have been in ruins.

Colonel Baden-Powell sympathizes as much as his official position will permit him with the inhabitants of Mafeking in their unfortunate predicament, and since the Boers wished to preserve Sunday as a day of rest, the Colonel encourages the people to indulge in as much simple pleasure upon this day as is possible. To-day week the band of the Bechuanaland Rifles played in the Market-square. They repeated their performance to-day, while to this innocuous pastime has been added a firework display for the evening's attraction and as a means of perpetuating the historical "Fifth."

Nov. 7 (by Native Runner to Kuruman).

Only this morning the western outposts under command of Major Godley made a reconnaissance of the Boer laager upon that front. The men of C Squadron under Captain Vernon, the Bechuanaland Rifles under Captain Cowan, and three guns under Lieutenant Daniels were engaged in the movement, which was completely successful. The previous night, after the men had turned in, when the glow of the camp fires had died out, a headquarters orderly brought the command that the men were to form up at 2 30 to make an attack at dawn upon the enemy's position. C Squadron has up to the present not enjoyed so great a share of the fighting as has fallen to A, B, and D Squadrons, and, although C Squadron contains a larger number of time-expired men than any other in the regiment, since hostilities commenced these troops have not been blooded.

At a quarter to 2 we turned out. Great-coats had been left behind, men slinging their water-bottles and bandoliers across their shoulders. Each had 50 rounds, although here and there others more fortunate than the rest had secured some few extra. We were to meet at the base of the hill which rose a few hundred yards across the veldt from Major Godley, and from there we were to march to our position. Night hung upon us heavily. The sky was dark, and everything seemed to point to the wisdom of choosing such a night. We stepped out briskly, yet trod as lightly as possible.

The sole objective of the night attack was to effect a reconnaissance of the enemy's camp upon the west side of the town. The guns were to throw a few shells, the men were to fire a few volleys, and then the whole force would regain their own trenches as quickly as possible. In respect to the constantly increasing force surrounding Mafeking almost the one means of temporarily checking their advance which remains to us is through the medium of these daybreak sorties. Information had been brought into headquarters that the Boers were massing upon the east side of the town, the small laager on the west being temporarily evacuated. The opportunity which was thus afforded of both surprising and annoying the enemy was very welcome, and the night dash was entered into with infinite zest. So soon as the guns had discharged their first shell our men began to fire by volleys, but the sortie had not progressed very far when the activity in the Boer lines showed that they were preparing to repel a force much larger than the mere sniping party which was actually before them. In the uncertain light of rising morn a body of 600 Boers could be seen riding from the main laager upon the western front to the support of the minor camp. We have hitherto thought the Boers timid at close quarters, but in this case there was every sign of haste and eagerness on the part of the reinforcements to arrive upon the scene of action. We could see them dismounting as they came up and run to the laager, some of them firing as they ran, others of them forming into detached parties and firing from isolated positions. After volleying for some minutes our men fulfilled the object of their morning excursion and were preparing to retire by troops, when, owing to the presence of the reinforcements, firing became general. Our rifles replied to their rifles, our two seven-pounders replied to their guns, but beyond this nothing was permitted to interfere with the successful completion of our work and the fitting execution of the Colonel's orders. It mattered very little to us how fiercely the enemy's Nordenfeldts spat out defiance or what their rifles said, for we fell back steadily, the different troops doubling 50, 100, and 150 yards each time. The fire as the various troops took up the retirement became very hot, the enemy cheerfully Mausering into space. For some hours after our men had gained the security of their own trenches the enemy maintained a heavy fire upon the several outposts along the western front. During the retirement of C Squadron Major Godley had ordered Captain Cowan to occupy Fort Eyre, a rifle trench, with a detachment of Bechuanaland Mounted Rifles, so that he might check any signs of advance which the enemy might display. In consequence of this, added to a mistake upon the part of some Boers that had brought about 300 of them to within 800 yards of the trench, Major Godley, Captain Cowan, Lieutenant Feltham, and the B.M.R. experienced the most severe fire which has at present been received from the Boers since operations began. The enemy made a determined onslaught upon Major Godley, but fortunately lacking the courage to charge the trench, after some few hours' rifle firing, they incontinently withdrew. These little fights are all the outposts have to do, and the success with which they have been conducted has been sufficient to check the enemy and to cause him to reflect upon the relative value of the means at our command. Despite Boer telegrams to Europe there has been no battle around Mafeking.

1st January 1900.

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, Nov. 21.

From November 12 it may be said the rigours of the siege closed more severely upon the town. The first week had been an anxious time. The sensation of being under shell fire was new and distressing. This was especially so when the second large calibre gun had come into position on M'Bulwana in our direct rear. The defences also were a cause of trouble. They were incom-

plete, and it was felt that the enemy, if determined, could make an impression upon every section. Probably the civilian population had not realized this, but it was obvious to those concerned in their construction ; and if it had not been for the moral effect of the naval guns it is doubtful if the defences would have been finished in time to meet the assault when it was made. The devotion with which the sailors drew and returned the enemy's fire while all other troops were engaged in building breastworks stands unprecedented. The first three days their guns had little or no parapets, and the men had to stand to in the open. The luck of the British service was with them, for, though the ground round the guns was furroughed and ploughed in every direction, no appreciable damage was done to any group. With the naval gunners drawing the fire it was possible for the men to work at day on some of the posts. But on others nothing could be done except at night, and the men as soon as they were relieved from holding the crest lines were forced to exchange rifle for pick and shovel and to spend the night intrenching. But each 24 hours that the Boers delayed the assault saw the safety of Ladysmith increase, until by November 7 those responsible for the line of defences were confident that we could hold our own.

But after the experience of November 9, the Boers have made no further attempt to reduce Ladysmith by storm. They have made the investment closer, and seem to rely upon their shell fire to reduce the place. There is not a point of vantage within range of the works upon which they have not mounted some kind of gun. Even the screw guns which they captured from us were in action against us as long as the supply of shrapnel taken with them lasted. But the effect of the latter was very feeble, as the Dutch gunners had almost expended the supply before they realized that it was necessary to withdraw both safety pins from the projectile. Their shell fire was desultory, lacking in energy and system. They would lay on a mark, then, as soon as they found it, would relay the gun upon some other object. It was only towards the end of the month that they attempted anything approaching a concentrated fire upon any one section of the town or defences. A French deserter from the Dutch lines, to whom I shall presently refer, reported that he had come to the country in the company of three German artillery officers, and it is probable that they are responsible for the change in the artillery tactics which have taken place lately. But the waste of ammunition from the enemy's works is prodigious. A mounted infantry patrol will draw a dozen rounds of shrapnel, and a single mounted man or a cart will immediately attract the fire of the field guns. This is sheer waste and not ignorance, for the enemy's gunners are undoubtedly possessed of the very best telescopes. Any movement of troops, even when partially screened by the trees and cover of the town, will immediately attract the notice of the look-out in the parapets of the large calibre guns. Even groups of men engaged in camp pastimes, such as polo, cricket, and football, must pay the penalty of their energy by enduring shell fire. But, except when special targets goad the Dutch gunners into action, the bombardment of the town is spasmodic.

The usual hours for the heavy guns is an hour at dawn, half an hour at 9, an hour about noon, and an hour in the evening. For one week they entertained us at midnight with a salvo from every gun in position against the town.

The flag of truce has been in constant request. In previous letters it has been pointed out how constantly the Boers have abused the privileges of the white flag to juggle with the usages of war. But as far as it has been used for an interchange of communications between the opposing generals, the enemy for the most part behaved with courtesy. Only on one occasion were the pickets discourteous. Then the officer carrying the letter met a patrol of Dutchmen of the old type. He addressed them in English, and they refused to answer. "Do none of you understand English ?" he asked. The reply came in Dutch. "We all understand it, but we refuse to speak the —— language !" The frequency with which this interchange of letters between General White and General Joubert has taken place has been the subject of some criticism in camp. It may have been politic, but it has not been popular. Certainly the answer which was given to the request made in the interests of the wounded and non-combatants during the early days of the siege read like a polite dictation of terms from the stronger to the weaker.

November 14 was a day of some excitement. It was on this date that we received the first authentic news of relief. A Kaffir came in with a message that Sir Redvers Buller had despatched three infantry brigades under Sir Francis Clery to our relief. That the leading brigade, that of Major-General Hildyard, had embarked on November 9 from Cape Town, and, as our messenger had left Colenso on the following day, was due to be at Durban. This was inspiriting news, and had a marked effect upon the garrison. Brigadier-General Brocklehurst on this date made a reconnaissance towards Middle Hill on the Van Reenan's road. He took out with him a battery of Royal Field Artillery, two squadrons

Natal Carabineers, and one squadron Imperial Light Horse. The enemy were found in position on Star Hill, a kopje three miles outside the perimeter of the camp. This kopje the guns shelled for three hours until a cross fire was brought to bear on the battery from the right. The column was then reinforced with another battery and the 5th Lancers. But no developments took place. Our guns fired many more rounds of ammunition than we could afford under the circumstances. While the artillery remained in action the Boers took shelter, but as soon as we ceased firing to withdraw the Dutchmen returned to their pieces, and harried the column as it fell back to camp. Luckily there had been rain, and the ground being soft the enemy's badly fused missiles all exploded under ground. There were many narrow escapes but no casualties. Altogether it was a useless and disappointing day. A couple of intelligent scouts could have discovered as much information as the reconnaissance, and 300 precious rounds of shrapnel would have been saved. As the column returned into camp the enemy's batteries on the M'Bulwana range south of the town made very pretty practice. They followed the guns in through the line of our works, across an open space of a mile, made it impossible for the batteries to cross the bridge across the Klip river, and finally shelled them as they were unhooking in camp. The practice was excellent, but the range was so great that the energy of the shrapnel had become exhausted.

Several men were struck with shrapnel bullets, but none were hurt. The town had not fared so well ; although the bombardment had, as usual, been spasmodic, yet the heavy guns had been trained on the town rather than on the naval redoubts. The damage to house property was severe, but, as usual, out of all proportion to the weight of metal thrown into the town. Colonel Ian Hamilton and staff, including Lord Ava and Colonel F. Rhodes, escaped a serious burst by a few moments. They were about to have breakfast when a shell from the Peppworth battery entered the plinth of the house and, passing into the cellar, burst under the breakfast table. The force of this explosion drove the floor planks of the room through the ceiling and roof. It was a single-storeyed tenement.

Lucas Meyer's commando, encamped in the vicinity of Farquhar's Farm, and covering the rear of the M'Bulwana batteries, considered that it would be expedient to put forward some men, as feelers, while the garrison was weakened by Brocklehurst's engagement on the west. They consequently showed in front of the Helpmakaar posts. But the long-range marksmanship of the Devonshire Regiment was sufficient to extinguish this little flash in the pan. In fact, as was said before, the untiring efforts of all arms had made the defences strong enough to defy any infantry attack. By this over 40,000 sacks alone had been used to manufacture sandbags and breastworks. Of course the position had weak points. The slopes which lead up to Maiden Castle and the foot of Cæsar's Camp especially lend themselves to successful assault by a determined and well-disciplined enemy. But we had long before this come to the conclusion that it was not within the Boer to thus jeopardize the 2,000 men which it would be necessary to sacrifice before such an assault could be pressed home.

On the night of November 14 the Dutch gunners undertook a new departure in bombardment. A few minutes before midnight every gun which they had bearing upon the town fired a round. The effect on Ladysmith was magical. Although many of the civilian populace had come to regard shell fire with the contempt which it deserved, yet throughout the day the burrows and shelters on the river's bank had plenty of occupants. But in the evening these troglodytes appeared, and, after promenading the main street, would retire comfortably to rest in their houses. A weird scene met the gaze a few seconds after the first night shell burst in the town. I was once in a city when it was convulsed with earthquake. The demeanour of the inhabitants of Ladysmith when bombarded in darkness was very similar to that of the people experiencing an earthquake. Women in night apparel and with unbound hair dashed into the street hugging infants to their arms. A motley crowd, in undress and panic-stricken, were rushing for the river casements, carrying such bedding with them as had readily come to hand. Some carried lights ; others implored, entreated, and even cursed them to extinguish their hand-lamps, fearing that it would draw the enemy's attention. Heard and seen in murky night the horror of a shell is exaggerated fourfold ; the wicked swish of a projectile would provoke screams from the women, while the grinding crash of a heavy projectile drove them back even from the mouths of their havens. For five minutes it was a piteous scene. It is difficult to know why the Dutch essayed this night attack. Generally it is believed that our pickets or working parties had alarmed them, and, believing that some attack was about to develop, they fired each gun in rotation in order to give the alarm to their whole force. This seems a likely interpretation, since, as far as we could judge, no individual gun fired twice. Strange to say, this night firing was repeated on four consecutive nights. Beyond keeping the women and more timid of the inhabitants underground both night and day it had little effect.

From November 16 to 19 the enemy may be said to have completed their siege dispositions. They pulled more guns up the rugged bluff of Bulwana and had altogether six pieces in position capable of dropping shell into the town. They also completed implacements on other outlying hills, such as Telegraph Kopje and Middle Hill. It is impossible to realize why at this period of the siege

more use was not made of the cavalry. We had in Ladysmith, including the volunteers, over 3,000 mounted troops. During the earlier phases of the investment, when the infantry posts were insecure, we can understand that it was necessary to keep the cavalry in reserve to support the infantry in the event of any section of the defences being severely pressed. But once the casemates and breastworks were finished the cavalry became free. Yet they were kept inactive in camp, with the exception of a squadron on patrol along the Helpmakaar road and three troops in rear of Observation Hill. One would have thought that, the defences being secure, the time had arrived for a strong chain of cavalry pickets to surround the entire length of the defences. Not only would they have strengthened the security of the infantry defences, but they would have been able to discover the weak points in the enemy's cordon, and, led with some dash, would surely have been able to prevent the humiliation of our seeing new guns brought into position against us, at decreasing ranges, without the movement of a finger to prevent it. The one or two cavalry affairs which were undertaken were clumsy in design and ponderous in execution, resulting in little more than a mere waste of artillery ammunition. We have passed through phases when cavalry, used with judicious enterprise, could have saved us from many disheartening circumstances and furnished some set-off against the bungling which is responsible for having left the enemy a complete railway communication with all its frontiers.

At this period news was very scarce in the town. The Boers had promulgated a statement that all Kaffirs caught bearing messages through the lines would be mutilated. This threat had been put in circulation with the express object of intimidating the Kaffir runners, and for a time it had a very marked effect. Moreover, the invaders had augmented their sentry cordon with a number of armed Basutos, and had taken the precaution to institute a close search of all the kraals in the vicinity of the town. The result was that the natives, not realizing the situation, and believing that the Dutch were winning all down the line, were shaken in their confidence and refused to undertake the risks of forcing the Boer lines. The Government pigeons, however, were despatched regularly to Durban, and from subsequent reports appear to have worked well. Myself I have been singularly unfortunate with my pigeons. When on Monday, October 30, I realized that the investment of Ladysmith was inevitable, in conjunction with a colleague I despatched a man to Maritzburg to purchase homing pigeons. The man made the purchase, but returned on the day that communication was cut. Very pluckily he attempted to make his way, with the birds, through the Boer lines, but he was unfortunately captured while hiding in a Kaffir kraal a few miles from his destination. He was a European. The official birds belong to the Durban Homing Club and were volunteered by that institution. News being so scarce the most appalling and impossible rumours found circulation in camp and town. At one time the fall of Bloemfontein was announced with such circumstantial evidence that it was generally believed to be true, except by those who realized that, however mobile a force was at Sir Redvers Buller's disposal, time and caution were necessary to ensure its successful advance.

The 11 miles of defences were after the investment divided into three sections. The left or western section was commanded by Colonel Ian Hamilton, the centre or northern by Brigadier-General Howard, and the right or eastern line by Colonel Knox. The latter was rendered well nigh impregnable. The men excavated the whole of the hill sides, and though, as an average, 50 shells were daily fired against these defences, the regiments holding the section have not lost above a dozen men. When the posts, especially the detached post of Helpmakaar, were perfectly secure, Colonel Knox set about the construction of "dummy" works and intrenchments. For a time these ruses deceived the enemy and drew some shell fire. But their information was so good or their glasses were so perfect that the deception soon wore through. In the case of the "dummy" battery it gave a very fair example of the accuracy of the Dutch artillery practice. In order to perfect the deception one of the Elandslaagte guns, under Lieutenant Kincaid Smith, R.H.A., was sent into the river bed in the rear of the battery to initiate the belief that the trenches were in reality occupied. After the Maxim-Nordenfelt had fired twice the enemy from the battery on the shoulder of Lombard's Kop trained on the empty trench. Having fired two rounds they discovered our gun and for the rest of the day made it so uncomfortable for the gunners that they were content to lie under the river bluff without returning the fire.

From the middle of November we began to feel for the first time the pinch of a "siege." It began with a general reduction in the provender ration for the horses. Not that the authorities allowed that grain was becoming scarce. The want of exercise was a sufficient excuse for the curtailing of the animals' allowance. But when, a few days later, the meat ration of the garrison was reduced all round, "murder was out." It was then realized that we were of a truth besieged. The situation was not serious, but Colonel Ward had found it necessary to husband his resources. It was the thin end of the wedge. If there is credit due for the conduct of this campaign in Natal the prime share should fall upon Colonel Ward and the staff of the Army Service Corps. It is their forethought alone which has made the defence of the town possible, and it is doubtful if in the annals of war the food supply of a beleaguered garrison has been sufficient to main-

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tain an army of 9,000 fighting men and 3,000 civilians practically on full rations for a month. Whatever may be in store for us in the future we have lived in comparative luxury for 30 days.

In a way the natural capabilities of the country for supplying transport has been responsible for the success of the supply department. Moreover, Ladysmith itself proved a veritable gold mine. For an insignificant little South African village the quantity of foodstuffs which it contained is amazing. Not only necessities such as wheat and mealie grain, but many of the luxuries of life. For instance, on the concentration of the Dundee Column with us the expenditure of the rum ration was doubled. Colonel Ward has been able to commandeer in Ladysmith enough whisky to furnish the men's spirit ration for one week. The resources of Ladysmith have been wonderful.

About November 19 and 20 the garrison became considerably depressed. Joubert sent in a polite and ponderous letter stating that he was despatching some wounded from the Dublin Fusiliers to the Intombi camp for treatment. From these men we heard the history of the disaster to the armoured train which had been working between Colenso and Estcourt. The history of the unfortunate affair is similar to that of previous disasters when armoured trains have proved themselves veritable death traps. Apparently for days the train had been plying between Colenso and Estcourt. As it was not molested, those responsible for its conduct doubtless lapsed into indifference, until they suddenly found themselves with half the train derailed and 3,000 Boers with artillery in action against them. A pitiful enough history. Apparently a portion of the train succeeded in cutting adrift from the *débris* of the derailed truck and this portion escaped. There remained in the enemy's hands about 80 men, made up of the Dublin Fusiliers and Durban Light Infantry. Of these, perhaps, 30 were wounded, including Captain Haldane, D.S.O., Gordon Highlanders. This officer had been wounded at Elandslaagte and had only returned to military duty a few days before he was again wounded and taken prisoner.

These details, meagre as they were, were not inspiriting and considerable gloom settled over the garrison when it was realized that weeks must ensue before the people at Estcourt could relieve us or an advance upon the other frontiers take the pressure off Natal.

GENERAL BULLER'S ADVANCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

FRERE CAMP, THURSDAY, DEC. 7.

The period of inaction is drawing to a close. The steady but rapid concentration of our troops, the presence of the Commander-in-Chief, and the elaborate defences the Boers have prepared on the other side of the Tugela all mean that heavy fighting is to be expected before we can reach Ladysmith. If the fighting resolves itself into one big battle it will certainly be the largest yet fought and will probably be the most important of the whole war. Meanwhile, during this uneventful period that precedes the storm the chief interest has lain in watching the Boer preparations on the other side of the Tugela. Colenso, the chief scene of operations, is barely 12 miles from Frere and can easily be seen from our pickets outside the camp. The position the Boers are occupying is one of great natural strength. The village lies on this side of the river and close to it, in an absolutely flat and open plain. Two bridges cross the river—a railway bridge and a wagon bridge ; but the former has already been blown up. No attempt has been made to take up a position on this side of the river, with the exception of a small wooded kopje about a mile below Colenso, where they have mounted two guns. When we advance they will probably withdraw these, and then blow up the wagon bridge. On the other side of the river the hills rise in steps, beginning with a line of little steep foot-hills a short half-mile back, on which the Boers have made intrenchments and rifle-pits, and culminating in a hill called Grobler's Kloof, about two miles from the river and at least 800ft. above it. A short time ago it was reported that on these hills the Boers had mounted three tiers of guns, among which were at least two of heavy calibre.

It is now 12 days since the Boers fell back from Estcourt upon Colenso. At first they confined themselves to fortifying their position there until they had made it practically impregnable for direct frontal attack. Perhaps they realized this, or perhaps they feared that Sir George White would march out of Ladysmith, 18 miles away, to attack them in the rear. At any rate, since the beginning of this month they have been observed trekking away from Colenso westward. If we are to take Colenso it will have almost certainly to be by crossing the river higher up and outflanking the Boer position. There are three fords by which we can cross to do this. They are called Maritzer's, Potgeiter's, and Trichard's Drifts, about ten, 15, and 20 miles respectively from Colenso. We are not to be allowed to cross any of these drifts unopposed.

for the Boers who trekked westward from Colenso have fortified no less than eight positions along the river. Many of these positions are supposed to have been made under the supervision of German engineers, for native scouts who have been amongst the Boers report that the orders were given by men whom the Boers addressed as "Sir," a most unusual thing for a Boer to do, and who were dressed in uniform. Besides occupying these positions along the river the Boers have assembled in considerable force at Mount Tabanyama, a mountain lying about 15 miles E.S.E. of Ladysmith. The choice of this position shows excellent generalship, for it commands the approaches to Ladysmith from either Potgeiter's or Trichard's Drifts, and in case of defeat covers the retreat towards the western passes. This extension of front has naturally somewhat weakened their position at Colenso, as they have withdrawn from it a certain number of both men and guns. What their strength there is at the present moment it is impossible to say.

Last Saturday there were six camps visible behind Colenso. Yesterday morning there were five, and in the course of the day the Boers were seen to strike one of the largest of them and move off behind the hills. Last Sunday a large escort accompanying the artillery officers who were conducting range-finding operations within easy reach of Colenso failed to draw the enemy's fire, and yesterday, when the Commander-in-Chief made a reconnaissance with the entire mounted force, no movement could be seen in the enemy's lines. This, however, can only have been an attempt to draw us into a trap, for their guns are still visible on the hills above Colenso, and they could easily conceal completely behind the hills as great a force as they chose.

The news from Sir George White that he could read the messages flashed to him from the searchlight of the Terrible that has been mounted here is of extreme importance, as it means that he is acquainted with our movements and will be able to co-operate with them. There is still, however, one element of absolute uncertainty against which nothing can be done. We are absolutely dependent upon the river remaining low in order to cross the drifts. The name Tugela means "fear," and it has received the name from the rapidity with which it will come down in flood. A thunderstorm among the mountains in which it rises will raise the river many feet in a few minutes, and a resident on its banks told me that he has seen it rise 40 feet in a single night! The current is at all times extremely swift, and a comparatively slight rise is sufficient to make the drift impassable, whilst a heavy rise will sweep away any temporary bridge that may have been erected.

If, as is to be hoped, nothing of this sort occurs, we ought in a few days to be ready to move forward. The trestle railway bridge here was finished last night, and trains are now passing over it preparatory to taking stores to Chieveley Station four miles from here, where our advanced guard is to encamp under the command of General Hildyard. Troops and artillery are arriving rapidly. The 5th Dragoons and three companies of the South African Light Horse marched into camp from Escourt on Tuesday, making a considerable addition to the 1,300 colonial mounted infantry who have hitherto been the only mounted troops here.

The two 4·7 naval guns that arrived here a week ago and are the only guns that can cope with the enemy's heavy artillery are to be augmented in numbers, as eight more of the Terrible's guns are being sent up. These heavy guns will probably be used against Colenso. The difficulty of transporting them is very great. For any great distance they have to be drawn by oxen, and it requires two teams—*i.e.*, at least 28 oxen—to move them. The difficulty experienced in taking them from the station to their camp, a distance of half a mile, the day they arrived showed that they could not be taken over ground which is uneven or where there are any dongas. Should the two infantry brigades at present at Mooi River and Estcourt, under Generals Lyttelton and Barton respectively, receive orders to advance, General Buller will have a division of infantry with a strength of at least 15,000.

We have now reached the crisis as far as the campaign in Natal is concerned. The Boers are on the edge of a country where, though we may gain victories against them, we can never reap the fruit of those victories. It remains to be seen whether the crossing of the Tugela will be effected in such a fashion that we shall have to continue to fight our way step by step through a country as badly adapted to our style of fighting as it is well suited to the tactics of our opponents, or whether they will be rolled back in a disorganized rout along the line of retreat of which they have already assured themselves.

2nd January 1900.

WITH GATACRE'S DIVISION.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

PUTTER'S KRAAL, DEC. 1.

Hitherto but little of real interest has occurred here, and I have written more with the idea of showing that I am not too lazy to write than for any other reason. In a few days, however, I trust that there may be excitement enough. I hear upon reliable authority that 3,000 Transvaalers are marching south to join hands with the Free State and rebel commandos about Burghersdorp, &c., and that the intention of the enemy is to attack our advanced post on Bushman's Hoek,

which is defended by mounted troops and Kaffrarian Rifles, numbering some 800 men in all. The distance in advance of our camp is about 12 miles, and at Sterkstrom, 4½ miles from here, the general has established an intermediate post defended by one company of Kaffrarian Rifles and 200 Brabant's Horse. There is heliographic communication in addition to the telegraph, so that ample warning can be given in the event of attack. Bushman's Hoek is a very strong and most important position. The railway to Stormberg here climbs over the pass by a series of snakelike curves, and during the ascent there are large numbers of comparatively heavy culverts, embankments, cuttings, &c., which would require much time and labour for their repair were the enemy permitted to injure them. Moreover, the main road to Stormberg passes also over Bushman's Hoek, so that the loss of our present position thereon would be a very serious matter. I hope and believe that the defenders of the post on the Hoek, aided by counter attacks delivered by the force here, will be able to maintain themselves, but a disaster is by no means impossible. Sir William Gatacre is simply powerless to assure anything whatever owing to the delay in supplying him with troops. His division to-day is represented by two battalions only; and one of these does not properly belong to it. We have no cavalry and no Royal Artillery. Of course, the diversion of early arrivals to Natal and the later need of others for the Kimberley Relief Force fully accounts for the disparity of reinforcements in this direction when compared with others; but it is difficult to explain why greater expedition in the despatch of troops from home has not been displayed. The want of cavalry in particular has been most grievously felt. It is not too much to say that if Lord Methuen had had, say, three regiments of cavalry at Belmont the Boer army would have been so utterly routed that no further fighting would have taken place.

Late this evening I have had a wire from Dordrecht telling me that a commando 1,200 strong is marching on that place from Barkly, and since then I have been informed that two batteries, an ammunition column, and a battalion are to arrive in two or three days. This latter piece of intelligence is really good news; but until we have been reinforced by another 3,000 men it will remain impossible to do anything except what we are now doing—sitting still.

DECEMBER 2.

The Boers are reported to have occupied Dordrecht this morning with a commando estimated at 1,200 strong. The distance from here to Dordrecht is only about 30 miles, so that a night march would enable us to attack at dawn.

DECEMBER 3.

Full particulars are now to hand about the occupation of Dordrecht, and it turns out that the commando numbered only 500 men, most of whom are rebels from the Barkly district. At the same time, the idea of attacking them falls through, since they have already gone towards Stormberg or Molteno. A gentleman who was in Dordrecht at the time of its occupation counted the numbers of the commando as it marched in. He says that the Boers still seem to be full of confidence. He had a long talk with Mr. Munnik, the renegade ex-magistrate of Barkly East, but without gaining much information.

DECEMBER 4.

This morning I heard that the Cape Police had cleverly arrested two rebels named Anandale and Botha, whom they caught in the act of commandeering Dutch colonists, on Carnarvon Farm, only about 15 miles from this camp in the direction of Dordrecht. It is to be hoped that these rascals will be made an example of, but meanwhile they have been only committed for trial by the magistrate at Sterkstrom and have been sent down to Queenstown.

DECEMBER 5.

The 74th and 77th Field Batteries and the 12th Field Company Royal Engineers arrived during to-day, the two latter in the morning but the former was not complete until late at night, although the horses and a small detachment reached the railway station shortly after midday. It appears that through some jumble on the railway, the train containing the men and equipment of the 74th Field Battery was delayed for nearly three hours within a short distance of its destination. Had not this delay occurred the battery might easily have been settled down comfortably in camp before dark. The horses seem to have suffered considerably during the voyage. The fittings of the ship appear to have been hastily erected and without any regard for sanitation, so that before the battery artificers could complete the needful alterations no less than 13 deaths resulted from pneumonia caused by the poisonous atmosphere between decks. The weather, most unfortunately, was such that the "ports" required to be kept shut during the early part of the voyage, just when the ventilation which might have been supplied by them was most needed. In spite of all their troubles the horses are a splendid lot, and in a very few days they will be fit for work. At present very many, more especially the original battery animals, are much "tucked up" and their coats "stare" considerably. I am glad to find that there is at least one amongst the officers who knows the Cape, and I look forward, therefore, to seeing the horses turned out to graze on the veldt. There is little enough grass, it is true, but the luxury of a roll and a little freedom works marvels with horses that have had a bad time of it. The superior condition of the tram and omnibus horses serving with the batteries is obviously attributable to the fact

that they had a better start coming out of hard work and plenty of good food. The 12th Company R.E. did very smart service during the afternoon by making two new "drifts" between camp and station, by which the previous congestion of traffic has been entirely removed. The men stuck to their tasks most manfully under a broiling sun; no navvies could have surpassed them. Number 12 Company came out with a reputation, and seems likely to increase it.

DECEMBER 6.

The divisional ammunition column arrived during the night; or rather the men, vehicles, horses, and part of the harness for the mules. The rest, no doubt, will follow in course of time, as well as the Ordnance depôt of ammunition. The latter is an urgent necessity. One such battle as Modder River would exhaust all the available supply of artillery ammunition now at hand. Whilst I was at the railway station this morning watching the ammunition column preparing to march into camp I observed an amusing incident which deserves to be recorded. One of the drivers who had been entrusted with the charge of a sick horse in addition to an extramcar animal proceeded to mount the latter, regardless of the fact that it, probably, had not had a saddle on its back since it was a colt. The result was much kicking and rearing, combined with an obstinate determination to remain otherwise stationary. The man got angry, and, uttering a variety of anathemas, began to ply his spurs with vigour and intention. Just as the contest culminated another driver standing by called out, "Stow them spurs, Jack; ring yer bloomin' bell!" This anecdote represents the light side of the picture, but there is also a serious aspect that may not impossibly force itself into notice. Here we have batteries sent to the seat of war with 50 per cent. of their strength composed of "registered horses" not half-a-dozen of whom have ever been worked on the "ride and drive" system. Thus, in addition to needing gentle exercise and nursing after their voyage, the remounts require also a complete course of training in artillery draught. It might be supposed that batteries which left England on November 2 would have received their reserve horses soon enough to have had time to do some little training previously to embarcation; and yet most of these horses were not actually received until two days before going on board ship. This is a very rough country, and consequently the horses drawing the guns need to be especially well trained in order to give the batteries the desired mobility.

There was a small field day early this morning in which two battalions and the mounted infantry were engaged. I am sorry that I was unable to be present—being at the railway station—more especially as I should have liked to see whether, under the eye of the General himself, greater attention was paid to the "use of ground" than I have hitherto been accustomed to see or read of in relation to the present campaign. In all the battles fought it would seem, so far as we can understand from the meagre narratives, that the Boers, having been found occupying a position, the preparatory fire of artillery has been followed by purely frontal attacks delivered right on the position and without any attempts to turn or threaten the enemy's line by the occupation of adjacent positions towards his flanks or rear. There are very few positions in South Africa that are not of the class that tempts the intending defender to spread more and more to the flanks because this or that point is just the one thing needful to ensure perfection. And as each is successively included another ridge or knoll appears in view and is found equally tempting. Finally, the defender is obviously obliged to content himself with an extent of front suitable more or less to the strength of his force, and the further points are necessarily left unoccupied. In my opinion the time required for the artillery preparation should be employed by the assailant in effectively occupying one or more of the positions reasonably adjacent to that of the enemy, and not until these *pied-à-terre* have been secured should one single man of the force be seriously committed to the attack, or much less to the assault of the position itself. Quite apart from the special case of the Boers, I do not think that any assault can succeed against modern rifles except at an awful cost to the attackers, unless the point assaulted is kept under effective fire until the assailants reach charging distance of it. Such a fire cannot be maintained as a rule by adjacent units, and scarcely ever by those in rear—not even by artillery. Consequently a fire position nearly perpendicular to the line of advance is required, and this will generally mean in prolongation of the enemy's position. In any case the advance to the attack should consist in the successive occupation of various fire positions, the occupants of which can, by their fire, favour the advance of their comrades to others at closer ranges. The advance of a "general line" is perhaps the "road to Paradise," but it is not the way to victory. To seize something with the right hand, something else with the left, and then more with the teeth—and *da capo*, or with variations—is the method by which an assailant can approach and finally assault an enemy in position. "General lines" look pretty at drill, but cannot and should not be preserved on the field of battle. We need to think of the ground itself, not of the lines we place upon it. The officer, be he of high or of inferior rank, who can best turn to account the advantages offered by the ground for the use of the men under his command is the best fighting officer. Until the attackers come under effective fire the retention of power to manœuvre, or, in other words, the preservation of

order, is the chief consideration ; but afterwards the occupation of successive tactical points by whatever troops may be able to seize them is everything, and the rest comparatively nothing. The combination of order with the quick grasping of local opportunities is so seldom feasible, if ever, that it is scarcely worth while to discuss means intended to secure it. I have to-day heard a whisper that the general may be moved against his will to take early action. That much pressure is being brought to bear upon him by certain ignorant civilians is, I know, the case. But I trust that he will stand firm and postpone his advance until his mounted troops are really fit for service, even if he does not await further reinforcements to his infantry. There is little use in striking until he is in a position to strike hard and drive the blow well home. The delay, of course, is causing great local inconvenience and loss of property, besides encouraging the rebellious section to declare openly for the enemy. Yet the accession of a few hundred extra colonials to the enemy's forces can, in the end, have but little effect upon the issue that will soon be decided. However, I think it by no means impossible that we may march on Friday or Saturday next, but I still hope that we may wait until Monday.

2nd January 1900.

LORD METHUEN'S ADVANCE.

THE BATTLE AT GRASPAN.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

MODDER RIVER, DEC. 1.

From the battlefield of Belmont, where the great aasvogels were slowly wheeling with motionless wings in huge circles through the blinding glitter of a South African sky, the division made its way on Friday to Graspan with the Yorkshire Light Infantry as advance guard.

It was a short march, and, like that from the Orange River, uneventful. Now and then the ground scouts in extended order flushed a covey of partridges or beat up a herd of springbock ; once a flock of Kaffir cranes passed overhead with hoarse, gull-like cries,and always the quick lizards flashed in and out of the scrub under foot, but of the enemy there was no sign, though the entire line of march passed between kopjes some two thousand yards apart, and the cover afforded was perfect.

Graspan is a curious reminder of early volcanic activity now completely extinct in the continent. Few strata in the geology of the earth can exhibit a uniformity as universal as those of South Africa. Evidences of seismic disturbance, faults due to volcanic action, even gradients caused by subsidence are rarely seen, and the long extinct crater of Graspan, now a perfect circle of kopjes carpeted with the smoothest and softest of white sands, seemed almost out of place.

The scene at night in this huge Coliseum was extraordinary—the camp fires blazing round the mouth of the " pan," and the alternate dark and vividly lighted figures moving round them, the stars in the fleckless purple above, the dark forms stretched in rows upon the sand, and over all the half-pathetic beam of violet-white haze that now and again lighted the northern horizon,lending to the composition of the picture a note of human interest, and an insistent reminder of the end and aim of our journey.

To the last moment the position had been kept warm for us. Pickets were sent up at once to the surrounding heights, and in one of them was found, in a newly made sangar, a field-glass and a walking-stick still lying in an undusted state that proved that the Boers had occupied the place a few minutes before. Supper was soon cooked and eaten, and the column, wrapped in blankets, slept in the fast cooling night.

Up betimes, indeed, and on to Enslin, some five miles on, which was reached in the earliest dawn, the last two miles being covered in fighting formation, the naval detachment and the 5th Fusiliers being supported by the Yorkshire Light Infantry and the Northampton Regiment.

On this occasion the Guards had no share in the fighting that ensued, indeed, it was not till late in the morning that they appeared. The Navy and the Y.L.I. won the laurels of as hot a fight as Belmont and as plucky a storming of a fortified height as stands to the credit of any regiment in the list.

The engagement began with a sharp artillery duel between the western batteries on either side. There was no attempt to scale the kopjes at this end of the position, a row of five heights—interconnected by neks—of which all except one, a small hill commanded from either side, were strongly occupied. The armoured train was met by a hot fire as it moved up, and retired, disgorging part of its crew to help in handling the naval guns. From the railway eastwards to the last kopje, which lay almost on the border of the Free State, the fighting was for a long time desultory, but it was soon seen that this latter hill was the strongest position held by the enemy, and was occupied by a stronger garrison than any other. It was necessary that this position should be taken, and taken before a cloud of horsemen hovering upon our flank could concentrate its strength upon our single brigade. The second battery shelled the elaborate sangar at the top ; for half an hour the bombardment was kept up, with what result it is even now difficult to say—and a sustained, but badly-aimed, fire was directed upon the guns and the supports in answer. The rifle fire—here as elsewhere—was evidently under no control. There was a great waste of ammunition, and a wish to make fancy

long-distance practice on the part of the Boers was soon obvious. While riding up to the battery at work upon the hill, and while still at a distance of at least 1,600 yards, a steady "sniping" at me was indulged in by the Boers. It is sufficient for any one to be riding or not carrying a rifle to make him a target for long-range independent fire. The rule of the enemy to pick off officers is still fully enforced wherever there is the slightest chance of distinguishing one. Of course the late regulation forbidding officers to wear or bear anything marking them out from their men has had the best results. It is not too much to say that as the Zulu war stopped once for all the carrying of colours into action, so the present war will finally have forbidden officers to be in any way marked or distinguished from their men. Even the red chevrons of the non-commissioned officers have been found at Orange River too certain a mark, and they now wear on their sleeves a lightly ink-outlined indication of their rank.

The Naval Brigade that now moved up to the foot of the hill was destined to receive a terrible lesson. They advanced in extended order, but in converging upon the position to be taken they unconsciously found themselves closed in, and in that formation attempted the ascent. The fire directed upon them was terrible, and, distinguished by their swords, the officers were the first to fall. Commander Ethelstan was mortally wounded 50 yards from the first slope, and one by one the rest fell as they advanced, many with two or three bullet wounds. The slaughter was appalling to watch; the gallantry displayed was useless under the pitiless iron hail that was but slightly checked by the redoubled shelling of the reinforced battery. With a cheer the Yorkshire men—by a curious coincidence they had been conveyed from Mauritius by the very men to whose help they now came—ran up, pouring upwards a tremendous fusillade towards the crest of the sangar. Of course they lost heavily, but their open formation and the impossibility of distinguishing officers saved them from the concentrated fire that had deprived the naval detachment of their leaders, and little by little the thin line of khaki crawled up to the top.

The activity of the gunners was now extraordinary. Shell after shell burst upon the very edge of the sangar and the fire slackened perceptibly. The rampart that they had constructed now proved a serious disadvantage to the Boers. Except by leaning head and shoulders over the breastworks and exposing themselves to the storm of shrapnel that safeguarded the upward climb of the two regiments now reinforced by some of the Northumberland Fusiliers and the North Lancashire men, the Boers could deliver no effective fire, and many cautiously retreated to a second position from which they could fire upon the first of our men who reached the summit. The storming line was now so near the crest that the guns could only be directed upon the Boers enfilading the position from the spurs of the kopje on the left, and almost in a calm Lieutenant S. C. Taylor, closely followed by Lieutenant Jones, of the Marines, reached the outer works of the sangar and made their way over.

In the next half minute fifty men tumbled over and immediately rushed forward to clear the position in rear. This was, however, stubbornly held for a quarter of an hour, more, perhaps, as a screen than anything else to cover the retreat of the Boers, many of whom had already fled, broken into small parties hastening to their horses, which stood in safety some fifty yards down the hill on the other side. Whatever the cost, the position had been taken and the enemy fled almost simultaneously from the whole line. The artillery galloped round in rear of the position and shelled the crowds of flying horsemen that spotted the north roads, driving an arc of shells into the dense mass with astounding rapidity and accuracy.

Above, the hill-top was almost dripping with blood; not a boulder escaped its splash of crimson, and the innumerable splinters and chips of the ironstone blocks indicated the terrific nature of our fire. Most of the dead or wounded Boers were carried off—50 of the more severely wounded were found in their hospital a quarter of a mile away—but here and there a dead man proved that here the Transvaal had sent its men down for the first time to meet the oncoming column. The rifles—carried away with even more sedulous care than their dead owners—were of German make, and two at least of the dead were members of Albrecht's foreign legion.

The skill and labour with which the summits of the kopjes had been prepared and fortified were extraordinary. The embrasures and head protections were most cleverly constructed, and the means of retreat—now a matter of no small importance for the Boers—had been as carefully provided for as the ground allowed.

Of the courage of the naval detachment and of the Yorkshire Light Infantry too much cannot be said. Man by man they climbed in the fiery hail and returned it with a steady courage and carelessness of loss that cannot be overpraised. Of the latter regiment, it is enough to say that E Company lost so many that it formed up after the fight under the command of the senior corporal. The wiry Yorkshire stock, confident in its continuous experience of war, and hard with a steady training of months, makes a man into a soldier after the heart of Napoleon, and the silent pride of their motto "Cede nullis" was more than justified as they swung back into camp as steadily as though the loss of 53 of their best men were no great price to pay for work as well done as theirs.

On the other side, there were the same disgraceful scenes of cowardly firing upon the Red Cross that have become the rule and not the exception. Major Beevor, R.A.M.C., was fired upon as he conducted his bearers with laden stretchers

from the field, and in one vile instance the fire came from a Boer ambulance wagon.

At night the troops bivouacked by the railway siding, the camps separated by the torn-up rails and broken and bent telegraph posts and rails, and already the aasvogels, summoned from some invisible quarter, were circling round the second battlefield of the relief.

THE BATTLE AT THE MODDER RIVER.

From Enslin the column pushed on to Klokfontein, a halting place that possessed the double advantages of good water in plenty and of being within easy striking distance of Modder River. Water, of course, is, more than any other, the question that decides the halting-place of the men ; the colour of the water is of no consequence—much of it on the march has been mahogany coloured—but free from enteric germs and abundant it must be. With each battalion goes a water cart that has pre-eminence above any transport except the ammunition carts, and the need of it was never better shown than after the storming of Rooilaagte at Enslin. Men lay down at the bottom of the hill on their stomachs and lapped up diluted red mud, churned and fouled by a hundred mules, and scarcely fit for animals to drink. It is almost impossible to prevent them after the fever of excitement and a hard morning's work in the sun has gripped them. Luckily the ochreous mixture was pure enough, and no harm resulted.

Klokfontein is merely a farm upon a bluff surrounded by four vleis of varying degrees of muddiness. It had been deserted by the owners in the face of the British advance—a symptom of disloyalty that is no unfair test—and the general took up his quarters for the night in a room with a broken-in door, littered with many scattered photographs of the family of De Jongh. Everything of the least value had been removed.

Reports came in of the peaceful state of the neighbourhood ; and the Boers were reported to be clear north of the river preparing for a last resistance at Spytfontein. Half way through the afternoon, however, a Rimington scout returned with a story of a skirmish and a retreat from an apparently empty cottage that proved to be a well-fortified block-house. This threw some doubt upon the rumours of serenity, and as the most careful examination of the spies failed to shake their contrary testimony, the general himself determined to reconnoitre the situation. Accompanied by but one or two of his staff he advanced to within a few hundred yards of the position at Modder River unmolested.

Nothing was more peaceful ; a few Boers might be lurking in ambush and caution was therefore necessary, but the long descending sweep of the veldt towards the tree-lined course of the river—or rivers—betrayed nothing. There were no men to be seen, no earthworks, no unusual number of horses grazing, no banners floating from the tin-roofed white houses near the head of the bridge.

At 4 o'clock on the following morning, an hour before the time appointed, the column broke up the camp and moved forward, the Northamptons acting as advance guard, with the Yorkshire Light Infantry at the head of the main body. It was only a short march of some five or six miles, and before 7 the first shots had been fired by the artillery on the extreme right. The attack was answered at first vigorously, and the general, standing on the edge of a disused quarry, watched the practice of the guns with interest. One shell from the Boers fell among the artillery spare and reserve horses. But there was soon a lack of energy about this long range skirmish that made one contented to leave the spot and make one's way towards the Modder River Bridge, which was reported to be damaged by the Boers in a curious and effective manner—as indeed it is—firmly believing that the engagement could last but a few minutes longer. Leading my pony behind the second line of the Scots Guards, I was preparing to unstrap a camera from the saddle to take a photograph of the destruction when suddenly, without warning of any kind whatever, there burst out the most appalling fusillade from the immediate front. The Mauser bullets swept the field in thousands ; half the leading company fell at once ; the Maxim gun remained with its crew of men fallen round it, not one escaping. Every man at once threw himself on the ground except a few who took cover on the river bank on the right flank. For a moment nothing could be done, and the silky whistling of the Mauser bullet continued in unabated vigour sweeping the veldt for some 1,800 yards, and even wounding some of the staff, who must have been at least 2,500 yards from the firing line. Then an attempt, led by Captain Lowther, to collect a flanking force and join Colonel Paget and General Colvile was made in the cover afforded by the willows and the sandhills of the river bank.

This manœuvre was, however, prevented by a well-directed enfilade, and it was felt that nothing could be done on the right flank until the guns had cleared the situation. These, which had been concentrated on the right, quickly came into action, and for the remainder of the day poured a continuous fire of shrapnel into the shelter trenches and embrasures of the Boers.

But so well had the fortifications been carried out that it was long before the rifle fire of the enemy was considerably affected, and even until sunset it was held impossible to risk the renewed disaster that must have followed any exposure whatever, and for the whole of the day the Guards Brigade lay on the open veldt in a heat that was actually 110deg. in the shade at midday. Meanwhile the left flank had not been idle, and after the general had personally led them to the sum-

mit of a slight rise that commanded the only possible means of crossing the river—the dam that had been built to turn the Modder River into an ornamental water for the picnics of the Kimberley excursionists—they moved in echelon towards the edge of the river bank on the enemy's extreme left.

That it could even be attempted to cross the river sliding sideways through the rush of water over the paddles along a rickety iron bar, one by one, clinging to the short supports in full view of the opposite shore, was an act of reckless heroism against which even the wary Cronje had not provided. This, however, is what was actually done, and it would be difficult to find a parallel for the stubborn pluck of the men who accompanied Colonel Barter across the 300 yards of dam and weir. One by one some 400 of them crossed. Then a detachment of the Royal Engineers, showing how well they could take their part in the forefront of the fighting line, followed them, after that some more of the Yorkshire Light Infantry. Little by little a force was collected which cleared several of the nearest houses on the right and effected an occupation of an irrigation patch from which they were never dislodged. Shortly before this Colonel Northcott, the general's *alter ego* and right hand, had been mortally wounded while riding away from the general's immediate neighbourhood on the latter's horse. To this is probably due the fact that Lord Methuen did not himself observe that the crossing had been effected, and was only informed of it after he had given an order for the left flank to retire to a position less swept by the iron hail that never ceased from the other bank of the river.

This, however, was fortunately not carried into execution, and there came almost immediately a lull in the firing. This curious suspense, in each case followed by redoubled activity, was repeated twice later in the day, and probably indicated physical weariness as much as anything else on the part of the enemy. To fight for thirteen hours is an ordeal that in any kind of warfare would be a terrible strain ; but, out on the treeless, shadeless veldt with the thermometer at the degree above mentioned, the exhaustion suffered by our men was so great that in hundreds of cases men and officers alike slept as they lay in the scrub, careless of the shell and rifle fire that surged over them. To provide them with food was impossible, to bring a water-cart on to the field—as the Coldstream Guards found by bitter experience—was only tempting men to expose themselves to death, rushing for the water at all hazards, and leaving the cover, such as it was, afforded by the nine or ten inch growth of mimosa scrub.

Early in the afternoon the general was shot through the thigh, and for some time the two brigades, in the absence of orders, were compelled to act independently of each other, the only communication being a warning to the 9th Brigade not to fire upon the first, of which there was some danger. General Colvile, whose headquarters were in the laager on the right almost touching the river, then assumed command in the field, and a question arose as to the course to be pursued after the fall of dusk. At first the intention was to rush and bayonet the Boers in their trenches under cover of night, but this course was finally abandoned upon receipt of news that half the 9th Brigade were already across the river and safely intrenched. The plan adopted late in the evening was that the 1st Brigade, leaving only one battalion of Coldstream Guards on the right, should make their way across protected by the force already on the northern bank. This, however, was found to be unnecessary when morning came, as the Boers had evacuated the town bag and baggage, and retired to a position halfway between Modder River and Spytfontein.

Such is the slightest possible sketch of the battle. Of individual phases of the fight and the hundred and one incidents of interest that made up the day-long drama it is impossible to speak at length now. The magnificent manner in which the Boers had realized and augmented the strength of the position, the success with which they had kept their works and disposition secret until the crucial moment, the feint on the extreme right by which they drew off the entire artillery strength of our force from their main position, and the astonishing accuracy of their picked shots at the longest ranges should all be remembered to the credit of their generals. But it was in the *matériel* which formed the commandos that they failed. They could not do more than they actually did with the men under their command. Already jealousies had sprung up between the generals, the men accused each other of cowardice, and the threat of physical force had, if rumours were true, to be held over them more than once.

On our side the fighting stuff that confronted the Boers was beyond question. In any position, even the most impossible, the prestige of the division stood it in good stead, and retreat it would not.

It is easy to be wise after the event, and the possibility of outflanking by a second drift lower than the Modder dam, the exposed nature of many of their gun positions, the chance offered us of securing their guns at nightfall when they retreated, only returning at 2 o'clock to retrieve them, all these criticisms are easy to make now, but not one of them was at any time within the knowledge of the Staff, who had had hitherto no reason to suspect the information they had received.

The cardinal surprise of all lay in the presence of the enemy at all, and it should be remembered that, though no sign or word of their intention to defend the bridge had reached General Methuen, the actual advance upon the bridge-head was made with the same caution that would have been

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s, 3 1/16 3	Nat. Discount, 10⅞
, 20 ¼	N. Zealand Loan, Pr. Ln., 92
Finance, 100¾ x.d.	Peruvian Corp., Deb., 46¼ 7 6½
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	Trustees, Exors., Deb., 107
k Invest., Pref., 8¾	U. S. Deb. Corp., Deb., 109

FINANCIAL—TRUSTS.

st., Pref., 80½ 80	International, Pref., 73
vest., Cum. Pref.,	†Do., Def., 9
	Mexican Central, A Stk., 89¾
avy, Pref., 89⅝ ½	Do., A Deb., 90½ 90 ¼
	Do., B Deb., 62¼ ½ 3 2
st., Pref., 93	Stock Conversion, L. and N.-W., 1st Pref., 110
, Deb., 107½	

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ight, 44	Gas Light, 105 6 5¾ ½ ¼
	Imp. Continental, 214½ 15½ 14¾
n, 10⅝	River Plate Gas, 10 15/16 11
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41	

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nion, 40	Ocean Accident, 24⅝

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	Ooregum, 3⅝
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	St. John del Rey, 1 1/16
rry, 4⅛	†Wassau, 1½

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al, 200 5 3⅛	

WATER.

	Southwark and Vauxhall, 203
.d.	

attention to this satisfactory feature. In the accounts submitted at the last meeting the total New Zealand assets stood at £8,492, but during the year £24,659 had been realized by sales and repayments of a portion of them, thereby carrying a realized surplus of £16,167 to reserve, while a considerable amount of property and mortgages still remained on their hands. To increase the value of assets in a balance-sheet by a revaluation was admittedly a bad course, save in exceptional circumstances, but the circumstances in their case were very exceptional; and in view of the whole of the facts—many of the shareholders also desiring a revaluation—the directors asked the attorneys in New Zealand to make a careful valuation, and the board decided to place the assets in the balance-sheet at a substantial figure. The attorneys valued them at £44,335, but the directors thought it advisable to deduct 20 per cent. from this, and they therefore placed the New Zealand assets in the balance-sheet at £35,468. They deducted the 20 per cent., not because they at all doubted the attorneys' valuation, but because the latter had been asked to make it in view of the present condition of affairs in New Zealand, and the directors had felt that it was their duty to make some provision for matters taking a turn for the worse. As they had always told the shareholders that the London investments were worth more than they stood at in the balance-sheet, it might be thought that a similar course should be taken with respect to them, but the circumstances were totally different. In the first place, although there was a margin, it was comparatively small; and the London investments formed a part of the machinery necessary for carrying on the active portion of the company's business—the River Plate business. The ordinary arguments against increasing the valuation therefore applied in full force. The principal item in the balance-sheet was the River Plate mortgages, which stood at £473,649. Since the last general meeting he had been to Buenos Ayres. He had seen every property in that city on which the company had advanced money, and he had also seen the deeds relating to all their loans. He had done his utmost to obtain information from every quarter, and to the best of his belief their mortgages in the River Plate were thoroughly worth the figures at which they stood in the balance-sheet. The River Plate properties on their hands were unquestionably not overvalued at £11,844. To the best of his belief their assets were thoroughly good, and their reserve was therefore a true and solid one. They must not, however, rest contented with their reserve even at £125,000, but, if they wished the company to progress satisfactorily, they must be prepared to transfer every year a fair sum out of the profits to the reserve. He most strongly recommended that two-fifths or, at the very lowest, one-third of the profits should be added to the reserve for a considerable time. On these lines the proposed alteration in the capital which he was about to submit to them did not admit of increasing the nominal amount of the dividend at the present moment, because it involved a larger distribution among the shareholders in another way. Three years ago he informed them that the question had forced itself upon the directors whether they ought to remain satisfied with a liability of £4 a share hanging over their heads. At the date of the accounts the share capital paid up was £177,685, and their current debentures were £313,225. It was proposed to increase the capital and to issue 122,315 new £1 shares, to be fully paid up, thereby raising the paid-up capital to £300,000. If the investments remained at the present figure, the £122,315 would be employed in the repayment of debentures, and the current debentures would be reduced to £200,000. If the investments were increased, the directors' present idea was that two-thirds of the increment should be provided by preference shares and one-third by additional debentures. All the debentures of the company to be issued in

employed had all the facts been known.

The destruction caused by our shell fire was awful. There is not a house near Modder River that on the day of battle was capable of sheltering riflemen that is not ploughed through and through with shrapnel. The room in which I write at the Crown and Royal Hotel, now the General's head-quarters, has had a shell in through the roof and out through the jamb of the doorway, burying itself harmlessly in the roots of a yucca ten yards away. The chapel on the northern bank, used by the Boers as an ammunition store, is torn and riddled with shell fire. The most exposed house in the centre of the enemy's line is a mass of charred and twisted iron and woodwork, the adobe walls crumbling to the touch. One of our batteries alone fired 1,500 shells throughout the day, and the hundreds of thousands of cartridges lying in the two-mile stretch of rifle pits on the south bank of the river testify to the fearful fire that all day long assailed our men whenever a helmet or a shoulder could be seen.

The 1lb. Maxim gun was the most effective weapon used by the Boers. The five or six shots fired in one second while the gun was traversed had more moral effect than the steady discharge of shrapnel from the ordinary 15-pounder at half-minute intervals. One man not far from me had both thighs blown off as he sat by one of these little shells landing on the ground between them, but there is no question that the moral effect was as a rule greater than the practical results. No gun was more cordially disliked by our men than this new weapon that was usually christened "bong-bong-bong" upon an onomatopœic principle.

The courage of the ammunition bearers in traversing the field of fire twice or three times during the hottest fire; the steady pluck of the Argyll and Sutherland men in the tightest places; Private Anderson, Scots Guards, distinguished by his repeated gallantry in carrying in the wounded from the hottest part of the fire-zone; Lieutenant Fox, K.O.Y.L.I., wounded while storming a house on the northern side of the river; and a hundred other examples that one cannot enumerate of quiet pluck on one of the most disconnected battlefields of modern times—all call for mention; but on others who were perhaps in the more immediate neighbourhood this duty must devolve. Still the excitement of the longest and probably the most important British battle of modern times is hanging round us, and it will only be when the noise and dust of this campaign has died away that the truest perspective of the great fight at Modder River will be presented.

Now, as I write, the lazy, winding river, broad as the Thames at Wallingford, fringed like that with a rich network of trees, lies under the afternoon sky clouded with just the wet atmosphere that Constable loved, and it seems difficult to believe that within the last few days it had been bridged for a long summer day by a never-ending horizontal rain of shot and shell and is the site of one of the brightest triumphs of our arms.

MODDER RIVER AFTER THE BATTLE.

Most people who have stayed at Kimberley know of Modder River as a recreation ground, only thinking of it, in fact, much as London regards Maidenhead. The river has been dammed up a mile or so below the railway bridge, and the lagoon thus formed is dotted with small islets fringed and covered with willows, poplars, and acacias. The hotels here indicate clearly enough the *raison d'être* of the place. There are four or five all conveniently near the water with quadrangular gardens where yuccas and flowering mimosa hedged in with cactus and a few sickly pines take the place of the shrubs and creepers of an English tea-garden. And with this all the luxuries that can accompany corrugated iron were once to be had. Never has it been anything but a frivolous little patch in the heart of the veldt. The punishment for its giddiness has been sudden and extraordinary. The place is deserted, the walls and roofs perforated like a colander, the water, churned and befouled by 10,000 animals, rolls over and over the dead that were hurriedly thrown into its eddying hollows with a weight attached that has in many cases proved insufficient. The bridge itself lies on its ruined piers a twisted length of scrap-iron, and the dead horses fill every nook in the riverside woods.

The chapel, with its little wooden cross near the river, stood in the thick of the fight, and now lies a crumbling mass of adobe walls, with its shattered earthen altar and the remains of its seats. There is no square rood within this extinct paradise that does not bear witness to the fearful effect of modern weapons, and the busy labour that is now working upon alternative bridges some 50 yards above and below the existing wreck unearths each minute more and more of our projectiles.

The shelter trenches, running for a mile and more on either side of the bridge, are heaped with empty cartridge cases, and one's horse continually picks his way besides the empty case of a 15-pr. shell. Some way up the slope leading to the bridge the division is encamped, resting now for the first time since leaving Orange River. The rapid change of scene has perhaps done as much as the inveterate cheerfulness of the troops to efface the remembrance of the price we have had to pay for our success. Now Kimberley corresponds nightly by its searchlight, and we only await the arrival of reinforcements to continue, and, we trust, complete the task. The river is full of bathers, and the night time is as full of cheerful noises as on the last evening of our stay at Orange River. Except for the railway work in the daytime and the strong picketing that is necessary every night,

Tommy Atkins has his time to himself and is enjoying himself in his own way, which never varies, whether he is quartered at Inverness or Wynberg—"*Cœlum non animum.*" The proverb was never truer than of the British soldier.

As I write in the courtyard garden of the Crown and Royal Hotel, with a shell-shattered door jamb in front of me and a shell-hole in the roof above, the eccentricities of the chance that decides the battlefields of the world are brought home indeed.

For the moment the never-ceasing smell of iodoform is the sole reminder of the grim struggle on Tuesday, but I have only to go a few yards in any direction to be confronted with the truth. The telegraph poles are torn down and the wires lying in twisted lengths, the rails and sleepers are thrown like gigantic sistva on the veldt, and always on the horizon the tangled network of girders that once was the railway bridge stands up as a continual memorial of the struggle, and at night the shifting searchlights answering each other carry on to its destination the hopes of the expedition.

After the battles are over, the ensuing peace broods over the camp more heavily than ever. Perhaps in the previous case the exhaustion inevitable after a fasting march, fight, and sleep of 24 hours makes the silence more noticeable than before. A few British subjects returning to their homes, to find them looted by the Boers or shelled by their own side, move softly along the tracks between the deserted houses and exchange their miserable experiences; a few Boers, probably having risked their lives in doing so, have broken away from their camp and surrendered themselves, and now stand under guard in the heat of the sun waiting their turn for examination, while on the wall behind them the peacock of the hotel spreads his tail, shaking his plumes in the sun. We move on in a few days, and the enemy is waiting for us in a position stronger perhaps than his earlier strongholds, but for the moment we can sit under the shadow of trees and rest. Nothing in the world is so sure to make of a man a hedonist as the anxiety, danger, and sleep of a forced expedition. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we may die," is all the philosophy that survives the strain, and nothing would have more surprised many of those who were taking part in it more than to have been told a month ago of the phlegmatic calm with which they would now find themselves in the hottest corner.

The sound of the passing projectile has ceased to be even interesting, the silky breath of the Mauser bullet, or the burr of the Martini-Henry alternating with the siren-like drone of the ricochet, all are familiar. The only exception that should be made is that of the 1-pound Vickers-Maxim gun. "Bong-bong" is wholesomely respected by every one, and it has been a matter for the most serious regret that this interesting weapon has not been put out of action.

The actual damage caused by it, though it is responsible for several losses, is probably not so great as that caused by an ordinary Maxim, but the moral effect has been undoubtedly greater, especially as its mobility succeeded throughout the day in defying the aim of our gunners.

It was not captured, however, and one of our first experiences on Saturday will probably be the five or six fold discharge of this weapon, the patent of which was in 1892 offered to and declined by our Government.

The sun is getting low, and one bathes in the river and criticizes the superhuman efforts of the engineers about this time. Perhaps one may capture a swallow-tail butterfly on the way down, they are common enough here. *Che sarà, sarà.*

SOME MILITARY LESSONS OF THE ADVANCE.

DECEMBER 8.

Before considering any of the lessons that may even thus early be drawn, however hastily, from the experiences of General Methuen's relief column, it is necessary to sketch the position before any advance was made. Kimberley and Mafeking closely invested, the rest of British territory north of the Orange River proclaimed the territory of the insurgent Republics, the Cape Dutch keenly watching for our first reverse to openly join the enemy, and, above all, our own anxious outlook for the never-coming transports, cooped up as we were in a few, a very few, frontier camps—all these considerations made up a picture that is still lively enough to make the contrast vivid. Now Mafeking is free, and Kimberley can cheerfully await the near moment of deliverance, while the steady advance of the troops, always in the worse position when the hour of battle came, yet steadily victorious and insistent, has effected a wonderful change in the loyalty of the local farmers. The division itself has crossed swords with the Boers so often that it knows its strength, and has, to use Kipling's expression, "found itself."

The Boers, though their losses may not have greatly exceeded our own, have been consistently expelled from every position they have taken up, and the facts cannot be concealed even in their Press. No excuse can be made by them. Their positions have been well chosen, well intrenched, well defended by artillery, but their first experience has been enough to make them desert on the sly as opportunity offers, and, if reports be true, a steady stream of fugitives passed north from and after 3 o'clock on the afternoon of the Modder River battle.

That engagement gains in importance as the days pass. There was scarcely an element wanting to make it a serious test of modern warfare. In arms, ammunition, tactics on either side the latest theories were put into practice; and if it be urged that the Boers' superior numbers were more than neutralized by their want of drill, it should be remembered that the river was one of their most important weapons, and that many of the pages must now be torn from the most up-to-date of drill-books.

The limit of effective fire has now been reached —that is, no improvement in the material weapon is possible beyond the point at which the soldier can with reasonable certainty hit or check what he can see. Previously the uniform of the soldier extended enormously the vision of his enemy, while the range of his enemy's rifle fell considerably short of that limit; now the greater invisibility of the uniform, added to the enormous range of the rifle, has at last brought it about that the range of the eye and not of the rifle is the limit of safety, and it is beyond question that this new rule must be accepted by military text-books, as proved by the engagements of the expedition. Other theories as to the zone of effective fire are untenable. The greater danger appears to be in some extent at the greater distance. There has hardly been a score of men hit during the war at any range under 300 yards, though, of course, this may be to some extent due to the fact that there is always dead ground when storming a kopje. The moral effect of a charge appears to be as great as ever, and the importance of artillery grows with each encounter. Over 1,100 rounds were fired by the 75th Battery during the battle, and there is hardly a yard in the defending line that was not searched by the shrapnel. What the effect of lyddite will be when used against civilized troops will be an interesting question when the column resumes its march; all indications seem to point to its being one of the greatest safeguards of our troops that have been devised.

A difficulty was early found in the supply of ammunition. The reserves cannot, under the new system of warfare, approach the firing line, and the ammunition bearers run a risk that is out of all proportion to that run by the man actually in the fighting line. Of course this affords an opportunity for courageous action, of which advantage was fully taken on Tuesday; but this is hardly a justification of military ordinances, and means will have to be taken to supply troops in the open with ammunition without running the dangers of loss of delivery that were certainly only too obvious at Modder River.

Another matter that can be dismissed as of no importance when fighting a worthier foe is the impossibility of getting medical assistance to the wounded. It is a trite story now, but in shame it never loses, and the long red list of stretcher bearers shot down at their work is only one of the many similar deeds that stain this war.

That any regiment will again have to spend the hottest of tropical days lying in the scrub exposed to the sun is not perhaps likely; but the passive occupation of a zone from which night work can be attempted, however much under fire it may be, will inevitably become a factor in future warfare. In this connexion it is difficult to estimate the lives saved, because an order was issued before the fight that overcoats—a most obvious target in the midst of the ten-inch scrub that constituted the only possible cover—were not to be carried. The loss of them was of course keenly felt at night, which happened to be bitterly cold, but there can be no doubt that their absence rendered tenable a position that otherwise must have been evacuated.

From the popular point of view a forced march through the enemy's country is always attractive, but it is often forgotten that a forced march entails an amount of physical discomfort and extra work that in extreme cases may counterbalance the value of a blow quickly struck.

It is impossible, to take only one obvious matter, to be as surely possessed of information full and accurate of the position held by the enemy as when the march is less rapid and when a thorough investigation of both the country ahead and the reliability of informers is possible.

There is no doubt that a serious and a successful attempt has been made on more than one occasion on the present expedition to mislead the advancing column. On two occasions the rumour that the enemy's position had been evacuated gained considerable credence; and, though no precaution was omitted, the moral effect of finding the enemy fully intrenched in a spot from which it was commonly understood among the troops that the enemy had retreated was great.

On the occasion of the Jameson raid this false information device, it will be remembered, was used with fatal effect, and it is worth noting that on two occasions it has been attempted during the present march.

The first warning of the presence of the enemy has invariably been a sharp artillery fire from the extreme right or left of the enemy's front. At Belmont this duel was fought on the previous day, but there can be no doubt that on this occasion the hand of the Boers was forced by our afternoon march.

This duel is conducted with considerable skill by the enemy. It is difficult to say at what point the fire from our batteries has actually succeeded in silencing their guns, and more than once a well-placed shell has done considerable damage after the gun has been silent for some time.

The fire having been slackened for some time, the Boers trust to a certain carelessness in maintaining distance among our men, and pour from the least expected spot a storm of bullets at about 500 yards range. At Graspan a minor incident of the fight was the fusillade that greeted the

9th Lancers and Rimington's Horse, who had carelessly advanced near an isolated kopje quite two miles and a half from the artillery position. This kopje was disregarded during the subsequent engagement, and beyond an occasional sniping shot at 2,000 yards gave no further trouble, though an advance from it under cover of a steep slope in the veldt to the immediate north would probably have prevented or delayed the successful storming of the kopje afterwards taken by the Naval Brigade and the Yorkshire Light Infantry.

No attempt has been made by the Boers to attack us in the open, and the transport and working of the guns that were expected to compel them to take up position on open ground have been surprisingly well managed.

If it is necessary to draw attention to another habit of the Boers—that of directing their fire against the officers—it is only to restate the terrible loss of life among the officers of the Naval Brigade, who had not adopted the rifle like their military comrades.

It will be impossible in any future war for the officers to retain their swords, and it will be worth while for the War Office to construct some light carbine that may be carried by them instead of the weighty rifle served out to the men. To have no rifle, or to be mounted, has throughout been to court a systematic fire at whatever range; and it is a question for war correspondents to consider whether, for such of them as prefer to see the fight from the firing line, it is not necessary to carry such a carbine. There can be little doubt that Mr. Knight was singled out among those who responded to the white flag at Belmont because he held no rifle, and there cannot be one among them who has not realized the impossibility of taking a horse into the fight at all.

But with all this, which shows clearly enough that the eyesight of the Boer is not dimmed, it must be recorded that the slight stunted mimosa scrub of the veldt, some 10in. or 12in. in height, has been found amply sufficient cover to conceal entirely a division of some 8,000 men. Of firing there was none until a movement—the slightest was enough—had been made. In a moment, whatever the range, the hail of bullets began, and it is doubtful whether it was not a mistake of some of the senior officers to stand up and walk in front of their men, however courageous such an action undoubtedly was. Anything served to give the Boers the range. A flock of goats, some 30 in number, strolled slowly across between the two forces early in the afternoon, and was utilized in the most skilful way by the Boers to find the exact distance.

Up to the 700 yards range a complete series of whitened stones had been constructed by them, and no precaution had been omitted to give every possible advantage to those of the Boers who were sharpshooters. Ammunition, though expended with the utmost freedom, was never wasted by them, and their control over the firing line was astonishingly good.

Enough has been said to draw attention to a few of the deductions to be drawn from, and the difficulties of, this advance, which may fairly be said to have been as greatly creditable to British arms as many in which the objective and the enemy's loss have been greater. It is yet too early to apportion to each arm and each section of our force the honour that they may individually claim. It has, perhaps, never been the custom of the English race to weigh over-much the individual golden deeds of her soldiery, satisfied perhaps that the chance which one had the good fortune to meet with would have been as well and successfully seized by any other, and probably there will never be properly written the thousand and one acts of self-sacrifice and pluck that, despite all modern weapons, still found their opportunity on the battlefields of this expedition.

4th January 1900.

THE RAILWAY COMPANIES OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

MODDER RIVER, DEC. 8.

The fact that the railway must in the future necessarily be the principal method of transport in time of war between civilized States, coupled with the consideration that the present occasion is actually the first on which a large and complicated system is affected, suggests some inquiry into the capacity of the existing Railway Staff of Engineers to deal with the questions now confronting them.

At the present moment four large ports and at least five points of entrance upon the frontier are available, but the total severance of the Cape lines from the smaller Natal system and, in the more important section, the temporary abandonment of any intention to use the Naauwpoort-Springfontein branch confine our attention to the work that is now being pressed forward upon the great trunk line running north-east and north from Cape Town to Mafeking. For the moment the network of cross-country lines may be disregarded.

Three or four points suggest themselves at once. The first and incomparably the most important is the enormous length of the line of communication. In the history of warfare no

expedition has ever before attempted to maintain a line of communication a thousand miles in length from its base. The difficulties surrounding this endeavour are obvious—the drain of troops required to protect, however scantily, this enormous road, and the ease with which a small body of the enemy can elude observation and do harm in an hour that it may take half a week to repair, the slowness with which even railway material can be concentrated upon a defective section, and the enormous consumption of coal and water in merely bringing to the scene of action engines and plant that may themselves require a still greater consumption to make them workable. All these considerations are obvious ; the present struggle possesses features that single out the existing questions as singular. The inability to regard any section of the line as otherwise than in the enemy's country is a totally new feature, and one of which we have had as yet little experience. As a rule the frontier line between nations at war has hitherto proved a hard and fast line, on either side of which the sympathies were at least known ; here ordinary precautions, in view of the impossibility of trusting even our own fellow-subjects, have been tempered by a wish to avoid mortifying a considerable proportion of loyal burghers by the exhibition of a single unnecessary precaution. Other matters of immediate importance are suggested by the facts that the line is throughout single and the sidings quite insufficient to cope with a sudden rush of work ; that the gradients are practically those of the veldt, and the curves often of a radius unknown in Europe ; and that the chief work of the Engineers comes necessarily at a time when the precedence of troop trains cannot be questioned, whatever the delay to other valuable transport.

It will be seen that the R.E. Railway Corps has in the present case a work of unusual difficulty ; the value of its work is best shown by the consideration that it is at the same time absolutely indispensable.

Without a railway at our back it would be the merest insanity to attack any civilized foe 100 miles from our base. However great the number of transport animals, they will consume their own burden of forage in seven to nine days. Here it is necessary to say that the main duty of any railway is to carry supplies, not troops. Apart from the fact that a train passing through a hostile country presents to the enemy exactly the easiest and by far the most effective target, the rule is admitted that for bodies of men over 10,000 travelling over 20 miles it is actually quicker to make the journey on foot ;, and, on the other hand, the besieged garrison of Paris believed that the task of supplying the 200,000 of the investing force with food by rail would be impossible—a task that was, however, easily accomplished by 14 trains daily. Again, whatever the facts for other countries, the waterless and forageless Karroo would in any case present an insuperable barrier in the present campaign.

It will be seen that a body of expert men is necessary to get out of the existing materials the utmost amount of work, and the care with which this body has been formed is not the least remarkable part of the work of the railway corps. Long before war was inevitable British subjects acquainted with every section of the railway in the two Republics were secured for the engineers ; of these some were engine-drivers, some platelayers, some stationmasters, some signallers, but all were thoroughly at home on their own stretch of line ; the possibilities of watering, of making sidings, of wrecking culverts, of commanding the line from neighbouring kopjes—all information was collected and organized. It must not be thought, however, that the Boers on their side used no diplomacy. The main aim of our enemy was to secure as many trucks within their frontiers as possible on the outbreak of war, and a pretty little game of confidences was played between the Cape Government Railway and the Netherlands Railway during the last month before the war, the motto of each being "a truck for a truck." Refrigerator vans, in which the Republic was especially deficient, were the particularly coveted objects, and a story that is told of a very distinguished Cape official, Bondsman and Minister, reflects as little credit upon his loyalty as the cartridge incident does upon that of Schreiner. As a matter of fact the engines, trucks, and rolling stock generally that were acquired from us on October 12 were far greater than those commandeered by us, but the absence of locomotives on the Great Western line made the possession of the actual permanent way north of Orange River of no great value to the Boers.

Culverts have been destroyed by them—and by ourselves in two instances on the Naauwpoort-Colesberg line—in great quantities. The climate of the country, which necessitates provision for sudden torrential rains and the consequent outflow from almost each kloof or low ground crossed by the railway, is responsible for the unusual quantities of culverts on these lines, with the result that for ease of disablement there have been, and can be, few home railway systems able to test to any extent the engineering capabilities of the military railway sections in this country.

Created directly to cope with such difficulties are two companies of the R.E., the 8th and the 10th, whose existence has been at times severely criticized as a useless extravagance, but is now more than sufficiently justified ; indeed, their absence would have been fatal to the immediate success of the expedition.

There are two lines in England which are under the immediate control of military authorities. One, the Upnor-Chattenden Military Railway, the other, the 40 or 50 miles of rails that intersect the Government arsenals and dockyards at Woolwich.

Of these the latter, though nominally of greater extent, is practically useless as a means of training, as there is wanting almost every difficulty that will confront the engineer on active service. There is no through traffic, no length of run whereby to test engine-drivers, no bridges, no gradients, and, above all, no signalling.

The former line, commonly known as the U.C.M.R., possesses all these, and, though often criticized, has supplied in the present war the 8th Company R.E., upon whom the first responsibilities have devolved, and who have personally and with the assistance, directed by themselves, of the 31st and 11th Companies R.E. carried out most of the severe work already done on the Kimberley line. The 8th Company has also hitherto garrisoned the armoured train, but it is a matter for discussion whether this should strictly fall within their sphere of work.

So far from the present system proving itself unnecessary, it is felt by every one out here that an immediate increase of the special railway companies should be made. Civilians in time of war, whatever their capabilities, are subject to a stubborn unwillingness to run into the dangerous district, however remote the chances of being hurt, and for this, if for no other reason, the existence of a trained body of men, otherwise drilled and qualified as Regulars, who can at the same time undertake technical duties in connexion with the railway, is called for.

No small part of the 8th Company has already seen active service in Egypt, but it need hardly be pointed out that the conditions prevailing there were child's-play compared with the complex system of railway communication in South Africa.

The work done by the C.G.R. platelayers deserves recognition. Besides their daily work they patrolled the line nightly, and the integrity of the line north and east of De Aar is due in no small measure to their watchfulness.

It may perhaps be suggested that the two totally distinct functions of repairing the line and organizing the traffic should not be entrusted to the same body of men. Decentralization in this matter would be of immense benefit; the pressure has been so great in the present instance that the C.G.R. has been compelled, somewhat prematurely, to take over the management of each section of the railway as it has been repaired and pronounced safe by the military authorities, but their experience of the press of traffic caused by war and the imperative necessity of transmitting certain special trains through is almost *nil*.

Other difficulties found by the railway corps have been due to the conditions of the railway in a state of peace. Coal has been stored at points which were fixed by the presumption of a straight run through, and now that the time occupied by a train in passing from Orange River to Modder River is sometimes 30 hours, instead of two or three, the coal and water reserves are wholly inadequate. In fact, between De Aar and Kimberley—a run of seven hours—there had not been up to the time of the war any coaling facilities whatever. Sidings, too, are now needed to an extent hitherto unexpected. On a single line the passing of trains is always a matter of difficulty, but in the present case doubly so, as in the present congestion a run of four or five miles has often to be made before any chance of crossing or allowing another train to cross is offered. Extra sidings and platforms at Stellenbosch, De Aar, Naauwpoort, and Orange River have been no small part of the work of the Engineers.

The incessant labour consequent upon all these demands upon the railway companies can be imagined, and to them we must add the wilful damage to the permanent way caused by the Boers. At the present moment, a few hundred yards away from this place, the Modder River bridge hangs on its crumbling piers a chain of scrap iron, and the temporary railway bridge to the east and the pontoon bridge to the west are employing over 2,000 men working night and day.

The work has to be done and will be done, but so little attention is usually directed to the non-combatant sphere of a campaign that one is justified in reminding many at home that nowadays the railway has taken the place of both the famous vehicles upon which Soult is reported to have said that an army travelled, "belly and boots." When much that has resulted from the present war has been forgotten it may be hoped that in the matters of supplies and transport the work of Major W. R. Stewart and his men will be remembered as a full justification of the timid attempt in England to provide in time of war a capable corps of military railroad engineers.

8th January 1900.

THE BATTLE OF MAGERSFONTEIN.

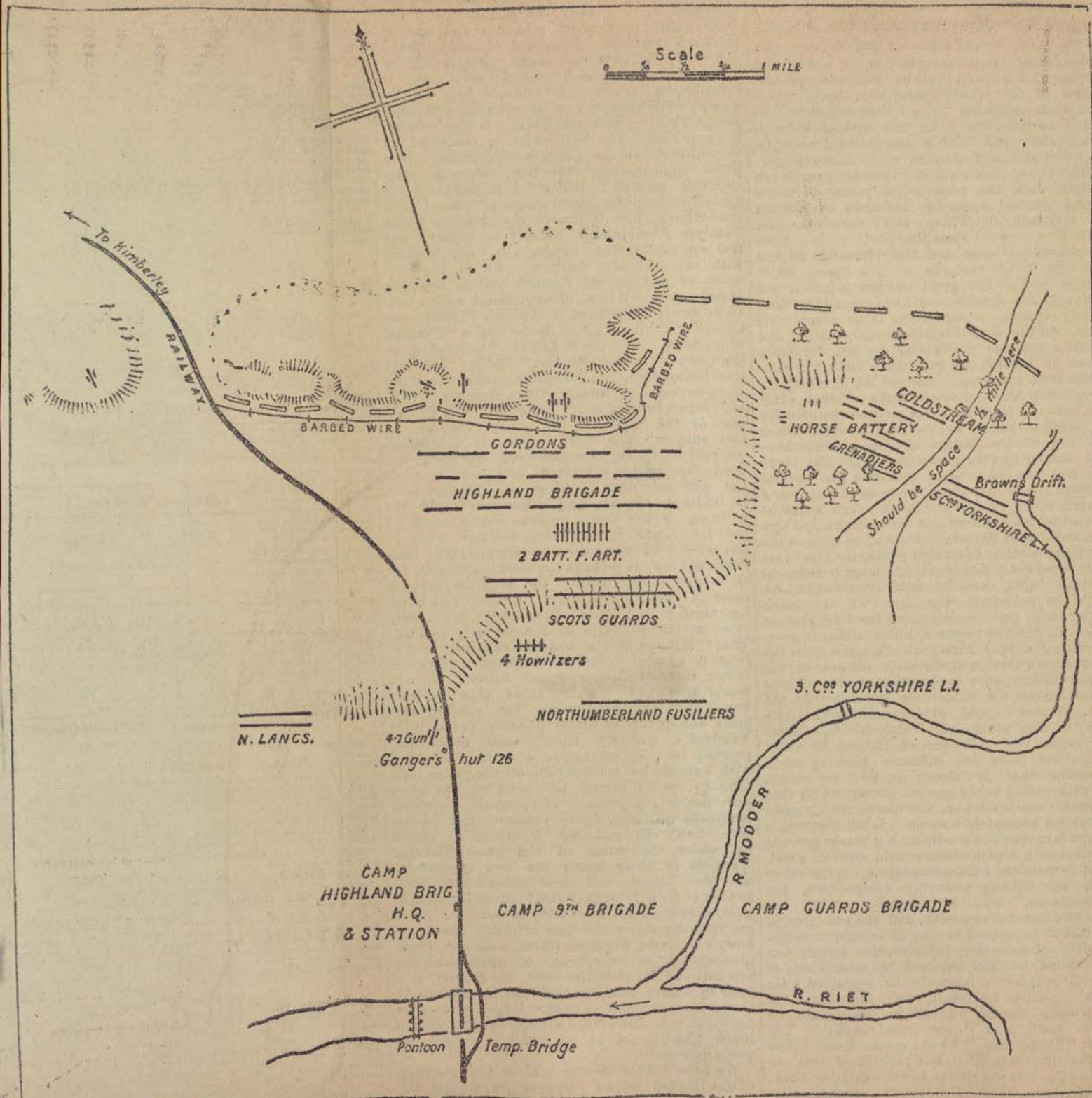
(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

MODDER RIVER, DEC. 14.

Perhaps I had hardly expected to write this letter from the same place as the last, but the issue of the battle at Magersfontein last Monday has postponed the actual relief of the diamond city for some days, perhaps weeks. Before I attempt any comment upon it the actual sequence of events in the engagement must be remembered. During a halt of 12 days at Modder River, during which our forces were reinforced by the Highland Brigade, one howitzer battery, one horse battery, the 12th Lancers, a balloon section, and a 4·7 naval gun from her Majesty's ship Doris—promptly christened "Joe Chamberlain" by the entire division—the work done by the

THE BATTLE OF MAGERSFONTEIN.

The following rough sketch has been sent us by our Special Correspondent to elucidate the details of the fight :—



Royal Engineers in throwing across the Modder a temporary railway bridge and a pontoon bridge, each a fine piece of engineering completed within seven days from the battle, had made the advance of the reinforcements possible. In the former case the old gradients from the level of the existing railway to the level of the river have not been used, a new cutting being made 50 yards up stream on either side of the river, and the rails carried across on cairns and sleepers, where they will remain until the floods wipe them away. Even then the cuttings will still represent this curious substitute for the steel bridge now daily falling into a worse state of twisted uselessness and danger.

On Sunday afternoon warning was sent round to the troops to hold themselves in readiness for an advance, and the 30 oxen that draw the 4·7 gun plunged and swerved away to an eminence a mile from the station, marked by a platelayer's hut, from which point the whole of the enemy's centre, some three and a half miles distant, was within easy range. The howitzers moved out and the field and horse batteries, convoyed by the Highland Brigade, took up positions about 2,800 yards from the kopjes that had been surveyed for days beforehand and known to be heavily intrenched. Fire was opened about half-past 4, and until nightfall a steady and, as was afterwards found, a most effective, bombardment was kept up.

The Boers themselves have admitted that their losses were far heavier from shell-fire on Sunday than on the following day, giving as the reason that the effect of lyddite acting upon the ironstone rock had been infinitely more widely spread than when, on Monday, aim was particularly directed upon the trenches constructed some hundred yards from the foot of the kopjes.

Cronje is credited, with perhaps some truth, with having purposely dug his outworks at some distance from the safer ground of the kopjes themselves in order to prevent a certain unwilling part of his army from bolting back when our fire became too hot. Certainly it was impossible for any Boer to retreat without being instantly shot, and, heavily mauled as they were, the trenches were throughout manned without reinforcements by the men who filled them in the morning. Another reason that will occur as likely to prompt the device is the well-known attraction that any elevated object has for a gunner. It is more difficult to drop ten shells a hundred yards short of a conspicuous object than to send 30 into it.

There was little fire in answer, and no lights appeared on the crests of the hills during the evening.

From the extreme left of the position it was possible to see small bodies of Boers watching this artillery duel from a kopje in safety until a shell from the heavy gun sent them cantering towards Douglas, a place that may give us some trouble yet. The belief that the trenches were but thinly occupied was by no means held on the left flank, and General Pole-Carew fully recognized the seriousness of any attempt to storm the fortifications which, as usual, were designed with extraordinary skill by Albrecht, the German expert.

Since the fight took place the intrenchments have been greatly strengthened, and it is doubtful whether the loss of life that must be suffered in any attempt to take the position is worth incurring for a victory which can be achieved in any other way. From west to east the kopjes are fringed with intrenchments, carried on their eastern extremity across the plain of slightly rising ground, dotted with shrubs and small thickets, as far as the river. Thus, some five miles of earthworks from the south-east spur of Chief Kopje have been constructed, and the enemy were certainly occupying the entire line from end to end, besides the large bodies under cover upon the sides of the kopjes, in the sangars built upon the crest of the hills, and in reserve behind the heights.

Estimates of the numbers of the Boers present vary considerably, but all things point to 15,000 as being approximately correct. Our forces numbered about 11,000 of all arms, including reserves, Army Service Corps, and others who had no place in the fighting line.

This force moved forwards under cover of the night, and the Highland Brigade, to whom was entrusted the duty of making the first assault, soon vanished in the darkness. They had been expected to make their way to the south-eastern face of the kopjes and then extend for attack as soon as there was light enough to see their way, but by a mistake the entire brigade, still in quarter-column—the least effective of all formations, and that affording the most certain target, in fact, a formation that should never have been used within the range of the largest ordnance possessed by the enemy—found itself within 400 yards of the southern face of the enemy's position opposite to the barbed wire entanglements of the strongest intrenchment of the entire line of defence.†

†It has been pointed out to me that for the beginning of a night march quarter-column is the usual and, indeed, almost inevitable formation, owing to the difficulty of keeping direction and dressing by any other means. On this occasion the troops had to be led through the worst weather that has been experienced during the expedition. The moon was entirely obscured, and the rain descended in torrents from 9 in the evening till 3 on the morning of the battle, adding enormously to the difficulty of maintaining direction, which the thick cactus hedges of the lower ground had rendered an almost impossible task. Continual passing and repassing backwards and forwards on the part of the officers conducting the march, and the use of guide ropes alone rendered progress possible. But this, of course, does not affect the

formation which should be adopted when within a mile of the object aimed at, and a most successful night march in line of battalion, double company columns, at Orange River proves that long distances can be so covered.

A moment later a single shot was followed by a fusillade that must have emptied the magazine of every Boer rifle for a space of a quarter of a mile. Beneath this hell of fire discipline vanished, the men broke and fled, leaving on the field dead, dying, or wounded, one man in every five of the 3,000 men who but 30 seconds before had been marching at ease, trusting absolutely to their leaders, and thinking of nothing less than that, in march-past formation, they were to be instantly called upon to face at point-blank range the most devastating volley that has probably been poured into any body of men. Recharging magazines delayed the Boers a moment, but in the Mauser system this operation wastes much less time than our own. The darkness, more than any possible cover, saved our men from a second catastrophe, and there was entire silence as the shattered remnants of the brigade made their way back. This silence was broken at last by a huge lyddite shell from the naval gun, bursting on the spur to the left of the scene of disaster. From that time onwards artillery became the chief feature of the day, and the accuracy and steadiness of their fire while within rifle range of the shelter trenches and the promptness and energy with which they eventually covered the retirement of the troops deserve the highest praise.

A few shots, not perhaps 50 in all, were fired by the enemy, but their guns were quickly silenced, and the only fighting that took place for some hours was on the right. Here the mounted infantry and cavalry were early in touch with the Boers, backed by Major Allason's Horse Battery, which galloped forward and took up a position a mile and a half east of the kopjes enfilading the trenches on their left, and sweeping the containing line of intrenchments running eastward to the Modder. The mounted infantry early in the day pushed forward too far, and were at one time cut off by a body of horsemen who intercepted their retreat. A bold dash, however, cleared their way with the loss of one man only, Private Lazenby, brought into camp under fire by Lieutenant Riley, the retreat being covered by Sergeant Cassen, Lance-Corporal Bennett, and Private Mawhood, who dismounted, without cover, and under a hot fire knelt and kept off the Boers for some minutes.

The 12th Lancers under Lord Airlie did well on the same flank and under similar conditions. Meanwhile, the Yorkshire Light Infantry stormed a house, and occupied the drift over the Modder on the extreme right of our line, three companies being left as guard of a second drift half way back. Some of the Grenadier Guards came to their support, there being a considerable gap between this small force on the extreme right and the right of the main body, which was composed of the Coldstream Guards and Grenadier Guards, with a small sprinkling of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The Highland Brigade reformed, reinforced, and, led by the Gordons (who had but arrived the day before, and whom it had not been intended to use), approached the kopjes in open order without suffering any great loss. The Scots Guards acted as guard for the central artillery and two batteries of field artillery and a howitzer battery, and the extreme left was protected by the naval 4·7 gun and the North Lancashire Regiment. There was little incident to note throughout the day, except on the extreme right, where the Yorkshire Light Infantry expended 22,000 rounds. There was little rifle fire from us, and what there was from the Boers came chiefly from a strong contingent of sharpshooters who crawled among the bushes in front of their left extension and sniped at anything that showed itself.

Towards 2 o'clock the monotony and heat combined with the terrible shock that had been suffered in the early morning, and little by little the Highland Brigade came back, the movement culminating in a general withdrawal under cover of a terrific fire from our guns, front and flank, which, however, was unable to reduce greatly the redoubled fire from every yard of breastwork and every boulder on the hill sides.

There were, however, fewer casualties than might have been thought, though again and again a man flung up his arms and fell. The retirement was an obvious mistake, as the men were in no danger where they lay, and by remaining where they were would, as the Boers have subsequently admitted, have persuaded the already intimidated and decimated enemy to retire from the trenches under cover of night exactly as had previously happened at Modder River. It is, however, only just to General Lord Methuen to state here, on the highest authority, that this retirement was in direct opposition to his definite orders, given earlier in the day to the Highland Brigade, to remain until nightfall in their positions. As there has been some uncertainty on this point, it is necessary to lay stress upon the truth.

The probability, already referred to, that in future civilized warfare endurance in awaiting evening in extended order under cover will be a considerable factor in success receives additional support from the action at Maggersfontein. It is a higher trial of condition than might be supposed to lie for 13 or 14 hours under a semi-tropical sun without more food or water than has been carried into action, and the need to obey rules laid down as to emergency rations and water bottles has become urgent.

With this retreat the battle ended, except that the artillery, covering their own retirement, fired continuously for some 20 minutes, ending with a salvo of lyddite shell from the howitzers that shook the ground.

The Guards were left to bivouac as they lay, and continued their line to the left to occupy the position left by the Highland Brigade. Some of them advanced during the night far enough to see that the Boers were still manning their intrenchments and refreshing themselves out of the gin-bottles that always form a striking feature of their evacuated earthworks.

Desultory shelling from the Boers' extreme right had marked the close of the day, and with the morning it again began. Presuming on the military traditions of the Boers, the artillery had remained all night on the field, and recommenced fire, but this lasted for a short time only, and by 9 o'clock the brigades were on their march back to the river, leaving only the ambulances at their dreary work.

Then occurred the incident that attracted some notice. Under a flag of truce the Boers asked that stretcher-bearers should be sent to take away the wounded and dead British that still dotted the veldt close under their trenches, and the request was instantly complied with, Major Beevor taking a large force of men with him under the Red Cross. On our extreme left the naval gun regarded the approach of a small body of Boers with mistrust, and, in ignorance of the armistice, fired two or three times. This the Boers regarded as bad faith, and as a reprisal shelled the horse battery several times. This, considering itself bound by the armistice, made no answer, and the Boers then ceased fire.

It is difficult to sum up impressions of an encounter which has resulted badly without referring again to the continued lack of information which caused the initial blunder and consequent slaughter. It is not too much to say that no troops could have retained their *moral* in a situation for which not the slightest palliation has yet been offered. Whose is the fault is not the question to raise yet, but it is only fair to the men who were thus shaken to state frankly that it was by no fault of their own that they were compelled without alternative to begin an arduous day by retreating in disorder ; and it must not be forgotten that for the rest of the day the brigade was practically without officers in a position in which men require leadership more than usual.

This reverse has checked the advance, postponed almost *sine die* the relief of Kimberley, which was the end and aim of the movement, and has placed the division in a position of which the Boers will not be slow to take advantage. But the soul of goodness was in the evil thing, and many a quiet act of heroism and steady unselfishness marked the day. No words can be too high in which to praise the medical staff, who in the hottest fire, which their presence always attracted, carried through their work as coolly as though in hospital, and conducted their transport operations, heavy as the strain was, with such perfection that 500 wounded were sent off by train to Cape Town before 10 o'clock on the following morning.

Of the artillery I have spoken. It remains yet to note the excellent work done by the extreme right—recognized by the General in orders on the following day—and to put on record the exhibition of the same desperate pluck of the same men who but a twelvemonth before had carried the heights of Dargai.

9th January 1900.

RED CROSS WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, DEC. 20.

Nothing, perhaps, can more interest the public at home at the present time than any news affecting the well-being of our brave soldiers who have fallen victims to wounds or disease in the course of the war. A brief summary of the work done in the last month by the British Red Cross Society and kindred local institutions can only be welcome reading to those who have friends and relatives at the front. The object of the Red Cross Society in a war like the present is to assist and supplement the regular Army medical services in every way that expert and local knowledge may suggest, rather than to endeavour to replace by private charity those efforts which it is the ordinary duty of the regular Army medical staff to make. It is impossible, without an entirely incommensurate amount of waste, to provide beforehand at home for all the miscellaneous requirements that particular cases or local exigencies may create. The regular Army medical equipment can only supply on a large scale those things of which there is certain to be a large and constant demand. The result is that there always remains a large variety of local and particular needs which are discovered only at the moment when they require to be satisfied. There are many things, medical appliances, articles of food and clothing, which it is not always easy for the medical officer in charge of a field or base hospital to procure just when they are wanted. In the first place, he has no free funds at his disposal, and, by the time he has made his applications in due form and gone through all the necessary and unnecessary formalities that official red-tape enjoins, the required article may no longer be of any use ; and, secondly, he is often so overworked with his surgical

duties, with attending on the primary wants of his patients, that he has no time to spare to make any effort to provide for other wants which he would like to see satisfied as well. Then, again, there are innumerable minor comforts, distractions, and amusements which in a sense, because they help on the recovery of patients, are almost necessaries, but the expenditure on which it would not be easy to justify to nominal War Office authorities. To supply these varying momentary and subsidiary wants some organization more elastic and readier than the military organization is required. One might suggest that it ought to be possible to leave a very much larger spending discretion to medical officers in time of war rather than to let them have to apply to the uncertain aid of private societies for things that are in many cases absolute necessities. On the other hand, it is also very desirable that there should be some outlet for private generosity and private effort. The one great virtue of war is its moral effect in binding a whole nation together in one common endeavour and one common sympathy, and in calling forth individual effort and individual self-sacrifice; and it would be unwise to put any hindrance in the way of the generosity or the efforts of the public whenever its help can be accepted without any harmful effect on efficiency of admistration. A due limit ought to be found somewhere between those necessities which it is the duty of a properly organized medical staff to be equipped with—and which in several instances our economically furnished staff out here has not been equipped with—and the things which are much better left to private initiative and generosity. It should not be forgotten, too, that, in the case of all the various minor comforts that can be supplied to wounded, and especially convalescent, patients, these things are all the more appreciated when the element of private and personal sympathy and care has its part. It is easier for a man to feel grateful to his fellow countrymen and country women who have subscribed and laboured to ease his sufferings than to the Treasury.

But even voluntary and personal contribution requires organization and experience before it can become efficient. The need for a permanent central organization for the control of the funds supplied by public generosity was recognized by the formation early in the year, under the auspices of Lord Lansdowne, of the Central British Red Cross Committee, under which the British Red Cross Society, the St. John Ambulance Brigade, and other voluntary bodies are federated.

When the war broke out the central committee sent out Colonel J. S. Young to act as its commissioner, supplying him with ample funds and material, and with instructions to make use of them as seemed best on the spot in co-operation with the principal medical officer of the field force and with the local aid societies. Colonel Young has had a remarkably wide and varied experience of Red Cross work, having been commissioner for the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in the Franco-German war, in the Russo-Turkish war, in the first Boer war, and in the Egyptian campaigns of 1884-85 and 1898, besides having seen service as a transport officer in Abyssinia and South Africa. He arrived here on November 14, and at once set to work organizing the bodies that already had been locally constituted for similar objects. The Good Hope Society had been organized a short while before by some of the leading men and women in Cape Town and had done a great deal of good work. Without the least signs of local jealousy this society and the local branch of the St. John Ambulance Brigade at once put themselves under Colonel Young's direction, in order to secure efficiency of action and to give their own personal services to expend and distribute the funds and materials he had brought out with him. Committees of ladies were formed to divide among themselves the work of purchasing medical stores, provisions, comforts, and amusements of every sort, all work in which a knowledge of local resources was invaluable; other ladies assemble on mail days to assist in making up parcels of the latest newspapers for the wounded soldiers; others go down to meet the ambulance trains on arrival and offer refreshments to those who are well enough to partake of them, or to see that the beds in the departing trains are provided with such luxuries—necessities rather—as towels, handkerchiefs, pyjamas, &c.; others see off steamers departing with convalescent soldiers and provide them with overcoats and other warm articles of clothing. A depôt has been opened for the two Wynberg hospitals, where agents of the Red Cross receive all the various contributions of private individuals as well as of the society itself—meat and fresh vegetables, fruit, flowers, tobacco, stationery, games, books, &c.—and arrange for their distribution in the different wards. The barrack rations of the men in the convalescent home at Green Point are liberally supplemented with vegetables, fresh milk, &c., paid for by the Red Cross funds. Every conceivable facility has been afforded to Colonel Young by Sir A. Milner and also by the colonial authorities. The Ministry may have been reluctant and half-hearted in its support of Sir Alfred Milner, but on the "neutral ground" of humanity they have done everything that could possibly have been demanded. The colonial Government has put commodious offices and store-rooms in the House of Parliament at Colonel Young's disposal, the dock

company have similarly provided a depôt for stores down at the harbour, neither duty nor dock charges nor railway charges are imposed on any of the Red Cross material. The newspapers addressed to the soldiers' hospitals are delivered free of charge by the Post Office.

After having set the organization at Cape Town in working order Colonel Young went up to the western border to see what assistance he could possibly render to the hospitals at Modder River, Orange River, and De Aar ; and arranged for the regular despatch of fresh vegetables to the front, and for a regular weekly visit by a special agent of the Red Cross Society bringing up stores and comforts of every kind for distribution and on each visit inquiring about the existence of any wants that can be satisfied on the next. The task of the Red Cross Society is not altogether an easy one. It is only human nature for a medical officer to say that the hospital he presides over is amply provided with everything, and that these offers of help are only a source of trouble and confusion. It requires both persistence and tact on the part of the Red Cross Commissioner to gain his point. Sooner or later, however, something is sure to be wanted, and then the military authorities gladly accept the offers previously rejected, whether offers to purchase medical appliances, or food, or clothing for the use of the men in hospital. In many cases the hospitals have already availed themselves freely of the help afforded, and there is little fear of the funds subscribed not being spent. And the public at home can rest satisfied with the assurance that all the money that is spent is spent well.

9th January 1900.

THE BIRTH OF AN IRREGULAR CORPS.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, Dec. 20.

The British public hear something of the irregular corps which are taking their share in the hardships and dangers of the campaign in South Africa when there is a reconnaissance, a raid, or a battle, but they know little of the tremendous difficulties which have to be overcome by those whose duty it has been to raise, equip, and place in the field these invaluable troops.

A short history of the birth of the South African Light Horse may therefore give a few touches of local colouring and complete a picture which is not without pathos, humour, and a moral. What is true for this corps is probably true of the Imperial Light Horse, Brabant's Horse, Bethune's and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, and other irregular levies which are doing such gallant deeds at the post of honour.

Owing to the political exigencies of the situation in Cape Colony it was not considered advisable to take any active steps to utilize the good will of her Majesty's subjects until the arrival of the first troops of the army corps had somewhat improved the general aspect of affairs. (I am only recording, and offer neither comment nor criticism.) The growls and grumbles of her Majesty's loyal subjects were loud and deep. They knew—none better—that the day was at hand when the struggle for supremacy in South Africa was to be decided ; they knew the excellence of the Boer military system, and the mobility which was the most essential characteristic of Boer tactics, and they desired eagerly to place at the disposal of the Government the services of men who could meet the Boers on their own ground, and fight them at their own game, in a country to which they were thoroughly accustomed. Despairing of permission to get themselves killed in Cape Colony, many fine fellows went off to Natal to join the Imperial Light Horse ; others went home to England, and much excellent material was unfortunately lost.

Before Sir Redvers Buller had been a week in Cape Town the necessary permission to begin work was received. Lieutenant-Colonel à Court, of Sir Redvers Buller's staff, was ordered to raise a corps of horse, and Captain Villiers of the Blues was added to assist in the work.

Save and except the good will of many loyal colonists there was practically nothing in existence for the makings of a body of horsemen. Had the Government been well advised it would have stored saddles, bridles, equipments, clothing, and other military stores in abundance ; it would have been as good as throwing men into South Africa ; it might have been better. But everything was wanting, nor did the military situation permit the delay inseparable from an application home for all the many things required. The enemy was at the gates ; he had overrun the frontiers and was commandeering in the colony itself. Work began without delay ; a recruiting office was established in the town, and soon men of all classes and professions trooped in to register their names. The committee of the agricultural society placed their ground at the disposal of the corps, and hither were despatched the recruits when they had been accepted and had passed a searching medical examination. The recruits were so numerous that it was possible to make a selection and only take really good men of fine physique, able to ride and shoot. They were mainly British colonials, including a few Australians and New Zealanders ; but one troop was composed of Texas cowboys who had

come over with mules from the United States and ardently desired to see some fun before returning, while from every mail-boat from England a batch of enthusiasts came forward to share in the work.

The history of the 800 or 900 men who have joined the corps would probably be as interesting a record of adventure as imagination could picture. No Imperial officers were at first available to command the squadrons, and the colonial officers, though keen and zealous, were without much military training and knew little or nothing of drill. At a later date more special service officers from home were allotted to the corps; and there are now some eight or ten on the regimental staff and in command of squadrons, the troop officers and the rest of the regimental staff consisting of colonials. Many old soldiers of Regular and irregular corps joined the ranks. The East Kent Yeomen made a valuable addition, and one troop was composed of the Stellenbosch Mounted Infantry, which joined *en masse*. Men of trades useful in a mounted corps were recruited in sufficient numbers to make each unit self-supporting, while one squadron consists exclusively of the sons of colonial gentry from Cape Colony, including several members of the oldest Dutch families. A great number of men of high social position and ample means joined as troopers when unable to obtain a commission; while of individuals whom one would scarcely expect to find in such a regiment I may mention a fighting parson from Rhodesia whose influence made the canteen a model of propriety, an Australian fast bowler whose name is a household word in England, a son of an ambassador, a Danish Lifeguardsman, and many others prompted to doughty deeds by all those various and varying influences that sway humanity. The corps became popular at once. It received the invaluable support of Mr. George Farrar and Mr. Abe Bailey and of other well-known Johannesburgers, thanks to whose liberality a fund was raised to provide the medical aid required in the field and to form a compassionate fund for the relatives of those killed in action or dying on service. Thanks to the efforts and sacrifices of many colonial and Uitlander gentry, this fund has now reached a total of £5,000.

While the men were being recruited and assembled, and while they were being drilled by a few cavalry drill instructors who were temporarily lent by the remount branch, superhuman efforts were made to provide the clothing equipments and saddlery, and to find 850 horses capable of at once taking the field. The Ordnance stores were drawn on for all they could afford—it was not much, but it gave the needed start; some saddles way-billed to Pretoria were seized and made use of; a small army of tailors and saddlers were set to work to make breeches, clothing, bandoliers, rifle buckets, and so forth; the ladies of Cape Town provided cocks' feathers from their wardrobes to decorate the rakish-looking hats, looped up at the side by a Maltese cross on a red patch, which forms the distinguishing badge of the corps; ambulances of a light and handy type were constructed and fitted with everything necessary, including a Röntgen ray apparatus, whose owner arrived from England and was promptly taken as medical officer. Wagons were built, painted khaki colour, and fitted with water casks and everything necessary for a long campaign on the veldt; while veterinary surgeons and colonial gentlemen with keen eyes for horses scoured the country, and at an average price of £26 kept up a flow of good and serviceable mounts, in which the Arab blood was a marked feature.

The squadrons were formed successively. The first was complete within a week and left for the front; three others were ready within a fortnight and left for Natal under Major Byng, of the Blues; in a month eight squadrons in all have been formed, and are now in the field, the last leaving Rosebank depôt yesterday. Each squadron consists of five officers and 100 men and horses, and is complete and self-contained down to the smallest detail. It was thus proved conclusively that a single town of the Empire could turn out a complete mounted regiment in less time than the War Office could land a cavalry regiment from home, while the time taken to form the corps could have been reduced by one-half had the saddles and equipment required been available in military charge.

The men and officers are dressed alike in khaki drill, Bedford cords, putties, lace boots, and spurs, with broad bandoliers; the only arm is the Lee-Enfield magazine rifle, and neither swords nor revolvers are permitted; the hat is of soft felt, with a grey puggaree and the ornaments already described. The saddle is good and serviceable, and each man has a complete equipment of field kit and necessaries. A large number of rounds are provided for in the transport, which is drawn by mules, and three days' rations and forage are carried in the wagons.

I had forgotten an important item in the organization of the corps—namely, a couple of ·303 Maxims on galloping carriages, each drawn by six speedy horses, ridden by stout drivers annexed from the Army Service Corps. Colonel à Court's experience of the Sirdar's Maxims with Broadwood's squadrons in the Sudan had made him register a mental vow that any mounted corps with which he might have to do should be similarly provided. He asked for them for the Light Horse, and was met with a refusal, but was informed that he was allowed to accept any present for the regiment. It was a Thursday. Two days later a couple of Maxims on galloping carriages, with harness and equipment complete, left Southampton, addressed to the Light Horse, and are now at the front. Messrs. Vickers and Maxim

14th January 1900.

sent an anxious cable to inquire "From whom are we to receive payment?" and it is said that the cabled reply was, "That is the very question I am asking myself." However, the difficulty was overcome by a subscription, once again met by Mr. Bailey and his friends. During the brief period that the corps spent in inglorious ease, if such we may call a few days when all ranks had to work from morning to night, the Rosebank show-ground became a popular resort on Sundays, on which day alone the public was admitted. The men's dormitories were scrupulously clean and neatly kept, the rifles shone with fresh oil, the kitchens were a model of ingenuity, and the stables and loose-boxes contained many a horse of hard and useful stamp.

But the men were the thing—strapping, wiry fellows in the very prime of life and vigour and health, such men as could be relied on to go anywhere and do anything. As squadron after squadron was turned out with machinelike regularity and left for the front there was only one opinion expressed by the crowd of admirers and well-wishers who came to see them off. I will not repeat it; may their deeds commend them.

The first recruit was taken on November 8, on December 15 the three squadrons sent to Natal were engaged in the fight on the Tugela, and lost one-fourth of their numbers, a baptism of fire only hitherto equalled by that which the Imperial Light Horse received at Elandslaagte. They are reported to have behaved with the greatest gallantry and steadiness, and those who know the excellent material of which the corps is formed can well believe it.

The moral of all the experience gained in this war is that from a population accustomed to out-door exercise, such as is the whole population of our colonies and most of the middle and upper-class population of the old country, troops can be raised which at the end of a few weeks, and led by capable officers, are worthy to stand side by side with the best Regulars. They require a higher rate of pay—the mounted troops raised in South Africa all get 5s. a day—but they are far cheaper in the long run, for they are raised only when wanted. This is the regular old English fashion. The archers who fought at Cressy and Poitiers were raised in "companies," just like our mounted riflemen in South Africa to-day, and were paid on a scale at the least equal to the wages of skilled labour in the England of that time. With their help England was for over a century the most formidable military Power in Europe. Perhaps this war in South Africa will lead us to revive the tactics of five centuries ago. If we practised rifle shooting and horsemanship as our forefathers practised the use of the long-bow and the grey goose feather, there need be no fear of our ever lacking a sufficiency of excellent infantry and mounted infantry for any war that we could ever be called upon to face.

THE BATTLE OF COLENSO.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CHIEVELEY CAMP, DEC. 21.

By the beginning of last week (December 11) everything was at length ready for an advance on Colenso. A force, whose fighting strength was nearly 20,000, had during the past fortnight concentrated at Frere Camp. The infantry consisted of four brigades—namely, the 2nd, under General Hildyard, consisting of the Devonshire, the Queen's, the West Yorkshire, and East Surrey Regiments; the 4th Brigade, under General Lyttelton, composed of the 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade, the 3rd Battalion of the 60th Rifles, the Durham Light Infantry, and the Scottish Rifles; the 5th Brigade, under General Hart, consisting of the Dublin and Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Connaught Rangers, and the Border Regiment; and the 6th Brigade, under General Barton, which was composed of the Royal, the Irish, the Scots, and the Welsh Fusiliers. This force numbered approximately 16,000 men. The cavalry and mounted infantry brigade, under Colonel the Earl of Dundonald, included the 1st Royal Dragoons, the 13th Hussars, Bethune's Mounted Infantry, Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, each about 500 strong, three squadrons of the South African Light Horse under Major Byng, and the composite regiment under Major Walter, made up of a mounted company of the 60th Rifles and the Dublin Fusiliers under Captain Eustace, a company each of Natal Carbineers, Major McKenzie, and Imperial Light Horse, Captain Bottomley. The whole mounted force numbered about 2,600. There were five batteries of field artillery, the 7th, 14th, 63rd, 64th, and 66th; and besides these there was a naval battery consisting of two 4·7 guns, capable of firing lyddite, and 14 long-range 12-pounders. The guns all belonged to, and were mounted by, the Terrible. They were all drawn by oxen, the two big ones requiring 28 each. The naval contingent consisted of 254 men, 200 of whom belonged to the Terrible. Captain Jones, of the Forte, was in command.

On Tuesday, December 12, the first move was made. At dawn General Barton's brigade, with the two large and six small naval guns, marched out and occupied a position about three miles from Colenso. The position chosen was a stony kopje directly in front of the village of Colenso, just to the east of the railway line. From this kopje the country slopes gradually

down to the river, and is absolutely open except for a few small dongas intersecting it. The river cannot be seen from the kopje for the reason that it has high, steep banks, and that along them there is a good deal of brushwood. The road bridge, however, which till yesterday stood intact, can be easily seen. Colenso village lies on this side of the Tugela, and close to the river on the far side rise abruptly the line of steep little kopjes which the Boers have been busy fortifying ever since they recrossed the Tugela at the end of last month. They extend about half-a-mile east and west along the river, and about the same distance north and south. On the westernmost and nearest to the river is situated Fort Wylie, a position completely commanding both bridges. Fort Wylie was held by the Dublin Fusiliers and Durban Light Infantry whilst they were in possession of Colenso. On both sides lies the flat plain through which the Tugela winds, but behind them line after line of kopjes rise in steps till they culminate in a range of hills which approach the river to the westward of Colenso, and form the two dominating positions of Grobler's Kloof and a hill that has been christened Red Hill for want of any other name. This formed the centre of the Boer position. The two kopjes which they had fortified elaborately completely commanded the approaches to Colenso, the more so as the plain opposite sloped gradually down towards the river, and was entirely devoid of cover. Behind these kopjes a retreat if necessary was easy. An attacking enemy would have to storm kopje after kopje, whilst all the time he would be under fire from Grobler's Kloof and Red Hill. In fact, to hold Colenso he would have to hold all the hills in a ring round it, and if the possession of them were disputed it would entail more than one day's fighting. To the east of Fort Wylie the river bends sharply northward, and here the left flank of the Boer position is on the south side of the river on a solitary hill called Hlangwane. This is, doubtless, the weakest spot in the Boer position, for if an enemy could take it by storm or otherwise he could render the kopjes north of Colenso untenable.

At 7 15 o'clock on Wednesday morning the naval guns commenced the bombardment of the Boer position on the kopjes north of Colenso, which was continued till midday. The range was 7,200 yards and the practice was extremely good. One line of intrenchments, in particular, had two great gaps, each about 30 yards long, knocked in it. This was done with lyddite, the power of which was terrific. Not quite so high a percentage of the lyddite shells burst as of the ordinary kind, but this is due to the fact that the fuse of a lyddite shell cannot be charged with fulminate, and so needs to strike harder ground to cause it to detonate. To the fire to which they were subjected for nearly six hours the Boers made no attempt to reply, although it was evident they were manning their trenches, for when a shell fell in a new place they could be seen scattering in all directions.

The next morning the entire force moved out of Frere Camp at 4 30 and marched to Chieveley, where they pitched their camp on the west side of the line and about a mile nearer the river. Meanwhile, the naval guns had moved forward to a slight hill on the west side of the railway, about 1,000 yards further forward, and again shelled the kopjes behind Colenso, sending a few shells into a small camp visible about three miles away from the river, which was reported to be General Botha's. Again the Boers made absolutely no reply, and it was pretty generally supposed either that they did not intend to hold the position or at least that they had withdrawn their big guns. The bombardment ceased at midday, but was continued at intervals during the afternoon whenever the enemy were seen attempting to mend the breaches in their earthworks. That evening it became known that a general attack would take place next morning, and orders were sent round that camp was to be struck and the baggage packed and troops to be in their allotted positions by 4 o'clock next morning. The disposition of the troops was as follows :—On the left General Hart's brigade was to cross the river at a bridle drift about three miles above Colenso at a curve in the river, in approaching which General Hart's men would be exposed to flank fire from the enemy on the other side. He was supported by the 63rd and 64th batteries and his flank covered by the Royal Dragoons. Next General Hart on the right came General Lyttelton's brigade, with orders to act as supports to General Hart's and General Hildyard's brigades. On General Lyttelton's right a long low spur of hills, scarcely more than an undulation, with a broad flat top, ran gradually down from the high ground at Chieveley to the Tugela. On the western side of the flat top, about 2,000 yards in advance of their position of the previous day, was the chief naval battery consisting of two 4·7 guns and four 12-pounders, under Captain Jones. The range to the kopjes north of the Tugela was between 3,000 and 4,000 yards. About a quarter of a mile away the railway ran along the eastern edge of the flat top of the spur. Between the two General Hildyard had orders to advance directly upon Colenso bridge. His left was to be supported by the 14th and 66th Field Batteries and a battery of six naval 12-pounders, under Lieutenant Ogilvy of the Terrible, the whole under Colonel Long. To the east of the line lay a broad flat plain intersected by a few dongas. Across this General Barton's brigade was to advance and co-operate with General Hildyard's, whilst on his left Lord Dundonald had orders to attack Hlangwane Hill with the 7th Field Battery and the whole of the cavalry and mounted infantry, except the Royals,

who were on the left, and Bethune's mounted infantry, who were guarding the baggage. The formation was brigades of infantry, alternating with batteries of artillery, the two flanks being covered by cavalry, and our front only extended about three miles to the Boers' fire, though this was not discovered until the battle was in progress.

At dawn, on Friday, the 15th, the troops were filing slowly out of camp to their respective positions. There was no wind and not a cloud in the sky. By a quarter to 5 there was sufficient light for the main naval battery to open fire, which they did upon Fort Wylie. For three-quarters of an hour only an occasional gun was fired on our side, but at 5 30, when all was ready for an attack, the bombardment became brisker. The Boers made no response whatever. Shortly before 6 the 14th and 66th Batteries and the naval 12-pounder battery advanced across the plain to the right of the railway. Colonel Long, Colonel Hunt, and Lieutenant Ogilvy (commanding the naval battery) were riding in front, and Colonel Long selected a position about 800 yards from the river and 1,200 yards from Fort Wylie, more than a mile in advance of the infantry. He had scarcely given the order to unlimber when a single gun was fired from one of the kopjes behind Colenso. This was evidently the signal for the Boers to commence firing, and immediately a tremendous fire began from the intrenchments on the kopjes, from Fort Wylie, and from trenches along the river, all directed upon the two field batteries. Just behind the batteries lay a small donga, and 300 yards behind that a larger one. The naval battery drawn by oxen was in the middle of crossing this donga when the fire commenced. Two guns under Lieutenant James were already across, and they got into action behind and to the left of the field batteries. Two more were in the middle of the donga and two more had not yet entered it. When the fire began the native drivers of the last four guns at once ran away, but the sailors manned the oxen and at length with great difficulty got their guns into action behind the donga. Meanwhile the other naval battery and Colonel Long's two batteries were directing a tremendous fire upon Fort Wylie. The 14th and 66th were themselves the object of a most deadly musketry fire from the enemy, who were sheltered under the bank on the near side of the river at a range of about 800 yards, as well as a tremendously heavy, but not so effective, shell fire. At about a quarter past 6 Colonel Long was wounded and was helped back into the donga behind the artillery. Shortly afterwards Colonel Hunt, commanding the two batteries, was also hit. The rifle fire from the enemy's trenches was terribly effective and our casualties were very heavy, but the men served their guns with the utmost gallantry and coolness. At 7 o'clock, the ammunition train not having come up, the ammunition in the limbers was exhausted. Captain Herbert, A.D.C. to Colonel Long, and one of the few unwounded officers left, who had already had his horse shot in going to fetch a doctor, was sent off to ask for reinforcements, and whilst doing so had a second horse shot. The order was then given to retire into the donga behind until fresh ammunition should arrive. This was done, the men carrying their wounded with them. They did not attempt to destroy the guns by carrying away the breechblocks because they expected to return to them as soon as the infantry came up. The naval 12-pounder battery, which was about 400 yards in the rear of the field batteries, continued the bombardment alone under very heavy fire. It is extraordinary that their loss of four wounded was not greater, for they remained in action entirely unsupported until 9 30, when they received the order from General Buller to retire. There were several extraordinary escapes. Lieutenant Ogilvy, after having his horse shot, had the three shells from a Hotchkiss pass between his legs whilst looking through his field glasses.

Meanwhile, on the left General Hart was developing his attack. The bridle drift by which he was to cross was defended by a semi-circular position following the curve of the river. The Dublin Fusiliers were the leading battalion. The brigade advanced in column, and the Dublins had scarcely taken open order when the enemy opened on the column with shrapnel. They were temporarily unable to deploy owing to the nature of the ground, and in the interval the Connaught Rangers, who were now leading the column, suffered heavy loss. At 6.30 the Dublin Fusiliers, with the Connaught Rangers, advanced across the open ground under fire, and as they came into the curve of the river the Boers opened an enfilading as well as a front fire upon them. The ground was very dry, and every bullet could be seen striking up a spurt of dust. The fire was terrific. Besides the musketry fire, the enemy shelled them with three guns, one directly ahead at comparatively short range, one on the flank at the foot of Grobler's Kloof, and a 40-pounder on the top of the Red Hill. The 63rd and 64th Batteries on the left seemed unable to silence their fire, and the naval battery, which was the only one capable of doing it, was concentrating its fire on Fort Wylie. The Dublins and Connaughts advanced magnificently against the almost overwhelming fire, men falling at every step. As they approached the river the enemy's fire seemed to redouble. Every time a company rose to its feet to advance there was a perfect crash of musketry, and the plain all round them became a cloud of dust spurts. It seemed wonderful that any man could survive it. And yet there was nothing to tell where the enemy lay concealed. Not a single head even was visible ; nothing but a long line of smoke, scarcely visible, and the incessant crackling roar. The batteries sent shell after shell wherever they

ithin 14 days.
pplication of Mr. Senhouse, the usual order
e's costs was made.

UNTY OF LONDON SESSIONS.
e MR. MCCONNELL, Q.C., *Chairman, sitting at Newington.*)
TORNEY, 25, printer, was indicted for house-
Mr. Rowsell was for the prosecution. The
, Mrs. Colette Day, a widow, said she was
of a house in Loughborough-road, Brixton,
furnished but at present unoccupied. On
30, in the middle of the day, she went to
, letting herself in with a latch-key,
ound the prisoner sitting in the dining-room
fire, which he had lighted, and rea ing a book.
him what he was doing there, and he said he
over the back wall out of the wet, a lding,
mind ?" She said, "Oh, no, not at all,"
ut again to the house of her father-in-law,
few doors off, and who fetched a constable
Then the officer arrived he found the prisoner
before the fire and took him into custody.
were found a silver pocket-knife and a few
es of small value which he had taken from
bedrooms. The prisoner was found *Guilty*
ed to six months' hard labour.

R. LOVELAND LOVELAND, Q.C., *Deputy-Chairman.*)
S FINSLER and HENRY WHEELER surrendered
l to answer an indictment for having had a
raspberries found in their possession, in-
she food of man, which were unsound and
food of man. Mr. Biron (with him Mr.
peared for the prosecution on behalf
stry of Bermondsey; Mr. George Elliott
Layman were for the defence. This
last of a series of cases tried at
ther Courts, arising out of the seizure of
nsignments of fruit at Lipton and Co.'s and
ies during the hot weather of last summer.
ternoon of July 14 Mr. Thomas, sanitary
Bermondsey, was at Lipton's jam factory
oad, Bermondsey, examining other fruit,
signment of 250 tubs of raspberries arrived
railway, having been sent over from
the night before. These were taken
n's premises by Mr. Thomas's order, and
ined and seized by him as being bad. The
ey were taken before Mr. Slade, the police
and were condemned by him. The goods
g been in the possession of Lipton and Co.,
ngs were taken against them, but this prose-
commenced against the present defendants,
firm of wholesale fruit brokers, carrying on
the City. Apparently their only connexion
uit was that they were the London agents of
in Holland, whose contract with Lipton and
n effected through them. The only witness
he police-court to prove their part in the
was Mr. Light, Lipton's manager, and it was
that that gentleman was suffering from in-
unable to be present. At the close of the
prosecution Mr. Elliott said he had several
nesses to call to prove that the raspberries
tly good at the time they were seized, but
he preliminary objection that there was no
go to the jury that the fruit was ever in the
f the defendants. Mr. Loveland upheld this
and by his direction the jury *Acquitted* the
and they were discharged.

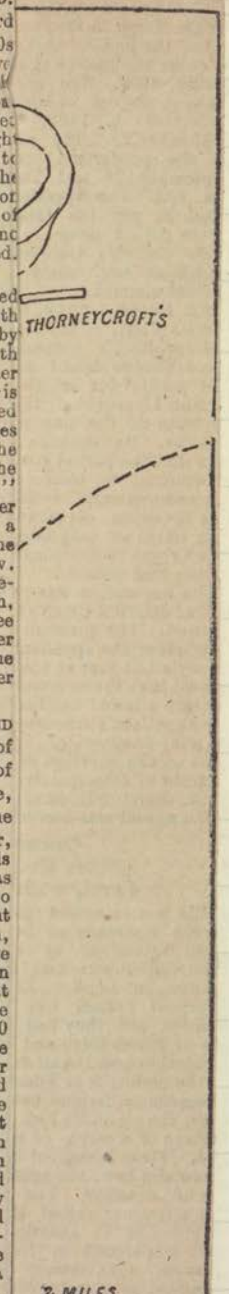
PPOINTMENT.—Mr. A. H. Dennis, of the
ple, has been appointed junior counsel to
y in legitimacy cases, in succession to Mr.
n es.

LAW NOTICES, JAN. 19.
OURT OF JUDICATURE.—COURT OF APPEAL.
MASTER of the ROLLS, LORD JUSTICE VAUGHAN

At BOW-STREET, yesterday, before Sir Frankli
Lushington, GEORGE KINGSLEY, 36, a commissio
agent, who refused his address, was charged with bein
concerned with another man, not in custody, in break
ing and entering the shop of Messrs. Goff and Co.
trunk and portmanteau manufacturers, New Oxford
street, and stealing four Gladstone bags, value £3 10s
Shortly after 9 o'clock on Wednesday evening Detective
sergeant Williamson, of New Scotland-yard, saw th
prisoner and another man, who were carrying fou
portmanteaux, leave Messrs. Goff's shop. He followed
them into High-street, Bloomsbury, and then caugh
hold of the accused. Before the witness had time to
address the accused, the second man threw one of the
bags at the witness and ran away. On examination
the witness found that both the outer and inner doors of
the premises had been forced with a jemmy, but no
housebreaking implement was found on the accused.
The prisoner was remanded.

JAMES FREEMAN, *alias* THOMAS AUSTIN, described
as a labourer, of no home, was charged on remand with
obtaining £1 from the Hon. Philip Stanhope, M.P., by
means of false pretences. He was further charged with
obtaining £1 5s. in the same way from the Rev. Archer
George Hunter, vicar of Christ Church, Epsom. It is
alleged that in February, 1899, Mr. Stanhope received
a letter purporting to be written by the Rev. Charles
Jones, vicar of St. Andrew's, Burnley, stating that he
had obtained a situation for a man named Austin. The
letter asked Mr. Stanhope to advance "Austin"
sufficient money to carry him to Burnley. The prisoner
called on Mr. Stanhope and was then handed a
sovereign, but it was afterwards found out that the
letter was a forgery. On November 29 last, the Rev.
A. G. Hunter received a letter by post with a similar re-
quest, supposed to be written by the Rev. Edgar Wharton,
vicar of St. Mary-le-Wigford, Lincoln. Within three
hours of the time the letter was delivered the prisoner
called at Mr. Wharton's house and was given a cheque
for 25s. The accused was again remanded as other
charges will be brought against him.

At GUILDHALL, before Mr. Alderman Crosby, ALFRED
LUSSAN (otherwise Baron de Lussan), described as of
the Grand Hotel, Northumberland-avenue, and of
Woodcroft Castle, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire,
appeared in answer to an adjourned summons at the
instance of Mr. James Stratton Thompson, stockbroker,
for obtaining credit to the extent of £20 and upwards
(namely, £797) without disclosing the fact that he was
an undischarged bankrupt. Mr. Campbell-Johnston, who
prosecuted, said that in December last the defendant
was introduced to the complainant by a Mr. Golden,
and on the 15th, according to instructions, 50 Lake
View shares were purchased for him, the market then
being in a favourable condition owing to a rumour that
Ladysmith had been relieved. On the 16th there were
directions to sell 100 Lake View shares, but only 50
were disposed of, and a loss was incurred. While these
transactions were being carried through the prosecutor
had no idea that the defendant was an undischarged
bankrupt. Mr. J. S. Thompson, a member of the
London Stock Exchange, carrying on business at
Copthall-court, said he did the business in question
through Albert Golden, a commission agent. On
December 15 last he purchased 50 Lake View Gold
Mining shares for £817 6s. On the following day
Golden asked him to sell 100 shares, but he declined
to sell more than 50, and there was a loss on the trans-
action of £68 17s. He sent the contract note to the
defendant with a request that he would forward a
cheque, but he got no reply. He had never been paid.
Directly he heard that the accused was an undischarged
bankrupt he took these proceedings. Golden stated that
he was in ignorance of the bankruptcy. On behalf of
the defence an adjournment was asked for to enable
counsel, who had not attended, to cross-examine. The
summons was adjourned, defendant being released on
his own bail.



could distinguish the line of the trenches, but they failed to silence the terrible fire. At last our men reached the river, but where there should have been a ford there was 7ft. of water. The few who tried to cross it, overcome by the weight of rifle and ammunition, were drowned. The rest lined the bank, and poured in a tremendous fire on the still almost invisible enemy. Then came the general's order to retire, and our men fell slowly back. It was during the retirement that the brigade suffered the heaviest loss. Half General Lyttelton's brigade went out to cover the retirement, but the men had to retire half a mile across the open under perhaps the heaviest fusillade of the day. Even when they at last reached cover the 40-pounder on the top of the hill pursued them with shrapnel until the naval battery eventually silenced it. The day after the battle it was reported that the Boers had dammed the river below the bridle drift, thus making it impassable. It is more probable that the guide, a Kaffir, led them to the wrong place.

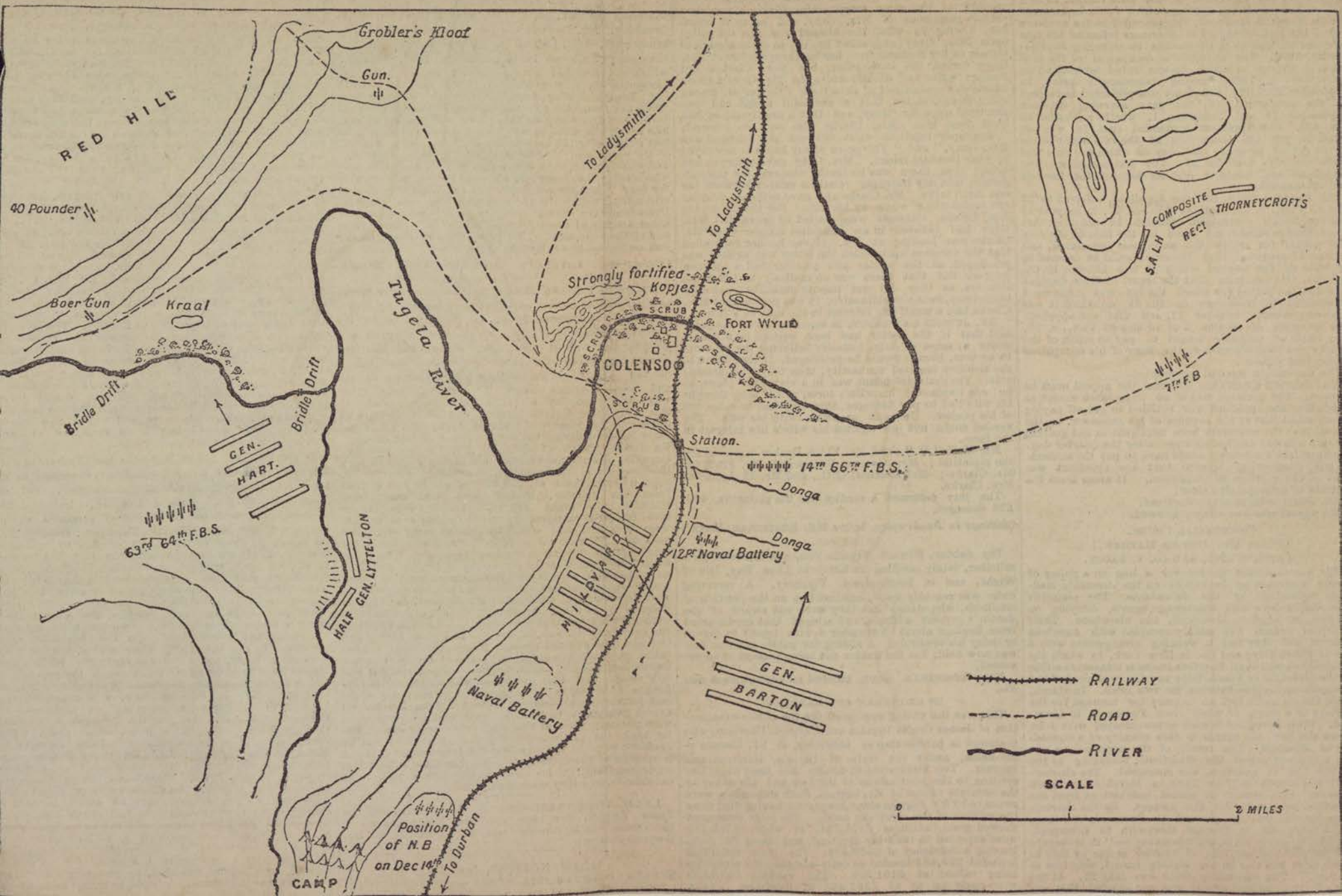
In the centre the naval battery had at first directed its fire entirely on Fort Wylie. Under the combined fire of this battery and the batteries under Colonel Long, the small kopje on one end of which the fort stands became completely enveloped in lurid clouds of smoke and red dust, which rose straight up in the air and gave the effect of the hill being on fire. The hill was chiefly used by the Boer riflemen, who, as far as could be seen, retreated very soon after the bombardment began. But there were also two or three small guns mounted on it. Under the tremendous fire the gunners worked their guns bravely for a time, but at the end of half an hour no reply came and the bombardment ceased. Fort Wylie was silenced. One of the last shots from the 4·7in. guns, a lyddite shell, struck the corner of the fortification and knocked the whole end of the fort shapeless.

Meanwhile the central attack began to develop. General Hildyard's Brigade on the left of the railway was advancing in extended order along the flat top of the spur straight on Colenso bridge, and the Irish Brigade a little behind them was crossing the plain on the right of the railway in the rear of the now silent 14th and 66th batteries. The Queen's were the leading battalion of Hildyard's Brigade supported by the Devons. From the manner in which they advanced they might have been taking part in a field day at Aldershot. The country over which they advanced was absolutely devoid of cover, and they were subjected to a heavy shell fire from the kopjes behind Colenso which the naval battery did its best to silence. Nevertheless they advanced in perfect order, maintaining absolutely perfectly their intervals and their alignment. As they approached Colenso the enemy opened a heavy musketry fire upon them from the banks of the river. It was now that the want of artillery was most apparent. The naval battery, the only one supporting the advance, was unable to get at the enemy, who were down in the hollow, and there was nothing to check the latter's fire. Still the Queen's pressed on. They checked a minute in a Boer shelter trench, and then with a series of short rushes the leading company gained the edge of the plateau and disappeared over it into cover in the scrub that grows all round Colenso. Company after company succeeded them, and down below we caught glimpses of men running across the open from one patch of cover to the next. The roar of musketry swelled louder and louder, and then it died away into single shots. Then it suddenly rose again, and a swarm of brown figures were seen swarming up the steep sides of Fort Wylie and disappearing on the other side. The naval guns behind were trained on the struggling mass, when the word went round that it was our men storming the fort. But it was not, it was the Boers evacuating their positions along the river and falling back to their second line of defence, and the sudden storm of musketry was our men firing on them. Previous to that they had not seen a single Boer to fire at.

During the advance two companies of the Devons had crossed the railway with their colonel, Colonel Bullock, to support the 14th and 66th Batteries. They and two companies from the Scots Fusiliers, who had advanced on the right side of the railway, took shelter from the Boer fire in the larger of the two dongas behind the guns. At 9 30 General Buller and General Clery rode down to the guns and remained there some time under a heavy fire. It was here that both the generals were wounded. General Buller was hit in the ribs by a fragment of shell, which, fortunately, did not penetrate his coat, but gave him a severe bruise, and General Clery was grazed right across the chest by a Mauser bullet. It was here also that Captain Hughes, R.A.M.C., staff-surgeon to General Buller, was killed, being hit in the chest by a rifle bullet. General Buller then ordered the naval 12-pounder battery, which had remained in action all the time, to retire. They had lost 32 oxen, and their Kaffir drivers had long since run away. With infinite difficulty it was done, however, but the spare ammunition wagon was left behind. A Natal farmer and transport-rider named Pringle, the owner of the wagon and span of oxen, then went out quite alone, his Kaffirs having deserted him, and under heavy shell fire at last inspanned the oxen, and brought back the ammunition. A little later two exceedingly brave attempts were made to recover the lost guns. Captain Schofield, A.D.C. to General Buller, Captain Congreve, temporarily acting as Press censor, and Lieutenant Roberts, A.D.C. to General Clery, with about six men, harnessed two teams of horses to limbers and galloped out to the guns with them. On the way out Lieutenant Roberts was wounded in three places, and Captain Congreve was hit in

PLAN TO ILLUSTRATE THE BATTLE OF COLENSO.

(From our Special Correspondent.)



the leg as he dismounted. The rest were not touched, although they were under a terrific fire, and succeeded in bringing back two guns, the only two saved from the 14th and 66th Batteries. A message was then sent to the 7th Battery, which was on the right asking for assistance in getting the guns out. Captain Reed, of the 7th Battery, rode down with a team of wagon horses; but while they were being harnessed to one of the ammunition wagons they were almost all shot, and Reed was forced to retire, being himself wounded in the thigh. After this General Buller gave orders that no more attempts to save the guns were to be made.

On the extreme right Lord Dundonald was attacking Hlangwene Hill. He went round to the east side of the hill, and then, dismounting his men, advanced with the South African Light Horse on the left, the composite regiment in the centre, and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry on the right. The 13th Hussars were left in reserve, and the 7th Field Battery, under Major Henshaw, alternately shelled Hlangwene Hill and Colenso. Under cover of this fire Lord Dundonald attempted a flanking movement on the east side of the hill, and was advancing up a narrow valley when his flank was turned by a party of Boers who had moved down off the main hill on to a spur and engaged Thorneycroft's. This movement of the enemy prevented further advance, and the mounted infantry could not do more than hold their ground for a considerable time. At length the order to retire came, but for two hours it could not be obeyed owing to the heavy fire the enemy poured in whenever they tried to move. At about 3 30 the 7th Battery, by well-directed shelling, had sufficiently silenced the enemy's fire to allow the retirement to take place. Even as it was, however, the losses during the retreat were far heavier than they had been during the attack. This was the first time the South African Light Horse had been under fire, and they behaved splendidly under it.

About midday by General Buller's orders a general retirement began all along the line, except on the extreme left, where the retirement had already taken place. General Hildyard's brigade, pursued by a deadly fire, retired in just as good order as when they advanced, the Boers reoccupying the positions they had vacated, but not attempting any pursuit. By some mistake the order was not communicated to the men who had gone to the support of the disabled batteries, and when the Boers crossed the river in force at about 4 o'clock to take possession of the abandoned guns the former were surrounded and made prisoners. Most of the wounded, including some wounded officers, were left for our ambulances, and their sufferings were intense, for they lay in the donga without shade or water for about six hours before help came.

Our losses in killed, wounded, and missing were 1,114, but the proportion of killed to wounded was fortunately extremely small. Many of the men were very slightly wounded indeed, the most frequent wound being one in the foot. This in the majority of cases was not serious, as many of the men so wounded hobbled to the ambulance without assistance after having had the first dressing applied.

The extreme strength of the Boer position it is almost impossible to exaggerate. Men who know the country well say it is by far the strongest position in Natal; Langs Nek, they say, cannot compare with it. The Boers held an exceedingly strong position, and no one can deny that they made an exceedingly able defence. To have lain low for two days when they saw our camp within easy reach of their big guns, and to have forborne to fire on the morning of the battle until they had us within easy reach whilst they themselves were all the time under shell fire, was a thing many more disciplined troops could not have done. Their position was excellently planned, their trenches and gun emplacements were extremely well hidden. All day we were fired at by guns whose position we could never find, and through the heat mirage we were never sure exactly where the musketry fire came from. It was one of the conditions of modern warfare. We had to attack an invisible enemy whose position could not even be fixed by the smoke of his rifle. It was rifle fire that caused our losses. Their shell fire, though accurate enough, was not deadly, and during the advances men did not drop till they had come within effective rifle range. This was the case in spite of the fact that by far the greater number of the Boer shells burst, and burst accurately too, sometimes right in the middle of our men.

The extreme heaviness of the enemy's fire often at what is now considered close range induces the question, Are the Boers really such good shots as they are made out to be? Perhaps when there are shells bursting over their heads they are not quite so steady; but, considering the amount of firing, one might reasonably have expected that had those trenches been manned by British infantry the casualty list of the attacking force would have been heavier.

Our big naval battery, after its first success against Fort Wylie, seemed unable to repeat the performance on the guns on the other kopjes immediately behind Colenso. It was reported the day after the battle that the enemy had erected bomb-proof shelters over their guns, from which they only emerged to fire. It is impossible to say whether or not this is true. Several times our shells pitched right into the emplacements and burst there, and usually after that the gun was silent for from half an hour to an hour, but almost invariably at the end of that time it would commence again. It was as if the gunners

had fled on the explosion of our shell and only returned when they considered it to be quite safe to risk another shot. There were two Hotchkiss guns which could never be located all day.

The following day an armistice was agreed to for the purpose of burying the dead. The Boer loss is quite impossible to estimate. It is extremely difficult even to guess at the numbers engaged, as they were never seen and only the intensity of their fire gave any clue.

During the night of Saturday, the 16th, after the conclusion of the armistice, camp was shifted about a mile back out of range of the enemy's big guns.

18th January. 1900.

GATACRE'S REPULSE AT STORMBERG.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

PUTTERSKRAAL, DEC. 7.

The move forward is at last at hand. A strong column will leave here by rail to-morrow evening, and, having detrained north of Molteno, march on to the Boer laager at Stormberg, which it is proposed to rush with the bayonet at 3.30 a.m. on Saturday. Only one field battery is to proceed with the troops, and this, having selected horses, is to be also conveyed by rail. The distance is about 25 miles, and would be far too much for horses only just off the ship, and General Gatacre has wisely decided against overtaxing their strength by such a march. Every one is to go as lightly equipped as possible, the baggage being left to follow the column later on. Sir William has most kindly arranged to have the horses of the newspaper correspondents conveyed with the train which carries the Headquarter Staff, so that it will be our own fault if we are unable to gain a fair idea of what takes place. To attempt such an enterprise on foot is of but little use, since a pedestrian with his limited powers of locomotion cannot cover a sufficiently wide area to gain a comprehensive view of operations upon even a reasonably large scale. We shall have somewhere about 2,500 of all ranks, including two and a-half battalions (less details) mounted infantry and artillery. It is a thousand pities that, owing to the delay in sending him reinforcements, the General is not in a position to do as he would have much preferred—make a decided move with the intention of sweeping the enemy right over the frontier by a continuous advance. But even what is about to be attempted must, if successful, be attended by very important results. The line to De Aar will be reopened within a few days, and the petty commandos in the Dordrecht and Barkly districts will be obliged to fall back as the only alternative to being destroyed in detail. A concentration of the enemy about Burghersdorp and a subsequent fight in that neighbourhood, probably at Albert Junction, may be expected to follow the Stormberg engagement. At all events, the immediate concentration of the enemy is a certainty; but there is of course a chance that his combined strength may be too great for us to tackle with the troops at present available; in which case we shall be obliged to await the arrival of reinforcements. Such delay, if it occurs, will be most regrettable since much moral effect will thus be lost.

DECEMBER 8.

The move northwards has been postponed until to-morrow, the reason being, I believe, that after further consideration it has been decided that an earlier start than that arranged for to-day will be necessary in order to reach the enemy's position before break of day. Under present arrangements, therefore, we shall leave here about the middle of the day to-morrow. The 16th Field Hospital under Major Lilley, R.A.M.C., only arrived in camp yesterday, and although fully efficient in every way, yet I imagine that a start off to fight a battle on the very same evening would have been a somewhat severe test.

DECEMBER 12.

I have had neither time nor opportunity to write more until now, and the task before me is a very difficult one.

General Gatacre had under his command in this district only three and a-half battalions, two batteries field artillery, and some 850 mounted infantry and volunteer horsemen. The Colonial Boers were joining the enemy in considerable numbers, and it appeared very needful to strike a blow that would have sufficient influence to check the stream of rebellion. Stormberg Junction had been occupied by the enemy, who had thus cut the lateral communications by rail and telegraph with the British forces under Lord Methuen and General French to the westward. At first sight it may appear as if all Sir William Gatacre needed to do was to move forward his troops north of Molteno to a position of observation threatening Stormberg, and by so doing, even if obliged to delay an attack upon the Boers at that place, overawe the disaffected. But inactivity after a forward movement will generally, and rightly, be interpreted as a confession of inability to proceed further, and such, pending the arrival of reinforcements, would have been the actual condition of affairs. Moreover, with the forces at his disposal the General was not strong enough to maintain himself in the vicinity of the enemy and also to guard his own communications. Something therefore needed most urgently to be done, and Sir William elected to adopt a bold course. Accordingly he arranged for a sudden swoop by rail upon Molteno from

Putter's Kraal, followed by a night march and an attack at dawn upon the enemy's position. That the enterprise involved extreme risk, and that such an attack upon a difficult position that had not been properly reconnoitred by efficient staff officers is against the principles of war, it would be idle to deny. Yet there are occasions when the true instinct of a commander leads him to disregard all rules and accept the risks that his conduct may entail upon him. The whole question turns upon the value of the advantages consequent on success in comparison with the losses that may be incurred in case of failure. General Gatacre was quite aware that he might incur disaster, but he considered it his duty to face the risks before him without regard for his own reputation or any other considerations except the immense gains to the British cause that would assuredly accrue in the event of victory.

I am fully persuaded that the decision to carry the Stormberg position by a *coup de main* was justified by the circumstances under which it was arrived at. Certainly, had the enterprise proved successful no one who attempted to pass hostile criticism upon the victorious General could have obtained so much as a hearing. The actual failure was due to a variety of accidents, some of which, it is true, were not unavoidable.

Stormberg Junction, at the foot of the "Rooi Kop," a considerable mountain overlooking the station, is situated about nine miles to the north of Molteno, the magnetic bearing being 356deg. The Rooi Kop has its greatest length north and south, and to the north-west, west, and south-west of it were the Boer positions and the scene of the fight. The intention of the General was to fall upon the south-western portion of the Boer defences by inclining somewhat to the westward and then coming up in a north-easterly direction upon the right front of the enemy. In the event—owing, no doubt, to some extent, to the darkness—the guide at the head of the column lost his way, with the result that the force made a wide detour to the westward, circling completely round until, returning from the north-west, it struck the right rear in place of the right front of the enemy.

Owing to various delays upon the railway, the start from Molteno took place two hours later than had been intended, and this fact, added to the immense increase in the length of the march, deprived our troops of the aid which the moon would otherwise have afforded upon the road to their halting place, and further, which was even more detrimental, necessitated their subsequent advance against the enemy being proceeded with after only one hour's rest instead of three. The infantry had been at work, or in the train in open trucks, or marching since 4 a.m. on Saturday morning. The actual march occupied seven hours, and it is, therefore, little to be wondered at that the men were wholly incapable of making a supreme effort when at last they were surprised by receiving fire at short range whilst marching in fours in fancied security. On receiving the enemy's fire the companies at hand rushed at once against the kopjes from which it proceeded and, advancing from boulder to boulder, swiftly commenced to ascend. Indeed, it is the fact that a considerable number actually reached within a few yards of a lower line of "scanses" which could not, however, be reached without ladders. But at this juncture our own artillery, failing in the yet uncertain light to observe the ascent of the infantry, opened fire upon the enemy, and several shells falling short dealt destruction amongst the assailants of the position. A partial retirement instantly ensued, and, having been brought to a standstill, the attack gradually melted away until, convinced that the case was hopeless, the General ordered the "retire" to be sounded. Had the order been promptly obeyed the troops might not improbably have been withdrawn without very serious loss, and a fresh attempt might even yet have been successfully prosecuted. But it was not to be. Many men were loth to retire because they were anxious to go on, whilst not a few were so utterly exhausted that they simply preferred to stay where they were, at all hazards, than to undertake the ordeal of a rapid retirement over the open ground at the foot of the hills. Eventually over 500 unwounded men were taken prisoners. Steadily, as if on parade, the retirement was executed by those who responded to the order, the soldiers moving back at a steady pace, without the least hurry or confusion, and halting constantly to fire. As an example of rear guard skirmishing the performances of the Northumberland Fusiliers and Irish Rifles could scarcely have been surpassed. Disputing every inch of ground the survivors of the ill-fated attack finally gained a line of low hills, which formed a horse shoe about 1,500 yards west of the scene of their repulse, and from which the road by which the column had advanced shortly before was within easy reach. It was indeed fortunate that this most excellent rallying position was at hand. Whilst a sufficient portion lined the crests and easily kept the enemy back the remainder were re-formed in rear. Then, finally, when all hope of collecting more men had to be abandoned, the General gave orders for the retreat upon Molteno.

Fortunate, indeed, was it that at the last moment, before leaving Putter's Kraal, Sir William decided to take both batteries of artillery in place of only one. Had there been but one battery the entire force must have fallen into the hands of the enemy. Never were batteries more skilfully handled. Retiring alternately from position to position the gunners splendidly atoned for the mischance of the earlier morning. The courage and steadiness of all ranks in the 74th and 77th Field Batteries undeniably saved the remnant of

the infantry and themselves also from destruction or capture. Even as it was, had the enemy shown the very least enterprise, the situation must soon have become desperate. The mounted troops, too, vied with the artillery in their unflagging energy and devotion, but all would have been unavailing had the enemy pursued his advantages with courage and average common sense. Our line of retreat lay round the circumference of a circle of which the enemy held the centre, so that from first to last the Boers possessed the advantage of working on interior lines. Their heavy guns, themselves in complete security upon account of their superior range, swept the plains over which the tired troops were wearily plodding. The fire was beautifully directed, but fortunately harmless, owing to the shells being nearly all plugged. Bursts were quite the exception. Be all this as it may, it is at least certain that before many miles had been traversed in retreat stragglers were the rule and formed bodies the exception. Amongst the latter a party of the Royal Irish Rifles was most skilfully directed and kept well in hand by the adjutant, Lieutenant Sitwell, whose behaviour was distinctly conspicuous. I am certain that, say, five miles from Molteno, 300 average good men could easily have rolled up the entire column—all that was needed was to head it and swallow it by driblets as it came along.

So far as I can understand the matter the causes to which this most lamentable failure must be attributed are as follows :—

(1) The map of the ground was utterly misleading and worse than useless. Not only was the contouring so incorrect as to give a totally false picture of the configuration of the hills, but the actual distances and the roads were inaccurately represented.

(2) So far as I am aware, no one amongst the responsible authorities had taken any compass bearings, and consequently no one knew where he was being taken in the dark. A knowledge of the general direction in which it was intended to proceed and occasional reference to the compass would have sufficed to disclose the fact that the guide completely boxed the western half of the compass-dial—concluding with a straight shot at the needle-axis—instead of keeping a line pointing a few degrees west of north.*

(3) The Berkshire Regiment, by whom the redoubts now occupied by the Boers at Stormberg had been built, and to whom every inch of the ground was familiar, were left at Queenstown instead of being employed to recapture the works which they had so unwillingly evacuated about a month previously. The consequence of no one knowing where he was going or what he had to attack, or when proximity to the enemy had been reached, was that the infantry, marching in fours, were suddenly fired into at a point where after ascending but a few feet their further advance against the enemy was precluded by an unclimbable precipice. The moment that the first shots were fired companies doubled straight at the points whence the firing seemed to have proceeded and commenced to scale the hill. Soon, however, they came upon a perpendicular wall of rock, from the summit of which the Boers were plying their rifles at half-a-dozen yards' distance. Here fell Lieutenant-Colonel Eagar, and close to him Major Seton, of the Royal Irish Rifles. Colonel Eagar was the man who reached the highest point attained by any of the attackers, and was then shot down, where many another British officer has fallen before now, at the head of his battalion, gallantly leading them as in the days of old when long-range weapons had not been invented.

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*[Note.—Our Special Correspondent at Cape Town, in forwarding this account of General Gatacre's repulse, makes the following interesting comment :—" Your Correspondent with General Gatacre, I think, exaggerates this point. Owing to the abundance of magnetic ironstone all over South Africa (and the name " Rooi-kop," " red-head," probably indicates its presence near Stormberg) compass bearings are liable to be all over the place, especially at night, when it is impossible to know how near one may be to magnetic rocks. At Chieveley one day I was taking some bearings which made Colenso lie due east instead of north, north for the nonce happening to be a large stone a yard or two away."]

(4) Over 500 men, afterwards made prisoners, had fallen into a trap from which they failed to extricate themselves. Consequently when the rest of the force had been rallied upon a defensive position in rear the General had not forces sufficient to warrant a fresh attempt upon some selected point of attack.

(5) In any case the men, who had been by this time on the move for over 24 hours on the stretch, who had just completed seven hours' marching through the night, and who had been actually under arms for upwards of 16 hours, were so dead beat that severe hill fighting was quite beyond their powers. During the actual retirement from the hills attacked—or rather under which we were ourselves attacked in anticipation—men were falling asleep in the open ground, under fire, after or before using their rifles. No sooner did they halt to fire than they fell forward sound asleep. An officer told me that he awoke several such men by kicking them soundly and thus insisted upon their continuing their retreat to a place of safety.

(6) The guns were at first in the same trap as the infantry and were compelled to retreat some distance over very difficult ground before they could come into action upon, even then, a poor position, with most inferior command. During this movement a gun was lost in consequence of

being stuck fast and the struggling horses shot down by the enemy. It was a pitiable sight, of which those who saw it cannot speak without emotion.

Finally, to state the case in brief. The position to be attacked had not been reconnoitred by any of those to be engaged against it, and even its exact situation was unknown to any of them. The information supplied by the Intelligence Department was complete and accurate, but owing to the misdirection of the march its value was thrown away. The distance to be marched was nearly doubled. The start was two hours late, so that the moon set long before the journey had been completed to an intermediate halting-place, and the men lost the rest that they so much needed. Day broke without the point of attack having been reached, and at the time when the enemy opened fire the column was unsuspiciously "route marching." Both battalions were winding along the foot of the hill and were fired upon simultaneously; both consequently became at once engaged in a skirmishers' fight, so that there remained no formed body of troops to interpose by any deliberate action in accordance with any fixed idea.

Defeat in such circumstances was the natural consequence. The only marvel is that the force escaped annihilation; certainly but for the good work done by the artillery and by the mounted troops not one man could have reached Molteno, although the shooting of the Boer riflemen was contemptible in the extreme. Worse shooting in action than that of the Boers in the Stormberg engagement has, perhaps, never been seen in war. Moreover, the failure of the enemy to make any determined attempt to cut off the straggling procession of worn-out troops denotes either strange want of confidence or incompetence. That we should have been beaten by such an enemy renders our case the more deplorable. Our retreat was molested merely by "snipers." Upon the other hand, the Boer artillery practice was splendid. They had no field artillery, and apparently not more than two mobile guns. Some say that they had but two guns in all, including the 40-pounder in a fixed position. Yet they succeeded in teaching most of us what it is like to come under a well-directed shell fire. Luckily, however, we had our instruction at small cost to ourselves, since few of the Boer shells burst. This was no doubt a cause of disappointment to their gunners—but not to ourselves.

It was, I think, a pity that the two companies of the Royal Scots and the 12th Company R.E., who remained in Molteno, were not ordered out to cover the retirement of the troops. The occupation of one very awkward position about three miles from Molteno by fresh troops was most desirable. Had the Boers been enterprising and made use of this position, we should have been cut off when actually in sight of our goal.

STERKSTROM, DEC. 13.

I omitted to mention that the armoured train which advanced toward Stormberg from Molteno had a narrow escape. The Boers had laid a pretty little trap by partially removing fish plates and getting ready a big gun to open on the train as soon as it got into difficulties. The sharp eyes of those in the train were, however, destined to perceive the trick, and a halt in time saved the situation. No sooner had the train come to a standstill than the gun opened fire, the range evidently having been measured, since the first shot was pretty close and the second and third within a few feet. The range was about 7,000 yards. Lieutenant Gosset did not wait for more. Forty-pounder shells cannot be digested, even by armoured trains.

It should also be noted, in order to show how early in the proceedings misfortunes commenced to befall, that the field hospital, bearer company, Maxim gun of Royal Irish Rifles, with sundry ammunition wagons and other vehicles, lost the column at the very start, and pursued the direct road to Stormberg, upon which they bivouacked at the point C, shown on the accompanying rough sketch. At dawn, this detachment, guided by a native policeman, moved round to the west, and eventually rejoined the column during its retreat. Until this reunion took place, the troops were absolutely without any hospital or ambulance.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

STERKSTROM, DEC. 13.

Since concluding my letter this afternoon, in which I endeavoured to describe and to some extent account for the disaster which we have experienced, it has occurred to me a narrative of my own adventures during the eventful 10th of December and the night of the 9th might be interesting to some of your readers. The infantry marched off at 9 15 p.m., and, as we were unwilling to give our horses unnecessary fatigue by a long march at infantry pace, two other Correspondents and myself waited half an hour with the intention of accompanying the artillery. The latter, however, not being ready to move so soon as we had expected, we followed after the infantry, whom we supposed to have proceeded by the Stormberg, road which runs in a northerly direction from the town of Molteno. We did not hurry ourselves, but rode at a leisurely pace, making about five miles an hour. At the end of a little more than an hour and a quarter we began to wonder why we had not overtaken the column, and shortly after one of us dismounted, lit a match, and examined the road in search of footprints. There was no fresh "spoor" whatever, of horse or foot, except the tracks of our cart; all else was quite stale. What, then, were we to do? That we were on the direct road to Stormberg was certain, and also that this

road was the one which we had been informed would be used by the column. Naturally, we concluded the infantry must have moved off the road by some Kaffir path which we had failed to notice. After a brief consultation we decided to return and meet the artillery ; and this we did in some haste lest they also might perhaps elude us. At the end of about two miles we heard wheels, and supposing the sound to herald the approach of those whom we sought we halted and dismounted to await their arrival. To our surprise the supposed artillery turned out to be the hospital and bearer company, with sundry ammunition wagons, a Maxim gun, and other odds and ends. At the head of this conglomeration rode Colonel Edge, R.A.M.C., to whom I addressed myself. He had been ordered, he told me, to " follow the artillery," and he was naturally astonished when I explained to him that he was actually following nobody. At this juncture there arrived two sergeants of the Cape Mounted Police, who were likewise under the impression that they were following the detachment of their own corps. From these we learned that the nearest Boer laager was about two miles beyond the point from which we three Correspondents had just returned. The time was now 11 30 p.m.

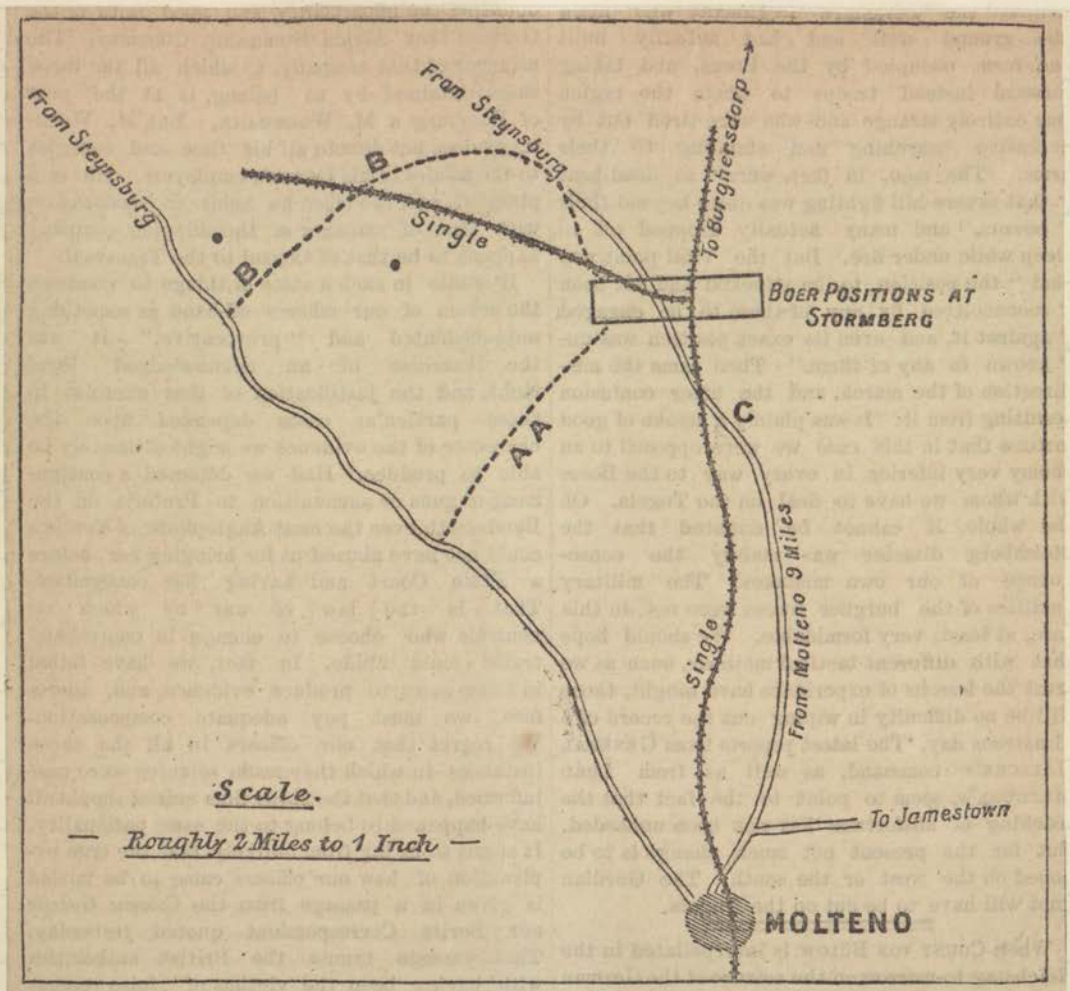
After a consultation it was agreed that we should ride back to Molteno and report to Lieutenant-Colonel Waters, D.A.A.G., who had been left in command, and from him learn what was to be done. It was at least obvious either that the column had taken the wrong road or else that the detachment which we had encountered had lost its way. The moon had now set, and we could not ride very fast. However, at the best pace that we could muster we hurried back to Molteno, the police who accompanied us examining the tracks they knew of, so as to detect the spoor of the column in case it had anywhere left the road. Our impression, however, was that the troops must have taken the Steynsburg road direct from Molteno, and this we eventually found was the case. It may here be mentioned that Molteno is generally placed wrong on the maps of South Africa. It is the first station south of Stormberg Junction, from which it is nine miles distant. Having arrived at Molteno Station, we speedily roused Colonel Waters and explained the situation. One of the chief *employés* of the Intelligence Department was present, and he assured the colonel, from our description of where we had been, that the detachment was on the right road. Naturally, therefore, Colonel Waters could do no more than request us to tell Colonel Edge to proceed. In short, the officer left in command at Molteno was not aware, nor was his civilian assistant in the Intelligence branch, that the general had changed his plans and elected to march by the westerly route.

We felt very small and very much annoyed. We had deliberately undertaken a task which involved adding 12 miles or more to our night's journey—for nothing—and, what was worse, we had no idea where to find General Gatacre's troops. However, there was nothing for it but to return to Colonel Edge, as we had promised, so away we went. Within a mile and a half we met the entire detachment marching back towards Molteno ! Colonel Edge and those with him, instead of remaining where they were until we returned, had decided that they must clearly be on the wrong road, and they preferred therefore to anticipate the order to return which they expected us to bring. This gave the wretched mules an extra six to seven miles' work. Once more the column reversed and set out for the second time towards Stormberg.

Leaving the wagons to follow at their own pace, we trotted forwards, accompanied by the policemen as a sort of advanced guard. Just before we reached the furthest point to which we had attained on the previous occasion we heard wheels and voices from the westward, and, riding up, found one white and four black policemen with two mule wagons, one of which carried the reserve ammunition of the Northumberland Fusiliers. In answer to our inquiries, the constable, who did not strike me as an intelligent man, stated that he had lost the column in the dark and had struck across the veldt so as to find the main road—and, in short, here he was.

The time was now 2 30 a.m., and it was decided to wait where we were until dawn. The drivers of the wagons were told to outspan and feed their mules. At 3 45 we got ready our horses and, accompanied by the police, cantered forward to reconnoitre. The police sergeants went to the westward, whilst the three correspondents and four blacks went east at first, and then, working gradually north and west, on hearing the firing to our left front, we cautiously approached the Boer positions amongst the kopjes west of Stormberg. By 4 30 we had clearly located the scene of the fighting, upon which I sent back one of the blacks who knew the road to tell Colonel Edge what we had discovered and to guide the lost detachment into the region where its various contingents would find their proper spheres of usefulness. The black faithfully and successfully performed his task, and consequently the wounded men eventually had one ambulance, otherwise there would have been none. A civilian, whose name I regret having forgotten, drove out with a Cape cart from Molteno and did excellent service, disregarding his own safety and deliberately remaining for many hours under shell-fire conveying wounded men from the rear.

But to return to my story. Having duly sent off the black to Colonel Edge, we continued upon our way, winding in and out amongst the kopjes opposite to those along which we could see the Boers hurrying along towards the scene of the fight. So intent were they upon this that they disregarded or failed to see us. At all events, we were only once fired at throughout our progress



A.A.—Route by which Gatacre intended to reach the Boer positions.
B.B.—Route actually followed after missing the turning *via* A.A.
C.—The spot where the field hospital, with a maxim gun, sundry ammunition wagons, &c., bivouacked, 2 30 to 4 a.m., having lost the column at the start and proceeded by wrong road.

from opposite the centre of their position until we passed round the western flank and there joined the right of Gatacre's troops on the defensive position to which we had observed them retiring. Up to this point we had no reason to suppose that any greater evil had happened than that the attack had failed. For this we were in a measure prepared, as the firing had not commenced until after daylight and had not been heavy. We, therefore, supposed that, having arrived late, our people had found the enemy wide awake and had merely done some little skirmishing in order to disengage themselves. The regular and leisurely mode of retirement which we had observed naturally encouraged us in this belief. As I stood under shelter of a friendly boulder on top of a convenient kopje watching the retirement, I almost forgot my disappointment at the failure which it indicated in my admiration for the manner in which it was being carried out.

A few hundred yards before we reached the right of our firing line on the ridge of low kopjes where the defensive position had been taken up we met Captain Amphlett's company of mounted infantry galloping forward to seize a favourable covering position further to the right of the British force. This proved an excellent move. The line of retreat for our men was on the cir-

cumference of a semi-circle, the centre point of which, together with the entire diameter, was in the hands of the enemy. The resistance offered by the mounted infantry for a long time prevented the enemy from utilizing some of the most favourable ground that would otherwise have been at his disposal upon our exposed flank. Riding up on to the ridges I met Captain Riddell, of the Northumberland Fusiliers, whose company was deployed along the crest line, and at his request cantered further to the right in order to ascertain whether some men whom he had observed coming back towards that part were actually arriving, he having lost sight of them. Just as I reached the kopje, which had hitherto hidden them from view, I came upon the party coming in all right, so was able to return and reassure Riddell as to their fate. Little, however, did either of us then realize that not less than 500 men in addition to the killed and wounded were boxed up in a trap and were shortly to be made prisoners. The few regarding whom we were at the moment interested represented merely a tiny fragment that had succeeded in breaking loose.

It was curious how few at this time seemed to have grasped the fact that we were in an extremely tight place, but by degrees it dawned upon us. I talked for some time with the men of the Northumberland Fusiliers who were lying down in quarter column about 200 yards in rear of the ridges, my object being to get the soldiers' idea about what had taken place. That there had been very bad luck and that they wished that they themselves had been in front at the time seemed to be the only ideas prevailing. That there might be any further danger or difficulty did not seem to have crossed their minds. By degrees, however, from what I heard from various officers I came to understand that we had had a very serious beating, and that more excitement would assuredly follow. Accordingly, I rode back towards the ridges, intending to have a good look round and obtain some notion of the general situation. Just, however, as I arrived, the troops received the order to retire on Molteno, and various local matters put general considerations out of my head. First there was a sergeant of the Northumberlands who dislocated his ankle amongst the boulders, and immediately afterwards there was a young subaltern of the Irish Rifles, named Stevens, who had been shot through both lungs. The latter, under the circumstances, naturally interested me most, but my relations with the former resulted in an amusing incident which is worth telling, and to which I shall therefore refer presently. Meanwhile, the career of Lieutenant Stevens was remarkable. From the ridge he walked down for several hundred yards supported by two men of his regiment. Then for about three-quarters of a mile four riflemen carried him in a blanket. From the blanket he was transferred to an ammunition wagon, upon which he was carried about a mile or more. His next conveyance was a hospital stretcher, and, finally, after a still longer interval, he reached the ambulance. Nothing but the marvellous pluck and endurance of the man could have saved him. Hurt as he was nine men out of ten would have sunk from exhaustion. But Stevens had always a cheery smile as one rode up to see how he was getting on, and as he jolted along upon the ammunition wagon he laughed heartily when I told him how the black police who had been with me in the morning had deserted me in order to steal Boer horses that had stampeded during the firing. I was delighted to hear yesterday when the P.M.O. returned from Queenstown that Stevens is doing well and likely to recover. The sergeant also, I was rejoiced to learn, had reached the hospital. I was afraid that, after all, he might have been left on the road for reasons that will presently be explained.

From the ridges this sergeant rode my horse to the rear with strict injunctions to send it back immediately, so soon as some other means of conveyance had been reached. My meaning, of course, was that a mounted man should lead back the horse. But it so happened that when my friend the sergeant caught up the ambulance the horse was handed over to some man or other belonging to I know not what, but, at all events, a man who had no rifle. This worthy, finding himself in possession of a horse, preferred to ride it himself to returning it to its rightful owner—and he rode it accordingly. Retribution, however, was speedily to fall upon him. Taking a short cut round a kopje, I intercepted him when emerging from a defile and had my revenge. Observing that he was unarmed, I thrust into his unwilling hands the rifle I had taken from the sergeant and also made him take over a couple of handfuls of ammunition which I produced from my pockets. He had made me walk perhaps two miles with a rifle, but in the end he himself had to tramp 12 carrying the same weapon into Molteno! It was, perhaps, two hours later when I again met my sergeant. Major Lilly, R.A.M.C., had asked me to ride forward to catch the ambulance and, having turned out of it any men who could bear travelling on carts or wagons, to bring it back to pick up some bad cases in rear. Amongst those whom the non-commissioned officer in charge of the ambulance caused to dismount was my sergeant, who inquired anxiously after his rifle. I reassured him as to this, and then left him sitting at the side of the road whilst I returned with the ambulance. When riding back once more I did not see him, so assumed that he had been picked up, but was much troubled about him and naturally thankful when next day I was able to ascertain for certain that he had safely reached his journey's end. It would have been hard had I, after being instrumental in his being originally enabled to leave the field, been the cause of his being hereafter left behind and made a prisoner.

During the rest of the march I do not think that any further proceedings of mine are worth writing about. I watched our artillery practice, and observed how excellently our mounted troops anticipated the enemy by taking possession of successive kopjes from which to keep him at a distane. The enemy, moreover, was, I thought, most unenterprising, and, except by the fire of his big gun of position, did but little to interfere with our retreat. This gun was well placed to command the road, and its fire was admirably directed. Fortunately, its shells generally failed to burst, and I do not believe it succeeded in doing us any damage. Finally, having been with the troops from about 5.30 a.m. until 10 15, I trotted along for the last couple of miles to Molteno and dismounted at the Central Hotel at 10 45. I have seen in my life one or two ticklish fights, but at Stormberg for the first time I was enabled to realize what actual defeat means. It was, indeed, a case of *væ victis*. The hopeless exhaustion of the unhappy soldiers was terrible to see.

19th January 1900.

GATACRE'S REPULSE AT STORMBERG.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

WEEK COMMENCING DEC. 14.

STERKSTROM, DEC. 14.

To-day we heard of Methuen's fight at Magersfontein, which seems to have been terribly bloody and upon the whole distinctly unfavourable to our troops. It is about time that after one of our so-called victories we should be left masters of the field and in a position to count the bodies of the dead Boers. Hitherto the Boer losses have invariably been stated to have been enormous, but we have been altogether without evidence as to the actual number of the slain. The Highland Brigade appears to have walked straight into the lion's mouth just as we ourselves did last Sunday. Such catastrophes cannot be classed as accidents. If a man "coasts" down a steep, winding hill and runs into a flock of sheep or some other obstacle, the consequences to himself and to his bicycle are not the result of accident, but of recklessness. So also in the case of columns surprised upon the march. If proper precautions are taken, surprise is impossible, and therefore the officer who allows his force to be surprised must *ipso facto* be guilty of negligence.

With reference to the disastrous engagement at Stormberg last Sunday a most peculiar incident has just been brought to my notice. Captain Hall's company of the Royal Irish Rifles lost touch of the battalion and was proceeding by the main road from Molteno to Stormberg, but, unfortunately as it happened, the error was detected and the company was brought back on to the Steynsburg road. Had Captain Hall been left to proceed by the Stormberg road his company would have bivouacked thereon with the hospital, the Maxim gun of his battalion, and the other details that had become detached. The result would probably have been as follows. At 3 45 a.m., when we three Correspondents, together with two Cape policemen and four blacks, rode forward to reconnoitre, it cannot be doubted that Captain Hall would have moved with his company and the Maxim to support us. Three-quarters of an hour later, when we had located the fight and sent a guide to conduct the hospital, &c., by a circuitous route to the rear of our troops, Captain Hall would have certainly elected to go straight for the field of battle as we did. The consequence would have been that, instead of three Correspondents watching helplessly the retreat of our men from the scene of their surprise to the defensive position upon which they rallied, a hundred rifles and a Maxim would have opened fire from an excellent point of vantage upon the flank and rear of the Boers. Such an interposition would, in my opinion, have saved the day. The riflemen and Maxim would have arrived, probably unseen, within 800 yards of the Boers. Certainly we were very ill-served by fortune.

I have also learned that two mounted infantry men of the Berkshire Regiment actually reported the error of the guide in passing by the correct turn to the right from the Steynsburg road, but their protest was unheeded by the officer to whom it was addressed, he naturally supposing that the guide at the head of the column knew better.

DEC. 15.

This morning it had been my intention to accompany a patrol of the mounted infantry under Lieutenant Braithwaite, Northumberland Fusiliers, in the direction of Tarkastad, but at the last moment the patrol was despatched by a different route to that originally intended, and consequently I missed the party. However, I had a most enjoyable ride whilst searching for the patrol, and saw quite a large number of springbok besides capturing a tortoise which I brought back to camp in triumph when I returned to breakfast about 9 a.m. The scenery to the west of this place is very fine, and the morning was comparatively cool. The headquarters of the Royal Scots marched into camp from Putter's Kraal about 10 a.m. The men are

a very fine-looking lot. The Scots have four companies here, the remainder being at Bushman's Hoek.

DEC. 16.

We heard last night that the 10th Brigade was *en route* to join the division, but this morning we have been bitterly disappointed to learn that this welcome and much-needed reinforcement has been at the last moment diverted to Lord Methuen. The 1st Battalion of the Derbyshire Regiment, which is landing at East London, represents all the assistance that Sir Redvers is at present in a position to grant us. This means inactivity and a consequent spread of rebellion. I hear upon reliable authority that some 400 colonials have joined the enemy since our defeat of Sunday last. Naturally, if we fail to make a forward movement, numbers of those who are still wavering will throw in their lot with their kinsmen. The situation in this district is extremely serious, and something must be done. I trust that when the Derbyshires have arrived we shall at least reoccupy Molteno. The guns lost at Stormberg have been replaced, and the 79th Field Battery has joined, thus completing the brigade division. A howitzer battery has also arrived at Queenstown, so that we are much stronger than before.

DEC. 17.

The Derbyshires have arrived in camp and are a very fine-looking battalion. They have been lucky as regards the weather, which has been threatening all day, but the rain, most considerately, delayed its descent upon us until after the new-comers had pitched their camp.

DEC. 18.

The prospect of any serious military enterprise in the immediate future has now become more than ever discouraging. The news from Natal is decidedly bad, and our howitzer battery is to be taken from us, no doubt in order to make good the losses in artillery so unhappily experienced on the Tugela. Moreover, the Northumberland Fusiliers are ordered to return tomorrow to East London, and, our infantry force being thereby reduced to a strength equivalent to only two battalions, this column becomes almost impotent. The Derbyshires are very strong, nearly 1,100, but the Irish Rifles were reduced by losses at Stormberg to about 500 of all ranks, and of the Royal Scots there are but four companies. Under the circumstances no move forward seems feasible. There are, no doubt, enough men to occupy Molteno, but troops to guard the communications thereby increased in length are not available.

I cannot help thinking that the strategical organization of this campaign has been injudiciously contrived. We have tried to be ubiquitous and have consequently paid the usual penalty. Weak everywhere, we have left the initiative with the enemy. Had the whole force in Cape Colony been concentrated for a single effort against Bloemfontein we should by now have reached that place, whilst the mere fact of our proceeding against it would have sufficed to raise the siege of Kimberley and at the same time to remove a great deal of pressure from Natal. Concentration of force is always preferable to dispersion, except in cases where the only object that needs to be considered is the destruction of the enemy. In the present campaign we have been obliged to pay much attention, and not wholly successfully, to securing our own safety. Strategically we have hitherto had undeniably the worst of it, whilst tactically we cannot justly claim to have any balance in our favour. It should also have been taken into account that Boer troops, like all irregulars, are most formidable when in comparatively small bodies, and that the proper aim of the commander of a regular army opposed to such an enemy is to compel concentration against himself by directing a sufficiently heavy force against some important and unmistakable objective. Thus, had we marched 25,000 men on Bloemfontein, the Boers must either have concentrated to oppose us or been content to permit our movement to take place without serious hindrance. Such concentration would have compelled the enemy to raise the siege of Kimberley and to renounce all incursions over the Cape Colonial border, besides seriously shaking the confidence of the invading army in Natal. There is but one thing that comforts me with reference to the manner in which Sir William Gatacre's division has been permitted to drift along in an incomplete condition. Clearly we are being kept in a state of abnormal weakness merely in order that other columns may be strengthened. Thus concentration is perhaps really coming to be regarded as desirable, although in two directions instead of—as I would prefer—in one only.

Of all the regrettable incidents recorded in the history of the region allotted to the 3rd Division, the next after our disastrous repulse at Stormberg, December 10, is the failure to reoccupy that formidable position immediately on the arrival of the Royal Irish Rifles at Queenstown, when such an operation at once became feasible. The Rifles and Sir William Gatacre reached Queenstown on November 18, and it was not until the 26th that the Boers took possession of Stormberg. I admit that a detachment at that time occupying Stormberg would have been liable to being practically besieged, but I do not think that it could have been in the smallest danger of capture. In any case the risk attending an expedition for the purpose of relieving a British garrison at Stormberg would have been far less than that which we actually incurred with such fatal results in attacking the Boer position ten days ago. However, what is done is done, and it is easy to appear wise after the event. Moreover, I feel sure that had General Gatacre had any reason to suppose that the troops promised him were not destined to arrive

he would have anticipated the Boers in the occupation of Stormberg. With an entire division at his disposal the General could have made the Boer position untenable without being obliged to waste a man in attacking it. Naturally, therefore, he awaited the arrival of means for the accomplishment of that bloodless result.

DECEMBER 19.

The departure of the Northumberland Fusiliers to-day has been a great personal loss to myself. Nothing could exceed the kindness that I have received from all of them—from the commanding officer, Major Frend, downwards. I had begun to feel myself quite at home amongst them in the way that is possible only when the welcome extended is unmistakably genuine. Hospitality in the truest meaning of the term has always been characteristic of the 5th Fusiliers. By the way, whilst on the subject of this distinguished regiment, I was glad to hear to-day that the conduct of Second Lieutenant Duncombe Shafto has been brought to the notice of the general officer commanding with reference to the rescue of Lieutenant Stevens, Royal Irish Rifles, who was wounded during the earlier stages of the retirement from Stormberg. Hearing Lieutenant Stevens calling out, young Shafto with some private soldiers returned under a heavy fire, and carried the wounded officer to a place of comparative safety. I did not personally witness the actual incident, but, as described in a former letter, I met the party on the ridge where the force rallied. At the time, I supposed that Lieutenant Stevens had received his wound on the ridge itself, and therefore referred only to the devotion of the men, who, fatigued as they were, carried him by one means and another for so long a distance. Those who experienced it will admit that the fire which swept the approaches to the ridge from the enemy's side was hot enough to render slow progress carrying a wounded man extremely dangerous.

DECEMBER 20.

The political horizon at the present time is heavily clouded and necessarily reflects the military situation. The only thing that has so far prevented a general rising of the colonial Boers is the manifest determination of Great Britain to persevere until completely victorious. Were any doubt to arise upon this latter subject, every waverer would instantly declare for the enemy. Boer loyalty has scarcely any appreciable existence except in the imagination of professional anti-Englanders. Every member of the Bond proves himself, *ipso facto*, a rebel at heart, since no loyal subject could possibly reconcile membership with loyalty. The aims and teaching of the Bond are the overthrow of British power in order to make room for a pan-Afrikander confederation; but, as a rule, the influential members have not hitherto been prepared to risk person or property in anything further than what is now termed constitutional agitation, but was formerly known as treasonable conspiracy. The quarrel between the Transvaal and the British Government has offered a chance to the Bond such as could have been gained by no other means, and if it is sought to comprehend the reasons which moved the Orange Free State to make common cause with the sister Republic, one has not far to seek. Bond intrigues lie at the bottom of everything. At the present time the Republics are both of them very angry, and justly so, with their colonial brethren because so many fair promises of support have yielded comparatively little result in the form of armed adherents. But the Bond is playing its own game in its own way. Should the Republics vanquish Great Britain, the Bond pulls off the long odds and wins a huge stake; whilst so carefully has hedging been attended to that in the contrary event these "loyal" subjects stand to lose nothing. "Loyalty" at present means abstention from active rebellion and no more; but even this remaining shred is now being subjected to a heavy strain. Many of the doubters are beginning to wonder whether the numerous reverses of the British may really be accepted as evidence of forthcoming victory for the allied Republics—their catspaws. The moral effect of any great success upon either side just now would be tremendous. For example, should Lord Methuen relieve Kimberley within the next few days, not only would the tide of rebellion be instantly checked, but many now in arms would steal back to their farms. Upon the other hand, were Kimberley to fall, the enemy would gain the services of several thousands of colonists. Had Gatacre been successful in his attack upon Stormberg, the rebel movement in the eastern provinces would have been reduced to positive impotence. His failure has added several hundred men to the enemy's commandos. The marvel is that this local rising has been of such comparatively small dimensions. Probably the fact is that nearly all those of a really adventurous spirit had already joined hands with their kinsmen, whilst the remainder still need further convincing as to the probability of ultimate success before deciding to risk their necks or their farms. Your Afrikander is a shrewd man of business. He is willing to speculate only when, whatever the fate of the venture itself, he can see what he firmly believes to be a sure source of gain for himself. The fog of war still limits the power of reading the future, and pending the appearance of a strong light the Bond and its adherents will continue sitting upon the fence.

The Free State troops invaded the Cape Colony only because they were pressingly invited to do so. Naturally, the commanders expected a great number of men from the territory invaded to join their standards, but they were doomed to disappointment. Consequently, proclamations were issued annexing the districts occupied, and, this

done, commandeering commenced in order to provide, under pressure, the recruits who had failed to join voluntarily. But the application of commandeering has been very partial ; the rich Boers escaping it, and only the poor being enrolled for service without their own consent. As a body the well-to-do Boers will have nothing to say to rebellion unless they can clearly foresee its success, and since this remains improbable outward " loyalty " will be preserved to the end. Afterwards, rebels and arch-rebels will sing " God Save the Queen " with the best of us, and resume the paths of constitutional agitation.

DECEMBER 21.

There was a field-day at 5 a.m. this morning, the object of which, so far as I could understand, was to enable the general to judge the value of a neighbouring position by standing thereon whilst it was being attacked. The conclusion to which he probably arrived was that, if the enemy would only employ similar tactics to those adopted in the instance under his observation, the position could certainly be held without difficulty and the attackers would suffer heavy loss. It was the old, old story, use of ground utterly ignored and faith pinned solely upon a frontal attack directed across the open veldt. We play so, fight so, and get beaten so. Something in the climate of South Africa has clearly produced an epidemic of mental aberration amongst our superior officers. Africa is proverbially the grave of military reputations, and with these sink also the bodies of brave officers and men. We shall beat the Boers in the end, but by sheer weight of numbers, not by the superior skill and efficiency that should have given the advantage to an army composed chiefly of highly-trained Regular troops.

19th January 1900

WITH GENERAL FRENCH'S FORCE.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

ARUNDEL CAMP, DEC. 17.

Arundel Camp, owing to the delay in advance, has gradually assumed the appearance of a permanent station. It is beautifully situated under the lee of a range of kopjes, varying in height from 50 to 200 feet. On the left the kopjes extend in a half-circle for several miles, and all the commanding points are held by small bodies of the Berkshire Regiment, the only infantry at present here. In front of this screen of hills and towards the Boer position at Taaiboschlaagte there is a broad plain fairly flat extending forward without break for about two miles, where another range of kopjes is found, also semi-circular in trend, on our left running back right on to the camp range, but on the right broken off by a broad valley about half a mile wide. These outer kopjes were the favourite haunts of the sniping Boers. Orders were, however, given to-day by General French that these should in future be strongly held by cavalry patrols day and night, and it is hoped this will put an end to the Boer amusement and so save men and horses much practically fruitless work. There is a fair supply of water, but, owing to limited means of distribution, the watering of horses and cattle is a long business. Steps are being taken to open out some other known springs, which should much facilitate matters. On Monday, December 18, General French in person conducted a reconnaissance to Jasfontein farm on our right front with the object of harassing the Boers and of learning their numbers in that neighbourhood. The O Battery R.H.A., escorted by the New Zealanders, were taken out. Shell fire was opened on the position, and, no reply being made, the homestead was visited, and no sign of life found, though from appearance of house it could only have been vacated shortly before. In a few minutes rifle fire began from the adjoining kopjes, and the general, his staff, and the New Zealanders had a very warm quarter of an hour getting out of rifle range. Meantime the Boer guns above Taaiboschlaagte joined in at a distance of about 7,000 yards, judged by the R.H.A. range-finder, but did no harm, though several of the shells came very close. The R.H.A. guns were soon at work again, and after a quarter of an hour silenced the rifle fire, whereupon a return to camp was made. The Boer shooting was by no means good or our loss must have been considerable. The New Zealanders had two men wounded, one, Trooper Bradford, reported killed, left on the ground, but ascertained later by the ambulance people to have been wounded through the thigh and stunned by a fall from his horse, two horses killed and four wounded. The Boer loss was, at least, two men killed, and native deserters reported later that there were a considerable number wounded. The general complimented all concerned on their behaviour. The ambulance driver was also informed at Jasfontein that Sergeant Freeman, listed as killed in previous skirmish there, was convalescent in the Boer hospital.

DECEMBER 19.

Not a shot has been fired, General French's dispositions having had the wholesome effect of keeping the Boers at a respectful distance. During the afternoon I visited the extreme outposts towards Vaalkop with Colonel Lessard, of the Canadian Dragoons, and from the plain about one and a half miles out we had an excellent view of the whole Boer position, which is undoubtedly very strong. There can be little doubt that without strong reinforcements, pre-

ferably of cavalry, this division has arrived at a deadlock. The experience here is, however, unique in the history of the campaign so far. With a force mainly composed of cavalry and horse artillery, General French has effectively checkmated the much larger force of Boers in front. Using the position here as a pivot, he has deprived the Boers of access to ten miles of the country on each side, and he has established patrol connexion with both Hanover and Rosmead. Even with a very small force the position here is practically impregnable. Naauwpoort is effectively guarded, and from all points of view this is superior to it. An attack on De Aar would expose the enemy to great danger, as also would any attempt on either Rosmead or Hanover. Several attempts to get round our right flank towards Naauwpoort were frustrated with considerable loss to the Boers, and have taught them the futility of the efforts. Had he under his command, say, double the quantity of cavalry, the Boer position at Taaiboschlaagte would be speedily and inexpensively turned, while if assaulted by infantry the price to be paid would undoubtedly be heavy. The mounted infantry does not appear to be an unmixed success, even although South African horses are supplied. The men have but rudimentary knowledge of horses, and take out of them twice as much for an equal result as the trained cavalryman. As, however, there is but little chance of any such reinforcements arriving here speedily, this camp may be regarded as fixed here for some time till the Boers are tired out into vacating their position and retreating. Native deserters examined to-day reported Norval's Pont Bridge to have been blown up by the Boers yesterday. and this. if true. would indicate some such intention. Patrols observed to-day a gun being moved from the main position to a point above Vaalkop, which, as a probable line of retreat towards Colesberg, lends some additional strength to the idea. There can be no doubt whatever that the Boers in front have learned to dread so mobile a force as that used against them here several times with effect—namely, cavalry and horse artillery. A conversation with a loyal Boer illustrates this. He said that from his farm he had learned with certainty one thing—that the Boers were much more afraid of our men than ours of the Boers. He lives in the vicinity and sees a good deal of what skirmishing goes on, and his opinion is not without value in consequence. He also said that very few of the people in the neighbourhood had joined the enemy ; that Geldenhuis, the owner of Jasfontein, was innocent of all participation with them, though twice attacks on our men have been made from his homestead. The majority of well-to-do farmers are understood to be very indignant with the Free State leaders for crossing the Orange River and so placing them in an awkward and easily misunderstood position. The recruits gained are said to be mainly no-account town loafers, men for years in Transvaal pay and poor *bijwoners* or day-labourers.

Among the well-known personages to be seen here is the famous young South African cricketer J. H. Sinclair, who has joined Little's scouts, and he expresses as fervent a desire to bowl over a few Boers as he did to knock out Lord Hawke's team in the final test match at Cape Town. Young Sinclair is rather in a difficulty, no patrol jacket large enough for him having so far been obtainable here or at Naauwpoort.

DECEMBER 20.

Cavalry patrols have been out all day worrying the Boers at many unexpected points and several times drawing fire from the Taaiboschlaagte big guns and also from the new position above Vaalkop. Some few rifle shots were exchanged without casualties on our side. Great activity was noticed at Taaiboschlaagte and numerous wagons seen arriving and departing.

The English cavalry horses are doing none too well, but with prolonged rest may be expected to improve. Some observers, however, say that the scale of forage allowance, though 2lb. more than in England, is still insufficient to keep them in good condition with hard work. The newly-arrived horses seem all to be troubled with bad colds, and the infectious illness, locally called "new sickness," has made its appearance. The symptoms are dulness of eyes, running of the nose, swelling of throat, and staring coat. The Australian and New Zealand horses are, generally speaking, acclimatizing better, and the Cape horses of the mounted infantry would, with better treatment, do well. A visit to the lines shows some horses of most mongrel colour, greys painted so far as possible to represent khaki, and a very curious effect it has.

19th January 1900.

ON THE SOUTHERN BORDERLAND.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

HEADQUARTER CAMP, ARUNDEL, DEC. 21.

Having been instructed to proceed to Aliwal North I had ample opportunity whilst passing through Burghersdorp to obtain evidence of the feeling of the colonial Dutch in the last-named district, which is the birthplace of the Afrikander Bond. I found in Burghersdorp and surrounding district of Albert only a very few sympathizers with our own nation. One Englishman, home-born, and a merchant, even going out of his way to proclaim himself pro-Boer. In a speech made afterwards when the Free State Boers came into Burghersdorp he was, however, sadly snubbed by the Boer commandant. Wishing to "run with the hare and hunt with the hounds," he said he

was a "loyal Englishman, and a bondsman." The commandant interrupted, "No, that cannot be; it is impossible." The commando which had already crossed the Orange River at Bethulie Bridge had not come into Burghersdorp when I left, but there was every indication that they would do so.

At Aliwal North I found the feeling of the colonial Dutch even worse than in Burghersdorp. The Boer camp on the Free State side was pitched only about 3½ miles on the Rouxville road, a picket of about 20 men being kept night and day at the end of the bridge. The Cape Police were watching the Aliwal end. The situation was almost ludicrous, as the Cape Police had instructions to retire on the nearest colonial town as soon as a commando approached. This state of affairs lasted for a week after I arrived; then an alarm came that a commando was approaching from the Burghersdorp road. The Cape Police immediately retired to Jamestown, 30 miles away, never even having sighted the Boers. The commando did not come for eight days afterwards. The police picket having left the bridge, it was nothing unusual to see several of the leading colonial Dutchmen and even Dutch ladies going on to the bridge talking to the enemy for hours together. On several occasions the picket was invited across to the hotel at the Aliwal end and hours were spent there in conversation and drinking. Even in the club, I have heard men whom I have known for the last 16 years openly declaring their intention of joining the enemy's ranks if a commando came over. The day came at last, after every one had begun to think the Free Staters had given up the idea of crossing. On November 13 the cry was "the Boers are coming." There was no false alarm this time. Stopping at the Free State end the commandant sent three of his Field Cornets over to ask the Aliwal magistrate to bring his wife and family down and stand on the middle of the bridge while the commando rode over. The magistrate refused to bring his wife and children, but came with his assistant and the chief constable, and there they stood until the last of the Boers had crossed. I counted them as they came over. There were 450 men with a good many spare horses and one 7-pounder Krupp gun.

The invaders were well armed with Mausers and plenty of ammunition. There were also some Englishmen (burghers of the Free State) who had been commandeered, amongst them being two doctors (Cockerton and Jefferson) who afterwards deserted, their reason being not only that they were English subjects, but that there were no bandages, medicine, stretchers, or medical comforts of any sort whatever.

After reading the proclamation of annexation and hoisting the flags of the two Republics the commando camped outside the town and commandeering of colonial subjects commenced. The large proportion of them, however, did not require any commandeering summons as they freely volunteered. Several of them I know personally. I stayed on five days after the Boers occupied the town, wanting to gain all the information I could of their movements, numbers, &c. Three hundred more came over the second day, making in all 750. I saw no more guns. On the fifth day after their entry to Aliwal I was obliged to leave. The commandant had proceeded to Burghersdorp, where the Bethulie commando had already entered and occupied the town, and in Aliwal the local rebels were beginning to be nasty. So I had to hide all my passes, diary, and other papers, and very fortunate it was I did so, for the very next day I was searched at the hotel, my portmanteau being emptied of everything on to the floor. Even my leggings were pulled off to see that I had no papers concealed. After this I applied for a pass, which I succeeded in obtaining, and, leaving all my belongings behind me (where they still remain), I got on my horse and ran the gauntlet of the Boer commando and proceeded on my way to Jamestown.

Without any ceremony or warning the same commandant (Olivier) who had entered Aliwal rode into Jamestown the morning after my arrival, attended by about 40 men. Jamestown itself is a very small village, but the Boers in the district are all rebels and volunteered to join the enemy's ranks at once. The Cape Police having to obey orders, although themselves a bigger force than the Boers who entered the town, retired to Dordrecht. Having hoisted the Free State flag and appointed officials, Olivier and his men soon left on their way to Aliwal. I left the same day for Dordrecht, and thence to Queenstown, but after spending a day there, hearing that the Boers were likely to occupy Barkly and Dordrecht, I hurried on in that direction. I was too late for Barkly, as the town was occupied the same day as I arrived at Dordrecht. The magistrate at Barkly left his post some days before the arrival of the commando, leaving his assistant at his post. He had never troubled even to have the guns and ammunition removed from the Government magazine, so that the Boers made a nice haul of nearly 400 Martini rifles and 40,000 rounds of ammunition. In all the other towns occupied the magistrates (some of them of Dutch descent) stuck to their posts and had all munitions of war removed before the enemy arrived. Barkly was taken on November 23. On the same date the Hon. J. W. Sauer arrived and, with the member for Dordrecht, went on with the idea of holding a consultation with Commandant Olivier and of addressing the colonial burghers in the endeavour of persuading them not to rebel. Mr. Sauer, however, thought "discretion the better part of valour" and only got half-way, sending on the M.L.A. (Mr. "Pony" De Wet) and a Mr. Hynam (now a rebel) to see if it was safe for him to continue his journey to Barkly. These men returned to Mr. Sauer with information which led

him to return at once to Dordrecht. In the meantime both volunteering and commandeering were proceeding in Barkly. On November 27 Mr. Sauer held a meeting in Dordrecht, which was attended by about 250 whites and a great number of natives. A resolution was carried after some discussion protesting against the entry of any foreign commando into Dordrecht, but, although this resolution was carried and a deputation appointed to take it to Commandant Olivier at Barkly, I happened to be in the centre of the audience and heard all the Dutchmen had to say around me, which was anything but in accord with what they were voting for. Several asked, "Who is Sauer?" "He is not our member," "Why did he not go to Aliwal and address his own constituents?" and when Mr. Sauer read two telegrams from Mr. Schreiner giving results of Graspan and Belmont battles, many of the audience quite audibly remarked, "He is telling us lies." Mr. Sauer's speech was a very plain statement of the position of the colonial Boer who rebelled and the punishment he would meet with in the end; but it met with little appreciation either from Boer or British.

The deputation went to Barkly and presented the resolution to Olivier, and on its return the only statement obtainable from the members was that "the commandant was a fighting general, and if he was ordered to take Dordrecht he would do so." On December 2, at 4 30 a.m., the commando entered the town and took over the offices of the Government, hoisted the flag, and read the usual proclamation. The Rev. Mr. Marais, of Dordrecht (who had formed one of the deputation), a British subject, read the document. The commando, mostly composed of Barkly and Lady Grey rebels, was 500 strong, but no guns. They off-saddled for about two hours, after which the whole commando, with the exception of 50 men who remained for commandeering purposes, left for Jamestown, having 21 wagons of provisions, tents, &c.

In the afternoon I had a conversation with the well-known Mr. G. G. Munnik, a late magistrate of Barkly, who left the colony some 12 years ago in disgrace and has since been one of President Kruger's right-hand men in the Transvaal.

Knowing the gentleman intimately from Boksburg, in the Transvaal, I called on him at his room, where he was laid up. He received me courteously enough, but was full of the Boer victories, and his parting advice to me was to "get on board ship at East London as quickly as possible, as they (the Boers) would be down there in a fortnight." He gave me a pass to leave "Dordrecht O.V.S." I heard from him that all recruits from the districts of Barkly and Lady Grey were going on to Stormberg, and that the Boers would be careful to keep away from the borders of Kaffirland.

Having received my pass, I left for Putter's Kraal, where I found General Gatacre's camp.

To sum up shortly, the result of my travels amongst the colonial Boers is that nearly every one is in sympathy with the Transvaal and Free State, and that wherever a commando appears the bulk of the men will join, especially the younger men, who have no farms in their own name, and all the poorer class, who are living on the farms of the richer Boers as "bijwoners," or farm labourers. There are lots of cases of very wealthy farmers also rebelling, the names of all being well known to the magistrates of the different colonial towns.

19th January 1900

AFRIKANDER DISLOYALTY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, DEC. 27.

In an interview recently granted to Mr. J. T. Molteno, Sir Alfred Milner is reported by that gentleman to have expressed himself to the effect that he had a mission to crush out Afrikanderdom. The report of that interview, as given by Mr. Molteno, Sir A. Milner has since been obliged to characterize as inaccurate and misleading, but not before it furnished Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman with material for an attack upon the policy of the High Commissioner, in the course of which he entered into an elaborate comparison of Afrikanderdom with "Canadianism," contrasting it at the same time with "Downing-streetism," which last he assumes is what Sir A. Milner is now attempting to enforce upon South Africa. Both the comparison and the contrast are entirely misleading. By Canadianism is meant a local Canadian patriotism, a zeal for Canadian interests, a feeling of nationality separate from, though not conflicting with, devotion to the British Empire. Such a thing may, we can only hope, come in time, but it unfortunately does not as yet exist in South Africa except in the imagination of a few idealists like Olive Schreiner. The insuperable obstacle to its existence has hitherto been Afrikanderdom, in the sense in which the word is usually understood, the political embodiment of the strong race prejudices and separatist aspirations of the Dutch element. To most people out here the word Afrikanderdom has come to mean a movement for the expulsion of the British supremacy from South Africa and for the political subjection of the English half of the population to the Dutch. This is what Afrikanderdom means to Mr. Reitz or Mr. Steyn, when they declare in

their manifestoes that they have undertaken this war in defence of Afrikanderdom. And it is this Afrikanderdom that Sir A. Milner has made it his duty to put an end to. The only question to ask is, Has Afrikanderdom meant the same to the Dutch population of Cape Colony that it has meant to the political leaders of the Republics, or is there such a thing as a loyal Afrikanderdom? Against a Dutch party, whose object is to increase the political influence of the Dutch element of the population in a British colony, the Imperial Government has nothing to say. It may regret that divisions of race rather than of principle should form the chief material for political activity; but it would be against all the principles that govern our policy to the colonies to intervene. Nor has there ever been any attempt at such intervention in South Africa. The political supremacy of the small Dutch majority in Cape Colony has always gone unquestioned. Even since our statesmen have become aware of the disloyal ambitions fostered among the Dutch element in Cape Colony by the Transvaal there has been no attempt to interfere directly in the Colony, only an attempt to stop the infection of disloyalty at the source. That attempt, as made by Sir A. Milner, was to induce the Transvaal to divest itself peacefully of the character of a purely and aggressively Dutch and anti-English State and become gradually a mixed Anglo-Dutch State of the same general political complexion as Cape Colony itself. The attempt failed because the Transvaal was resolved, sooner than yield aught of its national ambition, to put the issue to the test of war. This war must now be the final test; it must put an end once for all either to British supremacy in South Africa or to the independence of the Republics. Peace on any terms short of one or the other of these will mean, not a settlement, but an armistice.

But for the existence of the Republics—due to our shirking the responsibility of administering poor and distant districts—there would never have been any disloyalty among the Dutch in Cape Colony. Their existence gave the Dutch element in our colony an external rallying point, and inspired them with a national ambition incompatible with any true loyalty to the British connexion. As long as the Republics were poor and unimportant it mattered little whether the Dutch dreamt of some distant day when all South Africa should be a Dutch Republic, as long as they remained loyal British subjects in practice. But the discovery of gold in the Transvaal changed all that. It converted a sturdy little Republic of farmers into a wealthy military State, and gave an entirely new life and new character to Afrikander ambitions hitherto more or less visionary. But at the same time that the discovery of gold quickened Afrikander ambitions, it confronted those ambitions with a serious menace. The discovery of the gold had not only brought wealth and power to the Transvaal, but it also brought with it a great influx of foreign population, mainly English. This new element was enterprising and progressive and by no means likely to content itself in the long run with a position of political helplessness. Thus at the very moment that the Transvaal was developing new ambitions it found its position made infinitely more difficult by the presence of a large immigrant population thoroughly opposed to those ambitions. As long as the Uitlanders could be kept down all was right, but, if once they got a share of political power in any proportion to their numbers, the whole national ambition would be knocked on the head. The hatred of the English, never dormant in the Transvaal, revived all the more acutely when the British Government began to make representations on behalf of its misgoverned and politically helpless subjects. The position had to be strengthened at all costs, hence redoubled importation of Hollanders and Germans, more vigorous suppression of the English Uitlanders, active intrigues with European Powers, and, above all, intrigues with the Dutch in the Free State and Cape Colony. Upon all this supervened the Raid. The effect of the Raid upon the Dutch population of South Africa was never fully realized by people in England. The English people as a whole could never be got to look on it as anything more than a rather reprehensible counterstroke in a game in which neither side was particular as to its choice of means. In South Africa it caused a commotion and excitement which have grown ever since. The indignation provoked by the illegal and violent character of the whole plot, and by the duplicity with which Mr. Rhodes deceived the party which had put such implicit trust in him account for some, but only for a part, of the bitterness of feeling stirred up by that unfortunate event. The main motive was terror, the realization of the fact that the peaceful and normal development of the Afrikander ideal stood imperilled, seeing that the Transvaal, the very corner-stone of the whole ambitious edifice, might at any moment fall into the hands of the enemy.

From that moment a great conversion set in in Cape Colony of men hitherto only disloyal in their sentiments and their ultimate ideals into men disloyal in fact, men actively scheming for the forcible overthrow of the British supremacy at the earliest possible opportunity. The Transvaal Government, as was only natural, did all in its power to help the movement. It felt that its only hope lay in binding all the Dutch in South Africa to itself and insuring their co-operation in war against England, before the Uitlander element in the Transvaal should get the upper hand. As the dispute with England went on, secret agents were freely sent into the colony to give and gain assurances of support and to help in the vigorous propaganda of sedition carried on by clergymen, schoolmasters, and Bond local organizations. In

many districts arms and ammunition, or the money to buy them with, were distributed to trustworthy local farmers. On every side a movement was in preparation which would sooner or later have ended in open rebellion whenever the Transvaal felt itself strong enough to declare war against England. The whole thing, however, was still vague and formless ; it was a general movement rather than an organized conspiracy, and a movement which affected different people in different degrees. Even after the Raid and up to the outbreak of the war those who were actively scheming for rebellion in the near future can only have been a small minority. The majority were more disaffected than before, but having no tangible grievances preferred to await the development of events.

For years the British people, with a certain natural self-complacency, have refused to entertain the idea that British subjects in a self-governing colony could possibly be disaffected. Those who have visited South Africa knew it, but before Sir A. Milner no responsible Statesman had the courage to lay his finger on that sore spot. At the present moment the tendency is almost too strong in the other direction. From some of the articles which appear in the English papers one might think that the whole Dutch population of Cape Colony had been elaborately organized for rebellion, and that the Afrikander Bond was merely the executive council of a great conspiracy. For this view there is no evidence whatsoever. There is nothing to implicate the Bond party as a whole, or, so far as is as yet known, any of its leading members, in an officially organized conspiracy against the Imperial Government. What is true is that there has been a good deal of winking at sedition by the Bond leaders to avoid unpopularity, or the suggestion that they were half-hearted in their zeal for the Afrikander cause. In some districts, too, there can be little doubt that the local branch of the Bond has been captured and made use of as a seditious organization. The absence of any general organization has been shown clearly enough at the outbreak of this war. Although the sympathy of every Dutchman in South Africa is with the Republics, there has hitherto been no concerted rising in any large district. All that has happened is that, where the Boer commandos have marched in and proclaimed the district annexed to one or other of the Republics, the local Dutch have joined readily, gladly salving their consciences with the plea that they had been made burghers and were obliged to obey the summons. From other districts many individuals have come over, each with his horse and rifle, but there has been no general movement. Such a general rising is still quite possible, but, should it occur, it will be due less to any regular organization before the war than to the excitement created by the continued series of British reverses among a population filled with disloyal aspirations. If Magersfontein and Colenso had been successes instead of serious checks, a general rising in the colony would have been out of the question, and even now a single decisive British victory may prevent rebellion spreading any further. Even in the districts now occupied by Boer commandos, where the population have practically joined the Boers *en masse*, the advance of a victorious British force would mean that a very large proportion of the 10,000 or more British subjects now in arms would return quietly to their farms, hide their rifles, and make preparations to file claims for losses incurred by the Boer invasion. But the danger of a general rising must not be lost sight of. South Africa is so vast a country, so scantily supplied with water, and so difficult to traverse except by railway, that the task of reconquering it if once the railways have been broken up will be one of exceptional difficulty, and will demand a far greater force even than the one we have already sent into the field.

The position of the Cape Ministry throughout the whole crisis has been a peculiar one. It is generally spoken of as a Bond Ministry or a Dutch Ministry, but it is really a composite Ministry, held together by opposition to Mr. Rhodes. Three of its members, Mr. Schreiner, Mr. Solomon, and Mr. Merriman are Englishmen. However strongly they opposed the High Commissioner's policy from an unwillingness to consider that the grievances of the Uitlanders were so pressing as to require remedying even at the risk of war, or to believe that the armaments and ambitions of the Transvaal constituted a menace to British supremacy, when once the war broke out they could not but wish for the success of the British arms. Mr. Schreiner has no doubt made several serious mistakes. If he had been more ready to co-operate with Sir Alfred Milner instead of endeavouring to thwart or forestall him it was always just possible, though not likely, as events now show, that the Franchise question might have been settled without war. When the war broke out Mr. Schreiner resolutely refused to believe in the possibility of the Boers ever crossing the frontier of the colony which he had so ostentatiously declared " neutral," and was only with difficulty induced to concur in the most necessary measures for the protection of colonial territory. On the other hand, since the outbreak of the war Mr. Schreiner has devoted his utmost efforts to the task of keeping the colonial Dutch quiet. He has used his influence over his own supporters in the Cape Parliament to make them endeavour to keep their constituencies from overt disloyalty. The mere presence of his name on the High Commissioner's proclamations has undoubtedly in many places had a powerful influence for good. But his position is one of extreme difficulty. It is no secret that, as the excitement in the country has risen, his Dutch

supporters have grown more and more dissatisfied with even that moderate amount of support of the High Commissioner which hours of persuasion and an ultimate appeal to his loyalty have succeeded in extracting from him. He receives no assistance or co-operation from Mr. Hofmeyr, the real leader of the Bond. As long as there is no rising on a large scale in the colony which would make it preferable to have a Progressive Ministry that would support the prosecution of the war with all its might and main, Mr. Schreiner will, in all probability, continue to stay in office, between the hammer and the anvil, satisfying neither English nor Dutch, but fulfilling a useful function, the value of which may perhaps be recognized after the lapse of some years.

Much less satisfactory than the attitude of the Cape Ministry is that of the Dutch Press, especially of its leading organ *Ons Land*, which is generally supposed to reflect the views of Mr. Hofmeyr, and which is practically responsible for the formation of the political opinions of the whole Dutch population of Cape Colony. Keeping carefully clear of any language that could be proved a definite incitement to treason in a court of law, it devotes an infinite cleverness to insinuating monstrous charges of cruelty against our soldiers and officers, to magnifying every British defeat, and passing over every British success, to making veiled suggestions that the British Empire is at its last gasp and menaced on every side by hostile Powers—in a word, to sedulously preaching rebellion. Its ablest articles are said to be written by that same Mr. Molteno, whose interview with Sir A. Milner gave Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman such opportunities for a discourse on Afrikanderdom.

There are some who think that the existence of such widespread disloyalty among the Dutch in Cape Colony is a proof that we are undertaking an impossible task in endeavouring to subjugate the Republics, and that we shall for generations to come have a hostile and rebellious population to govern all over South Africa. That view is based on a misconception. Of course there will be much bitterness for a time, but without a concrete grievance and without the existence of an external centre and nucleus of disaffection such as was provided by the Transvaal that bitterness will gradually pass away, as the Dutch realize that there is ample space for their national existence under the British rule of self-government and equality. But for the present it must be remembered that the whole Dutch population of South Africa, if not actively rebellious, is at least completely alienated. Politicians at home are already beginning to speak of consulting the views of the Dutch element with regard to the settlement which is to follow after the conclusion of this war. That is impossible. The settlement, whatever its details, must be made with every due consideration for the rights of the Dutch population and in no spirit of revengefulness, but it must by the force of circumstances be a settlement imposed upon them by us. The only real alternative is a settlement imposed on us by them.

20th January 1900.

WITH METHUEN'S FORCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

MODDER RIVER CAMP, DEC. 22.

The enforced pause which has followed the battle of Magersfontein affords an opportunity of considering from a wider point of view than has been possible hitherto the general situation and the place in it that has been taken by the relief column. That we have been thus far held in check on each of the three points of contact is true enough, but neither the issue of the war nor the confidence of the troops is thereby in any way affected ; in fact, the true state of the case is aptly exemplified by the American story of the man who was holding another down on the floor and shouting for help at the same time. The story goes on to say that to some one who pointed out the incongruity of his appeal, he gasped, "Can't you see he's tiring me out."

Whatever the temporary success of the Boers, we are tiring them out, and they are coming to know it. The younger generation of men have been fed high with the constant assurances that no British troops could withstand the Boer arms, that the rooineks would break and flee as soon as the burghers came swarming over the kopjes, and that the divinely protected army of the faithful would drive the English into the sea and eat their Christmas dinners in Durban, Cape Town, and Kimberley.

What these youthful Attilas have actually encountered has in a great measure taken the bounce out of their attitude. They have found that the reiterated assurance that the English are the Lord's enemies has not saved the Boers from continual and heavy loss, which is in their case irreplaceable. They have discovered that their leaders are in practice so little confident of their own precepts that they have never yet emerged into the open to meet their enemy ; above all, they realize that not one British garrison has surrendered to the besiegers, and that the acquisition and looting of undefended towns is not of great military advantage to themselves. They can hold us as yet, but their last man, last rifle, and last ounce of cordite is needed to do even so much, while the enormous reinforcements coming to our aid are no longer capable of being explained away. The advance of the Kimberley relief force has probably opened their eyes more than any other movement

of ours. From three positions of unusual strength they have been driven, and after the battle of Magersfontein, wherein their uttermost commandos were used, the tone used to the surgeons and stretcher-bearers was chastened indeed.

Fight they will yet, because they have burned their boats, and perhaps the Orange Free State is coming to realize that the Transvaal may even win a more respectful treatment at our hands when the day of reckoning comes than the State that had trimmed an even course of neutrality for many years, and has now turned upon her great neighbour only when the evil day came. The disillusionment is growing, and President Steyn will one day have to explain to his countrymen how it is that they are being hunted with the hare when they thought they were only asked to run with the hounds.

Of doubt or nervousness there is none among ourselves, and the confidence placed in the home Government is noteworthy. Had any of the members of the Cabinet who assented to the 1881 armistice, and have now given to the world the pusillanimous reason that decided them—had any one of them foreseen the deep disgust that has been awakened in the Army here by the confession, their motives would have been kept dark till the lapse of time had made any interest in their action merely historical. At this moment the 19 years that have elapsed seem but a few months, and the disgrace of the admission is felt more keenly in South Africa than could easily be imagined at home. Here the existing war seems but a postponement of that which Sir Frederick Roberts landed in Cape Town to press forward; for once the Roman estimate of Africa is wrong; it is a very old matter that is now being decided in the south, and nothing is more curious than to note the manner in which even the rank and file remember the incidents of the earlier struggle. And in its darker aspects there is much to remind one of the first war. The abuse of the white flag that marked Ingogo heights has marked every engagement in this war also; the shooting down of doctors and stretcher-bearers that closed on Majuba the campaign of 1881 has become a normal incident in that of 1899; and, while I write, a message from General Cronje intimating that doctors and ambulances within the fire zone will no longer be respected is received quite in the best spirit of his Potchefstroom record. Nothing has happened; the grievances of the Uitlanders are only the inevitable result of any compromise with the people against whom we then fought; the growth of the Bond is the natural consequence of our inaction a score of years ago, and the lives already lost, and to be lost, in this war are all payments for an accommodation borrowed then at ruinous interest.

The position in which the relief expedition is now placed can be summed up briefly by saying that the Boers hold and have strongly fortified the arc, while we are in possession of the chord. North of this bow which stretches east and west is Kimberley, some 18 or 20 miles from our outposts—near enough for continual communication to be kept up nightly by searchlights. The railway runs like the arrow from the centre of our position through the centre of theirs, though the mischief they have done to the permanent way will probably prevent any train from running through to Kimberley during the war.

Ten miles to the east lies Jacobsdal, a small town that has risen into prominence as the Boers' western depôt. Ammunition and stores of all kinds are kept here, and the anxiety felt by the Boers as to the safety of their supplies is shown by the erection of a strong fort between the rivers on the high road between Jacobsdal and Spytfontein. Of this last, Magersfontein, better known locally as Bissett's Farm, is the advance post, and actually stronger than the position at Scholtz Nek, on which the Boers certainly expected to be driven back during the engagement of December 11, for they did not bring up their reinforcements till past noon on the day of the engagement, when it seemed that the Boers were after all likely to be able to hold their intrenchments.

To the east, except by keeping to the banks of the Modder or the Riet River, it is impossible to obtain a certain supply of water, and the points at which a struggle is inevitable are easily to be foreseen. It is, of course, a disadvantage for an attacking force to advance along one side of a river, especially in the present case, when the drifts may change their depth in a few hours, and the services of men thoroughly acquainted with the locality have hitherto proved of more harm than advantage throughout the entire course of the expedition.

Time has never fought for any force as it is now fighting for ours. We are allowing time for the consumption of provisions and ammunition, not one pound of which can be replaced, except, in the former case, by the destruction of beasts upon which the Boers especially rely for transport. We are giving time for the development of latent discontent and disheartenment, and for what is probably an even more effectual solvent, the innate homing instinct of the Boers. To spend ten weeks in shooting down rooibaatjes was in 1881 no great hardship; to be forced in 1899 to keep the field while month after month expires, while their farms grow foul and weeded, while the enemy seems to grow in strength daily, and even their President is warning them that the end cannot be doubtful, is quite another matter. Besides, the Boer has never been called upon to provide for the sustenance of 15,000 to 20,000 men, with a like number of horses, in one place for more than a few days together, and of all discouragers of endurance the sickness that must follow want of sanitation is assuredly the most powerful.

Whatever their victories—and a Boer victory

generally means just the ability to outspan in the same spot as he had outspanned on the previous evening—the certainty of ultimate defeat has only to be recognized by a few of their leaders besides the President of the Transvaal for the whole edifice to crumble ; and discouragement is never far removed from panic among irregular forces.

But, in conclusion, a tribute must be paid to an illiterate and undisciplined nation for the gallant way in which they have repeatedly stood before our artillery fire. The explosion of lyddite, they report, has the effect of temporarily obscuring the reasoning faculties even when the sufferer has escaped without a scratch, and, if this be true, the demoralization that must follow is a new and a terrible element in war. Only when our men have worked their way to within a few yards of his defences, or have threatened to deliver a night attack—a most intimidating form of warfare to a bayonetless force—has the Boer retired, and, if we could but forget their long series of wilful malpractices no enemy would be more respected by his opponents. But these malpractices have unquestionably alienated from him the sympathies of one of the most good-natured and least prejudiced of his critics, the private soldier of her Majesty the Queen.

DECEMBER 25.

It must be remembered, in reckoning the part played by the Kimberley relieving force in the war, that the work before it at the outset was more complicated than that of other divisions, and the work actually achieved by it is marked by distinguishing features that are found in the record of no other advance.

The action of the Boers in attacking Kimberley at the beginning of the war was by no means chiefly a military movement. Indeed, in many ways the drawing off for that purpose of troops that could have caused far greater damage to the British by a rapid and ostentatious occupation of Naauwpoort, De Aar, and the almost undefended Orange River is hardly less than a blunder of the first magnitude. Kimberley *per se* meant, and means, nothing from a military point of view. The possession of Kimberley by either side is strategically of less importance than the retention of Colesberg. The vitality of the Boer defence is not thereby affected from a military standpoint, though the relief might end the war at once by striking at the Boers' prestige. The town could probably have been more satisfactorily invested by the occupation of the bridges at Orange River and Hopetown than by the closest cordon round the place itself. A demonstration in force by the Boers in Griqualand and the northern parts of Cape Colony would then have secured for themselves hundreds, perhaps thousands, of adherents, whom they have now lost.

The siege of Kimberley may be called a political measure, but even then only by a misuse of the word. An attack upon the richest city of the colony might rivet attention, might gain support among waverers, might paralyse the movements of the enemy by forcing his hand ; but all these considerations were based upon the assumption that the town would fall within a reasonably short period. When the direct assault failed, and the fact became known to those in command, it was no longer a political move to continue the close investment of a well-armed and well-provisioned stronghold. In war, more perhaps than in more veneered conditions of life, the primitive instincts of man carry a weight that is disproportionate when viewed in the cold light of strategy. Unrestrainable, unreasoning, unrecking of consequences, the Boers of both Republics have demanded the blood of Cecil Rhodes with a lust that has blinded them to their own welfare, and that has even balked them of their own end. Cecil Rhodes, though they do not know it, represents to the half-developed intelligence of the peasant class a system rather than a man, a threat rather than an achievement, an immovable obstacle rather than a wilful hostility. It is impossible to exaggerate the bitterness with which the Boers are coming to realize that their enemy has escaped, and that the ten weeks of the investment of Kimberley have been ten weeks of time wasted, of opportunities neglected, of delay, when to pause meant to hurry forward the day of defeat and of surrender absolute and unconditional.

To have secured the trunk railway, occupied the junctions, fortified the gorges, destroyed the bridges, blown up the dams, meant fighting England on equal terms, meant securing at first those advantages and victories that mean one thing on one's frontier, but quite another within two hundred miles of the enemy's seaport and base. It is not too much to say that the task of reconquering South Africa from the Hex River northwards and of holding in check the willing disloyalty that had crept to the very walls of Cape Town, without a railway, without the certainty of water, and against a foe as well-disciplined and sagaciously led as the Boers have proved themselves to be—this task might indeed have appalled the strongest man we possess. And at one time the thing was possible ; now, thanks to a personal and uncontrollable hatred, the danger, for months a grim and unspoken-of menace, is gone, probably for ever. While the best men of the Free State ringed the town of Kimberley, lost to everything but their desire once and for all to rid themselves of their enemy, yard by yard, mile by mile, bridge by bridge, the railroad that they should have destroyed as far as they could even touch it with their scouts was made secure, and when Lord Methuen moved out from Orange River the cloud that had overhung the colony for months rapidly cleared away.

But the work in front of the First Division

was not easy. The only thing that has almost uniformly favoured the enterprise has been the weather. Although it was nominally the rainy season, not a drift has been impassable, not a night, with the exception of the terrible night before Magersfontein, has been worse than merely cold. Otherwise the journey of this Division across a wire-strung veldt, intersected with dongas, shadeless, in parts waterless, compelled to accept and act upon evidence that was worse than useless, waging a day-long war of reconnaissance with an invisible foe, fighting at dawn what so far as could be seen were empty kopjes, hampered by wire from using cavalry to turn a defeat into a rout, was a test of steady perseverance that must have, and actually has, impressed the Boers with a feeling that the hour had indeed sounded for them.

That we are now compelled to hold our hands is not—and of this, too, the Boers are well enough aware—due to anything but common prudence and a proper recognition of the danger of throwing forward a flank while the central advance is still checked. As I have already pointed out, time is working entirely on our side. General Grant made himself famous by a despatch by which we, too, seem to have profited :—"I intend to work it through on these lines if it takes me all the winter."

23rd January 1900.

A BOER DIARY OF THE WAR.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

MODDER RIVER, DECEMBER.

To watch from our own side the progress of the war is of necessity only to see one half of the truth, and nothing is more interesting than to glean now and again from a prisoner or a refugee some insight into the personal attitude of the Boers towards the war, some detail of their commissariat and transport, some suggestion of their discipline, loyalty, and other qualifications as fighting men. But a prisoner who has been taken unwounded on the field is rarely inclined to be communicative, and, indeed, when he seems most ready to speak he is least to be trusted, while a wounded man naturally suffers from such a disgust and weariness of the whole war that his almost invariable assertion that the Dutch are tired of the struggle and willing to obtain peace at any price is only a reflection of his own feelings, and, as events have proved, by no means generally true.

But a diary of military movements kept by a Boer taken prisoner at Enslin is open to no suspicion of being intentionally or unintentionally false, and a few extracts I have been allowed to make from one which has fallen into the hands of the Intelligence Department are worth careful attention. The writer, a man of some position, had been commandeered in the latter days of October, and immediately sent his wife to Cape Town for safety. Perhaps nothing in this extraordinary war is more striking than the confidence of the Boers that their women and children will be safest and best cared for in the very capital of the enemy. Cape Town is full of Boer non-combatants, and the occurrence is so frequent that it is hardly thought worthy of comment.

Leaving Johannesburg on the 2nd of November, the writer made his way to Bloemfontein, being welcomed and offered refreshments at every stopping place along the route by women and children. He remarks, almost as though surprised, the enthusiasm felt by the Free State. After an interview with President Steyn he made his way to the Boer laager at Donkerhoek (? Donkerpoort), near Norval's Pont, where he found the Boers daily engaged in athletic sports and nightly in meetings of their debating society, singing, and prayer. With a religious service they seem also to begin the day, at 4 30, when in fixed camp, followed by coffee at 5. Of drill or military exercise there seems little or none beyond what is necessary for the construction of intrenchments and the sentries and ammunition guards at night. A curious note occurs under the heading of the 10th November. ". . . . and others went to a farm to drag dam for tortoises, and returned with a bag full, providing us with a delicious dish." Shortly after the commando moved westwards to Belmont, and the rapidity with which the work of striking camp was done caused the writer to make a note, "It is simply marvellous how quickly Boers do everything."

The Belmont skirmish of the 10th was the only incident of the war of which he says anything before reaching Fauresmith. At Jagersfontein he was shown the sword belonging to Lieutenant Victor Brooke, to whose gallantry he pays a frank tribute, hoping that "he will recover from his wounds." Commandant Van der Merwe sent the sword to his wife, telling her to give it up to any relations of Lieutenant Brooke that should claim it.

"I am more impressed than ever by the wonderfully fair and manly spirit shown by the Free State Boer—the utter absence of all brag or bounce, the quiet, resigned way he speaks of Britain's power and their own small chance of victory, is really astonishing to one who has till now seen the worst side of Boer nature. It is the conviction of the justice of their cause and their strong belief in the help of the Almighty that make them such dangerous foes. Every Boer fights for what he rightly or wrongly considers his liberty and country, and if he perseveres he will be most difficult to beat ; but it has yet to be proved if he possesses the required

stamina for prolonged war."

This criticism is by no means shallow, and is obviously genuine, but it should not be forgotten that it refers exclusively to the Free State Boers; into contact with the Transvaal commandos the writer never came.

Rumours in the Boer camp seem to be as frequent and as baseless as in our own. Sir Redvers Buller is about this time reported to be at De Aar with 25,000 men. A note that the day "being Sunday prevented any move" is interesting, especially as there must have been great anxiety at the time as to the advance of the British troops.

The deception that is practised upon the rank and file and even the lesser officers of the Boers is exemplified in the writer's note that 12 men held the kopje at the Belmont skirmish against 150 of the British forces; immediately after, quoting from the evidence of some of the "twelve," he says that the English officers were plucky and cool, but that the soldiers are turned very easily.

Rain fell in torrents on the night of the 20th November, and in this connexion he writes "I thank God that the rain is falling; many of them take this as another sign of the Almighty's favour of our cause. The pasturage will be excellent in a few weeks, and the empty dams replenished; on the other hand it will also enable the enemy to move a big body across the desert country between this and Kimberley."

The next entry, which is also worth notice, runs as follows:—"Early this morning the officers of this laager came into our tent; we discussed the war and the result of it, and I was again struck with the marvellously fair and manly way these men look at it; many of them expressed great regret at having to shoot innocent soldiers, and the few here who have already been under fire do not boast of having shot so many soldiers."

This, too, is full of interest:—"Another thing that struck me in the Boer character is the absolute fear he has before the fight and the cool and collected way he behaves when in it. When our laager left Kaffir River we expected to be in action in a few days' time; the result was that out of our lot of 200 men over 50 applied to the doctor for a 'sick' certificate. Only one such was granted, so about 25 per cent. of our men funked it; this, I am told, happens with every commando, but it has been proved in many instances already that the very men who pretended sickness when there was a chance of meeting the enemy were the pluckiest and coolest when under fire."

In another place he criticizes severely the Intelligence Department, and writing (apparently) from the north of Belmont remarks that the English would probably make a mere feint and give them the slip entirely. He describes the position as very strong, as held by 2,500, and estimates the fighting line at ten miles long at least. This is puzzling, unless the triple position at Belmont is counted as extended for the purpose.

Here he comments upon the cheerfulness with which the Free Staters accepted the hardships of their bivouac. The water was bad, and sometimes the food non-existent, but everything was taken with contentment, and even laughter.

His account of the battle of Belmont is curious:—

"Since dawn the big guns have been firing, and as we neared our range heavy (?) Maxims were firing some miles ahead of us; at about 7 o'clock a small column of troops with a couple of small guns approached our range, but did not come nearer than 1,500 yards. We exchanged shots and they fired a few shells at us but did no damage. Our big Maxim also fired, but short. . . . The firing, which was very heavy where the General is, has also ceased for the time being. I fear our side must have had a reverse, as we can see the wagons from the different laagers retreating. Every now and then a volley is fired, but cannons and Maxims are quiet. At about 2 we received intelligence that the Kroonstad commando of 400 men had been attacked early this morning, and that the British infantry had stormed the kopje occupied by them, being covered by a number of Maxims. The Kroonstaders had to fly and must have lost heavily. . . Information is difficult to obtain, but there is no doubt about our having suffered a severe reverse. I am certainly much disappointed in the Boer generalship and fighting power. We are told to occupy the range. Heaven knows why! All the troops are back at Belmont by this time and on their way to Kimberley."

The last entry, made an hour or so before the writer was captured, was that an artillery duel was in full swing at Graspan.

These extracts are valuable as showing the attitude taken by an intelligent man towards the shortcomings as well as the good qualities of our enemy. He is never bitter against the English and it is more than probable that his capture was not unwelcome to him; but the few extracts here given will do more than many words to show his appreciation of the Free Stater before the latter had come into contact with Cronje and the Transvaalers. There is a good deal of evidence to show that the character of the war spirit of the smaller Republic has altered lately, and that the military independence of the Free Staters has been lost, the hand of Cronje now stretching from Mafeking on the north to Stormberg on the south, though his present work at Magersfontein has prevented his taking over in person any of his duties on the southern border.

That such a people as is indicated in these notes, simple, religious, gullible, and probably

half-educated throughout, should have joined the Transvaalers in a war forced on by them wholly to bolster up an administration as corrupt and partial and politicians as self-seeking as have existed anywhere within the memory of man—that this should have been done reflects very seriously upon their leaders, who should have been the first to disclaim the alliance. That the temper of the Transvaal should have been adopted by the Free State in the conduct of the present war, after having come into contact with the northern Republic, is still an unfortunate matter, however much it may simplify our work in cleansing the Augean stables of South Africa.

24th January 1900

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, DEC. 19.

It is impossible to express the feeling of consternation with which the news of General Buller's check on the Tugela was received in the invested town. All had made up their minds that the period of enforced inactivity was at an end. We were proud to think that we should be able to meet the relieving troops with the little histories of our own regarding the Gun and Surprise Hill batteries. No one for a moment imagined that the Southern force would be anything but successful. On December 12 heavy firing had been heard in the direction of Colenso, while on the following day the pickets on Cæsar's Camp and Wagon Hill had seen the smoke made by the bursting shrapnel. Then we waited for news—waited breathlessly for orders to be given to the Flying Column, composed of the Devonshire and Manchester Regiments and the Gordon Highlanders, to leave camp to complete the devastation which the Southern force had begun. Men and women congratulated themselves in the streets when they heard that one of our heavy guns had been sent to Wagon Hill to cover the movement of the Flying Column. But the silence was prolonged, though the helio winked ceaselessly from the hill tops; but rumour had its way and stories were told of a splendid victory, of deserting Boers, of fleeing Dutch and slaughtered burghers. But nothing from headquarters. December 16 was Dingaan's Day, the anniversary of the declaration of independence of the South African Republic by the triumvirate in 1880. It was thought that this would be a suitable date for us to crush the power of the rebel State. Day dawned, and with the advent of the sun the big gun on Bulwana opened a spiteful fire. Twenty-one rounds were fired into the town. The Boers had remembered the salute which we had fired on the Prince of Wales's birthday. Grimly, on Dingaan's Day, they returned the salute. And with effect, for there were three fatal casualties from the fire.

Still the garrison congratulated itself. This salute was but the song of the dying swan. In a fit of bravado the enemy had fired into us before removing the gun to escape the advance from the south. A story came in from Intombi Camp that the Boers had sent a number of wounded Dutch for treatment. Excitement ran high, and a speculative photographer circulated a notice to the effect that now the siege was practically at an end he would be happy to take a mass group of the civilians who had survived. But on Saturday night a sinister order appeared. The batteries attached to the Flying Column were sent back to their positions on the line of defences.

On the morrow the following general order was published to the garrison :—

The General Officer Commanding the Natal Field Force regrets to have to announce that General Sir Redvers Buller failed to make good his first attack on Colenso ; reinforcements will not, therefore, arrive here as early as was expected. Sir George White is confident that the defence of Ladysmith will be continued by the garrison in the same spirited manner as it has hitherto been conducted until the General Officer Commanding in Chief in South Africa does relieve it.

The news was received with blank dismay. The disappointment was overwhelming. Then, as the situation began to be studied calmly, the tension was relieved. It did not really matter if the investment lasted a few weeks longer. We had few of the luxuries of life, it is true, but there was a full ration of the necessaries for at least two months. The defences were practically secure against attack. Our worst enemy was sickness. The situation was anything but desperate. The men having so long stood to the field fortifications seemed satisfied to remain on the defensive. The disappointment was acute, but, as far as the garrison was concerned, the situation remained unchanged. As a whole, the health of the troops was good. Enteric fever in a virulent form had made its appearance and was dealing hardly with the younger men. But this was to be expected, after 10,000 men had been cooped up in a small area for 50 days.

Perhaps the most serious question which the authorities had now to face was that of forage for the cavalry. The garrison, with mounted Volunteers, includes 5½ cavalry regiments and two brigade divisions of artillery. There is a limited supply of grazing ground within the perimeter of the camp. But it is very limited, and whenever our animals stray outside to better grass the drovers and

escort are immediately shelled into more discretion. Even if grazing were sufficient the situation would be serious, as troop and battery horses cannot do their work on grass alone. To my mind only one course remains open. The cavalry are no good here ; they never have been any good since our communication was cut ; they should go, and make their way down south. It is not a long ride to the Tugela, and once across the Tugela they would be safe. It is a pity that the cavalry has ever been here at all. After October 30 it was apparent to all that the place would be invested. When General French left he should have taken the cavalry, or the majority of the regiments, with him. They would have been of inestimable value to the relieving force. If there had been 3,000 cavalry working from Estcourt no general raiding of the Weenen and Upper Tugela districts would have taken place. They would have prevented the Boers from breaking up into the small parties which have been responsible for the general looting of Northern Natal.

From all accounts the invaders have carried out their devastation with a ruthless hand. Not content with lifting all cattle found on the farms, they have destroyed private property in a shameful and childish manner. When orders were given to leave the homesteads standing, the raiders, after removing everything portable, resorted to the petty spite of slitting pictures and firing bullets into pianos, and in every way trying to do as much annoying damage as possible. In a farm which we have retaken we found the pictures with the eyes gouged out of the portraits, and all the little harmless ornaments, which the feminine mind loves so well, deliberately smashed. A poor revenge !

23rd January 1900.

THE SITUATION IN CAPE COLONY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JAN. 3.

Since the series of unsuccessful attempts to drive back the Boer line of defence which have made the week of Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso one that will not be easily forgotten in South Africa or in England, there has been a lull in the course of military operations. In Natal, Sir Redvers Buller has been steadily strengthened by the arrival of the fifth division, and by the transfer of the remaining squadrons of the 1st Regiment of South African Light Horse from Richmond Road, and of the Northumberlands and two batteries of artillery from General Gatacre's force, till at the present moment his force must amount to at the very least 25,000 men. The Boers, having no reinforcements to receive, have spent their time in working hard to strengthen their position. In Cape Colony, for the moment, all has been hanging on the attitude of the colonial Dutch. The course of the war has shown that wherever a Boer commando has invaded colonial territory, it has been largely—though by no means universally—joined by the local Dutch, while recruits have slipped off to the Republican ranks from almost every Dutch district in the colony. The question now was whether the colonial Dutch might not of their own initiative rise all over the colony, and cut off our forces from their communication with the coast. In that case our position would have been one of great difficulty. Each of our forces at the front relies for its communication with its base at Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, or East London, on several hundred miles of railway which forty or fifty determined men could break at almost any point. To guard these lines really effectively against an actively hostile population a far larger force would be required than that which at present endeavours to fulfil the task. If such a general rising had taken place the only course open to our generals would have been to force their way down to the sea, and then gradually begin the reconquest of South Africa. In a former article I have tried to explain how completely the sympathies and hopes of the colonial Dutch have been with their kinsfolk in the Republics, and how those sympathies and hopes have been worked upon both before the war and since. Fortunately the disloyal movement had not by the time the war broke out acquired any effective widespread organization. Except in a few of the districts bordering on the Republics, there had never been any active preparations before the war for assisting the Boers against the British Government. The attitude of the Cape Ministry since the outbreak of the war and the unwillingness of the prudent farmer to risk the loss of his property as well as of his life in a conflict, the end of which he was as a rule better able to realize than the ordinary Transvaal Boer, had combined hitherto to keep the bulk of the population quiet. Still, with a population in a general ferment of excitement and kept back from putting its sympathies into action mainly by prudential considerations and want of organization, the rapid succession of British reverses could not but have a most disquieting effect. Few men can have passed through a more anxious fortnight than the fortnight Sir Alfred Milner spent after General Gatacre's defeat at Stormberg. Fortunately the danger seems to have almost passed over, thanks to the slowness and caution of the Dutch character, to the energetic measures taken for the organization of local defence, and for the effective policing of dangerous districts, and latterly to the small successes we have been gaining at various points.

At the present moment the territory occupied by Boer forces or by rebel commandos organized with the help of the Boers comprises practically the whole of British Bechuanaland—whose inhabitants, it will be remembered, are largely the very same Transvaal raiders whom Sir Charles Warren had to keep in order in 1884—and Griqualand West, though the victory with which the colonial contingents opened the New Year, two days ago, has, it appears, resulted in clearing the whole district of Herbert as far west as Douglas. On the southern frontier the Boers have been driven back on Colesberg by General French, but further east they occupy the whole districts of Steynsberg, Albert, Aliwal North, and Barkly East, and dispute with General Gatacre the possession of the district of Wodehouse, in the centre of which Dordrecht has been successively occupied and evacuated by both sides. Nowhere is there at present any advance of the Boer forces or of any active rebellious movement, while such advices as reach Cape Town all indicate that the defensive and preventive measures taken in the colony are having a reassuring effect on the quieter section of the farmers, and preventing their being rushed into action by the efforts of the more violent elements in their midst.

On our side everything possible has been done by Sir Alfred Milner and the military authorities to strengthen our lines of communications, to police districts known to be disaffected, and wherever possible to fill up the wide gaps that intervene between our three main columns. The raising of various bodies of mounted infantry is being carried on busily. At Cape Town and in the western province a first regiment of the South African Light Horse has been raised, and a second is being raised, and at the present moment already musters three squadrons. The first regiment is temporarily in Natal with Colonel Byng, but will return as soon as General Buller can spare its services. The second is to be commanded by Colonel Broadwood. It would be impossible to pass by the South African Light Horse without referring to the energy and generosity with which Messrs. George Farrar and Abe Bailey have assisted in the raising of the force, helping not only out of their pockets but devoting weeks of continuous labour, the former to the task of selecting men, and the latter to the no less difficult and responsible task of selecting horses. In the midland districts Colonel Brabant's Horse has been continuously strengthened, till at the present moment it probably musters well over a thousand men. Two new bodies of mounted infantry, each 500 strong, are being rapidly organized in the eastern province. One, Major R. A. Nesbitt's Horse, is being recruited from the intensely English population of the Albany, Bathurst, and Fort Beaufort districts. The other, Colonel Bayly's Horse, is being raised in the districts lying eastwards of the railway from East London to Queenstown. Besides these every effort is being made to organize the English farmers and townsfolk in the midland and eastern parts of the colony for the defence of their own districts, and there are very few districts now in which some sort of irregular scouting force is not being raised. The existing volunteer corps at Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, East London, and all the English centres are being strengthened by the admission of recruits. The Railway Pioneer Regiment, recruiting for which is busily going on here, at Port Elizabeth, East London, and Durban, is already over 300 strong, and has gone out to camp at Stellenbosch. It is expected within a very short time to reach the limit of 1,200 men at present sanctioned. The object of this force is primarily to help in the repairing of the railway wherever broken up by the enemy, but being armed and drilled as a regular battalion it will also serve the purpose of a force for defending lines of communication, and thus release an equivalent number of regulars for service at the front. It is under the command of Major Capper, R.E., and the rest of its officers are composed about equally of Royal Engineers and leading mine managers and engineers from the Rand. The combination seems to work admirably, and the greatest keenness is displayed by both the Imperial and the volunteer officers to make their force a really useful military unit.

Gradually, with the help of these various irregular forces and of the colonial volunteers, an effective defence of the line of communications is being organized. Small forces are posted at all the more important stations along the railway lines leading to De Aar, Naauwpoort, and Queenstown. At the same time the broad gap between General Gatacre and General French is being closed up, a gap which might have allowed free entry to a Boer force, and which permitted free communication between districts already in the enemy's hand, and districts wavering in their loyalty. The presence of detachments of the Kaffrarian Rifles and other volunteer forces at Rosmead Junction, at Cradock, Tarkastad and other points along the border of the debateable land has had a most beneficial effect. The ostentatious preparations made in several of these places for the welcome of the Boer commandos have now been quietly dropped. Further east still, in the native districts, admirable work has been done by Sir Henry Elliott, the Administrator. Acting in concert with the leading chiefs, he has organized and supplied with arms small bodies of native levies, to secure the defence and at the same time the control of the native territories. The action of the Cape Government in consenting to these precautionary measures has raised a storm of indignation in the Dutch Press. Mr. Schreiner, who no doubt only acted under considerable pressure from the Administrator on one side and Sir A. Milner on the other, has incurred the most bitter and un-

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merited abuse from members of his own party and from Mr. Hofmeyr's organ *Ons Land*, which persistently represented the measure as a general and indiscriminate arming of the blacks in order to let them loose upon the peaceful farming population. If once the Boers had entered the native reservations it would have been impossible to keep the Kaffirs quiet. As it is, Sir H. Elliott's defensive organization both serves to keep the Boers at a distance and prevents the springing up of any sudden panic among the natives.

Perhaps the most important question at issue at the present moment is that of the advisability of considerably extending the area of martial law behind the present narrow belt in which it is enforced. There can be no doubt that the ordinary civil law is very inadequate to secure the prompt punishment of espionage or seditious agitation. On the other hand, there are serious difficulties in the way of the administration of martial law amid a population unaccustomed to authority, sturdily independent, and eager to find a grievance. Our officers are, as a rule, ignorant of the country and of the ways of its inhabitants, often unnecessarily abrupt in their demeanour, and too ready to think that because a man can only speak Dutch and looks like a Boer he must be disloyal. The really dangerous spies, the glib, slim young Afrikander, who talks English as well as an Englishman born, as a rule passes unsuspected. Much has been made by the Dutch of the behaviour of our troops at Victoria West about 14 days ago, and there seems no doubt that the colonel then in command—since transferred—was somewhat peremptory in his demeanour and too ready to call a Dutchman a rebel to his face, and that one of the officers shot buck on a farmer's land without his permission, &c. Very much was made of these mistakes, though they were, no doubt, not very serious. But it is difficult to get officers to realize that, though a man may be a rebel in his sympathies, it is foolish to drive him into open rebellion. On the whole, there is no reason for regarding the situation as very unsatisfactory. The colonial Dutch know well that large reinforcements are coming out daily, and they also know much better than we do the other side of the picture, the difficulties under which the Boer forces are labouring, the dissensions between the Free State and the Transvaal, the lack of supplies, &c., and all these are strong arguments in favour of keeping the peace.

HOSPITAL ARRANGEMENTS AT CAPE TOWN.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, DEC. 27.

In a letter written for the last mail I dealt with the sphere of usefulness occupied by the Red Cross Society in supplementing the work of the regular military medical organization. A short account of the military hospital arrangements themselves may not be inappropriate, especially as a certain amount of complaint has been made in various quarters with regard to some of the details of their organization, the nature of which it is, perhaps, as well to make clear, in order to prevent the matter from being either exaggerated or neglected at home. There are at present three general permanent hospitals constituted in the neighbourhood of Cape Town, Nos. 1 and 2 at Wynberg and No. 3 at Rondebosch, each for 500 men and 30 officers. Besides these, part of the sanatorium at Claremont is being used as a convalescent hospital for officers, while there is a convalescent camp for men at Green's Point. The eastern side of Table Mountain, at the foot of which Rondebosch, Claremont, and Wynberg are situated, is much cooler and pleasanter at this time of the year than Cape Town itself. The sites of the hospitals are well chosen, and, except on occasion, when the prevalent south-easter blows up too much dust, the air is always pure and fresh, and the nights are almost invariably cool. The accommodation consists in No. 1 hospital at Wynberg of barracks, and in Nos. 2 and 3 of marquees. Both the barracks and the tents are clean and airy, and there is very little overcrowding. The tents have wooden floors, and except on very windy days are almost pleasanter than the barrack wards. A visit to the hospitals makes, on the whole, a very pleasant impression. The men are, as a rule, wonderfully cheerful; eager, if they can get the chance, to return and have another shot at the Boers. At Wynberg there is a small but clean and well-appointed operating room, and a regular operating theatre is being built.

Nevertheless, for some weeks past a good many complaints have been heard from various quarters of the arrangements in the hospitals here. Without wishing to do any injustice to the officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps, whose splendid courage and devotion in the field and admirable surgical skill in the hospital have been amply witnessed in this war, it would not be right to pass these over altogether in silence. Most of the complaints refer to matters which some time

ago no one would have troubled much about, mere matters of detail which have only acquired importance since the general recognition of the fact that the healing art is not only a matter of physic and the knife, but also very largely a matter of treatment and skilled nursing. Many of them, too, refer to deficiencies which had been largely set right at the time when attention was first drawn to them. In the first place, there was, to begin with, a certain lack of preparedness and of organization on a sufficiently large scale. The staff of the hospitals at first was hardly adequate to the demands suddenly made upon it by the first few big battles. When ambulance trains full of wounded came in, the call on the doctors' time was sometimes so great that some of the patients could not be seen to for several hours. The night attendance was at first very insufficient. In a case I had quoted to me a slightly wounded officer had to get up three times in a night to find an attendant for another patient in his ward. There are plenty of unemployed trained nurses here at Cape Town, mainly sisters from the hospital at Johannesburg who were turned out by the Boers at the outbreak of the war. But the military authorities were unwilling to make use of their services for various reasons, the chief being that more Regular Army nurses and orderlies were expected. The bulk of the complaints made, however, concerns not the general arrangements of the hospitals, but the arrangements provided for the comfort of wounded officers. There is a feeling that there is a lack of those comforts and lesser amenities of life, which, however impossible to secure at a place like Orange River or De Aar, ought to be easily procurable in a centre like Cape Town; that the accommodation is insufficient, and the diet on too poor a scale for strong and healthy officers suffering from some purely local injury. Thus the officers' ward at Wynberg has neither dining room nor sitting room attached to it. As long as the weather is fine enough to permit of dining on the verandah the absence of a dining-room matters very little, but on wet or dusty days it is not altogether pleasant for those who can get about to have to take their dinner in the ward, or for the worse cases in the ward to have to be present during their dinner. Similarly, it is inconvenient that visitors can only be received in the ward, with the alternative of their disturbing the other patients with their conversation or else of having their visits restricted for the sake of some one rather serious case.

The scale of food for officers in hospital apparently does not allow for meat in the evening, and the robust appetites of the younger officers at No. 1 hospital have had to be met by private contributions of joints of meat. It is hardly possible to believe that military red tape could go so far that, if the medical officers in charge sanctioned a fuller diet, the extra expenditure incurred would be disallowed. There seems to be a certain lack of initiative, of any desire to move outside of regulation grooves in order to make things more comfortable.

There has been a certain amount of jealousy and friction between the hospitals and the Red Cross Society, and even between the hospitals themselves. The Red Cross Society thinks its attempts at co-operation are not always well received, while the medical officers, on their side, declare that the society is too determined to give its assistance only in its own way and according to its own ideas, and is almost as cumbered with red tape as the military organization itself. For a while there was much dispute between hospitals 1 and 2 as to their respective shares of the luxuries sent by people in Cape Town.

To sum up, the complaints made do not, as a rule, concern any very serious matters or imply any serious neglect of the patients, but they do suggest a certain lack of a strong central organizing head, capable of foreseeing emergencies and able to make his subordinates all work together without friction.

24th January 1900.

THREE MONTHS OF WAR.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JAN. 1.

It is nearly three months ago that the two Republics declared war upon the British Empire and invaded the British colonies in South Africa. Since then a score of desperate engagements has been fought, none of them perhaps worthy to be ranked as important battles, but involving greater loss of life than we have experienced for many years, and displaying to the full the most splendid qualities and also some of the most characteristic defects of the British Army. Our officers and soldiers have shown the greatest gallantry in attacking and admirable steadiness when lying in the open for hours under fire from an invisible enemy. On the other hand, we have been slow in our movements, continually outmanœuvred and surprised owing to defective scouting or mistakes in choice of ground; we have met with some half-a-dozen unfortunate accidents which have cost us roughly 3,000 men in prisoners and casualties, a percentage of accidents too high to be reckoned as due to purely unavoidable causes. Our generalship has in many cases fluctuated between headstrong precipitation and planless inactivity. Our whole plan of campaign has, through a variety of circumstances, been frustrated in its execution for nearly two months, and when carried out will require a far larger force than was ever dreamt of when this war began. But if the war has not

hitherto proved a great success from our point of view, it must not be supposed that the Republics have any greater cause for being satisfied with their own performance. The Boers have shown greater courage in the field and constancy under heavy loss than any one, even their best friends, credited them with. But they have in no case shown themselves ready or able to attack an intrenched position however weakly held.* The shooting too has, as many foretold, been disappointing. Excepting a few marksmen, they are, under equal conditions, undoubtedly inferior to the average of British infantry. They have shown no small degree of generalship in the field, being less hampered by preconceived notions formed in warfare under very different conditions. But the task of the Boer commanders has been a much easier one than that of our generals. Looked at as a whole their strategy has been very timid, and they have made but poor use of the enormous advantages they had when the war opened. They had hoped, by overrunning Natal and raising the whole of Cape Colony in rebellion, to hold such a hostage in their hands as to be able to dictate peace on their own terms. This they have entirely failed to do. They hold Natal north of the Tugela, and a strip of from five to 50 miles wide of the frontier districts of Cape Colony. But even here their tenure is very insecure, and they have discovered to their cost that the colonial Dutchman is much too cautious to rise unless encouraged by the presence of a considerable force. They have lost heavily—if not quite so heavily as we have—and they have no reserves ; they are beginning to have difficulty with their supplies ; their crops are neglected : even their ammunition cannot last for ever or their big guns indefinitely stand the strain of firing. The Boers have done so many unexpected things in this war, that it is hardly wise to prophesy, but there is always the possibility that if once their thin line of defence is broken there will be a general collapse.

When the war broke out the two Republics had some 40,000 men mobilized on their frontiers. This force, by sweeping up of disloyalists in occupied districts and by calling out the few burghers who had been excused before, may now amount to 50,000. Against these we had some 13,000 men, including colonial Volunteer forces in Natal, and less than 4,000 in Cape Colony with an enormous frontier to defend, and a vast region behind known to be in sympathy, if not in secret understanding, with the enemy. The obvious policy would have been for the Boers to intrench themselves in the Natal passes and to pour a large army into Cape Colony, diverging along the three lines of railway from De Aar, Naauwpoort, and Stormberg, and gathering force as it advanced. If they had done that, General Buller on landing might have found himself face to face with the prospect of reconquering South Africa from the coast against an army of 80,000 or 100,000 men. But various reasons prevailed against this course : the want of complete military fusion between the Transvaal and the Free State, the convenience of sending burghers to the frontiers nearest their own homes, the ambition of the Transvaal to annex Natal to itself, the hilly nature of that colony, so inviting to Boer methods of warfare, the hope of completely destroying Sir George White's force before the arrival of reinforcements, and to some extent perhaps an unwillingness to invade a territory of which the Government had openly professed its neutrality, and which they hoped would largely rise on their behalf uninvaded.

Our position in Cape Colony was one of extreme difficulty. With so small a force the only possible course to follow was to " bluff " the enemy. The experience of Mafeking, Kuruman, Kimberley, all go to show that the smallest garrison, if well provided with food, can hold its own indefinitely against any Boer force. It is quite possible that a series of intrenched posts near the frontier—say, at Orange River, De Aar, Norval's Pont, Bethulie Bridge, and Aliwal North—manned by a few hundred men each, might have " bluffed " the Free Staters into a purely defensive attitude, or, failing that, absorbed their whole forces and wasted their opportunity in a series of fruitless sieges, leaving all clear for the advance of the main army. It is certain that for nearly three weeks half-a-dozen policemen at the bridges and at Aliwal effectively guarded the northern frontier of the colony, and it was only after the withdrawal from Stormberg that the Boers entered Cape Colony across the Orange River. That evacuation cannot but be regarded as a mistake on General Buller's part. The position was one of great natural strength and had been well intrenched by the Berkshires. Our retreat gave this to the Boers, deprived us of the railway connexion between the eastern and western halves of Cape Colony, and furnished the enemy a fresh recruiting ground, while at the same time, owing to the fact that he was advancing outwards from inner lines, it only lengthened the frontier we were called upon to defend.

In Natal the position was very different. The Boers had large forces amply supplied with artillery drawn up along two converging frontiers, so shaped that it was possible for them to concentrate rapidly on any one point in the colony and retreat again in any direction. To scatter our forces would in Natal have been absolutely fatal. The united Boer army could easily have crushed each small detachment, or disregarded them all and marched on to Maritzburg or Durban, quite unconcerned about its line of retreat ; whereas on the northern frontier of Cape Colony it would have been impossible for the Free Staters to concentrate on any one point without exposing another, or to advance south of the Orange River, leaving the bridge-heads held in their rear.

As it is, the occupation of Dundee was undoubtedly due to a complete underestimation of the enemy's forces and of his strategy. The little garrison was only saved by the faulty co-operation of the different Boer generals which allowed us to win the engagements at Talana and Elandslaagte and thus draw our head out of the noose. The alternative before Sir G. White after the evacuation of Dundee was whether he should hold Ladysmith or fall back behind the Tugela. The latter was the safer course, but Ladysmith, as an important town full of stores and railway material, and on the junction of two railway lines, was well worth defending if only it could be done. But it was essential that it should be held as part of the general scheme of defence and kept in communication with the south. This war has shown what an enormous extent of intrenchments can under modern conditions be held by a small force—an extent which can be almost doubled when one is fighting against an enemy who, unlike the British soldier, never ventures on a direct attack across open ground. And though Sir G. White had barely 11,000 men with him, he might, perhaps, if he could have realized in time the nature of the fighting that was to take place, have held a much more extended line to the east and south of Ladysmith —*e.g.*, by occupying Umbulwana—and might thus have prevented the investment of Ladysmith ever becoming complete and preserved his own freedom of action. As it happened, after the disastrous battle of October 30, in the general confusion of which the loss of the 1,000 men at Nicholson's Nek seems to have been a mere incident, Sir G. White allowed himself to be cut off from the detachment he had sent down to Colenso, and was invested. From that moment date all our failures. Once invested, Ladysmith was helpless for good or ill until relieved. For the moment the investment occupied an army of 20,000, but as the intrenchments were completed more and more of these were drafted off, till at the present moment there are probably not 8,000 Boers containing the town. As long as the connexion with the base was open an extra 4,000 or 5,000 men would have enabled Sir G. White to hold his own and play his part in the general scheme of the war, which was to keep Joubert's army busy while our main force invaded the Free State. Now we are anxiously waiting, anxiously hoping that an army of 25,000 men will succeed in saving the place.

After the investment of Ladysmith was completed, the little force at Colenso, not much more than 2,000 strong, and with no artillery besides the 7-pounders of the Natal field force, hastily retired to Estcourt at the approach of a Boer commando. There it was gradually strengthened till towards November 20 General Hildyard had under him some 6,000 men, including 750 mounted infantry and two batteries of artillery. Another 5,000 men, including the Fusilier and Light Brigades and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, were under General Barton at Mooi River, while smaller detachments were at Nottingham Road and Maritzburg. These forces did nothing and made no pretence at combination. Some 3,000 to 4,000 Boers wandered at their own pleasure round and about them, ravaging the whole countryside down to the Mooi River and even terrifying Maritzburg, and finally settled down for a few days halfway between the two superior forces at Estcourt and Mooi River, gaining a slight success over the former at Willow Grange on November 23, after which both Estcourt and Mooi River made preparations to hold out till relieved. However, after the Boers had returned unmolested to Colenso from their adventurous raid, the whole British force marched up to Frere, within a few miles of the Tugela, and there waited till it was strengthened to about 17,000 men. The Boers on their side were meanwhile busy intrenching themselves and their guns in a position of tremendous natural strength, and when at last on December 15 the long-expected attack was delivered, the force at General Buller's disposal proved quite insufficient for the task of taking it by main force. Now it has been increased to 25,000, and there is good reason to hope that before this letter reaches England Ladysmith will have been relieved, Natal cleared of the Boers, 15,000 men or more sent back *via* East London to the Free State border, and the long delay to our advance into the enemy's territory put an end to.

On the western flank, meanwhile, Lord Methuen, after the initial delay necessary to organize his force, advanced to the relief of Kimberley, which had held its own without difficulty, but was not quite sure of being able indefinitely to provision its large population. It is an open question whether it would not have been wiser to advance upon Bloemfontein over Norval's Pont and trust to this advance drawing the besieging force back into open country better suited for our style of warfare. A Boer force of 2,000-3,000 men under Delarey was driven back with some loss at Belmont and Graspan and retired upon Modder River, where it was reinforced by perhaps 8,000 Boers brought down from Mafeking and Kimberley by General Cronje. The combined Boer forces intrenched themselves strongly on both sides of the river among the bushes and small trees along a front extending several miles on both sides of the railway bridge. Somehow or other our scouts never discovered this. As a consequence the battle of November 28 came as a complete surprise to our soldiers, who were marching forward with instructions to breakfast on the other side of the river. Having run into the enemy unawares Lord Methuen resolved to ram his way through, and a most determined attack was made on the Boer line for 12 hours and more, which, if not exactly the most trying fight in the annals of the British Army or a second Waterloo, did great credit to

the steadiness and endurance of our forces, and so far impressed the Boers that they withdrew in the night and retired a few miles to the kopjes behind Magersfontein Farm. At the foot of these kopjes they intrenched themselves steadily for the next ten days, while our Engineers restored the Modder bridge temporarily and the remainder of our force rested from their week's hard fighting. On December 11 Lord Methuen made another attempt to drive the enemy back. Whether that attack might have succeeded but for the terrible mistake which sent the Highland Brigade right upon the Boer trenches in quarter column and lost some 400 of our best fighting men in a few minutes, it is hard to say. It is not altogether easy to see why no attempt was made to cut the Boers off from Jacobsdal, which for several days after the Modder River fight was still their base of supply. It might have been possible, too, to extend opposite and beyond the Boer position, working the right wing of our trenches between them and Jacobsdal, so as to outflank them and leave them the alternative of coming out to fight in the open or of retreating on Spytfontein. Now it is the Boers who have out-trenched us, and at the present moment hold a line of at the least 16 miles, completely overlapping the intrenchments we have constructed since our repulse.

At Queenstown General Gatacre, who had been busily exercising his force all November, determined to retake Stormberg by surprise. The idea was a bold one, and if successful might have had great results. But its execution was lamentably faulty, and it led to the worst disaster which we have yet suffered in this war. Since then, however, General Gatacre has not been inactive, and has been gradually pushing his line forward. Elsewhere our troops have been more successful. General French, advancing from Naauwpoort, has steadily harassed the enemy with his almost purely mounted force, and driven them back upon Colesberg. In the north Colonel Plumer has held his own, and has even invaded the bush veldt south of the Limpopo. Another force from Rhodesia is believed to be advancing from Crocodile Pools to the relief of Mafeking, where Colonel Baden-Powell has been maintaining himself with indomitable courage and inexhaustible fertility of resource.

Our want of success hitherto has been due to a variety of causes, but the chief of these has undoubtedly been the inability of elderly generals to adapt themselves readily to new conditions. It should not be forgotten, however, that these generals have had great difficulties to contend with. A number of battalions fresh landed from transports are very far from constituting an effectively organized force. Except General French most of our generals have been greatly handicapped by being provided with practically nothing but infantry, and in this country infantry are terribly helpless. Again, our commanders have allowed themselves to be tied too fast to the railway, which as a rule follows the worst strategical line of advance that could possibly be selected, and never provides any alternatives. Of course, the railway has done admirable work too, and the greatest credit is due to the officials of the Cape and Natal Government railways for the rapidity and smoothness with which the movement of troops and stores has been carried on. Altogether one of the best features of this war has been the landing and sending up country of the troops, which was everywhere carried out in the most perfect manner. It is not the fault of the railway if from lack of sufficient wagon transport or of initiative our generals have clung fast to it wherever they have gone. Our troops have not been mobile enough; our artillery has been in some cases insufficient; our scouting and intelligence has, as a rule, been very defective. But so novel are the conditions of this war that it was impossible to expect that every contingency of it could have been provided against beforehand. We cannot hope to escape paying for experience.

This war is practically the first war of any importance between forces both armed with modern weapons. The short experience we have already had has sufficed to show that the long-range magazine rifle, the long-range gun, and smokeless powder must completely revolutionize the art of war as practised 20 or 30 years ago. The advantage possessed by the defence has been enormously increased. The zone of effective rifle fire has become so wide that it is impossible, except under extremely favourable circumstances, to get the bravest troops in the world to cross it in the open against an intrenched enemy. The taking of Talana Hill was a splendid performance, but even there our troops had cover first in a plantation, then behind a long stone wall, and finally—like the Boers at Majuba—under the very steepness of the hill. At Elandslaagte the Boers were completely outflanked, and outnumbered by about three to one. The proportions were somewhat similar both at Belmont and Graspan. But at Modder River and Magersfontein all the infantry could do when it got within the zone of fire from the trenches was to lie down, each man keeping behind such cover as he might find and staying there most of the day. At Colenso when once the artillery got into that zone it was lost. The increase of range, combined with the greater rapidity of fire, enables the line of defence to be thinned to a degree hardly realizable before. One man in a trench with a box of ammunition beside him is worth more than ten men were a few years ago. While on this subject one might mention that the Mauser, which is a real quick-loading and quick-firing rifle, has an enormous advantage over the clumsy Lee-Metford, where each cartridge is inserted separately and which requires readjustment after each shot. The invisibility of modern rifle fire also protects it very largely against artillery. At

Modder River there were many, not only among the war Correspondents, who never realized that the Boer trenches were on the south side of the river. The extent of a defensive position has thus been greatly enlarged, and nothing has done the Boer commanders greater credit than the quickness with which they have grasped this fact and the courage with which they have acted upon it. At Magersfontein 10,000 to 12,000 Boers are holding over 16 miles of trenches; round Ladysmith a force of similar or less strength is holding an even larger circuit.

The same change which has so greatly widened the area of a battle even between such comparatively small forces as are now engaged in South Africa has also enormously increased the value of tactical mobility. The admirable skill and rapidity with which the Boers are always able to reinforce any portion of their fighting line that may be attacked has been one of the chief causes of their success, and has led our commanders almost invariably to over-estimate the numbers of the force opposed to them. Again, with the general spreading out of a battle, the importance of self-reliance and individual initiative in the officers commanding detachments, and even in each single private soldier, has been infinitely enhanced. It is getting less and less possible for a general to control the details of a battle once it has started. If he attempts to do so he runs the risk of leaving half his force inactive, while the other is struggling with a superior enemy, which has been the case with our troops in more than one instance in this war. The value of steadiness and intelligence in the individual soldier is, perhaps, the most important lesson of this war. Modern fighting demands not men who can obey a word of command promptly, but self-reliant men, men able to grasp the general idea of a battle, to remember instructions and carry them out faithfully to the intention rather than to the letter in which they are given. Such men are to be found by the score in every Boer commando. In this respect the whole of our military system will want most radical modification before it is properly adapted to modern conditions. Another important lesson this war is teaching us is the value of long-range artillery and abundance of it. We were well enough informed before the war that the Boers had field guns of longer range than ours, but, knowing, we did not realize what it meant, or conceive of the possibility of troops' being harassed by shells dropping among them at 6,000-10,000 yards' range. The Boers, too, have taught us that it is by no means so difficult to move heavy siege guns about country. But for Captain Percy Scott and his naval guns our position, at Ladysmith and elsewhere, might have been much worse than it is. This war, too, has made us realize that an infantry officer's sword is a perfectly useless ornament, and that for an officer to wear any mark distinguishing him from a common soldier at 500 yards' distance means certain death.

The usefulness of mounted infantry and the rapidity with which good troops can be made out of untrained, or comparatively untrained, volunteers have been shown, not only by the Boers, but also by the splendid performances of the colonial Volunteer forces and of the irregular troops raised here since the beginning of the war. If it can really be regarded as established that an army of Volunteers who can shoot straight, supported by an unlimited supply of good artillery, can hold its own defensively against the best Regular troops, then the problem of the defence of the British Empire will be greatly simplified. And, on the other hand, the experience derived from the raising of the various irregular forces formed in South Africa since the war shows that there is abundant material both in England and the colonies from which an efficient force for foreign service could rapidly be organized to supplement our small Regular Army.

29th January 1900

AFTER THE BATTLE OF COLENSO.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

FRERE CAMP, JAN. 4.

Since our retirement on the night after the battle to a safer position, the force has been divided between Chieveley and Frere. General Hildyard's and General Barton's brigades of infantry, with the mounted infantry, the naval guns, and two field batteries, remained at Chieveley; the rest marched through to Frere. It is on that part of the force that remained at Chieveley that most of the work of the last fortnight has fallen. The Boers, emboldened by their success, sent large raiding parties across the Tugela, both to the east and west of Colenso, which on several occasions pushed so far south that it was thought they intended striking at our lines of communication. In reply strong patrols were sent out along the southern bank, occasionally going as far as Weenen to the east and Springfield to the west. Almost every day they came in touch with the Boers, but the tangible results were very small. It is in this kind of warfare that the Boer is at his best. A natural instinct, unknown in British soldiers, leads him always to move through country where he can best combine his power of defence with his extraordinary mobility. Day after day patrols returned with the same disappointing news. A few shots exchanged at long range

without any damage done, and then the Boers either retreated out of reach or attempted to draw our men under fire of their own supports occupying a position far too strong for our men to risk an engagement. Then the following day a stronger force would be sent out with perhaps a couple of guns, but only to find no Boers in the neighbourhood, and would return again with tired horses. Our mounted men did well, especially the irregulars, who, from their knowledge of the country and the habits of the enemy and also because their colonial ponies are far better suited to this kind of work than English horses, could more nearly meet the Boers on their own terms than was possible in the case of English cavalry. A striking example of this occurred on the afternoon of December 20, when a strong party of Boers stalked a Cossack post consisting of seven Hussars who were stationed some way outside the line of the pickets. Creeping up unnoticed, they cut them off from their horses, all of which they shot, and then killed two of the Hussars as the latter retired. The following afternoon the same post was held by five Natal Carbineers, and the Boers tried to repeat their success. The Carbineers, however, had seen them, and, holding their fire till the Boers came within easy range, killed three and wounded several more. This is not intended in any way to disparage the merits of the British cavalryman, whose only fault is an over-amount of courage which leads him occasionally to disregard the precautions for his personal safety; but it shows that the mode of warfare at which the Boers are such adepts in a country which suits them is one that cannot be easily learnt and adopted by the man whose whole training has tended to convert him into the more or less inanimate part of a machine. There is no doubt that their lack of discipline is an advantage to the Boers in this kind of skirmishing. First, it makes them more mobile. The moment that news is brought that men are wanted at a certain point each man saddles his own pony and goes straight there as fast as his pony will carry him. There is no waiting to start till the last man is ready, no waiting to fall in and advance in column, which through a roadless country is a source of constant small delays. Each man goes for himself, and, when he reaches the point where he is wanted, uses his own peculiarly instinctive knowledge in taking up his position. Then, again, when advancing each man acts as if he were his own scout, with the result that it is almost an impossibility to draw a body of them into an ambush. The combination of these two qualities makes them a foe with whom we cannot at present hope to cope with any decided measure of success in the kind of almost guerilla warfare that has been the feature of the past fortnight and that will continue to play an important part in the campaign. For, quickly as they move, we must needs learn to move quicker, and well as they scout we must scout even better before we can hope to defeat them at their own preferred method of fighting. As our lines of communication extend the danger will increase, and unless we can defend them otherwise than by guarding their whole length the advance will be considerably hampered. At any rate, it is a satisfaction during the present period of enforced inactivity to reflect that our mounted troops are all the while learning the game—a lesson that will be of the utmost importance to all, and especially to the more newly enrolled amongst them.

The naval guns have returned to the position they occupied when they first went out to Chieveley, and have assiduously shelled the Boer intrenchments every day. It is to be hoped that the results have been as good as the shooting, for that has been excellent. The Boers have been hard at work repairing the damage done, and whenever a group of them has been seen a shell has been fired at them. Several deadly shots have been observed, but the total amount of damage done is quite impossible to estimate, nor is it probable that we shall ever know it. During the last week there has been a good deal of night firing. It was observed that a number of Boers slept in some houses close down by the river, and on December 27, at about 9 30, both the big guns, which had been previously laid on them, were fired. Unfortunately they missed. However, the next night the attempt was made again, and this time it was successful. On December 30 an attempt was made to give the Boers a night alarm. Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry were sent down to the Tugela to the west of Colenso, where they fired volleys. The naval guns were to give the enemy sufficient time to reach their trenches and were then to bombard them. Unfortunately the naval gunners never heard the volleys and so did not fire. The Boers only turned their searchlight upon the hill where Thorneycroft's men lay.

On January 2 the experiment was repeated. This time the naval men had placed a line of white stakes to indicate the direction, and, knowing the range, shelled the Boer trenches for about half an hour.

In spite of the shell fire the Boers have been steadily improving their defences at Colenso. They have now built a bombproof way leading from the kopjes directly behind Colenso to the Ladysmith road at the back, so that they can go to and from their trenches without being observed. But their activity has not been confined to Colenso. The several strong reconnaissances that have been sent to Springfield have caused the Boers to extend their defences westward. They are now engaged in fortifying Robinson's

Drift, a ford about six miles above Colenso, cutting down, as is reported, miles of barbed wire fencing and placing it in the river to render the drift impassable, and they have already mounted two of the field guns captured at Colenso in a position on this side of Potgeiter's Drift, north of Colenso. They evidently think that the next battle will be fought on the Upper Tugela. For several days troops of men and long lines of wagons have been observed trekking away from Colenso to the westward, and the news has lately come in that General Ben Viljoen, with the Johannesburg commandos, is at the junction of the Little Tugela with the main river.

Despite their activity, however, the condition of the Boers does not seem to be very prosperous. The week after the battle 120 Kaffirs, men, women, and children, who had been working for the Boers, deserted and came over to us, many of them being in a starving condition. They complained of getting neither food nor money, and, above all, of the loud lamentations of the Boer women in camp for their husbands and relations who had been killed in the battle. All Kaffirs have a superstitious horror of illness or mourning in any form. They said the Boer loss had been heavy, almost entirely owing to the effect of the lyddite in the trenches. The power of these shells, they said, was terrific, several of them stating that they had been knocked down by the force of an explosion 200 yards away. The following week some more Kaffirs came in telling the same story. On January 3 twelve Boer deserters came in. They, too, complained of lack of food and ill-usage and said that the Boers were short of both food and forage. All this points to the fact that the long waiting here is telling heavily on the Boers. Many of them are without tents—a serious hardship now that the heavy rains are beginning—and the supply of rations to a constantly moving force must be exceedingly difficult.

Meanwhile preparations are proceeding here in what would appear an extremely leisurely fashion. More guns, including a howitzer battery, are now at Estcourt. A balloon (had we had it sooner our failure at Colenso might have been averted) has at last arrived, and Sir Charles Warren's division is nearly complete at Estcourt. It is impossible to say what we are waiting for, but the fact remains that every day that we do wait increases the difficulty of our task of forcing a passage across the Tugela, for the Boers are perpetually busy doing everything in their power to prevent our ultimate success.

There is one question that every one asks to which no answer is ever given. How long can Ladysmith last? No one either can or will say. Did we know for certain that they have yet many weeks' provisions we might remain easy, for, next to inflicting a crushing defeat upon the Boers, we are doing the best thing. A policy of procrastination will wear out the Boers more than a series of indecisive battles. Like all undisciplined troops, they cannot stand inaction. And yet they dare not leave us, for attack us they cannot, to join forces with their western armies. Here before us is a large army condemned to comparative inaction, suffering from all the rigours of a protracted campaign without the proper protections against it, and yet unable to move. At the present moment it is the besiegers who have become the besieged.

29th January 1900.

THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, DECEMBER.

The straits of a beleaguered city are only just beginning to come to Mafeking. A retrospect of the history of the Franco-Prussian war reveals how very great were the sufferings of those unfortunate people who were unlucky enough to be besieged by the Prussian armies. Their difficulties, the dangers to which they were constantly subjected, their constant struggle against the extortionate demands of the few who had been able to "corner" the provisions can perhaps be taken as conveying a general impression of the hardships of a siege. Yet, however, when we come to consider the siege of Mafeking in its more elemental details, the picture is not unlike those presented by the farcical melodrama. It is now nearly six weeks since Mafeking was proclaimed as being in a state of siege, and, although there has been no single opportunity of any commercial reciprocity between ourselves and the outside world, the ruling prices are at present but very little above normal, distress is wholly absent, danger is purely incidental, and, indeed, it would seem, as Colonel Baden-Powell said in a recent order, that "everything in the garden was lovely." This somewhat happy state of things is, of course, to be attributed to the extraordinary foresight and sagacity which characterizes the arrangements that the well-known firm of contractors in South Africa, Julius Weil, concluded for provisioning the town. Immense stocks of foodstuffs had been stored in the town, and it is the knowledge of the valuable stores which are lying here which has inspired the Boers to court us so assiduously. The tale might have been different had the colonial Government been permitted to arrange for any such emergency as a siege. In this respect, so completely opposed to any preparation were Mr. Schreiner

and his Cabinet, that it was not even possible to procure through such an agency any adequate means of defence, much less to obtain the essential food supplies. When Kimberley appealed to Mr. Schreiner for permission to send up from Port Elizabeth some Maxims which had been ordered by the De Beers Company, the licence was refused on the ground that there was no cause to strengthen the defences of that town, nor any reason to believe that the situation demanded such precautions. The colonial Government repeated their policy in relation to Mafeking, and when urgent appeals were sent to Mr. Schreiner, to the Castle authorities, and to Sir Alfred Milner, the influence of the Cabinet was such that no notice was taken of their request.

Nothing perhaps can excuse such an obstructive policy as that which was followed by the colonial Government upon the very eve of hostilities. It is only when we come to deal with the situation which their neglect has created that we can adequately measure the full extent of their culpability. The claim of so important a centre as Mafeking upon their attention was wilfully ignored with a persistence which is positively criminal, and when taken into consideration with the repeated warnings which were sent to them by leading members of the community of Mafeking it is difficult to believe that the colonial Cabinet, by so flatly contravening the spirit of their loyalty to the Imperial Crown, were not directly conniving with a hostile oligarchy for the downfall of this colonial town. Had Mafeking been anything but Anglo-Saxon at heart, had it possessed that proportion of debased Dutch and renegade British colonists which is to be found in Vryburg and those other hostile areas in our own colony, the story of Mafeking would have been a story of treachery and deceit, of broken allegiance, and of palsied faith. As it was, when the petition for extra armaments was ignored, the town, disdaining the danger which confronted them, proceeded to stand their ground, and to show, at any rate, a firm front to any enemy that might assail them. While Colonel Baden-Powell persistently sought for guns and ammunition from the Government, the men of Mafeking, under the supervision of Colonel Vyvyen, base commandant, strongly intrenched the position of their town, which hitherto had been open to every corner of the earth. In times of peace Mafeking is a collection of buildings placed upon the veldt, lacking both natural and artificial protection, the centre into which all roads come and from which all classes of people go. It is a thriving mid-African township which, more by good management than by good luck, has become at the present time an important outpost of our Empire. In these days, when the boom of cannon destroys the silences of our splendid isolation, and the scream of shell disturbs the harmony of night, Mafeking rests with patient steadfastness behind its hastily improvised earthworks, seeking shelter when the shells of the enemy press too hotly upon one another, yet always ready for work at the outposts, prepared for the fitful turbulence of our invading foe. But there is perhaps a finer spirit in the tribute which this place has paid to Queen and country than mere courage. We have the faith of our affections, the steadfastness of a duty which, if inspired, is equally impressed with reverence. Such strain as the siege has put upon the loyalty of the colonists of Mafeking has been welcomed by reason of the opportunity which it has given for the many who have never seen the Queen to show their honourable allegiance to her Majesty.

From time to time Colonel Baden-Powell has issued orders congratulating the townspeople upon their spirit, and commiserating with them upon their unfortunate predicament. They are indeed deserving of great sympathy, since the manly way in which they have come forward in support of the situation has very materially aided the successful resistance given by Mafeking. Throughout day and night they are compelled to remain idle in their trenches, and from 9 till 6, and again from 6 till 9, they are not permitted upon any pretence whatever to leave their posts. The life they are leading is of the roughest description, and it certainly appears that a very considerable proportion of the hardships of the siege has fallen to the share of the town guard. For the most part the town guard is a collection of civilians, who are accustomed to the full enjoyment of comparative affluence, and who, through the exigencies of the siege, are at present living under conditions which would test the endurance of the most experienced soldier. They are penned up within the limits of Mafeking, unable to move with any degree of safety, and condemned to an inactivity which is very irksome to those who have been pressed as volunteers into the defences of the town. They did not expect in the early phases of the crisis to be actively engaged in defending their town, since, with some hope of having their views adopted, they repeatedly urged upon the Government the fallacies which distinguished the official forecast of the situation, and now, as they stand to their posts, throughout the heat of an African summer, beneath the deluges of the rainy season, they cull but little satisfaction from the Ministerial refusal adequately to protect their town by sending troops and armaments to it. They say that they were derided, that no notice was taken of their request, that their petition was overruled, leaving to them the work of warding off from the town such a day of bitterness, of exceeding danger, of very genuine disaster, as might have been expected to result from the unprotected condition in which the Cabinet's indifference had left the town. The Regular soldiers of the Protectorate Regiment do not, perhaps, deserve so much commiseration, since in all probability their present circumstances are

little worse than those which they anticipated when they were enlisting. But there is some force in the case which the inhabitants of Mafeking can bring against the Colonial Government, and it is to be hoped that the work which they are now doing will receive full and satisfactory compensation at the final adjustment. But there exists little possibility that they will be given any compensation which will be in any way commensurate. Their businesses have in many cases been absolutely ruined, those who were farmers upon the outskirts of the town have had the melancholy satisfaction of seeing their homesteads set fire to by the enemy and their cattle raided. Those who were local merchants, men of peace for the most part, with no very keen enthusiasm for martial glory, have seen the industry of a lifetime completely wrecked by the unwillingness of the Government to take such precautions as would have placed the town beyond the probability of attack ; but, although every one recognizes the worthlessness of the material which was placed at the disposal of Colonel Baden-Powell, there has been no public complaint. Upon the termination of the war perhaps it may come, but for the present the townspeople of Mafeking are singularly unanimous in their desire to co-operate with the military authorities, recognizing with cheerful appreciation the very skilful way in which Colonel Baden-Powell and his staff have woven the net of Mafeking's defences.

Under their direction the Boers have been repulsed for seven weeks, just as without the walls of Mafeking an almost impregnable defence has been constructed. It is perhaps a detail if our defenders be armed with Snyders, Enfields, a few Martinis, and a still less number of Lee-Metfords. These are the more material elements of our defences, and to them may be added the strength of the Protectorate Regiment, the Bechuanaland Rifles, and the native contingent, numbering, with the town guard, some eight hundred men. Against this we must place an enemy whose tactics are surprising everybody, whose artillery fire is admirable, whose guns are numerous and first class. They stand off five miles and shell the town with perfect safety, while under cover of their fire they project their advanced trenches daily a few feet nearer the town. We have endeavoured with our artillery and by night sorties to check their progress, but the sapping of Mafeking continues, and is at once a very serious, if not our sole, danger. Should their trenches advance much further it will be impossible to move about during daytime at all, and, although we have thrown up bales of compressed hay and sacks of oats to act as shields against the enemy's bullets, and the flying splinters of passing shells, there is no hour in the day in which the streets of the town are not sprayed by Mauser bullets. It is not possible for us to advance very far from our own lines, since, as eagles swoop down upon their carrion, so would the Boers from other quarters attempt to rush the town. Yet there is no doubt that such movement would be very welcome, affording as much keen pleasure to the volunteers of the town as to Colonel Baden-Powell and the newly-raised units of the garrison. We nurture a wild desire to attempt to spike Big Ben, and it may be that before long Providence will turn from the side of the enemy by presenting us with some such golden opportunity. The big gun is hedged around by barbed wire, guarded in front by mines, and flanked upon the one side by a Nordenfelt-Maxim and upon the other by a Hotchkiss. Truly, they could deal out a very warm reception to those who chanced their luck, but a little novelty these days atones for many hours of tiring inactivity, and if the colonel chose to put a price upon the task there would be no trouble in enlisting for the venture some 500 volunteers. The siege as it progresses seems to give fewer opportunities for coming into positive contact with the enemy ; such occasions as there have been are few and far between, and, although Colonel Baden-Powell holds out the promise of such a venture, it has been so constantly deferred that we are for the most part becoming incredulous.

30th January 1900.

WITH GATACRE'S DIVISION.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

STERKSTROM.

Dec. 21.—Field-day this morning. I devoutly hope that the men will not be similarly handled in actual fighting. No regard whatever for ground ; shut eyes, put the head down, and go straight like a bull at a gate ; but in such loose order that the gate would probably survive the shock.

Dec. 22.—De Montmorency, with a mixed patrol, in all 50 strong, met party of about 30 Boers between Halseton and Dordrecht, about nine miles west of the latter place. Boers fled precipitately, leaving a wagon loaded with stores and three rifles in possession of the patrol.

Dec. 23.—De Montmorency, following up yesterday's success with an increased force and the armoured train, in all 170 officers and men, attacked 300 Boers near Koups Laagte, and, continuously outflanking them in spite of their superior force, drove them for over seven miles from kopje to kopje until they took refuge in Dordrecht. Only that portion of the force under De Montmorency's own command (about 60 men) was actually engaged, the other squadron having no share in the fighting. The armoured train returned to Sterkstrom at night, but De Montmorency bivouacked upon the ridges overlooking

Dordrecht and about two miles from the town. Reinforcements were applied for but not granted and the party was ordered to retire. This was a pity. A favourable moral effect would have been created by the temporary occupation of Dordrecht. But the opportunity was allowed to slip. The capture of the Landdrost and a few other prominent rebels would have been worth a little risk. In actual fact there was no danger of a reverse, the enemy being completely demoralized and apparently without support.

December 24.—This morning I accompanied the armoured train which left here at daylight to cover the retirement of De Montmorency and his men. The enemy, however, made no sign. Meanwhile, these trivial matters sink into utter insignificance in comparison with the important news that we have now received with reference to Lord Roberts's appointment to the chief command of the Army in South Africa. Even this, however, seems but a small matter beside the announcement that large reinforcements in the form of mounted troops are to be sent from England. Apparently the authorities have at length realized that mounted infantry are more than a match for ordinary infantry, unless the latter be in overwhelming force and prepared to sustain immense losses wholly disproportionate to the results achieved. Whilst our slow-moving infantry are laboriously prosecuting a wide detour the mounted Boer will jump on his horse and reinforce the threatened flank, or not seldom form a false flank beyond it. What we need is to have mobile troops of some sort, regular or irregular matters not, so long as they are expert riflemen and reasonably well-mounted. To beat the Boer we must adopt Boer methods, more especially as these are all of them strictly in accordance with the common sense dictates of modern tactical science. The Boer carries out his tactical and other manœuvres on horseback and we must do the same. Mobility superior to that of the enemy enables a force to deliver or to decline battle at will, or in the event of a combat to frustrate by counter manœuvres all attempts of the assailant to work round the flanks. It is idle for an army composed for the most part of infantry to attempt manœuvring against an enemy whose chief strength is in mounted infantry, since the latter can always concentrate with such speed upon the threatened point that superiority attained against him can seldom be more than temporary. Success, be it admitted, can of course be gained by the combination of frontal and flank attacks, but only at great cost. Upon the contrary, however, when opposed by troops having mobility equal to their own and who show sufficient dash under good leaders the Boer can readily be dislodged from almost any position. In support of this I have only to quote the success achieved by De Montmorency yesterday. Upon this, as in every other occasion, the Boers fled precipitately upon the instant that each successive position had been turned. The Boer, for all that is said, is not as a rule a courageous fighter ; but he is a crafty and a skilful one. The stubborn resistance offered by Boer forces during the present war is to be accounted for by the fact that in spite of sensational allegations to the contrary their losses have almost invariably been insignificant. Any troops will fight on so long as they escape punishment. I am convinced that had the same Boers who fled before some 60 men under De Montmorency yesterday been holding the position at Sterkstrom attacked by British infantry at the field-day mentioned in the second paragraph in this letter, they would have held it successfully, or at all events been enabled to withdraw after trifling loss, whilst the casualties upon our side would have been extremely heavy.

Colonel Dalgety, Cape Mounted Rifles, I have just learned, occupied Dordrecht this morning unopposed. It appears that the commando which fled yesterday before De Montmorency's scouts was so completely disorganized that it melted away. The members, mostly rebel farmers, are no doubt at the present moment back on their farms and peacefully following the ordinary avocations of husbandmen. The success gained by Colonel Dalgety is most satisfactory, but had General Gatacre seen fit to reinforce the troops acting from this direction, or even to permit those upon the spot to remain at the discretion of the senior officer, it is probable that the rebel commando might have been captured almost to a man. Colonel Dalgety's mounted riflemen operated against Dordrecht from Clarke's Siding, seven miles east of that place, whilst Feilden with a squadron of Brabant's Horse and the scouts under De Montmorency advanced from the west. Thus had all things been well the enemy should have been pinched between the two forces.

Dec. 25.—Christmas Day in Sterkstrom camp has been chiefly remarkable for the utterly vile character of the weather. A hot wind, blowing half a gale, with clouds of dust, and followed up in the afternoon by a furious thunderstorm. Anything more un-Christmaslike it would be impossible to imagine.

Dec. 27.—This afternoon I went down to have a look at the artillery horses and was much distressed to find that they show very little signs of picking up condition. The great majority are badly tucked up and many are very much hide-bound. This, I suspect, is due to the constant field-days held in conjunction with the Mounted Infantry. Of course, in the case of the 74th and 77th Field Batteries, the traces of the terribly hard work which they went through before, during, and and after the disastrous fight at Stormberg could scarcely have been effaced altogether ; but certainly I expected to have seen a better recovery than appears to have been made. The

proper course would be for the batteries to do a drill daily, lasting from one to two hours, and for the horses to spend the rest of the day turned out to graze on the veldt. Unless something of this kind is done it is only too probable that whenever real work has to be faced the horses will prove unequal to the strain. After a month at sea horses require tender treatment until they have regained their strength. Instead of this they are being worked just as if they were in the pink of condition. "Fat horses" are no doubt an abomination and a deception, but they are preferable to animals with their bellies draw up to their backbones. The 79th Field Battery, which escaped the Stormberg ordeal, is a trifle better off than the other two as regards flesh, but this advantage is discounted by the extraordinary prevalence of bad feet. In many cases it is quite marvellous that the farriers have succeeded in finding any hold for the nails and as the condition of the feet is clearly a long-standing evil it does not appear as if the selection of the animals can have been very carefully conducted. Horses with brittle feet are no use for a campaign. A draft of New Zealand horses has arrived and, although rather ugly, as a rule, they appear to be a useful lot. Eight, however, are quite unbroken and some time must elapse before they can be fit to take their places in the ranks.

Sir George Clarke's "spade" seems to give general satisfaction. Many remedies are found to be even worse than the disease, but in this case the check to the recoil is effected without involving any consequent inconveniences in other directions. An artillery officer told me yesterday that he invariably made use of the spade whether rapid fire was required or not. In a word this invention seems to be exactly what is required; it is efficient as a means of checking the recoil, whilst at the same time involving no loss of freedom in training the gun at will. This is where the central spade shows its marked superiority over the various other systems, such as the Darmancier, which adopt a spade at the end of the trail. All that we now need is a genuine quick-firer mounted upon the Woolwich carriage. It seems a great pity that some of the new quick-firers are not out here for purposes of practical experiment in actual warfare.

December 28.—I went by train to Dordrecht with a patrol commanded by de Montmorency. The object was to discover the positions and strength of the Boer forces reported to be in the neighbourhood of Dordrecht. At Dordrecht we were rapturously received by the few English in the place. The town is on a hillside about two miles north-west of the railway station. On the west side of the station road, about one and a half mile from it and nearly equidistant from town and station, a mixed force of C.M. Rifles and C.M. Police with four seven-pounder m.-l. guns was encamped under the command of Captain Goldsworthy, C.M.R.

December 29.—De Montmorency with his 30 scouts set forth from Dordrecht in search of the enemy. The weather was truly awful, and from first to last the changes were rung between Scotch mist and thunderstorms, varied once, in the case of the latter, by a severe shower of hail. Under such circumstances reconnaissance, more especially in a mountainous country, was naturally difficult. Indeed, at times it was impossible to see more than a few hundred yards. At all events, not a Boer was to be seen, although in the course of our wanderings we passed under the very hills on which the enemy was found upon the following day and from the summits of which I have every reason to believe that their sentries must actually have been watching us. The object of our expedition was twofold—(1) To find out the position of a large commando reported to be about six or seven miles north-east of Dordrecht; (2) to find a smaller commando said to be a little further to the west and if opportunity offered to give the latter a fright. This smaller commando was reported to consist of the rebel colonists, whom De Montmorency had chased eastwards into Dordrecht the week before. The rebel commando whom we chiefly desired to meet had most evidently cleared altogether or else had joined forces with its stronger neighbour. To give an idea of how deceptive is the veldt on a misty day I need only mention that a flock of sheep which the thunderstorm had caused to close up into a block was actually mistaken for a Boer laager! This misconception was not dispelled until after out scouts, advancing with the utmost caution, had approached within 400 yards. At double that distance all of us were prepared to certify that we could see wagons, oxen, and mounted men. Now De Montmorency's scouts are picked men, and, whether colonial or home born, every one of them thoroughly accustomed to solving all the various conundrums that life on the veldt gives rise to.

As the result of the day's work the existence of the small commando as an isolated unit was considered to be disproved and De Montmorency therefore determined to devote all his energies upon the following day to fixing the exact position of the larger one, and, if possible, obliging it to disclose its strength.

December 30.—The programme for to-day was as follows:—A detachment of Captain Goldsworthy's force at the Dordrecht camp was to be placed at the disposal of Captain De Montmorency. Lieutenant De Cerjat, Frontier Mounted Rifles, temporarily attached to the "scouts," was to proceed with an English farmer to a point from which the latter alleged that the Boer laager could clearly be seen. Having grasped the situation, De Cerjat was to join the patrol at the appointed rendezvous, about half-way between Dordrecht and Labuschagne's

Nek. Unfortunately a strong Boer patrol impeded the researches of De Cerjat, so that he was prevented from reaching the intended point. As it was, we ascertained the enemy's fighting position, his approximate strength, and the fact that he was provided with two excellent guns. In short, sufficient information was obtained, and therefore we have every reason to be satisfied.

However, this desirable result was not achieved without a great deal of hard fighting, and the various incidents are deserving of a full description.

At 12 45 p.m. a scout belonging to the patrol on our right flank was fired at as he rode along the slope of the adjoining hill. Captain De Montmorency, who was with the advanced party on the road, immediately galloped over the drift, and having placed the horses behind a fold of ground commenced replying to the fire by which he was instantly assailed from the rugged slopes on the south side of the nek. Orders were sent to the main body to get cover in the donga to the west of the drift; a party being detached towards the western outlet of the donga in order to guard against any turning movement. A small picket was also let drop, during the advance, with orders to safeguard the right rear more especially against any movement by way of the donga.

The enemy's first effort was successfully beaten back as also was another far more formidable one at 2 35. De Montmorency had given the order to retire by the left except to the party actually with himself, which he had led back *via* the donga to the position where we found him. He had then returned by himself to the front, when Captain Hannigan, of Brabant's Horse, assured him that Milford had the order, and was coming along all right. Not satisfied with this assurance De Montmorency galloped to where Milford's party had been posted, and not seeing them naturally concluded that the facts were as had been stated. What had actually occurred was that, owing to the concentrated fire brought to bear upon them, the party had been obliged to change their position to a cradle in the rocks where they obtained better cover. Meanwhile they could not hope to carry their wounded away under such a fire as was being directed upon their post.

It being believed, as I have explained, that the entire force had been extricated, De Montmorency and Goldsworthy thought only of an attempt to punish the Boers who were engaged with Hannigan's covering party on the left front; and accordingly the whole galloped across the plateau for that purpose receiving as they went a well directed but ineffective fire from the hostile artillery. A series of skirmishes ensued westward of the original scene of the engagement, and finally the troops returned by the Jamestown road to Dordrecht. The absence of Milford's party caused no immediate alarm, but as the evening wore on a suspicion of the truth enforced itself upon us. Captain Goldsworthy reported the situation to the authorities, and, with reference to his suggestions about reinforcements and a rescue, was reminded that it was seldom desirable to risk a larger force in an attempt to extricate a small one. In face of this cold water Goldsworthy determined to engage every available man, as well as his four "pop-guns"—seven-pounder muzzleloaders. For thus manfully facing responsibility Goldsworthy deserves the highest praise. Whilst De Montmorency and his remaining scouts made for the donga by crossing the valley forming the western boundary of the plateau, intending at all costs to reach their beleaguered comrades with a supply of ammunition, Goldsworthy with 115 men and his guns reached the south-eastern end of the plateau by the road, and after scouts had carefully examined the ground men were dismounted and others led their horses to the spot where Milford's party were confined. The success of this venture was due to the enemy having evidently shifted their artillery, no doubt in order to put it in a position to shell the donga, and not having time to get it back again. At all events, not a round of shell was fired by the enemy until after the operation had been completed. As soon as the front was clear of the rescued and rescuers the four guns of the C.M.R. opened fire on the Boer position, and shortly afterwards the enemy replied. There was an artillery duel for about three-quarters of an hour, during which we sustained no casualties. The whole force then retired to Dordrecht. My telegram to *The Times* was delivered at Dordrecht Station by my own hand at 9 30 a.m., but when I reached Sterkstrom at 4 30 p.m. it had not yet been sent on. This was very unlucky. Having been the only correspondent present on the ground it was hard that I should have obtained no start of the others who had been comfortably sitting in Sterkstrom and gained their information from the Intelligence Department.

January 4.—It is strange, but nevertheless true, that the first intimation received here yesterday morning that a Boer force estimated at 3,000 men was advancing against our outposts was the message telling us that the Police camp between Cyphergat and Molteno was actually being attacked, and that it was entirely isolated by the march of the enemy towards Bushman's Hoek. It was most unfortunate that our artillery was at the time engaged in one of the frequent field-days by which it is hoped to get the horses into training, but which, in my opinion, serve rather to prevent them from recovering even their normal condition. At all events, the appearance of the horses, as a rule, suggests that gentle exercise and all the food that can be obtained for them would serve the required purpose better

than the course which is being actually adopted. The result was that the artillery were not in action until the afternoon, although the scene of the combat was but eight miles distant, and the news of it reached camp before 8 30 a.m. It was also a pity that but one battery, the 79th, was sent to the front. Had there been two batteries the enemy must have been severely punished during his retreat. At 10 45 I arrived at Bushman's Hoek and a few minutes later the mounted infantry moved forward as far as the kopje just referred to, and it was well for them that its friendly protection was at hand to cover them from the well-directed shell fire which the enemy opened upon them. The enemy was in great force on the Loperberg, a commanding position from which he could sweep the country with fire to a distance of 6,000 yards --and he was effectually doing so whenever a target was offered to him. The armoured train ventured to appear for a few moments, but at 5,000 yards the Boer guns made such excellent practice that Lieutenant Gosset very properly abandoned the unequal contest. Against artillery an armoured train is useless at all times, and indeed against any enemy it is of but little service unless its rear is protected by mounted men to prevent the line behind it from being broken. I am afraid that armoured trains, however formidable in theory, are actually of but little real service, and nearly always come to grief sooner or later. Moving westwards, across the Cyphergat road and railway, I ascended the high ground beyond. From this point I could see everything. It was clear that so long as the Boers retained undisturbed possession of the Loperberg our men could not possibly advance to the aid of the beleaguered camp, unless by so wide a detour that they could not arrive before dark. It was now 1 40 p.m. At this moment I observed a single horseman gallop from the kopje in my direction, and soon I recognized De Montmorency on the grey Arab that had carried him in the charge at Omdurman. I at once became interested. That De Montmorency was engaged in whatever was about to take place was a sufficient guarantee that it would probably be exciting and to the purpose. After an interval of a few seconds another man followed, until 30 had passed me, racing along with distances of about 400 yards between them. At first the enemy used only musketry fire, but soon losing patience his artillery opened rapid fire, pitching shell after shell just over the kopje, but to no effect. Suddenly came from my right rear the boom of a gun, and I knew that at last Armitage had not only arrived but found a position—a bad one, it is true, but right well it served its purpose. The effect was instantaneous ; the Boer guns ceased fire and the crests of the Loperberg, which had a moment before seemed alive with the enemy, became apparently tenantless. Fifteen minutes later the Berkshire Mounted Infantry under Lieutenant Thornton sailed calmly across the plain following the direction already taken by De Montmorency and his " scouts." Not a gun did the Boers dare to fire at them, an ineffectual rattle of small arms, but nothing more. The collapse of the enemy's defence being so marked, I hoped to see offensive developments from our side. I knew that a half-battalion of the Royal Scots had been sent by rail to Bushman's Hoek, and though I had not seen them I could not help expecting to find them put in an appearance somewhere or other. That they could easily have mounted the Loperberg and worked havoc amongst the retreating Boers, at any time after 4 p.m., is an absolute certainty.

Having waited some little time in the hopes of seeing our troops take the offensive, I cantered off after those who had, as I rightly surmised, gone to the police camp. On arrival I found every one in the highest spirits, and no wonder. The police, under Inspector Neylan, aided by Captain " Ronny " Maclean and his mounted company of the Kaffrarian Rifles, had successfully defended an apparently indefensible post against a superior enemy provided with excellent artillery which the gunners knew how to use. It was an achievement to be proud of, although not a single casualty had been sustained. Clearly it was because our men stood up to them and shot straight that the Boers failed to gain possession.

January 6.—The bodies of four dead Boers were found in one place about 600 yards from the police camp in an exposed position from which their comrades could scarcely have been able to remove them. Unmistakable traces were found on the Loperberg showing that our artillery fire must have been very effective. A Kaffir who observed the march of the retreating Boers states that four carts were loaded with dead and wounded. It has also to be noted that the Dordrecht commando, with which we had the engagements at Labuschagne's Nek on Saturday and Sunday last, co-operated with the Stormberg commando at the Loperberg on Wednesday. An English farmer who lives about three miles east of Bushman's Hoek, states that the Dordrecht commando—700 strong, with one gun—passed over his farm shortly after daylight on Wednesday and proceeded towards the Loperberg. This was the immediate result of our withdrawal from Dordrecht, by which the commando at that place was set free to roam as it pleased. Had we taken steps expeditiously on Wednesday last, in conjunction with the garrison of Ten Hoek, the Boer commando would have been practically at our mercy. The opportunity of cutting off a Boer force does not often occur ; we have had one chance and we have let it slip.

30th January 1900.

ON THE SOUTHERN FRONTIER.

GENERAL FRENCH'S DIVISION.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

RENSBURG, JAN. 7.

Christmas and New Year's Day have both come again and gone. The former was spent in camp at Arundel. Church parades in the morning, and in the afternoon athletic sports and mule races were indulged in. The amusement caused by "Tommy on mules" did, indeed, serve to make Christmas pass merrily, as the situations of some were most comical. The rest of the week was spent in the usual routine of camp life.

A perfect system of patrolling and scouting is kept up by sections of the different mounted regiments. The General himself almost daily, in company with his special scouts, reconnoitres the country in advance of his force, sometimes leaving his headquarters in the early hours and not returning till afternoon, thus gaining an intimate knowledge of the country through which he has to make his next advance. With Arundel as a front centre, the country to the west is patrolled to Hanover-road Station, half-way between Naauwpoort and De Aar, where mounted infantry are camped, and these again are in touch with the patrols from De Aar. To the east and south-east on towards Rosmead Junction, where the line of communication is also being guarded by mounted infantry, the patrols are also in constant touch, thus forming an unbroken front to the enemy through which it is impossible for him to pass with a commando without the military staff being quickly apprised of its approach.

The General is to be congratulated on the cautiousness with which he has advanced against the enemy and on the manner in which he has out-manœuvred, rather than driven, him from his positions both at Arundel and Rensburg. As a matter of fact he is using their own tactics. As the enemy extends his flank, so the General throws out his men and outflanks him again. There has been a very small list of casualties considering the number of brushes we have had, and this is greatly accounted for by the General having personally reconnoitred the Boer positions before advancing his men and having his scouts constantly in touch with the enemy and so preventing surprises.

On Saturday, the 30th ult., it became apparent that some move was to be made from Arundel Camp, but with the usual caution nothing had leaked out. It had now been discovered that the enemy had struck laager at Rensburg and retired to the strong position he now holds south and south-east of Colesberg, and by Sunday morning the camp was moved in most systematic order to Rensburg Siding, a point seven miles further north on the line of railway. On Sunday evening at 5 o'clock the General moved out of Rensburg Camp with one and a half battery of R. H. Artillery, the 10th Hussars, the Inniskillings, the Berkshire Regiment, and details of Engineers, ambulance, &c., *via* Maeder's Farm, to the west of Rensburg, where he halted for an hour or two, after which the force was advanced to Coles Kop (or Toren Berg), on the west of the town of Colesberg about three miles. Colonel Porter, with a half battery of R.H.A., the Carbineers, and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, left camp at 2 a.m. Monday and took up good position within 1,500 yards of the enemy's left flank to the south-west of Colesberg. At daybreak the Berkshires were ordered to charge a kopje between Colesberg town and Coles Kop; this they did most gallantly, causing the Boer picket to retreat, our casualties being only slight. The occupation of this hill gave one battery of the R.H.A. a safe position from which to shell the Boer right flank in its rear while the guns with Colonel Porter were shelling it in front. Our excellent artillery practice soon silenced seven or eight Boer guns, including two Vickers-Maxim quick-firers.

Our 12-pounders continued to shell the Boer position until sunset on Monday. We kept up occasional artillery fire and maintained our positions awaiting reinforcements, having found the enemy too strong to attack without more forces, especially of infantry and artillery.

The Suffolk Regiment, having arrived from Naauwpoort on the 4th inst., was marched out from camp the same afternoon to the north of the hills occupied by the Berks, and on the 5th inst., after several appeals from Colonel Watson (the commanding officer) to allow him to attack a hill overlooking Colesberg, which is really the key to the position, the General consented, and at midnight four companies of the Suffolks were ordered to march half way up the kopje, where they were halted until 3 a.m., when the colonel gave the order to charge. One company first charged, and with bayonets fixed got to within a few yards of the Boer rifles, when they were shot down; another company charged and shared a similar fate. A command was then given to retire (believed by some to have been given by the Boers), and the remaining two companies retreated as quickly as the darkness and the rough nature of the ground would permit. The colonel was shot through the head in the early part of the engagement, the adjutant also was killed before the retreat took place, thus proving how quick the Boers are to recognize officers. Two other officers were also killed, five wounded, and two missing. Of the men 26 were killed, 45 wounded, and 72 (official figures 117 missing, four wounded) taken prisoners. Our

ambulance went out in the afternoon to bring in the wounded, but the Boers would not allow them to advance nearer than a mile of the position, but they have buried our dead and taken the wounded prisoners into Colesberg.

The last rites to the dead were carried out by an English doctor, who is serving with the Boers, in the presence of our ambulance doctors. After the singing of a hymn in Dutch, this doctor addressed our medical officers, saying that they were all tired of the war and presumed that the British experience was of a similar nature.

This is the first serious reverse (although our position is unaffected) that has occurred to General French's hitherto successful advance, and that on the eve of the re-occupation of Colesberg town. It appears that only a few hours after it had been decided to make the night attack the intention was known to the Boers, who occupied the hill and waited for the Suffolks until the charge was made, and, being already in position while our infantry were stumbling up the hill in the dark over loose stones, the enemy naturally held a great advantage and were able to shoot our men down as fast as they advanced.

The Suffolks had been ordered to wear soft shoes, but only about half were doing so. Their bayonets were fixed, but none got near enough to use them.

The experience gained by these night attacks in such rough country so far is :—

1st. That the Dutch or half-breed Dutch employed in our Cape Police and in some companies of scouts find means of acquainting their blood relations of the intentions of our generals, and so prepare for whatever is going to occur. Some foreigners also have found billets in the scouts, whose relations with the enemy previously have been very close.

2nd. That fewer lives would be sacrificed if such rough kopjes as those on which the Berks are now holding a position were attacked in daylight by infantry—foot and mounted—with bayonets fixed, men advancing in very open order, under cover of as heavy a fire of shrapnel as can be poured in on the ridges where the enemy lies ready to fire.

Shrapnel and cold steel the Boer does not relish, and the more he sees of it in daylight the more he will try to avoid it.

30th. January 1900.

THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JAN. 10.

During the past week the military and political situation has remained almost unchanged. Neither side has any striking success to record. And as time is fighting on our side the week thus indecisively spent has been a week gained. The desperate attack made upon Ladysmith on the 6th by the Boers—inspired, it is reported, by direct orders from President Kruger himself—seems to indicate that they are beginning to feel the pressure of the British force assembled south of the Tugela. In Cape Colony they have failed to make any headway. General Gatacre is holding his own at Molteno and pushing his reconnaissances close up to Stormberg, while the hopes entertained by the Republics of a general rising of the Dutch population behind him or in the broad gap between his forces and those of General French must be growing fainter and fainter as they hear of the active preparations for local defence which are being rapidly pushed on everywhere. The slight check received on January 6 has not in any material way altered General French's position. His forces are still gradually working their way round Colesberg, "nursing" the enemy as much as possible in order to prevent a hasty evacuation before he can succeed in completely surrounding the town. At Sunnyside Colonel Pilcher won a success on January 1, notable as the first battle in history in which Canadians, Australians, South Africans, and British Regulars have all fought side by side, and put a decided damper on rebel activity in Griqualand West. At Kimberley and Magersfontein the Boers still hold their positions. But everywhere along the whole line of frontier from Kimberley to Colesberg, Stormberg, and Ladysmith they are now on the defensive. Every day, meanwhile, the transports are coming nearer with fresh troops, and it cannot be long before, at one point or another, that stubborn line of defence is broken through. Against this the capture of Kuruman and the repulse of a determined sortie from Mafeking can avail nothing. One cannot but feel deeply for the brave little band of Cape Police who have held Kuruman for so many months, and it would be still sadder if the heroism and resource displayed in the defence of Mafeking failed to maintain the town till relief can come from the north or the south ; but whatever happens in Bechuanaland can have but little effect on the main issue of the war.

The arrival of the new Commander-in-Chief, whose ship is already sighted in the distance, is awaited with the greatest satisfaction by everybody. This war is so extended and scattered that a powerful central control of it is absolutely necessary. It cannot be controlled efficiently by a commander at the front. Since Sir Redvers Buller's departure for Natal the various columns in Cape Colony have really been each fighting their own

little war. Now that we have a responsible general in Natal, the operations in that colony can be safely left to themselves, and there is no need for Lord Roberts or Lord Kitchener to leave Cape Town for more than a few days at a time till the long-delayed advance into the Free State begins.

Politics in the colony are, externally at least, quiet enough. But there are not wanting indications that the first decisive British victory will be the signal for an active agitation among the Dutch for a patched-up peace on any conditions acceptable to the pride of the Republics. The policy of the leaders of such an agitation will, no doubt, be the same as that pursued by President Brand of the Free State and by the Dutch politicians at the Cape in 1881. They will declare that they cannot restrain their followers and that they will not be responsible for what may happen if their proposals are not listened to; in other words, they will endeavour to frighten the British Government as they frightened it once before. But they are less likely to succeed this time. A great change has come over the temper of the British people since 1881, which would render the repetition of the old policy impossible. There is a great difference, too, between the circumstances of the time. It can be urged in defence of Mr. Gladstone's action that the Transvaal was then a question of minor importance; that we were involved in serious trouble in Ireland and abroad, and could never have afforded to risk the chance of being obliged to lock up in South Africa the 30,000 or 40,000 men which even then would have been required if the Free State and a large portion of Cape Colony had joined in with the Transvaal. The whole thing was done in a corner and hushed up as much as possible. To-day the eyes of the whole world, and not least of our own colonies, are upon us. To recede a hand's breadth from any policy we have determined to carry out because of a threatened agitation among a section of our colonists would inflict a worse blow on our prestige than the whole surrender of 1881. Nor is there any question now of running any serious danger through not giving way. We have already got an army of over 100,000 men in the country, and our Navy, thanks to the efforts made since 1885, relieves us of all anxiety of trouble from abroad. In our conduct of this war and in the settlement which must follow it every consideration ought to be shown by us to the Dutch population of the country, whether in the Republics or in the colony. Even actual disloyalty of our own subjects must, in many cases, be dealt with with a regard both to the difficulty of their position and to the hope of an ultimate fusion between the two races in South Africa, when the bitterness, of which this war is the outcome rather than the cause, shall have passed away. But for the moment, as long as the Dutch nationalist aspiration is still visibly embodied in the Republics, as long as the Dutch are pleading for that aspiration and not merely for considerate treatment of their kinsfolk in the Republics, they are out of court. We can listen to them, but we cannot, for their sakes as well as for our own, let them persuade us or threaten us into any settlement which will only mean a renewal of the old trouble in a few years or a few decades.

The capture of 47 rebels by Colonel Pilcher's force raises a question of considerable difficulty, and likely soon to become of the greatest importance. Legally these men are guilty of high treason and liable to the penalty of death. But it would be most unadvisable to proceed to such extremity in the case of any but spies in a camp or men caught red-handed in giving information to the enemy betraying our movements. The incident of Slagters Nek shows how easily a fully justifiable legal sentence may in the popular mind become a martyrdom. At the same time, it is necessary to inflict a penalty severe enough to act as a deterrent. Unlike the English law, the Roman Dutch law admits of other penalties besides death for high treason. A period of imprisonment or penal servitude, and a heavy fine, sufficient in every case to secure the compulsory attachment of a rebel's property, may perhaps prove sufficient deterrents. Another question that will arise after this war will be that of the franchise. It is absurd that open rebels should, immediately after the war, be allowed to have a vote in the affairs of a British Colony. At the present time there are several members of the Cape Legislature whose constituents are busily engaged in fighting on the side of the Queen's enemies. What their position will be if the House is reassembled it is not easy to say. It is not unlikely that after the conclusion of the war certain districts will for some time be put under special administration and excluded from participation in the political privileges possessed by the rest of the colony.

30th January 1900.

THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT WITH LORD METHUEN'S COLUMN.)

Among the various departments of the Army of which it was felt that the present war would prove a test, none was regarded as equally momentous with the proof of the Medical Corps, its organization, its efficiency, and its mobility.

On paper the various grades and divisions may perhaps seem over-complicated, but, as will be shown later, the entire and universally recognized efficiency of the Medical Corps has fully justified arrangements which have cost more earnest thought than those of any other branch

of the service. Theoretically the corps, divided into field hospitals, base hospital, and lines of communication hospitals, is under the supreme control of the principal medical officer of the expedition (in this war Surgeon-General Wilson), to whom are directly attached the eminent civilians who are now working with the troops as consulting surgeons and physicians. Beneath him, to take the field hospitals first, is the principal medical officer of each division, having entire control of the practical work done by the field hospital, with its attendant bearer company and the staff of doctors appointed on the outbreak of hostilities to each regiment, to each brigade of artillery, and to each company of engineers and service corps.

The field hospital, itself capable of receiving 100 patients, is under the management of a senior medical officer, generally a lieutenant-colonel with a full staff of officers—major, captain, and lieutenant as his assistants; the bearer company, under a surgeon-major and captain, possesses, besides stretchers, ten ambulances, each nominally capable of carrying two patients lying down and three sitting. Base hospitals are similar to field hospitals in organization, but, of course, of far greater size, and are relieved by hospital ships. Hospitals on lines of communication are useful in a double manner; they relieve the field hospitals of such cases as are not too severely wounded to travel, and retain simpler cases until either the base hospital or the ship is able to receive them, or the healing of the wound permits the patient to rejoin his regiment in the field. Communication is kept up by hospital trains, which, in their present perfection, have existed only in the war now being waged. They can carry 100 men, are under the charge of two medical officers and two nursing sisters, and are fully equipped with beds, medical comforts, and a perfectly supplied pharmacy. In the kitchen are a couple of chefs, and every possible kind of food is provided.

If we now follow a wounded man from the firing line, we shall see him picked up by the stretcher-bearers of his own regiment, a first-aid dressing having been hastily applied, and carried back to the collecting station, which, so far as possible, is out of the immediate range of rifle fire, though in some of the recent engagements it has been found impossible to do more than place it behind the screen afforded by a clump of bushes. Here the first dressing is carefully inspected, and if necessary renewed, and the sufferer is carried, as soon as the stretchers and ambulances can do so, to the field hospital in rear of the action. It is this first collection and dressing of wounded that has given rise to such misunderstanding and recrimination on the one side and the other. Some time ago Cronje formally intimated that he would pay no further attention to the Red Cross when in the firing line; and there is no doubt that on a strict construction of the first paragraph of the Geneva Convention he is fully entitled so to refuse.

The appearance of ambulances in the fire zone is open to two serious objections. First, they afford, intentionally or not, protection to men near them who are only doing their duty and carrying out their orders in firing upon the enemy, who is placed in an unfair difficulty in replying to the fire. But a more serious objection is that an unscrupulous enemy can make use of the Red Cross privileges to supply ammunition to the men among whom the bearers are working. Probably, therefore, we should rather regard the occasional shooting down of a stretcher-bearer or doctor as an unavoidable accident than as an act of wilful savagery, and we must only regard the risks that the R.A.M.C. run in any case as increased by this the most urgent and necessary part of their entire work. For if, as urged by the Boers on one occasion, no collection of wounded should be permitted until the fall of night, the work thus thrown on the ambulances, difficult enough at all times, is doubled by the darkness and by the added complications to the wounds caused by delay. Sometimes it is absolutely unavoidable that wounded men should lie out all night, and there is no sadder rate of mortality than that among those whose wounds, severe at first but in no way dangerous, have, under the heat of the day and the bitter cold of night, developed a mortal character that might have been averted. However, this is one of the inevitable hardships of war, and the splendid work of the medical staff has reduced the probability of this misfortune to a *minimum*.

From the field hospital, where the dressings are again looked to and medical comforts other than morphia or brandy, both of which are always carried by the ambulances, are administered, the wounded are carried to the central hospital camp—always pitched near the railway—from which the hospital trains begin to run even before the conclusion of the fight. Those whose wounds are extremely severe and those whose wounds are slight are alone kept at the field hospital. The latter require perhaps but a visit or two more to the surgery, and can be as well looked after at the front as elsewhere. The former are too ill to stand the journey, and must, even at the cost of suffering minor inconveniences, wait till the shock has passed and the wounded man begins to pick up the strength necessary for the operation.

Hospitals on lines of communication, as has been already stated, receive men for whom there is no room at the front. They also inspect the patients and remove from the trains any who show signs of sinking under the strain—slight as it is—of the journey. They relieve the pressure

upon the field hospitals, and are themselves relieved by the base hospital.

Of the base hospitals, which require special treatment, it is enough to say that they are fitted up with a luxury and abundance that testify to the generosity of public and private enterprise alike. Here the wounded are cared for until they are restored to health, or their inability to take further part in the campaign is proved, when the hospital ships carry them home.

5th February 1900.

THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, DEC. 6.

As compensation to the inhabitants of beleaguered Mafeking for the many dull days we have had lately, yesterday was replete with incidents and crowded with a constant succession of events of more than ordinary interest. We have had our days of activity, when the boom of artillery and the rattle of musketry have impressed into a few brief hours the full measure of martial excitement, we have endured our days of lonesome and tiring idleness when the hot winds of the Kalahari Desert have swept eddies of whirring, biting sand across the trenches, when the pitiless sun has spent its energies upon the heat-stricken garrison. But yesterday we had a new experience of the elements. It was a reconnaissance in force by nature. It came, it swept everything before it, and it left us drenched with rain, surrounded by small lakes of mud, streams of water, and without dry garments to our names. When the mischief was complete the deluge ceased. The general physiognomy of the scene can be described at once. When dawn broke in the morning across the sky there glowered the haze of heat, which in Africa, as elsewhere, denotes a more than usually tropical day. To those, however, who knew the signs of the sky the fleeting masses of black cloud, low down upon the horizon, foretold a day of evil tempest. Slowly the rising wind drove them together until, shortly before noon, clouds were bunched high up across the sky and over the Boer laager. From where we were in the town it was quite apparent that the temporary centre of the storm was almost above the implacements of the enemy's artillery. Before the breeze had increased the Boers had thrown a few shells into the town, but presently, as the force of the gale struck the town, it was evident that the rain-filled clouds were discharging their contents upon the extreme limits of the veldt. For an hour or two the Boers received the full effect of the storm and but few drops of rain fell into the town, as the wind swept before its path the *débris* of the veldt, portions of broken trees, of scrub, and bushes. The deluge quickly left the south-east, concentrating a little beyond and over the town. Possibly the wind carried with it a rainspout, since the effect of the streaming water was as though from somewhere in the sky buckets were being emptied on to the place beneath. The veldt was quickly flooded, the dried-up spruits were soon charged with foaming cataracts, Mafeking itself lay under water, the earthworks around the town were swept away, trenches and bomb-proof shelters were choked with eddying streams, everywhere was ruin—destruction and complete chaos reigned until the storm had spent itself. Down the acclivity upon which Cannon Kopje is placed there rolled the surging tide, carrying with it the stores of the fort, the blankets of the men, the bodies of struggling animals, who, if they succeeded in coping with the force of the stream, were dashed to pieces upon the rocky faces of the hill. The women's laager, which has hitherto rested in snug seclusion at the base of the hills forming the western outposts, was in a few minutes flooded with the off-pourings from the sluits of the veldt, while the trenches were quickly submerged or silted with the refuse of the torrent. A cart which went to the assistance of the inmates of the laager found itself water-bound through the tremendous force of swiftly-flowing cataracts. In the town bomb-proof cellars were vacated, and the people, discarding their shoes and stockings, made their way from point to point by paddling and fording the footpaths across the streets. Market-square was a sheet of running water, rising with such rapidity that it seemed that the houses bordering the square would be inundated.

From Market-square upon two sides the roads make something of a descent, and down these slight inclines volumes of water, yards in width and some feet in depth precipitated themselves to the river bed. As the storm increased it was seen that it would be impossible to retain any longer our advanced positions in the river bed. The first to go was the trench occupied by Corporal Currie and his sharpshooters. As the water swept from bank to bank through this post, which we but a few days before had won so gallantly from the enemy, the men clambered up the banks to the veldt and made their way as best they could to the base. With the flooding of this position, so rapidly did the river rise that those occupied by Captain FitzClarence and his squadron were equally untenable. As they were abandoned the stream rushed by them, with the roar of a river in flood, while the crash of boulder

upon boulder turned masses of rock into shattered fragments. Within an hour the river had risen 8ft., and so unexpected was the flood that for the time being it was not possible to rescue from the rising stream the 7-pounder gun, which was in position some way down the river. As the rain continued the wind died down, until in the height of this storm it scarcely possessed the strength to to dissipate the white mists which were rising from the veldt. They hung low upon the ground, prevented from rising by the strength of the downpour, and making it difficult to see the progress of events in the enemy's lines. From time to time above the hissing of the rain and the roar of the rivers we heard the angry cough of the Nordenfelt, the shrieks of their quick-firing guns, and the heavy and more stately boom of Big Ben. Ofttimes there was the echo of the Mauser, the grating rustle of the Martini, and it soon became evident that the enemy did not propose to let us endure the misery of the storm altogether undisturbed. From these omens, as some slight diminution in the downpour allowed the mists to rise from the ground, we expected to hear the sound of exploding volleys coming through the fog, and to find that the fight had become suddenly desperate; but the Boers lacked the individual courage, and the charge which they might have made under cover of the tangle of the brushwood and the bewilderment of the fog never took place. Their fire, however, continued, while about them tossed the thick white fog, as above us occasionally rolled the thunder of their guns. The area of the storm included the most advanced trenches of the Boers, and as the wind shifted the gloomy masses of vapour, we saw through the whirling mist and smoke-charged air, the Boers, rain-soaked as ourselves, standing disconsolately upon their muddy parapets. They did not seem to understand what they should do. They could hear their own guns firing on our positions, happily beyond the later centre of the storm, but these men themselves stood still, shaking the water from their limbs, attempting to dry their weapons. At night, with the darkness to cover our misfortunes, the town was busy in constructing fresh earthworks, in draining those shelters from which any further use could be obtained, and in making such amends as possible for an occurrence almost unprecedented in the annals of war.

5th February 1900.

THE ATTACK ON LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, JAN. 6.*

The recent restlessness visible among the Dutch culminated at 2 o'clock this morning in an organized attack on three Ladysmith posts. So well planned and executed was it that on two points the enemy succeeded in securing a temporary foothold, but they were eventually hurled back.

It was evident that they had determined to make a desperate effort, for three commandos arrived yesterday from Colenso. The points chosen for the assault were Cæsar's Camp and its connecting spur, Wagon Hill, the main defences on the west perimeter, and Observation Hill, the most northerly point. The former was defended by the Manchesters, half a battalion of the 60th Rifles, two squadrons of Light Horse, and the 42nd Field Battery, with the Gordon Highlanders in support. The latter post was held by the Devonshire Regiment supported by the 69th Battery.

The main attack was directed against the western defences, where the hills present more favourable conditions for an assault than the others. It so chanced that an alteration in a battery necessitated the presence of a working party of Sappers and Gordons on Wagon Hill. A little after 2 o'clock in the morning, parties of dismounted Boers worked round, shelling the slopes of both positions. Proceeding with the utmost caution, they succeeded in working behind and destroying the outlying picket posts at Wagon Hill, drove in several pickets, and forced the working parties and the defenders over the crest-line of the most exposed spur. The firing was heavy, and by daybreak the enemy had partially established themselves, commanding two or more crest-lines.

As soon as news of this arrived, the camp on Wagon Hill was reinforced with two squadrons and Headquarters of Light Horse and half a battalion of the 60th Rifles, and Cæsar's Camp with the Gordons and four companies of the Rifle Brigade, while the 53rd Field Battery was sent out to sweep the left of the plain and flank the ascent to Cæsar's Camp, the 21st Battery being entrusted with similar duty on the right of Wagon Hill. Though for hours under a heavy artillery fire, these batteries resolutely stood their ground and kept many reinforcing contingents from joining the enemy.

The fighting during the night was confused, the men only being guided by the flashes, but at daybreak the recovery of the crest-lines lost in the dark on Wagon Hill became a sanguinary struggle in which we lost heavily. On Wagon Hill 14 officers were killed and wounded before 8 o'clock. The Boers had ensconced themselves among stones, and to show on a crest was to become a target. Here Colonel Edwards and Majors Doveton and Karri Davies, of the Imperial Light Horse, and Lord Ava were wounded, as well as Major Mackworth. Lieutenant Tod, of the Cameronians, leading his assaulting company of the 60th Rifles, was killed. Seven of his men fell simultaneously with him.

It was cruel work, but it was done, and the Dutch were forced down under cover of the reverse of the hill-side, though sharp-shooters crept up among the boulders. Major Miller-Wallnutt led his Highlanders and sappers up and wrested the summit from the enemy, driving them below the crest, but it was at the expense of half the assaulting party. Major Miller-Wallnutt himself was shot dead point blank. Having won the battery epaulement, our men were decimated by a vigorous rifle fire from a neighbouring kopje—in fact, all along the line. While the defence and the attack were stalking each other, the enemy was maintaining a heavy fire from neighbouring points of vantage. Five field-guns, besides 6in. position and machine-guns, aided the attack, keeping down our fire.

At this period matters were looking very serious, as reinforcements were swelling the attack, and heavy firing broke out on the opposite side of Ladysmith, but the Gordons and the Manchesters gained ground on Cæsar's Camp. About 4 o'clock the rain which had been threatening came down in a blinding sheet. It was an abnormal storm even for Africa. The Boers, who had retired under cover of the storm, tried to escape.

Then came our opportunity, which was fully taken advantage of on the Boers' camp, where the formation of the hillside allowed our men to hurl punishment on the flying burghers. The tenacity of the attack was shown by the action of two resolute Free Staters, who crept up the epaulement of Wagon Hill alone and attempted to dislodge our men. One of them was shot by Lieutenant Digby Jones, an officer who behaved heroically and whose intrepid leading of our broken men after their officers had been shot probably saved the position. He earned the Victoria Cross, and would have been recommended for it if he had lived, but before evening he went the way of the majority of the intrepid officers that day, being shot through the head in front of his men.

At 5 o'clock in the evening the enemy still held the reverse of Wagon Hill, and Colonel Hamilton asked the colonel of the Devons if he could clear them away with the bayonet. He answered that he would try. There were only three companies, and they had 60 yards of grassy slope to cross before they could reach the cover which the enemy held. Never hesitating, with levelled bayonets they crossed the open spot in which no man had dared show his head since dawn. They lost all their company officers and a quarter of their men, but they drove the Boers headlong from the position. From that moment our defence was our own again. Captain Lafone and Lieutenants Field and Watson were killed, and Lieutenant Masterson was wounded. In all the Devons had 60 casualties in three companies. It was terrible, but magnificent.

JANUARY 8.

With nightfall all firing ceased and we were in undisputed possession, but it had cost us dearly. We spent the night in searching for the wounded, whose trials in the drenching rain had been awful. The scene on the plateau of Cæsar's Camp, with the enemy's search-light playing on us and laying bare the terrible sights, was heartrending. Even this morning we were busy finding the dead. The attack on Wagon Hill was made by the Free State Boers, the Harrismith commando bearing the brunt. The other attacks are believed to have been made by Transvaal Boers. The losses of both the assaulting parties were heavy ; I myself saw five ambulances piled with dead carried away from one portion of the field. To-day has been given over to the dead and wounded by both sides.

*By runner to Frere Camp.

5th February 1900.

THE BOER PRISONERS.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JAN. 17.

A few days ago I took the occasion to visit the Boer prisoners of war at Simons Town on board the Cunard transport Catalonia, to which they have recently been transferred from the Manila, which brought them round from Cape Town. Originally they had been kept on board her Majesty's ship Penelope at Simons Town for some weeks, before their removal to the Docks Hospital in Cape Town harbour. The Catalonia was anchored well out in the bay, no doubt to prevent a repetition of the attempts to escape by swimming which were made from the Manila rather more than a week ago. The arrival of a boat alongside at once attracted a crowd on the deck of the Catalonia, all interested in any little change in the monotonous routine of a prisoner's life. Climbing on deck I at once lit upon acquaintances, men I had met at Bloemfontein, Pretoria, Johannesburg, or in the Boer laager at Sandspruit. There was much laughing over our meeting again under such unexpected circumstances. One of my friends reminded me jocularly that I had not kept my promise of spending a few days shooting springbuck on his farm in the Free State, to which I could only rejoin that I knew that he had gone out rooinek shooting himself and was not to be found at home. They then did the honours of the ship, taking me round the deck and introducing me to various others of their fellow-prisoners. An orderly was present for form's sake, but took no part in our 'proceedings

except now and again humorously to deprecate some of the criticisms my friends passed upon their quarters. The prisoners were scattered all over the deck, some reading or playing draughts, others pretending to fish or walking about. Some looked profoundly bored, others were holding most animated conversations chiefly about the war. A favourite amusement seemed to consist in chaffing the sentries or the crew about the British reverses. One wizened little man, a Johannesburg bar loafer to judge by appearances, was treating a sailor to a most graphic account of how it took six lancers to capture him at Elandslaagte, a statement which provoked much laughter from his fellow-prisoners. The dinner bell then rang and we went below. The whole dimly-lit space below deck was filled with rows of wooden tables, with enclosures for the prisoners' kits, and with hammocks slung to the low ceiling. They were not very cheery quarters, it must be confessed, and the prisoners complained very freely about them, contrasting them with the comfort they had enjoyed at the Docks Hospital in Cape Town. It is true that the space occupied by some 430 prisoners on the Catalonia is the same as that allotted to 1,200 of our soldiers on their way out; and, as the captain of the Catalonia said to me afterwards, "If the soldiers were so pleased with their accommodation and feeding that they specially sent a deputation to thank me before they left the ship, I don't see why these Boers should grumble if they get the same treatment." Still, it must be remembered that most of the prisoners, especially those taken at Elandslaagte, are men belonging to the middle and upper classes, and accustomed to live in considerable comfort. These naturally find their present quarters squalid, gloomy, and unpleasant. Besides, the prisoner's life is anyhow very monotonous and depressing and calculated to encourage grumbling. Nor can the want of exercise and the confinement in such close quarters be very conducive to health. I have good reason to believe, however, that the Catalonia is merely being used as a temporary prison while better quarters are being arranged for on shore. Apart from the complaints already referred to the lot of the prisoners is not a very hard one. The only task imposed on them is that of keeping their own quarters clean. They are allowed to receive visitors on certain days of the week. Their friends may supply them with any luxuries they like in the way of deck chairs, clothes, cakes, fruit, or tobacco, in fact anything except money and spirits; and, as very few of them have not got relatives in Cape Town or else friends among the Uitlanders staying down here, they have no reason to feel particularly lonely and forgotten. Their food is not luxurious or very varied, but is sufficient and healthy. The meal I saw consisted of boiled beef, potatoes, pickles, bread, and coffee.

From such information as comes to hand through Boer sources it would seem that our prisoners now confined in the neighbourhood of Pretoria are well treated. It is rumoured that they get rather less meat and rather more mealie pap than the soldiers care for, but in the hot climate of Pretoria and with not enough exercise to keep them in condition a mainly vegetarian diet can do no great harm. They have an enclosure sufficiently large to allow them to play cricket and football in. From what I saw of the Boer leaders myself at the outbreak of the war and from their behaviour since, I believe that they intend carrying out this war in a civilized and humane spirit. There have been a few undoubted instances of unfair trickery, of firing on stretcher parties, or of misuse of the white flag. There is a very considerable ruffianly element among the poorer back-country Boers and the "mean whites" in the cities. and the discipline of the Boer commandos is not always sufficient to restrain these. But, as a rule, the better-class Boer, if not exactly chivalrous, is kind-hearted, and at Magersfontein and elsewhere frequent instances of kindness to our wounded soldiers have been recorded. In fact, it is doubtful whether in any war fought hitherto so much consideration has been shown on both sides to the wounded. Almost invariably the wounded have been given back to their own side, although it is a fact that with the wounds caused by the modern rifle quite 25 per cent. of the wounded are able to return to the front within two months. The duty of carrying on the war humanely and of treating prisoners with consideration is enjoined not only by the general feeling of civilized society, but especially by the circumstances of this particular war. We are fighting not against a hostile and rival nation which we desire to injure and crush, but against a mistaken political ambition which has been a permanent menace to the peace of South Africa and has checked its development. The men we are fighting against to-day are the brothers and cousins of many of our own fellow-citizens, and are themselves to become our fellow-citizens when this war is over.

While determined to carry out this war successfully at all costs, we ought always to bear the future settlement in mind, and as far as is compatible with military necessities do nothing that might even by exaggeration be twisted into ill-treatment of our enemies, or those whom we suspect of being our enemies. Every act of kindness to wounded Boers on the field, every little comfort provided or concession made to the Boer prisoners in our hands, will make the task of settlement easier hereafter and help to lessen the bitterness of racial feeling which will for some years to come survive the long historic conflict between English and Dutch in South Africa. So, too, in the disaffected districts of the colony itself our commanders had better resign themselves to the difficult position of being in a practically hostile country in which they are yet bound to treat the

inhabitants with all the consideration due to friends. It is very little use, and may be very much harm, to deal harshly with them because they are known to have sympathies with the Republicans, to have proclaimed them openly, or even to have entertained their commandos when passing by. Rebels who have actually taken up arms and spies against whom there is good evidence should, of course, be punished severely. But against the passively disloyal or doubtfully loyal the only thing to be done is to strengthen one's own force sufficiently to be quite indifferent to their actions. It is better to be obliged to send out a few extra battalions in order to carry through the war in this fashion than to do anything unnecessary to embitter race feeling in this country.

6th February 1900

THE SOLDIER'S EQUIPMENT.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JAN. 16.

The field equipment of the British soldier is a very different thing to-day from what it was 20 years ago. Our many little wars, if they have not afforded much training in generalship, have at least taught us valuable lessons in the no less important art of campaigning. Amid our failures, unexpected yet natural enough, to surprise a mobile enemy in a strange country, or to carry strong defensive positions with relatively small attacking forces, we have rather overlooked our success in matters almost as vital as generalship itself. That no other nation could so expeditiously have despatched a considerable army across 6,000 miles of sea may be taken for granted. But it is also quite probable that no other nation would have made such admirable arrangements for the provisioning of the troops when once sent to the front or for the treatment of the wounded after a battle, or have equipped its soldiers so serviceably for the task of fighting and campaigning. On the whole, the British soldier is very well equipped. Khaki is an excellent fighting colour and almost invisible against the ordinary background of the South African veldt at any distance over 800 yards. The puttee is a better marching legging than any form of gaiter ; it is a little clumsy to put on, but it supports the calf and never gets hopelessly sodden and shapeless, as a leather gaiter does by prolonged immersion in water or mud. The flannel shirt and cardigan vest which go under the khaki, as well as the greatcoat which goes over it, would serve to keep the soldier warm in almost any climate, and have certainly proved sufficient in South Africa. Still there are various points with regard to which the experience of this war goes to show that improvements might well be effected.

The great lesson taught by this war—a war fought with modern firearms and, as a rule, on open ground—is the enormous importance of invisibility. At the distances at which modern rifle fire is effective a little precaution is quite sufficient to make men almost invisible to the naked eye except when standing up against the sky line. The conditions of such invisibility are determined by a few elementary optical rules. The general effect of a soldier's uniform and equipment at long range should be neutral coloured and as much as possible blurred against the background. It should present no bright gleaming spots of metal such as polished buttons, buckles, or tin pannikins. In strong sunshine any bright metallic object, however small, is visible for hundreds of yards after the dull khaki uniform has become invisible. The production of a pair of aluminium field glasses out of their case will provoke a perfect hail of bullets from trenches a mile off, while an uncovered tin water bottle may mean a hot five minutes' attention from a Vickers-Nordenfelt quick-firer. Broad patches of colour differing markedly from the background or from the rest of the uniform are no less dangerous. The dark greatcoat shows very plainly on the soldier's back when lying down, and has been, no doubt, responsible for many straight shots. Still more fatal has been the dark green kilt, which proved such an excellent target to the Boers at Elandslaagte and Magersfontein. Even small patches or bands, if of a different material from the rest of the uniform and reflecting the light in a different manner, such as the polished leather of an officer's Sam Browne belt or the black strap of rifle regiments, attract attention at considerable distance. In fact it is an open question whether leather had not better be ousted altogether from the soldier's equipment in favour of other material for belts, shoulder straps, and even cartridge pouches. Leather is expensive, heavy, and, when once wetted and dried again, stiff and uncomfortable. Whether polished or pipeclayed, it requires a lot of attention to keep smart, and thereby at once becomes dangerous.

But it is not essential to invisibility that the soldier's uniform should be all of one colour. It would be quite possible to clothe soldiers in all the colours of the rainbow, provided no one stripe exceeded, say, one inch in width. The general effect at a distance would be a neutral grey due to the blending of the different colours. There are a dozen or more combinations of different colours whose general effect at long range would be practically the same as that of khaki. This optical fact has a very direct bearing on the practical question of the soldier's uniform. One of the first things that this war ought to put an end to is the historic

red coat of the British soldier. It is absurd that our soldiers and Volunteers should wear a uniform which is useless for the purposes of war in England or France just as much as in South Africa. At the same time the exigencies of recruiting for a voluntary army demand something smarter than plain dingy khaki. That such smartness can be combined with a generally neutral coloured uniform is shown by many of our Volunteer regiments and by the Australian troops. There would not be the least difficulty in devising a large variety of smart uniforms practically as invisible as khaki at any distance over 200 yards. All that is necessary is that certain elementary optical rules regarding the blending of colours should be observed, and that no separate patch of bright colour should exceed a certain size. The same thing will have to apply to the kilt. No one wishes to do away with the Highlander's kilt. It is a first-rate uniform for marching, especially for hill climbing, and its thick folds round the body render it a warm and healthy costume for sleeping out at night. But to wear the kilt in its present form is simply to court death. The dark patch it presents is easily visible at ranges where khaki trousers and puttees have long ago become indistinguishable from the background. In this war the Highland regiments have been wearing ridiculous-looking improvised aprons of khaki, but these have been no protection to them when lying flat on their faces. But it is by no means necessary that in future all Highland regiments should be reduced to wearing khaki kilts. All that is wanted is a tartan with a somewhat lighter ground colour, whose general effect at a distance should be that of khaki. It ought not to be beyond the capacity of some authority versed in tartan lore to devise a safe and yet perfectly correct service tartan for each Highland regiment. The old tartan might be preserved for officers' full dress and parade uniforms.

A similar application of optical rules will be necessary in the case of officers' uniforms. This war had lasted but a very few days before our commanders realized that, unless they wished to lose all their officers in the first few engagements of the campaign, it was essential that they should discard swords, cross belts, and in fact everything that could distinguish them from the common soldier. But, important though it is that the officers should do everything to avoid being picked off unnecessarily by the enemy's sharpshooters, it is no less important that soldiers should be able easily to recognize their officers. Nothing conduces more easily to a rout of Regular soldiers than any uncertainty as to the whereabouts of their officers. But, if it is impossible to distinguish the officer by his accoutrements, there is no reason why he should not be made plainly distinguishable at distances up to 200 yards by differences of pattern or arrangement of colours in his uniform, unnoticeable beyond that range.

The helmet is in every respect inferior to the felt hat worn by the Boers and by many of our colonial contingents. It is extremely visible. In many instances in recent engagements our men, after having their helmets shot through several times, have taken them off and preferred running the risk of sunstroke incurred by lying for hours under an African sun. Then, again, the projecting fore peak of the helmet prevents the soldier from lying really flat, as he ought to when cover is low, and forces him to rick his neck in trying to get a view of the enemy. The felt hat can be simply pushed on to the back of the head and lies there flat and perfectly invisible, while at the same time it protects the neck from the sun. It is also lighter, more comfortable and cheaper. With regard to other details of the soldier's dress, everything should be easy fitting, for comfort and not for show. The old notions of smartness and stiffness, derived from days when men stood or advanced shoulder to shoulder like a stone wall, the days of Fontenoy and Waterloo, must give way to modern notions of utility. The modern soldier's uniform must be the one in which he can most conveniently walk, run, or climb, and which he can wear with least discomfort day and night —for a week or more on end, if need be. It should fit loosely, especially at the neck. The upright collar should certainly be abolished in favour of a loose roll collar, which, as in the smart uniforms of the Italian army, can be combined by officers with a white collar in times of peace. A soldier's clothes should have plenty of pockets in which to stow provisions or any other odds and ends that may be useful to him on the march and during or after a battle. It is a good sign of the times that the Imperial Yeomanry are to wear, not tunics, but Norfolk jackets. The soldier's baggage has been the matter of so much expert study and experiment that it would be rash to offer much criticism. But to the ordinary layman it would seem that the system of strapping miscellaneous paraphernalia round the soldier might be simplified. A comprehensive *Rücksack* like that carried by Swiss guides, and hung well in the small of the back, ought to carry all the *impedimenta* of an infantry soldier except his great coat. The haversack should be done away with, and such rations as a soldier would want to take when going out to action in light kit without his *Rücksack* he might very well stuff into his pockets. If the haversack is kept, however, it should be made stronger. There have been frequent complaints of haversacks being unequal to the strain which Tommy Atkins puts upon them.

The question of officers' uniform has already been touched on. Of course the extra risk attaching to officers can never be done away with by similarity of equipment. An officer has to stay a little behind the firing line to keep control of his men, and he is obliged to move out of cover more frequently for the same reason. But the

risk can be greatly minimized. The most striking revolution in officers' equipment due to this war is the abolition of the sword. Its utter uselessness in modern infantry fighting ought to have been realized long ago, but there was no military reformer bold enough to carry out its abolition into practice. Now, however, it is to be hoped the sword will disappear for good and all, even from the parade ground, to join the halberd, mace, battle-axe, and other primitive weapons. The officer of the future will carry a rifle like the private, and will have to be a crack shot. In addition to his rifle he will also have the bayonet, and perhaps a revolver. The most important weapon of the officer, however, is his field-glass. Every officer, and not only every officer but every sergeant and corporal, should have a good pair of field-glasses. Artillery officers, and at least one officer in every infantry company or cavalry troop, should have a telescope as well.

Some of the above suggestions may well appear revolutionary to those accustomed to the conservative ways of the British Army. They are not half as revolutionary as the changes in the whole education, spirit, and system of that Army which will have to be carried out to make it adequate to meet the requirements of the future.

9th February 1900.

THE CAPE COLONY VOLUNTEER FORCES.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

QUEENSTOWN, JAN. 6.

The great loss of life due to frontal attacks on the enemy and the lack of sufficient cavalry has caused a sudden and enormous demand for mounted irregulars. Regiment after regiment has been authorized, and in each case so far their value in the field has been proved. In no country in the world probably but South Africa would three or four weeks' training of cavalry or mounted infantry recruits be sufficient to turn out serviceable forces, but in South Africa it has been done successfully time after time. The Imperial Light Horse did indeed have a somewhat longer period of training before their glorious baptism of fire at Elandslaagte. A general ability to ride and shoot, with a stiffening of experienced hands who have seen service in one or other of the numerous native wars, explains the ease with which so many corps are rendered effective fighting forces in such short time.

Of all the leaders to whom authority has been granted to raise mounted irregulars, Colonel Brabant stands first in popularity. His coolness and suavity and his ability to get his men out of tight corners, proved on many occasions, have given him a reputation which makes his recruiting operations almost a matter of selection. His first commission to raise a regiment of six squadrons was very speedily executed, and a further regiment of like number is already approaching completion. Four squadrons are at the front doing good service at Penhoek, five more are pronounced fit for active service, while two are under training and one is still recruiting. To fit out two cavalry regiments within a few weeks is a feat of which any man may well be proud. The task must indeed have been quite impossible without first-class backing from officers thoroughly up to their work. In command of the first regiment is Captain Henderson, of the 8th, with Captain Mussenden as second in command, and as adjutant Captain Williams, of the Bombay Lancers, while Major Grenfell, of the 1st Life Guards, has the second regiment, with Lieutenant Cookson, of the same regiment, as adjutant. Among the squadron commanders are several well-known personages, such as Major Merritt, of the Canadian Body Guard, Colonel Hoskyear, Volunteer Artillery, Captain Ford, of the Rifle Brigade, Captain Crallan, late Natal Mounted Police, Major Owen Thomas, of the Volunteers, W. Goddard, of Johannesburg, and, last but not least, Captain Henry Bettelheim, late Turkish Consul at Johannesburg. Captain Bettelheim signalized his commission by begging from his friend Mr. Alfred Beit, and promptly had notice of a gift to the second regiment, to which he is attached, of a Hotchkiss quick-firer throwing a 14½lb. shell. The sudden demand for all sorts of equipment has caused a scarcity which has to a considerable extent handicapped the efforts of Colonel Brabant's officers. Saddles of all sorts and shapes and boots of similar diversity are being supplied for the present. Khaki jackets are almost unobtainable, as are Bedford cord breeches. Some 400 belts without buckles having been forwarded elicited the question what was to be done with them? The reply for the nonce was crushing and to the effect that with time and ingenuity the difficulty ought to be solved. Some days elapsed without any solution, and a telegram was despatched to the sender of the belts that they had had the time and should like the ingenuity forwarded without delay. Overcoats of a curiously mixed sort have been served out, all of them good, but including military and police patterns, and, it was perhaps sarcastically added, some found in the Castle at Cape Town in 1806.

While it may be admitted freely and ungrudgingly that the Government and people of Natal are fully deserving of all the praise bestowed on them for their conduct at the outbreak of the present war with the Republics, a word may—indeed, deserves to—be said in deprecation of the criticism somewhat recklessly levelled at the

English people of the Cape Colony. It is true that this criticism was primarily aimed at the Government of the Cape Colony, and not at the people, whose hands were tied in great measure by the action of the Ministry. In Natal the defence of the colony was taken up in the most whole-hearted fashion by the responsible Ministry, and their action was endorsed and seconded most enthusiastically by the great bulk of the people, the only exceptions being the Dutch residents in the up-country districts. All Volunteers were called out and sent to the frontier even before the expiration of the Boer ultimatum, and every possible preparation was made by a practically united people, ready and willing to make any sacrifice in the cause of the Empire. In the Cape Colony a very different state of things obtained. Here was a Bond Ministry in power talking of neutrality, sitting on a fence, several of them speaking of peace, some of them probably believing in its possibility up till the very morning of the 11th of October, and stolidly prohibiting all measures of defence as provocative of war. Even after the outbreak of hostilities all preparations on the part of Volunteers had cold water thrown on them. An appreciable period even elapsed before they were called out. That magnificent corps, the Cape Mounted Rifles, was allowed to remain ineffectively divided, with force dissipated in small bodies over the country, and the Cape Police, in still smaller numbers, employed in "guarding" bridges, towns, and villages on the frontier, with orders not to defend but to retire on the appearance of the enemy, with the result that several bodies of them were snapped up and made prisoners by the invaders.

The Ministerial attitude was that colonial forces paid for by the taxpayers, largely Dutch, should not be used against their brothers of the Free State and Transvaal, and, but for the invasion and annexation of portions of the Cape Colony, which quite forced the hands of the Bond members of the Ministry, that would probably have been their position till to-day. A policy so weak-kneed as this would doubtless of itself have brought about action on the part of the English colonists; but their feelings of chagrin were deepened, and their revolt against the cold neutrality of the Schreiner Ministry was stimulated, by the stirring accounts of the despatch of colonial contingents from all quarters of the globe and the bitter, if justifiable, invective of the Press at the attitude of abstention of the Cape Colony. On all hands offers of service were made. The Volunteers were called out, though prevented from going to the front. The engagements in Natal, where the Volunteers displayed extraordinary gallantry, tended to swell the tide of enthusiasm. The military authorities cannot be said to have greeted this outburst of patriotism too warmly, and only later, when events proved that the war was a much bigger affair than had been anticipated, were recruiting operations on any large scale authorized. In no part of the Cape Colony was the attitude of the Ministry more resented, and from no division have more recruits been obtained by the military authorities, in proportion to the population, than from that formerly known as the Crown Colony of British Kaffraria, which roughly embraced the districts now known as East London, King Williams Town, Komgha, Stutterheim, and portions of Cathcart and Alice. Peddie may also be taken in for illustrative purposes. To show to what an extent this part of the country has been depleted of its manhood for military purposes a few figures are necessary. The election fights were so bitter that the voters' rolls may be fairly taken as fully expressing the entire grown white male population in the respective districts. The following figures, though round, are approximately correct—viz.:—East London, 4,000 voters; King Williams Town, 3,000 voters; Cathcart and Stutterheim, 1,000 voters; Alice and Peddie, 750 voters—total, 8,750 voters. Deduct for Dutch, say at least 1,000; natives, 800—1,800; total, 6,950. Of this number many are German settlers, who have by no means contributed recruits in equal proportion to the English.

It may be fairly reckoned that the growing lads and young men fit for service but not on voters' rolls would be about balanced by invalids and men over 50 years old no longer able to undertake the hardships of a campaign.

There are town guards in East London and King Williams Town composed of business men, their *employés*, &c., also men employed at the port of East London and on the railway whose services are not available as they cannot be dispensed with, totalling quite 2,000; so reducing the available number to 4,950. Be it remembered also that these districts are largely agricultural and that farming operations have to be carried on with white supervision. It will be readily admitted that to have succeeded in recruiting every other man in the districts for military service, as has been done, speaks volumes for the patriotism of the inhabitants.

Details of enlistments are as follows:—For Colonel Hore's Protectorate Regiment recruited before war, 300; Brabant's Horse, 400; Imperial Light Horse, 50; Thorneycroft's Corps and Bethune's Corps, 150; Rimington's Scouts, 15; Medical Corps, 100; Kaffrarian Rifles, 650; Frontier Mounted Rifles, 150; Bayly's District Mounted Rifles (enlisted for permanent duty), 500—2,315.

In addition to the last force of 500 men there is a reserve of about 600 men who will be available at a few hours' notice. It may be thought that the large element of the Johannesburg refugees has not been taken into account. It is, however, confidently stated that those at East London

were mainly miners and that a mere inconsiderable number of them have joined the irregular corps recruited there, in no appreciable degree affecting the proportion of old residents who have gone into the field.

The unfortunate fight at Stormberg occurred, and it was at first General Gatacre's plan to fall back on Queenstown. Such a contingency spread blank dismay among the unarmed English farmers below Queenstown. Meetings were called and deputations waited on the general, begging for an issue of arms and ammunition. To a limited extent these were granted to responsible persons, but better counsels soon prevailed. It was felt that the mere arming of a few hundreds of farmers without organization would be futile. The spectacular effect of patrols through the country to restrain the possibly wavering Dutch and to frighten off any raiding parties of the enemy was seen to be necessary. The gallant veteran, Colonel Bayly, though suffering from a very painful chronic complaint, at once proffered his services for the raising of a district defence corps which should serve permanently. The terms offered were good—namely, 12s. per day for troopers, who have to feed themselves and to find and feed their own horses. One shilling per stripe per day extra is allowed to non-commissioned officers. No terms, however good, would have been attractive enough for farmers but for the well-known personality of the commanding officer and the persuasive eloquence of Messrs. Crewe, M.L.A., and Warren, M.L.A., the former of whom is second in command and the latter captain of a squadron in the regiment. Within ten days the recruits exceeded the authorized number—500—and the names were taken of some 600 more willing to act as reserves. The under officers seem an excellent lot, and both they and the bulk of the men have seen service, while the horses are remarkably good and able to do hard work. Now that this corps has been enrolled and the men have been taken on for instruction purposes at various points, the condition of the country districts is described as nearly deserted. No farm has more than one white man to carry on work, while in numerous cases neighbours have combined, the one enlisting and the other looking after both farms. Lawyers have parted with their clerks, storekeepers with their assistants, all with the promise of re-engagement after the war, and in one way or another every one is making some sacrifice. In the equipment of his corps probably Colonel Bayly may have some difficulty. Magazine rifles are not available for him at present, nor are khaki suits obtainable, but, though his men may patrol in jackets of different colours, they will be found none the less effective against a Boer enemy, should the occasion offer.

In other parts of the colony similar district defence corps are being recruited, one notably by Colonel Nesbitt, but it is stated that he is calling out only one-third of his corps at a time, no doubt owing to the same class of argument as was at first used in Kaffraria by the farmers.

The necessity for such corps will not cease with the advance of the troops towards the Free State; indeed, if anything, their services will be more required.. While little faith need be placed in the stories current of concerted Boer action to cut the lines of communication behind our forces, there is some reason to fear that news of Boer reverses up country would be followed by cases of individual outrage in the colony, such as only constant watching and caution have hitherto prevented, causing loss of life and damage to permanent ways and rolling stock.

It has been truly said that an army fights on its belly—a fact some of our generals at times overlook—and in the matter of keeping man and horse supplied with food the ox-wagon transport plays a great part in South Africa. True it is that so far during this campaign the railways have done all of this, but when the Free State is reached the ox will be called on. Meanwhile at the various camps all over the country the ox transport is being utilized for all sorts of useful purposes, such as removal of stores to outposts, carriage of firewood and daily camp necessities. In the Cape Colony alone a contract was concluded with Mr. Julius Weil to supply 700 wagons, each with a span of 16 oxen. Though originally the idea had been to allocate these in equal proportions between three advancing columns, the exigencies of the campaign have resulted in one-third being sent to De Aar, which supplies Naauwpoort, Arundel, and Orange River forces as called upon, while the balance of about 470 wagons is retained at Queenstown and Sterkstrom. In addition to the wagon contract, another was concluded for a practically unlimited number of small spans of oxen, to be used in military carts and wagons. The Imperial Government learned several valuable lessons in the Zulu war, and one of these was to contract for such transport and not to purchase. The service is at once more efficient, and in the end is undoubtedly more economical. The contract could not apparently be in more able hands. Without default, almost without hitch, the requirements of the C.O.'s are attended to and carried out successfully. The amount of organization required is of Cook-like proportions and does credit to the contractor and his able lieutenants. The large transport camps at De Aar, Sterkstrom, and Queenstown well repay visits and should be good object-lessons to those in charge of the Imperial mule transport, whose camps cannot be spoken of in very high terms. These latter, however, it must be admitted, have to deal with servants less amenable to discipline. The mule drivers and leaders are all Cape boys, while the ox drivers and leaders are Kaffirs or Hottentots, who very speedily learn to obey a firm

and just master.

The contractor's system is admirably simple. The owners of every five wagons hiring to him were invited to nominate a white man as conductor, and in most cases owners themselves took the positions, so securing men personally interested in looking well after wagons and oxen. To every 50 wagons, however, the contractor also appointed an inspector of his own choice, and in addition a head man for every hundred wagons, to whom, for purposes of maintaining order, honorary military rank was granted. The result is most successful. In the transport camp strict military discipline is observed and the complex machine runs like clockwork. If it be reckoned out, it will be seen that in a camp of 230 wagons there must be at least 460 natives, without counting all drivers and leaders of small spans of six and eight oxen used in military carts, and that, with the same exception, at least 3,680 oxen have to be looked after. The task requires brains, system, and patience to an extraordinary degree. The question of pasturage alone would wear out a Job, particularly when it is remembered that the owners of farms, mostly Dutchmen, throw every conceivable obstacle in the way. Our English commanders to a certain extent are fighting with one hand tied behind their backs. The delicate susceptibilities of the "loyal" Dutch must in no way be offended, and accordingly, though there may be martial law in operation, the service has to suffer, not only as regards grazing for oxen, horses, and mules, but in many more important, even vital, points. No restriction on the liberty of the subject must be attempted for fear of alienating an already hostile people. The task of keeping the transport efficient, always difficult and rendered doubly hard, has, notwithstanding, so far been ably carried out.

In view of the urgent demand for use in the South African campaign of Horse Artillery, a demand which the present establishment can by no means cope with, a suggestion by means of which the Field Artillery could be rendered more mobile may not be without value. As at present manned and equipped, the Field Artillery can outpace infantry considerably, but cannot move with either heavy cavalry or mounted infantry, and to enable it to do so is an object much desired by South African commanders. The 15-pounders of the Field Artillery have, it is understood, a somewhat longer effective range of accuracy than the 12-pounders of the R.H.A., and are thus better able to deal with the superior Boer artillery. It is said that, if the gunners were provided with ponies to ride and if some amount of spare gear were removed and placed on carts, to follow with ammunition columns, the traction would be so much reduced as to allow of the guns' being readily used in conjunction with mounted infantry. The difference in the quality of horses would not apparently forbid the adoption of such a plan. While the R.H.A. horses are indubitably superior, those of the Field Artillery are quite capable of more continuously rapid movement than has hitherto been asked from them, provided the weight to be pulled be substantially reduced. The Field Artillery at present is horsed to the extent of from 33 1-3 per cent. to 50 per cent. with London omnibus horses, and these appear to be doing very well—indeed, are said in their class to be superior to the animal usually provided, as regards both endurance and strength, while there is no appreciable difference in speed. Critics allege on this point that her Majesty's Government falls between two stools; aiming at obtaining an animal with some blood, but objecting to give the necessary price; buying through middlemen who must make a handsome profit instead of allowing the commanding officers in their respective districts to buy from farmers direct, subject to a veterinary examination; allowing Germany, France, and Austria to buy, as they do in Ireland, all the best horses in the country, merely for the sake of an extra £5 or £10 per head, with the final result that we secure a class quite below that intended, a circumstance which on occasion may lead to disaster.

12th February 1900.

THE NEW COLONIAL DIVISION.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JAN. 24.

The news of Lord Roberts's decision to create an independent colonial division under the command of General Brabant, an experienced colonial soldier, and officered in the main by colonial officers, has caused the greatest satisfaction everywhere in Cape Colony. From the very first there had been frequent complaints from the English population in the colony that they had been set back and that no sufficient use had been made of their readiness to serve in the defence of their country. Those complaints have been expressed in several letters addressed to *The Times*, and have undoubtedly had considerable justification. There can be no question that if the organization of colonial forces had been taken in hand at an early stage, from the moment that war was quite inevitable—say at the end of September—a great deal that has since happened might never have taken place. A colonial division mobilized before the end of October would have effectively prevented any Boer force ever crossing the Orange River, and would have secured the bridge heads intact for an advance into the Free State as soon as

the divisions from home arrived. But there were two chief reasons which prevented this necessary step. In the first place the Cape Ministry were bitterly opposed to any use being made of colonial forces. Mr. Schreiner declared that the colony intended to be neutral, arguing practically that if the Dutch in the colony kept quiet and did not rise in rebellion it was only reasonable to expect that the English on their side should also keep quiet and not help the Imperial Government. He insisted, and kept on insisting long after he was proved wrong by events, that nothing would ever induce the Boers to invade Cape Colony, and that to mobilize large numbers of colonials on their frontier would be a mere wanton provocation of the Boers and of the Dutch in the colony. It seems difficult now to imagine the responsible head of a British Ministry taking up such an attitude, but it is only fair to add, in vindication of Mr. Schreiner, first, that he honestly believed that the Boers only intended standing on the defensive to guard their idyllic independence, and, secondly, that he probably expected the war to be but a matter of a few weeks when once the Imperial troops appeared on the scene. And so he hoped, no doubt sincerely, by discouraging all colonial effort, to prevent any increase of race feeling in the colony.

But the ignorance of the military situation, of the capacity of an almost purely infantry army against such splendid irregulars as the Boers have proved themselves, if to some extent an excuse for Mr. Schreiner, is the very reverse for our military authorities. It is a severe indictment against them that they should not have realized the nature of the difficulties they would be called upon to face, and should not have insisted on the necessary measures being taken for the organization of these local forces which might have saved most of the colony from invasion, and which would have been invaluable in covering the advance of our clumsy, crawling columns. They did not realize those difficulties. Full of self-sufficiency and professional pride, the majority of our officers displayed the supremest confidence in the capacity of the British soldier to do everything and anything, and the supremest contempt for the notion that " Volunteers " or " civilians " could do anything but get in the way. Colonial advice was, as a rule, contemptuously neglected,and the offers made by prominent colonials to raise local forces met at first with the greatest indifference, almost with hostility. Colonel Baden-Powell, at an early stage, raised the Protectorate Regiment which has since seen such splendid service in the defence of Mafeking. After much negotiation the necessary sanction was given to the Uitlander Committee for the raising of the Imperial Light Horse. Their numbers were strictly limited to 500, and the whole thing was treated as a rather harmless experiment involving a certain waste of money in pay, but useful politically to show that the Uitlanders were really sufficiently interested in their own cause to risk their lives for it. That notion was dispelled at Elandslaagte. But even after that very little was done before Sir Redvers Buller's arrival. Sir Redvers, with his colonial experience and his natural breadth of mind, did not fail at once to grasp the situation and see the necessity of making more use of the splendid fighting material which had hitherto been allowed to lie idle. In a telegram which appeared in *The Times* of D cember 23 I was unfortunately, owing to some mistake in transmission or in the interpretation of the condensed diction of the telegram, represented as attributing to General Buller himself at the first a certain self-sufficiency and unwillingness to make use of colonial assistance. As a matter of fact Sir Redvers from the moment of his arrival gave an impetus to the organization of colonial forces. The raising of Thorneycroft's Horse and Bethune's Horse, and of the Imperial Light Infantry in Natal, of Brabant's Horse, the South African Light Horse, the Railway Pioneer Regiment in Cape Colony—all belong to Sir R. Buller's *régime* and all owed a great deal to his help and encouragement. Abundant use, too, was made by him of the colonial Volunteer regiments for the purpose of guarding the enormous line of communications which connects each one of our advanced forces with its base at the sea. That the actual further step of creating an independent colonial division under colonial officers and a colonial general was taken by Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener does not in the least detract from the credit due to Sir R. Buller for the interest he has taken in the colonial troops and the value he attaches to them.

All credit, too, is due to Sir A. Milner for his constant efforts to push on the work of organizing the local defence of the colony, especially in the midland and eastern districts, during Sir R. Buller's absence in Natal.

Almost the first thing Lord Roberts did on his arrival was to inquire into the possibility of largely adding to the local forces already raised. On conferring with some of the leading Englishmen in the colony he very soon discovered that a really substantial addition could only be made by raising the colonials on their own terms—in other words, under their own commanders. Up to the present a great deal of the very best fighting material in the colony has in many districts scarcely been tapped. The Uitlander and the English townsmen of the colony have contributed more largely to the formation of the irregular corps raised hitherto than the English farmer. But there is no better fighter in the world than the English farmer of the Eastern provinces. Trained by experience of many Kaffir wars, the English borderer is in every way the equal of the Boer at his own game, and adds to the Boer's skill and watchfulness a

dash and gallantry which the latter rarely possesses. But intensely loyal as he is, the British farmer is not over eager to serve under Imperial officers. He admires them for their bravery, but distrusts their methods of fighting, and this war has furnished him with sufficient instances to justify that distrust. He is brave, but does not care to be led up to frontal attacks on strong positions when those positions might in most cases be outmanœuvred, and, above all, he hates to be surprised. But both these things he expects to happen to him regularly if put under the command of Imperial officers. Nor does he see any object in drill. What does it matter whether men ride four abreast or five abreast or keep an even or a crooked line as long as they scatter properly and take good cover when the enemy is about? A further objection to the Imperial officer is that he is accustomed to command men of an absolutely different social class, who render unquestioning obedience and are not supposed to think for themselves. But the colonial farmer recognizes no one as his social superior, and, though ready to obey his leaders, does so only in recognition of their superior ability or experience. Some military Conservatives may still think that automatic obedience is the one thing necessary, and that an army without a great gulf fixed between officer and soldier is a mere rabble. But the army of the future will undoubtedly be the army in which every man is capable of thinking and acting for himself, in which the essential thing is to carry out instructions, not to obey orders.

Even apart from these considerations it is only natural that colonials should wish to have a share in commanding as well as in the mere fighting. There are plenty of men in Cape Colony who, though what the ordinary army officer would describe as civilians, have seen quite enough of fighting as serious as any in which our Regular Army has been engaged in the present generation, and are quite as capable of leading as the average run of Regular officers. Nor can it be said that, even in the command of large bodies of men in the field, more than a very few of our generals can claim a much greater experience than colonials. Lord Roberts's decision to make Colonel Brabant a brigadier-general was not only a concession to colonial sentiment, but it was perfectly justifiable from purely military considerations. General Brabant himself is an officer who has been through almost every native war fought in the colony for the last 30 years. He is universally popular, and has already shown the greatest zeal in the organization of the two regiments of mounted infantry called after him.

The composition of General Brabant's force, which for the present at least is to be a purely mounted one, is to be as follows:—Two regiments of Brabant's Horse each 600 strong, the Cape Mounted Rifles, Frontier Mounted Rifles, and the mounted section of the Kaffrarian Rifles, altogether about 600 strong. In addition to these mounted Volunteers are to be raised from the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles, Cape Town, the Cape Town Highlanders, Prince Alfred's Guard, Port Elizabeth, and the Grahamstown First City Volunteers perhaps another 500 or 600. A further 1,500 or more mounted irregulars are to be raised all over the colony under officers chosen by the men out of the ranks of colonial gentlemen or men with colonial experience. In these 1,500 are included Colonel Bayley's Horse and Major Nesbitt's Horse, the raising of which was begun some little while ago. Recruiting depôts for this force are being established all over the colony. This irregular force is being enrolled primarily for the defence of the colony, and those who like can register their names only for service in the colony, though they can always subsequently change their minds if they wish to continue at the front. The headquarters of the division will be for the present at Queenstown, near which most of its existing conjoint detachments are already stationed, and from there it will move northward to Dordrecht and Jamestown, clearing the north-eastern corner of the colony of the Boers and dispersing rebel commandos and at the same time threatening the left flank and rear of the Boer position at Stormberg. At a later stage, when the advance into the Free State begins, its mobility ought to render it extremely valuable as a reconnoitring force spread out in front and on the flanks of the main column.

There is every reason to hope that the colonial division will prove as successful as the colonial detachments, whether from South Africa or from our other colonies, have proved hitherto, and that its success will be fully recognized by the Imperial authorities hereafter. No regiment in the Regular Army can boast of a finer record for this war than the Imperial Light Horse, but all the other local contingents, whether in Natal, Cape Colony, or Bechuanaland have shown no less sterling qualities. It is to be hoped that after the war some, at least, of these corps may not be disbanded, but form the nucleus of an efficient force to secure the permanence of British supremacy in South Africa, and form an element in the Imperial Army of the future, which should embrace troops from every country in the Empire. Is it inconceivable that at some future date and in some other continent the Imperial Light Horse may once again come out to fight side by side with British Regulars? Due recognition, too, should be given when this war is over to those officers of the colonial forces who have distinguished themselves in this war, to men like Colonel Dartnell, who conducted General Yule's retreat from Dundee, Colonel Royston, Major Sampson, and many others. It is not too much to ask that

appointments in the Regular Army should be offered to those of the younger colonial officers who have shown real ability and a love of soldiering. Nor should those civilians be forgotten who have devoted their labours to the cause of organizing the colonial forces or helping the Imperial authorities by their local experience and local knowledge. Few men have worked harder in the last two months than Mr. George Farrar and Mr. A. Bailey, both English colonials, and both prominent leaders of the Uitlander movement, who have not only generously helped with their pockets, but have done invaluable work, the one in the selecting of men and the other in the selecting and purchasing of horses for the irregular corps that have been raised. This war is being fought by the British Army for the sake of the English population in South Africa, but there will be no occasion to say hereafter that that population has not taken its part in the struggle.

13th February 1900.

THE ADVANCE TO POTGEITER'S DRIFT.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAMP ABOVE POTGEITER'S DRIFT, JAN. 16.

The rainy season, nearly two months late, began with the new year. On January 8 and 9 it poured with rain incessantly, and the camp at Frere was cut in half by the river Blaauwkranz, which was running almost bank high and could only be crossed with great difficulty even by the wagons with an extra span of oxen attached. On the 9th General Warren's division marched from Estcourt to Frere, a distance of 14 miles. The march took 12 hours owing to the state of the roads, which, not being macadamized, soon become in wet weather practically impassable, and to the flooded streams, before one of which they halted for four hours before a temporary bridge could be constructed.

These were the conditions under which the advance was commenced on January 10. Lord Dundonald, with about 1,000 mounted infantry, composed of Bethune's Mounted Infantry, the Composite Regiment, and Colonel Byng's three squadrons of the South African Light Horse, with the 64th Field Battery, marched from Chieveley with orders to hold Springfield Bridge. This bridge over the Little Tugela lies on the main road from Natal south of the Tugela to the group of western passes, of which Van Reenen's is about the centre and the most important. From the other side of Springfield Bridge also diverge the roads leading to the three drifts across the big Tugela, Trichardt's, Potgeiter's, and Skiet, each about five miles apart, which our present position now commands. Our occupation of it was therefore of the greatest importance. The country between Frere and Springfield Bridge is flat and open, but across the river it becomes extremely rough and hilly. It was known that the Boers had for some time been occupying the latter district in considerable force and had recently mounted there two of the field guns which we had lost at Colenso, and it was expected that there would be heavy fighting before the Tugela could be reached.

When, however, Lord Dundonald reached the bridge he was met by one of Murray's scouts, who informed him that there were no Boers on this side of the big Tugela. Fearing to be cut off by the flooded river they had all retired whilst it was still fordable, though the fact that they had left Springfield Bridge standing made it look like an elaborate trap. Lord Dundonald decided on a bold step, and leaving 300 men with two guns to guard the bridge, pushed forward with the rest of his small force and that evening occupied the high hills immediately above Potgeiter's Drift, nine miles from Springfield Bridge. The Boers were taken completely by surprise. There is no doubt that they suspected our intention of attacking here from our frequent reconnaissances in this direction, and had intended to hold the country between the two Tugelas, which would afford them a series of exceedingly strong positions very difficult to storm. Intrenchments have been dug on many of the hills about here, and the fact of their leaving the bridge standing shows that they intended to use it again. On the other side of the river parties of Boers could be seen moving in every direction, and the night was spent in expectation of an attack. Early next morning the South African Light Horse volunteered to bring the ferry punt at the drift across to this side, and six men, under Lieutenant Carlyle, and a covering party went down the hill to do it. Lieutenant Carlyle and his men took off their clothes and proceeded to swim across, when the Boers opened fire from some kopjes about 100 yards away. However, he persisted, and brought back the punt with a loss of only one man slightly wounded. All that day the Boers continued arriving in great numbers on the other side of the river till their numbers were estimated at 10,000, and immediately commenced intrenching themselves and throwing up gun emplacements along the summits of a line of kopjes through which the road from Potgeiter's Drift to Ladysmith passes. They are about 5,000 yards from the drift and present a front about two miles in length. These kopjes are at present their main position. Before them lies the valley of the Tugela four miles across, through which the river winds between steep banks in a series of U-shaped curves. Our position is on the hills on this side of the valley that descend abruptly—in places almost precipitously—to the plain some 800 feet below. Potgeiter's

Drift lies in the bend of one of the sharp curves right below us, and across it the tongue of land, absolutely bare except for one small line of kopjes from which the Boers fired on the party that brought over the ferry punt, slopes gradually up to the Boer position 5,000 yards away. To the westward of the latter lies Spion Kop, the highest mountain anywhere near and considerably higher than our hills, and on it rests the Boer right flank. It is a long hill lying parallel with the river, precipitous on its southern face but apparently sloping down more gradually to the west and north. Beyond it lies Trichardt's Drift, five miles from Potgeiter's, and this, too, lies on our side of the valley. It cannot be distinctly made out whether the Boers are mounting cannon upon Spion Kop or not. They are exceedingly skilful at masking their guns and only rifle pits can at present be seen; but it would be a splendid artillery position both for commanding the hill on which our naval guns are at present placed and for enfilading a frontal attack on their main position. To the eastward the hills on the north bank rise again and are thinly wooded, but the Boer position does not extend to them. To the left of our position and slightly outflanking the Boer right lies Zwart's Kop, a steep wooded hill on our side of the river, but considerably in advance of the ridge, with the river curling right round its base. This hill we have not at present occupied, but it commands not only the road to Colenso, along which all day long the Boer wagons pass, but also Skiet Drift, the next ford below Potgeiter's.

Meanwhile the infantry and transport advance was being carried on under extremely difficult conditions. General Hart's brigade was the first to advance on the afternoon of the 10th and was shortly after followed by General Warren's division. The roads were knee deep in mud. Transport wagons, ambulances, and traction engines all got stuck in turn, and at the drifts, where what had formerly been a mere trickle was now a rushing khaki-coloured flood, double and treble teams of oxen were needed to extricate almost every vehicle that attempted to cross. That night the camp was pitched halfway from Frere to Springfield. The following day General Lyttelton's brigade were pushed on to support Lord Dundonald, and the rest of General Warren's division followed. The halfway camp, which was maintained for some time to guard the road, was replenished by the arrival of General Hildyard's brigade from Chieveley.

The evening of the 11th General Warren's division camped at Springfield, where they have since remained except General Lyttelton's brigade, which arrived early next morning at Spearman's Farm, where Lord Dundonald was encamped.

The naval guns left Chieveley on the 11th. A dummy battery was constructed and four 12-pounders left behind. The two 4·7 guns were taken off their carriages and packed upon wagons, and the carriages were drawn by double spans. Their progress was slow, and over especially bad ground they had to use four spans of oxen, 64 altogether, to move them. They arrived at Springfield on the 12th, and the two heavy guns were sent on to Spearman's Farm the following day.

Since the 13th extremely little has taken place. General Hildyard's and General Hart's divisions have moved on to Springfield, but no more troops have come up here. All the while the Boers are steadily improving their defences, and the naval guns, though within easy range, refrain from firing upon them.

The Boers have undoubtedly chosen a very strong position for a frontal attack. Not, perhaps, so strong as Colenso, for the river does not flow so close under their position but we are on this occasion far more favourably situated. With the exception of Spion Kop, their position is considerably below ours and at a range of about 7,500 yards our naval guns should make their trenches almost untenable. Should they fail to do this there is another point which makes for our success. We are on the inside of a large bend in the river, on a part of it where there are several drifts and where our movements are hidden by the ridge of hills that forms an almost continuous wall along the southern side of the Tugela Valley. We are, in fact, now in a position from which we may deliver one or even two simultaneous flank attacks, and may at last abandon the frontal attack that has hitherto been the feature of the war.

14th February 1900

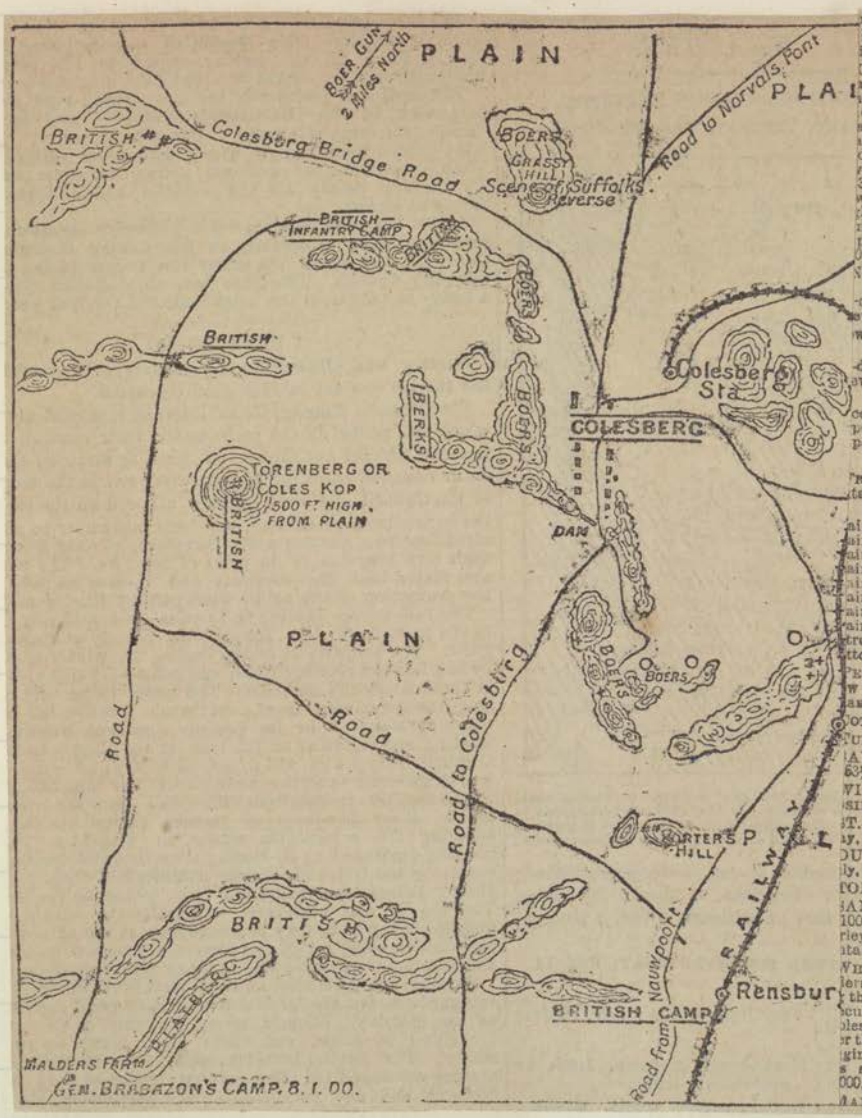
ROUND ABOUT RENSBURG.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

GENERAL FRENCH'S DIVISION, RENSBURG CAMP, JAN. 20.

I had thought this communication would have been written in Colesberg Town, where one could for once write in comfort. The fates, however, have willed it otherwise, and once more we have to bear with the many evils which accompany the military camp, the most trying to the temper being flies, heat, and dust.

The strength of General French's force has been increased by two battalions of infantry—viz., the Royal Irish and the Worcester Regiments—which, after a day's rest in this camp, were marched out to Slingersfontein, and they now occupy the hills (in conjunction with the Yorks) on the enemy's left flank. I hear that in



addition to these foot regiments there are also about 5,000 more in camp at Naauwpoort. When the latter are moved on the total strength of this division will be about 12,000.

A detachment of cavalry which was sent out on a two days' reconnaissance towards Colesberg-road Bridge returned on the 15th inst. The detachment consisted of a squadron each of the 10th Hussars and 6th Dragoons, with two guns of the R Battery of R.H.A. They reported having reached a point within two miles of the bridge, where they shelled the Boers. They then returned, finding the enemy's position all along on his right flank. Visiting a farm on the return they found it deserted apparently, but on coming to an outside room which was locked they forced an entrance, when they discovered five colonial rebels hiding. These latter had with them several rifles and about 600 rounds of ammunition. They were brought into camp prisoners, and now await their trial for high treason.

Judging from the different reports of the scouts and the patrolling parties, who have now pretty

¼c. Tin steady and in fair demand. Straits, th a moderate trade. No. 2 Northern f ils, $35.

COTTON on the spot closed steady at ⅛c. arkets have been very strong, and mostly tures opened firm at 17 to 21 points above Sa der strong foreign cables and indiscriminate c ars. The final reaction at Liverpool indu alizing, but at the decline European hous d near the close the excitement increased u vering and buying orders from everywhere, th 37 to 38 points gain for old crop and 17 to 2 w crop months. At New Orleans spot cotton gher. Futures have continued excited, and ns closed steady at net gains of 10 to 23 poi pts at interior towns are estimated at about 000 in the corresponding week of last year.

New York closing prices :—

	Spot.	Feb.	Mar.	Apl.	May.	Jne.	Jl
day	8¼	8.60	8.63	8.63	8.64	8.64	8.6
ev. day ..	8⅛	8.23	8.21	8.26	8.27	8.26	8.3

w Orleans closing prices :—

	Spot.	Feb.	Mar.	Apl.	May.	Jne.	Jl
day	8⅛	8.62	8.59	8.59	8.59	8.58	8.5
ev. day ..	8½	8.52	8.48	8.48	8.49	8.48	8.4

	To-day.	Week.	S
ceipts at ports	*78,000	102,000	5,0
ports to Great Britain	*7,000	15,000	1,3
ports to Continent ..	*11,000	24,000	2,1

*Two days.

FREIGHTS.—Liners steady, with the room o tsiders steady, with a good inquiry.

	To-d
ain to Liverpool—steam, Mar. shipm't.	3½
ain to London—steam	4
ain to Glasgow—steam	3½
ain to Bristol—steam	4½
ain to Hull—steam	4
ain to Newcastle—steam	4¼
ain to Leith—steam	4½
ain—coast	3s. 10
troleum—U.K. or Continent	2s. 3d.–3
tton to Liverpool—steam	2½d

PETROLEUM.—Refined steady, with a fair bu w York, 9.90c.; Philadelphia, 9.90c.; refined c ances at Oil City closed steady, unchanged at

COTTON OIL steady, unchanged. Crude, 33½c.

TURPENTINE steady, unchanged at 56½c.

SAVANNAH, Feb. 13.—TURPENTINE barely st 63½c.

WILMINGTON, Feb. 13.—TURPENTINE d SIN firm, unchanged at $1.40.

ST. LOUIS, Feb. 13.—WHEAT steady at ⅛c y, 71c.; July, 68⅝c.

DULUTH, Feb. 13.—WHEAT steady and ¼c. h ly, 69⅜c.

TOLEDO, Feb. 13.—WHEAT steady and ⅛c. u

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 13.—WHEAT steady, 100c., but May declined ⅜c. to 102¾c. No. 1 rley, 77½c. to 85c. To-day's shipments of tals, all to Cork for orders.

WHEAT opened easy with May ¼c. lower, but ders quickly absorbed offerings, and during th the tone was firm and active at improving culative buying induced by the firmness les. Later the dealing became easier owing r the weekly statistics and induced realization ging tendency helped by the poor export b s steady with quotations partially ½c. hig 000,000 bushels, against 15,000,000 last week.

MAIZE opened ½c. better with a steady tone, in

well visited all the farms in the district, nearly all the colonial Dutch have joined the enemy and are now fighting against us. The only exceptions are a few better class farmers, and these ought to be treated with great suspicion, as it is only the fear of losing their property that has kept them from going over to the enemy. I am afraid that our officers take much too little heed of this class. Their farms ought to be closely watched night and day, and neither the farmers themselves nor any one belonging to them ought to be allowed to come into the camps; but you find them driving into the different camps to sell produce, with the result that they know our numbers, position of men on the hills, &c., as well as our own officers do. They return to their farms and, although they may not even intentionally give away information, some rebel from the enemy finds his way to one of these farms under cover of darkness and learns all that is happening.

The 15th inst. was quite a field day for the New Zealanders and 1st Yorks, as an attack was made vigorously by the Boers on a position at Slingersfontein on our east flank. The particulars of the skirmish are as follows :—Before daylight on the 15th the 1st Yorks on the left and New Zealanders on the right flank, occupied the big kopje (now known as " Zealanders Hill ") half a mile to the north-west of Slingersfontein Farm, where troops under Colonel Porter (of 1st Cavalry Brigade) are camped. During the night about 300 Boers must also have moved to a position in front, and at daylight opened a heavy frontal fire on the ridge of our hill. Supported by continuous fire from Boers on adjacent kopjes, about 100 of them, guided by natives, advanced on to the ridge where our men lay concealed amongst the rocks, the Boer fire having been too heavy for them to attempt firing as the enemy advanced over the ridge. The Boers came on to a very few yards of where our men lay (even passing some of them) before they were discovered. The captain in command of the Yorks was immediately wounded and fell, a colour-sergeant of the same regiment fell dead, and the Yorks, being without any commander, were about to waver when Captain Maddocks, of the New Zealanders, grasping the situation at a most critical moment, ordered his men to follow him and shouted to the Yorks, " Fix bayonets and charge !" This was all the men required ; they immediately advanced, while the Boers turned and fled in confusion down the hill. Captain Maddocks, picking up a wounded man's rifle and bayonet, jumped over a wall in pursuit with four New Zealanders, two of them being killed in doing so. Maddocks got to close quarters with a Boer officer clad in a long frock coat and both lifted their guns, firing simultaneously. The Boer fell shot through the head, Maddocks escaping unhurt. The latter is a well-known Wellington (New Zealand) man, of gentle disposition, but brave as he is modest and every inch a soldier. His presence of mind at a most critical moment and his subsequent bravery have been deservedly appreciated by the General, who the following day thanked him and his men " for their gallant services." Colonel Porter informs me himself that had the position been taken by the Boers, he would have been compelled to retire and would probably have lost heavily in doing so. The names of the two New Zealanders killed are Connell and Gourlay. The latter was the son of the Hon. Hugh Gourlay (Premier of New Zealand), of Dunedin. The Yorks recovered the dead body of Connell lying between two dead Boers.

On the 16th inst. the Colonials had another encounter with the enemy on our right near Slingersfontein. Lieutenant Dowling, of the Australian Horse, and 25 men of the New South Wales Lancers left on a patrol to the N.E. to reconnoitre the Boer position towards Norval's Pont. On their return six miles from Colonel Porter's camp they were surrounded by about 100 Boers. There are every signs of the men having fought bravely for their lives. Cartridge belts found almost empty, pools of blood, three dead horses riddled with bullets, evidently having been shot and then used by the men as shields while firing on the Boers. Dowling's helmet was also found with bullet holes through it. The casualties on our side were Sergeant-Major Griffin, killed ; Corporal Kilpatrick, severely wounded (since dead) ; the rest missing, except three, who came back to camp later on. Eleven horses were found dead, four of which had belonged to Boers. Six prisoners on foot were seen by Rimington's scouts being taken away by Boers towards Colesberg.

On the 18th Colonel Porter, with the Carbineers, four guns of the O Battery of R.H.A., took up another advanced post eight miles north of Slingersfontein at a farm called Potfontein. As he advanced the Boers were showing activity on his left, the whole distance showing that considerable reinforcements must have come in to the Boer camps lately, as the distance of the enemy's front is now over 20 miles.

The only other incident of note during the week has been the firing of two howitzers with lyddite. Every one being anxious to see something they had never seen before, both officers and correspondents were on top of Coles Kop in the early morning.

The two guns were placed on some bushy kopjes to the north-west of Colesberg, and a splendid view both of the firing of the guns and the explosions of the shells was obtained from the top of the mountain, which I have already described in a previous letter. The first shells were aimed at Grassy Hill, the scene of the Suffolks late reverse. The report of the firing is not loud, not so crashing as that of a 15-pounder, then comes the flash of the explosion with a dense

volume of smoke and dust combined, and we wait for the report. This, although the wind was against it, was deafening. What the people in Colesberg must have thought when the first one burst so near them it would be difficult to say. What was most surprising is the accuracy attained, as the firing was all directed by the general and staff from the top of Coles Kop, a height of over 500ft., the gunners themselves being unable to see the effect of the shots.

Very few Boers were seen moving while the lyddite was being used, and the general opinion is that the few that were in the kopjes would never move of their own accord again, it being impossible for any one to live under the searching fire from Grassy Hill along all the hills to the position right in front of where the Berks have been picketed since they occupied their now historic kopje on New Year's morn. The position of the howitzers was changed once, and the shelling was kept up until noon. It is impossible to say what really the effect has been, but it was clearly seen that a movement was taking place in the Boer main laager, but whether it means a retirement or not remains to be proved.

There are now two guns on Coles Kop, one a 15-pounder and the other a 12-pounder, of the R Battery of R.H.A. These guns do very good work from their commanding position in keeping the enemy's artillery quiet on our left flank. A wire hoist has been erected also, which facilitates the getting up of ammunition and supplies, as the sides of the mountain, being so precipitous all round, renders the ascent a matter of arduous toil and entails the employment of a number of men as carriers, but the mechanical haulage rigged by the Royal Engineers has saved all this.

14th February 1900.

THE FIGHTING ABOUT SPION KOP.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

SPEARMAN'S HILL CAMP, JAN. 25.

We have been fighting continuously for a week, and have crossed the Tugela and have now re-crossed it. The character of the fighting no one could have foreseen, for where difficulty was expected we were unopposed, and when we thought victory at last achieved we were suddenly hurled back.

On January 16 we were ready to move. Our transport, the bane of all civilized armies in wild countries, had at last brought up sufficient supplies, and the various brigades concentrated rapidly at the two points at which it had been decided to cross the Tugela. These two were Potgeiter's Drift and Trichard's Drift, five miles above. Directly in front of the former lay the enemy's position strongly intrenched ; but they had made no preparations, as far as was known, to hold the latter. It was therefore to Trichard's Drift that the principal force marched. It consisted of General Hart's, General Hildyard's, and General Woodgate's Brigades, six field batteries, and the bulk of the mounted infantry, and was commanded by Sir Charles Warren. At Potgeiter's Drift, where General Buller had his headquarters, there were only General Lyttelton's Brigade, a part of Bethune's Mounted Infantry, and the heavy artillery, consisting of the two 4·7in. naval guns, six naval 12-pounders, and the 61st Howitzer Battery. A little lower down the river, at Swartkop, lay General Coke, with such part of his brigade as had not been detailed for road-making and guards, some mounted infantry, and the 64th Field Battery, to guard Skiet's Drift, five miles below Potgeiter's.

Late on the afternoon of the 16th General Lyttelton threw half his brigade across the river. The Scottish Rifles and the Rifle Brigade crossed part by the ferry punt, part by wading armpit deep across the drift, and advanced in open order towards a line of low kopjes that lay across the flat ground at the point where the narrow tongue of land debouched into the open plain. It was a very dark, still evening, and as one watched one could not help wondering whether, as at Colenso, the dark line of hill before them would suddenly leap with a crackling roar into flame. Nothing of the kind happened, however ; the position was occupied without a shot being fired, and just before darkness closed down innumerable little fires twinkled along the base of the kopjes where the men were drying their clothes. The other half of the brigade bivouacked that night half-way down the hill to the drift and crossed the following evening. The howitzer battery crossed soon after the two leading battalions.

At 5 30 on the morning of the 17th the naval guns opened on the Boer trenches, and were followed shortly by the howitzers. The bombardment continued heavy for two hours, but the Boers did not reply, nor could many of them be seen moving about in their trenches. As the firing slackened about 8 General Warren's batteries opened higher up the river. He had marched his force up from Springfield the night before and was now preparing to cross. Scouts reported the country on the opposite side clear, and the Engineers immediately threw a pontoon bridge across the river. Whilst they were doing it a few Boers hidden in a farmhouse began firing across the river at long range, and a stray shot killed a private of the Devons. They were

promptly shelled out, and by 9 30 the bridge was completed. Half a battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment were the first to cross, and they were followed by General Woodgate's Brigade.

During the rest of the day General Hart's and General Hildyard's Brigades and some of the guns and in the afternoon the cavalry and mounted infantry passed through the drift and immediately went away up the river. The drift lies to the south-west of Spion Kop, and from it a deep valley runs along the west side of the mountain. At the head of the valley a col joins this mountain with Mount Taba Myama, a ridge slightly lower than Spion Kop stretching several miles to the north-west. The side of Taba Myama which faces Ladysmith is a smooth slope not difficult to ascend, but its south-eastern face, sloping gently and smoothly down near the top, becomes broken lower down into rough spurs and steep valleys. Up the lower slopes of the hill the infantry advanced unopposed, but all the while the Boers were plainly visible on the skyline above busily throwing up schansjes. That night our men bivouacked on the side of the hill, and the following day was spent by the infantry in guarding the crossing of the transport wagons, an operation that took all day. The cavalry and mounted infantry, however, pushed rapidly westward with the object of holding the main western road to Ladysmith through Acton Homes, by which on the following day Sir Charles Warren could advance and turn the flank of the enemy's position in front of him. Taking nothing with him that could in any way affect his mobility Lord Dundonald advanced along the front of the Boer position until he reached the road and then passed round the right of it. Here he fought a most successful action with a party of Boers who had detached themselves to oppose his advance. The Boers attempted to occupy a kopje commanding the road, but were forestalled by the Natal Carbineers, who, unseen by them, reached it first. Unfortunately, our men did not hold their fire quite long enough, but the success was very decided, 20 Boers being killed and 23 taken prisoners. The honours of the day rested with the Composite Regiment, who only lost two men killed and five wounded. Lord Dundonald held the position he had thus won and awaited the arrival of Sir Charles Warren. The latter commenced his march early on the morning of the 19th, but at midday the plan of a flank march was abandoned and the mounted infantry recalled. The road lay all along the front of the Boer position. The transport was too slow and cumbrous to form a flying column with it, and to guard the lines of communication so near the enemy would have required more troops than could be spared. Therefore the column doubled back on itself and camped within two miles of Trichard's Drift. That night the outposts occupied the lower spurs of the hill preparatory to an attack next day.

We were once more forced to deliver a frontal attack. The ridge of Taba Myama is itself a spur of the Drakensberg, so to have tried to go round it to the west was impossible. To outmanœuvre an enemy so infinitely more mobile and cross at a point where they were not expecting attack, when all our movements had to be done in full view of them, was equally impossible. It was therefore decided to attack at a point where the two forces that were now across the river would, although acting separately, be able to give one another material assistance in case of need.

At 3 o'clock on the morning of the 20th Sir Charles Warren's force advanced up the hill. General Woodgate's brigade was divided. The 1st South Lancashire Regiment and the 2nd Lancaster Regiment, deploying on the right, occupied two kopjes, one on the extreme right, the other in the centre. The Boer position on the ridge beyond was roughly semi-circular. On their left it curved forward and culminated in a round point from behind which jutted out the col that joins Taba Myama to Spion Kop. Their right lay along a spur that ran forward towards the river. The whole field of battle was in the form of an amphitheatre. In the centre lay a stony kopje ; it was christened Three Tree Hill, and on it were massed five field batteries within easy range of the enemy's trenches all round. The whole way round the skyline was broken by the little stone schansjes they had thrown up, not having had time to dig trenches, as had been done at Colenso and Potgeiter's. The ascent of the hill was extremely arduous, and it was not until 7 o'clock that the guns were in position and had commenced shelling the schansjes. At 7 30 a little kopje to the east of Three Tree Hill was occupied by our extreme right, and the Boers immediately opened a heavy musketry fire upon it. Meanwhile the other half of General Woodgate's brigade, the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers and the 1st York and Lancaster Regiments, and the whole of General Hart's brigade were pushing forward on the left of the guns. The spur along which they were to advance was very broken, like a line of miniature kopjes with small dongas and rocks in between. At the point where the hill sloped down steeply the whole brigade and a half massed till 11 o'clock, when they received the order to advance. The lesson of Colenso had been well learnt. There was not, perhaps, quite the parade-like regularity that characterized the advance of our troops on that occasion, but it was infinitely more skilful. Taking advantage of every available bit of cover, they moved forward with a dash and a rapidity that were magnificent to watch. Musketry fire was poured into them from every side, and as they pushed on a terribly searching flank fire was poured in at close range from the trenches on their left. The batteries searched every schansjes upon the hill, but they could not silence the fire. Behind every stone or antheap that could hide a man lay a Boer marksman, and shell-

fire was of little use against them. About 1,000 yards from the enemy's trenches all cover ceased; the rocky, broken ground became smooth glacis, and when our men reached the last kopje they waited. At about 3 o'clock denser lines of men began to push forward from behind the hill till every little heap of rocks swarmed with them, and the whole hill was turning khaki coloured. Then the word came back to the guns that the infantry were going to charge across that last half-mile of open, and the battery commanders ordered their guns to fire at 15 seconds intervals. For a quarter of an hour this terrific rate of fire was maintained, and then we saw the infantry slowly filing away in diverging streams into the two deep valleys on either side. The order had been changed and the assault was not going to be made that night. The enemy's guns, which had not been much in evidence during the day, except when they had shelled the batteries for a quarter of an hour during the afternoon, were now turned on them, firing our own shrapnel, lost at Colenso, into them. The fighting for the day was practically over. As it grew dark fresh regiments from General Hildyard's brigade, which had not been in action that day, replaced the Lancashire regiments, who had lost most heavily.

Away on the left the cavalry brigade had been ordered to retire from Acton Homes when it was known that the flank march was abandoned. On the afternoon of the 20th inst., when the infantry attack was expected, two squadrons of the S.A.L.H., under Major Childe, were ordered to attack a spur of the hill nearly a mile beyond General Hart. They galloped to the foot of the hill, and dismounting there climbed it on foot. A trooper called Tobin reached the top, from which during the beginning of the ascent they had been fired upon, ten minutes ahead of the rest and found it clear of Boers; so he waved his hat to the others and the hill was occupied. On the top they were exposed to a heavy fire and suffered severely. Major Childe was killed by a shell. They held the hill, however, all night, but were forced to evacuate it the next morning.

That night the troops bivouacked where they lay, and except for an occasional exchange of shots between the pickets all was quiet. In the morning it was discovered that the enemy had evacuated the trenches along the spur which had formed the right of their position, from the extreme end of which our troops were only about 400 yards distant, and had fallen back on the ridge beyond. The trenches were occupied at dawn, and it was found that the enemy now held another position extremely similar to the first. It was in fact a continuation of it. The ridge continued beyond the point where the spur joined it for nearly a mile and then curved sharply round towards the river. The whole line was dotted with little stone schansjes. They occupied two sides of a shallow square basin of which we held one corner. Our men lined their evacuated trenches and the south side nearest the river was soon occupied. That was all the advance that was made for the day and also for the next three days. Heavy musketry fire was continued all day by both sides, and on ours at least the casualties were few. Most of them came from behind. We were well within range of the centre of the enemy's first position. Those who were not in the firing line were in perfect safety, as the hill sloped away very sharply immediately below it, and those on the slope were completely hidden. What was needed most was artillery that could command the whole of their line of schansjes, but the guns on Three Tree Hill were out of range, and there was no artillery position tenable any nearer except down below on the plain. On the 22nd two batteries and four howitzers took up positions on the plain below, and bombarded all day and the next, but, though they did considerable damage, it was obvious that they were not weakening the enemy's position sufficiently to make the success of an infantry assault more than problematical.

Thus we were at a deadlock. There had been four days' fighting. The first had been distinctly successful; we had forced the enemy back from all his advanced positions; the infantry had fought splendidly, and our losses, considering the strength of the position we were attacking, had not been great. Now, however, we had come to his main line of defence. Three days' fighting had not improved our position. His was probably stronger, for he had brought up more guns and improved his intrenchments. It was obvious, therefore, that we could not hope for success in that direction, and so the attack on Spion Kop was ordered.

THE FIGHTING ABOUT SPION KOP.

II.*

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

SPEARMAN'S HILL CAMP, JAN. 26.

The three days' fighting on Taba Myama, from the 21st to the 23rd, had been somewhat unproductive. We were in a position where we could use neither our guns nor our infantry to advantage, and it was evident that a successful attack could not be made there. Further west the country was the same, whilst at Potgeiter's Drift the enemy had constructed the most elaborate defences of all. There remained only Spion Kop. This great mountain was the key to the whole position. It was considerably higher than Taba Myama and it towered above the Brakfontein

MAPS TO ILLUSTRATE THE FIGHTING ABOUT SPION KOP.

m of builders, had undertaken the v
theatre at Eccles. By the terms of
ilding owner was at liberty to give s
work to other persons, and he acc
portion of it in the hands of the
hile the respondents were carrying
e work the deceased man, who wa
nt and was engaged in the work, met
g through a scaffolding. The ques
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the Workmen's Compensation Act.
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on 7, subsection 1. Did it apply to
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ut there was ample to show that
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g. It was clear that the deceased
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undertakers within the meaning of
section 2 of section 7 "undertake
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sons undertaking the construction
t of a building? In his opinion a pe
the construction of a substantial par
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was wrong, and that the applicant
compensation which had been awar
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E COLLINS was of the same opinion.
pecification clearly embraced work wh
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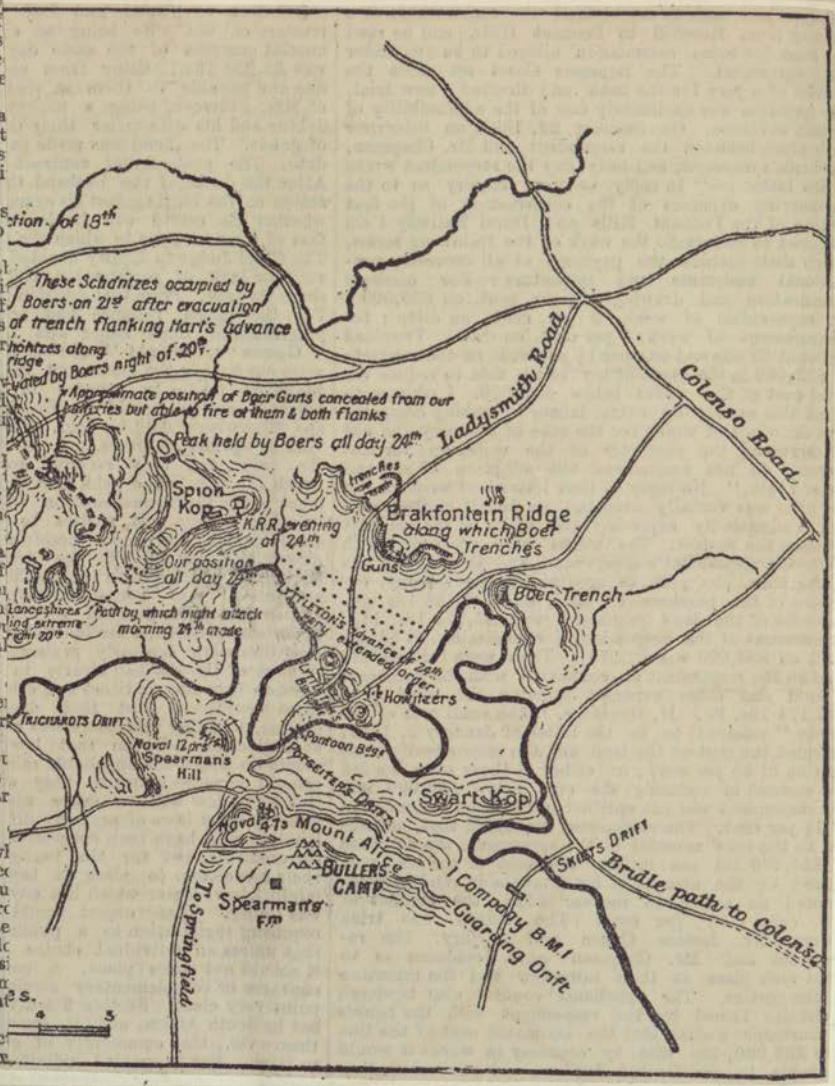
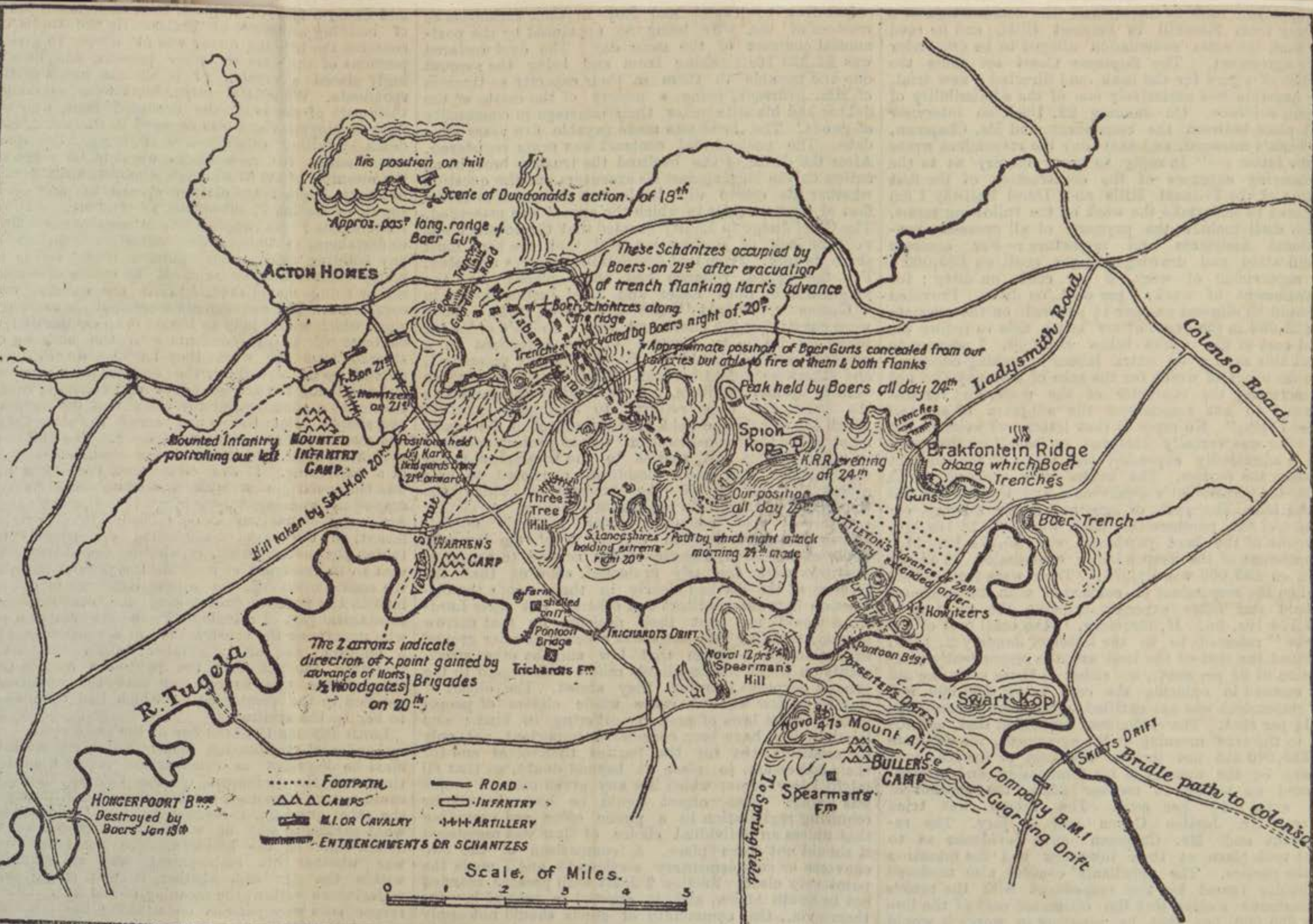
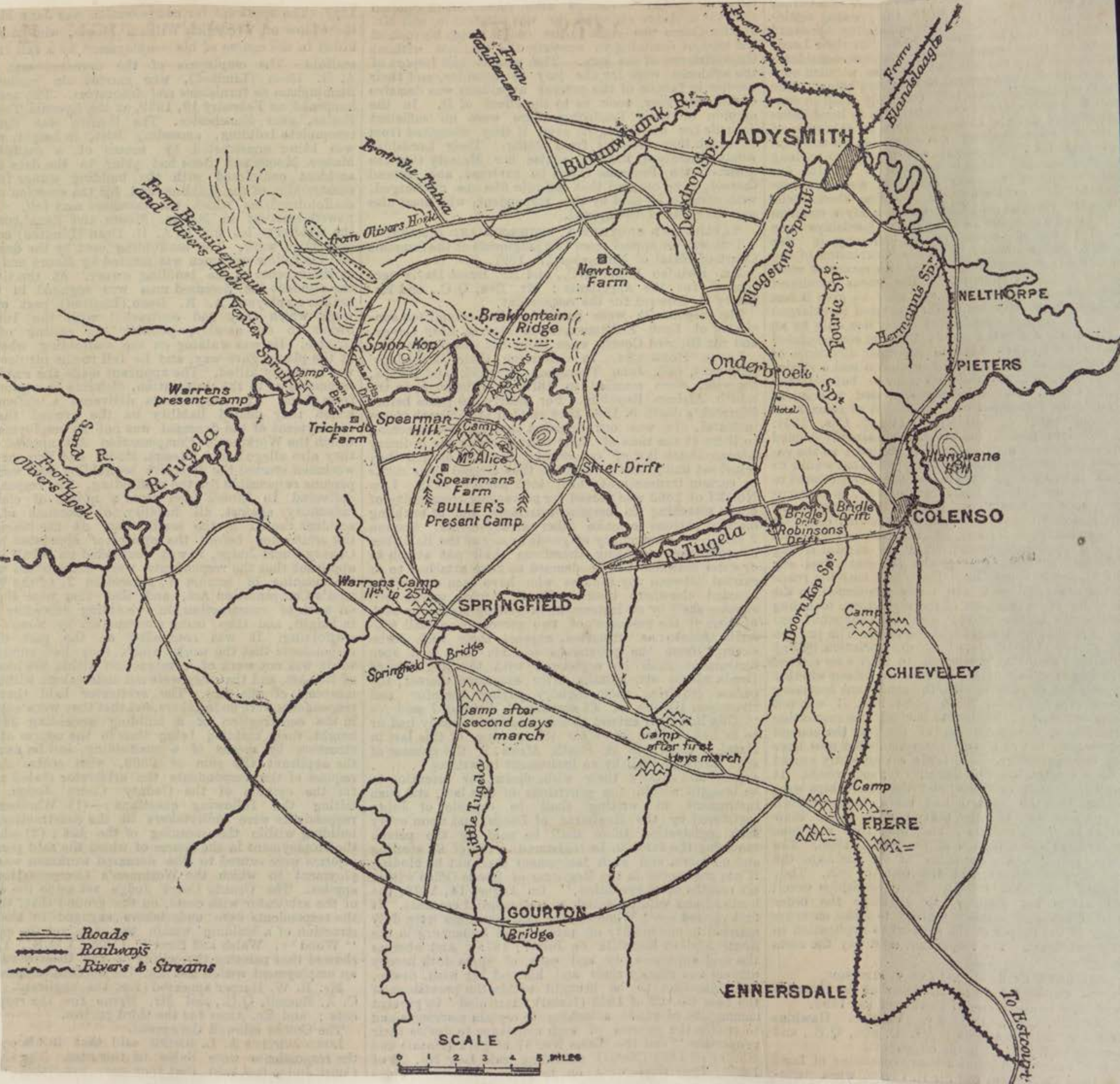
ithin the meaning of the Act. Here
ere persons undertaking the construc
ilding, and, in his opinion, they w



Ridge, the name given to the Boer position in front of Potgeiter's Drift. A force holding Spion Kop with artillery could enfilade the Boer trenches to the right and left and render them untenable. An attack upon it was the more likely to succeed as, the fighting of the last three days having been on General Warren's extreme left, the mountain lying outside his right was not likely to be strongly held. A night attack was, therefore, decided upon.

The flat top of the mountain is roughly triangular in shape, the most acute angle of the triangle lying to the south-west; but the eastern side has a large re-entrant, which makes the table-land remain narrow for some distance from its south-western extremity. At this point the mountain is less steep than anywhere else on its eastern or western sides, though even here it is a sharp ascent and the path which leads up it is narrow and winding. Up this path on the night of the 23rd went the 2nd Lancaster Regi-


His position on hill
Scene of Dundonald's action of 18th
Approx. posn long range of Boer Gun
ACTON HOMES
These Schantzes occupied by Boers on 21st after evacuation of trench flanking Hart's advance
Boer Schantzes along the ridge
Trenches evacuated by Boers night of 20th
Approximate posn of Boer Guns concealed from our batteries but able to fire at them & both flanks
Peak held by Boers all day 24th
Ladysmith Road
Colenso Road
Howitzers on 21st
Mounted Infantry patrolling our left
MOUNTED INFANTRY CAMP.
Positions held by Hart's & Hildyards from 21st onwards
Spion Kop
K.R.R. evening of 24th
Trenches
Brakfontein Ridge along which Boer Trenches
Guns
Three Tree Hill
Our position all day 24th
Boer Trench
Hill taken by S.A.L.H. on 20th
Venter Spruit
WARREN'S CAMP
S. Lancashires holding extreme right 20th
Path by which night attack morning 24th made
LYTTLETON'S advance of 24th extended order
Farm shelled on 17th
Pontoon Bridge
TRICHARDTS DRIFT
Howitzers
Trichardts Fm
The 2 arrows indicate direction of × point gained by advance of Harts & ½ Woodgates Brigades on 20th
R. Tugela
Naval 12 prs Spearman's Hill
Pontoon Bge
Potgieters Drift
Swart Kop
Naval 4.7s Mount Alice
BULLER'S CAMP
Skiets Drift
Bridle path to Colenso
1 Company B.M.I. Guarding Drift
To Springfield
Spearman's Fm
HONGERPOORT Bdge Destroyed by Boers Jan 13th
FOOTPATH
CAMPS
M.I. OR CAVALRY
ENTRENCHMENTS OR SCHANTZES
ROAD
INFANTRY
ARTILLERY
Scale of Miles.
0 1 2 3 4 5



From Van Reenens
From Bester's
From Elandslaagte
LADYSMITH
Blaauwbank R.
Dewdrop Spt
From the Tintwa
From Bezuidenhout and Olivers Hoek
from Olivers Hoek
Newtons Farm
Flagstone Spruit
Pourie Spt
Hermann's Spt
NELTHORPE
Brakfontein Ridge
Venter Spruit
Spion Kop
Onderbroek Spt
PIETERS
Warrens present Camp
Camp
Trichardts Farm
Spearman Hill
Camp
Mt Alice
Hotel
Hlangwane Hill
Spearmans Farm
Skiet Drift
BULLER'S Present Camp
Bridle Drift
Bridle Drift
Robinsons Drift
COLENSO
R. Tugela
R. Tugela
Sand R.
From Olivers Hoek
Warrens Camp 11th to 25th
SPRINGFIELD
Doorn Kop Spt
Camp
Springfield Bridge
CHIEVELEY
Camp after second days march
Camp after first days march
Little Tugela
Camp
FRERE
GOURTON
Bridge
Roads
Railways
Rivers & Streams
ENNERSDALE
To Estcourt
SCALE
0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES

ment, the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, two companies of the 1st South Lancashire Regiment, and 194 men of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, the whole under the command of Major-General Woodgate. They were led by Colonel Thorneycroft, who acted as guide. It was extremely dark, and raining. At 1 o'clock they began to climb the mountain in single file with the utmost caution, and at 3 o'clock were on the top, where they fixed bayonets. They had not gone far when they were suddenly challenged by a sentry. Acting on their orders the men immediately threw themselves flat on their faces, and the picket, not more than 15 in number and only 30 yards away, emptied their magazines into the darkness and fled for their lives. One brave man alone remained, and he was killed as our men flung themselves into the trench, with a cheer that was heard by those who were anxiously listening in the camp below. There was a second trench, and the alarm being now given the Boers kept up a heavy fire from it until the approach of our men, when they, too, fled, and by 4 o'clock the south-western end of the hill was in our possession. This part is slightly higher than the rest and hog-backed in shape. On it in darkness and fog the men dug trenches, but though care was taken to choose what seemed the best positions, it was found when the Boers opened fire later on that they were in some of the most exposed places.

Day broke with a heavy fog on the hill-top, which did not lift till 8. During this time the Boers had made their preparations with the utmost speed and skill. When the fog lifted they had at least six guns bearing on our position, two Maxim-Nordenfelts—the guns that proved most deadly during that day—being on the far extremes of the hill itself ; the rest were behind the ridge of Taba Myama, completely concealed from our batteries, but able to command them, as was shown by their dropping shells amongst them periodically during the day. The Boer riflemen followed their usual tactics. They were scattered all over the hill, lying wherever they found cover, and firing coolly and steadily all the time. To our men they were as usual practically invisible, and they were far too widely scattered for shell fire to have much effect upon them At 8 their attack began. It was a most vigorous infantry attack, supported by a converging shell fire from three directions. For the first time in this war the Boer artillery was as deadly as their musketry. The Maxim-Nordenfelts scoured first one side of the hill and then the other, raising great weals of dust, and shell after shell bursting where our men lay thickest. But these fought with splendid courage. Lying on the exposed slopes of the hog-back, without room to extend and with very insufficient cover, they fought desperately for three hours. The Boers, probably the best skirmishers in the world, advanced closer and closer without giving our men a chance and drove them out of their first line of trenches, but did not stay there long ; for the second time we drove them back again at the point of the bayonet, and in one of the trenches this happened three times. Early in the engagement General Woodgate had been shot in the head, and the command was given to Colonel Thorneycroft, who, with his men, remained in the firing line all day. An urgent message asking for reinforcements had been sent, but it was not till 11 o'clock that the Middlesex and Dorset Regiments reached the top and our men were seen to be slowly advancing.

Meanwhile the batteries below had been concentrating their fire upon the northern corner of the mountain, whither the Boers had been seen riding in considerable numbers, but had not been able appreciably to silence their fire. About 11 o'clock, however, the batteries on Three Tree Hill were shelled by the guns behind the ridge, and, turning their fire in the direction whence the shells came, eventually silenced them. With that the vigour of the enemy's attack ceased, though they still maintained a heavy and well-directed fire—both musketry and artillery—to which our reply was not very effective, and we continued losing men heavily. On the extreme right General Lyttelton had been advancing since dawn in front of Brakfontein, with the object of diverting the enemy's attention from Spion Kop. The message asking for reinforcements had been sent to him also, and he promptly detached two battalions to their assistance. The Scottish Rifles were sent back across Potgeiter's Drift, thence along the river to a Kaffir ford higher up, which they crossed and then ascended the hill by the same path as the other troops had used. The 60th Rifles were sent the same way, but after crossing the ford turned to the right, and after skirting along the foot of the hill commenced the ascent near the northern extremity of the eastern face. North of the large re-entrant in these faces there are two peaks, and half a battalion ascended each of these.

What followed was one of the finest sights of the day. The mountain side was in places almost precipitous, and all the way up the men were under fire from the top and from sharpshooters in trenches and behind rocks on the flanks, yet they never wavered once. The climb took over two hours, and when they at last reached the summit they surrounded it and went up the last part with a rush and cheer. It was a stirring sight, and to those who watched it seemed that now, at any rate, the hill was ours. The only ominous thing was that not a Boer left the hill, and the ceaseless fire went on without even a break. This was at 5 15, and things were not going well with the main attack. More reinforcements—too many considering the smallness of the position—had come up. The Scottish Rifles and Bethune's Mounted Infantry were up, and after them came

the Imperial Light Infantry, a Uitlander corps recently raised which had just arrived at the front. There were now nearly six battalions where earlier in the day two and a half had not had space to manœuvre. A large part had been compelled to retire to comparative shelter below the crest of the hill, but the Maxim-Nordenfelt found them out there, and there was no escape from it. To add to their other difficulties, the water supply was very deficient. It had been believed that there was a large spring on the top of the hill, but either they did not reach it or in this exceptionally dry season it had run dry. The regiments on the top of the hill were by this time inextricably mixed up. Owing to the insufficiency of cover men were compelled to shelter themselves where they could, and by the end of that long day battalions and even companies were hopelessly fused.

The state of things on the hill does not seem to have been unknown to those below who were making preparations to relieve them during the night. The 4th Mountain Battery, which had been at Springfield, marched all day and arrived in the evening, but had it gone into action it is very doubtful whether it would have been of any use against the much heavier Boer artillery. Of far more use were two naval 12-pounders, which were brought over from Spearman's Hill by Lieutenant James, R.N., of the Tartar, but they never got beyond the foot of the hill, and artillery officers were doubtful whether they could ever have been taken up. Six hundred Royal Engineers received orders to go up after nightfall in order to intrench the position, and a part of General Hildyard's Brigade bivouacked under Three Tree Hill, with orders to advance against the main ridge of Taba Myama at dawn. Colonel Thorneycroft was in ignorance of all this. The condition in which his force was has already been described, but besides this his men were suffering considerably from the effects of the day. The losses had been heavy ; his own men had lost 122 out of 194 who had climbed the hill, and the men, who had been under fire all day, although not in the slightest degree demoralized, were yet considerably shaken, and it was exceedingly doubtful whether they would be able to stand another such day's shell fire. It is the hardest task of all to be absolutely quiet under the heavy fire, and yet all except the firing line had had to do it and had done it nobly that day. Could they do it for another, the majority, perhaps, being without even their company commander, whose presence at such a time would be more than ever essential ? Moreover, a retirement from that spot, if followed up by the enemy, would mean disaster. The nature of the ground made it inevitable.

These were the reasons which caused the retirement from Spion Kop on the night of the 24th. It began at 8 30, and as the leading troops went down they met the sappers coming up. The descent was conducted with the utmost order and despatch, but it was early morning before the last man was off the hill. With the failure to retain Spion Kop failed General Warren's attempt to cross the Spion Kop Taba Myama range, so, on the 25th, a withdrawal across the Tugela was ordered. It took the heavy transport wagons all day to cross the pontoons, and in the night the troops followed them. After ten days' bivouac they are once more under canvas, but on this side of the Tugela.

19th February 1900.

THE BOER ATTACK ON LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, JAN. 10.

Saturday, January 6, witnessed the most sanguinary and desperate engagement which has yet fallen to the lot of the troops forming the Ladysmith garrison. Shortly after midnight the Boers, in four columns, attacked our most vulnerable defences, and by daybreak succeeded in effecting a lodgment in two places. So determined was the assault and so tenacious were the enemy that the Boers maintained their hold of the positions won for 17 hours, and were only dislodged after an immense sacrifice of life. The carnage on both sides was terrible. From beginning to end it was a soldier's battle, and our ultimate success lay in the company leading of the infantry.

The enemy had chosen to make their main attempt upon the western face of the perimeter. The defences here are ranged upon the summit of a flat-topped hill which forms a crescent, with the interior slopes facing the enemy. The southern half of this crescent is known as Cæsar's Camp ; the northern, which rather lies in a westerly direction from the town, as Wagon Hill. From end to end the military crest line is a little under four miles. The summit of Cæsar's Camp is a broad plateau some 800ft. above the level of Ladysmith. Wagon Hill is practically a continuation of Cæsar's Camp, forming two smaller plateaus connected by lower saddles. These plateaus are known as Wagon Hill and Wagon Hill West respectively. Cæsar's Camp is held by the Manchester Regiment with the 42nd Field Battery and a naval 12½-pounder gun, Wagon Hill by half a battalion 60th Rifles, and Wagon Hill West by two squadrons of the Imperial Light Horse. As the position faces the enemy the ends of the hill are very steep and difficult, and under all circumstances would afford cover to an assaulting column. Towards the centre of

the crescent the ascent is less perpendicular and has the appearance of a huge grassy glacis. The Dutch, with their natural instinct for attack, ignored the centre slope and simultaneously assaulted both horns of the crescent.

WAGON HILL.

As I have said before, from the very commencement it was a soldier's battle, and it would be impossible to give a detailed account of the action as it proceeded along that long line of front. I will therefore confine my description in the first instance to the sequence of events as they occurred on Wagon Hill. It so chanced that it had been determined to place a gun on Wagon Hill West. This entailed the presence of a working party of sappers and half a company of Gordon Highlanders on the hill. The working party was busy hauling up the different pieces of the gun and carriage when the assault was made. In fact the Kaffirs with bullock teams and carts made so much noise that, according to a story which was told by a prisoner, the enemy believed that we had been informed of the impending attack. So firmly did they believe that we were reinforcing that at one period there was some hesitation whether the attempt should be made. As it turned out, it was providential that this working party was present, for it added 60 rifles to the defence of the post. The Boers apparently collected in Fourier's Spruit, a dry stream bed which runs past the foot of the position. Here they surprised an outlying picket of the Imperial Light Horse. It consisted of four men, whom the Boers overpowered, killing two and wounding the others. The force, which consisted of about 300 picked men of the Harrismith commando, then took off their shoes and split up into two columns. One, under de Villiers and Van Wyk, commandant of Harrismith, commenced the steep ascent of Wagon Hill West; the other column climbed the almost sheer slopes of Wagon Hill proper. This column evidently made its objective the nek which joins the two Wagon Hills, which, if secured, would ensure the isolation of the most western post. They all but achieved their object, and if it had not been for the presence of the working party and sappers nothing could have deterred them. As de Villiers's party was creeping silently up the hillside, Lieutenant Mathias, an officer of the Imperial Light Horse, was descending to visit his posts. He suddenly found himself in the centre of the Boers. They mistook him for one of themselves, and he had the presence of mind to continue to climb upwards with them. When a few yards from his own picket he rushed forward and gave the alarm. But the enemy were already upon them. It was just half-past 2 when this picket was driven in. In a moment all was confusion on the summit of the hill. The working party of the Gordons had left their arms on the nek and rushed to find them. It was pitch dark, and from their similarity of head-dress it was impossible to distinguish the enemy from the Light Horsemen. The sappers, who had their arms, were formed up in some sort of order behind the gun epaulement by Lieutenant Digby Jones. But after a few seconds of indiscriminate firing the mixed defenders were driven over the reverse, and the Dutch were in possession of Wagon Hill West. Luckily the gun had not come up, but was still at the bottom of the hill.

It was an absolute surprise. The chaos for the moment was supreme. Rifles were snapping on every side. The Kaffirs and coolies with the wagons had fled, overturning the lanterns. The vivid flashes of the rifles furnished the only light. Firing now opened along the nek, showing that the Boers had forced the breastworks of the outlying pickets of the 60th Rifles on Wagon Hill. The Naval Volunteers fired half-a-dozen wild and erratic rounds from their Hotchkiss, and evacuated their gun-pit, hauling the gun with them. The little knot of mixed troops driven from the summit of Wagon Hill West was gathered in the dip of the saddle. All were strangers to the position, and they were herded together like sheep. Men were firing blindly into each other and into the darkness. Lieutenant Macnaghten, Scots Fusiliers, commanding the Gordon working party, collected as many of his scattered Highlanders as could be found. Something had to be done, and he shouted out for some one who knew the position. A trooper of the Light Horse volunteered to lead him up to the crest-line sangars. They clambered up amid the hissing of Mauser pellets and the spit-sparks of explosive bullets bursting on the stones. Men in felt hats were firing on every side. "They are our men; for God's sake don't fire," shouted the guide. They may or may not have been Volunteer cavalry. The situation seemed hopless. Lieutenant Macnaghten stumbled across a breastwork. It was full of prostrate men. One was shrieking in agony, others were groaning. There were perhaps 15 bunched in this flimsy sangar, constructed to hold four at most. All were wounded with the exception of three, and among the grievously wounded was Lieutenant MacGregor, the other officer of the Gordon working party. Macnaghten collected his sound men together, but, though the hilltop was alight with rifle flashes, it was impossible to separate friend from enemy. Fearing to do damage to their own supports if they fired, the little group lay with fixed bayonets until they were surrounded. Then a big burgher loomed up before them and shouted in English "Hands up." With three sound and 13 wounded men Macnaghten could do nothing, and the Boers took the little party below the crest-line. The enemy had won the crest-line, while the two weak squadrons of the Imperial Light Horse had been almost annihilated.

As soon as it had become apparent that the affair was more than an interchange of shots between pickets, Colonel Hamilton, commanding this section of the defences, telephoned down for reinforcements. The first to arrive were two and

a half companies of Gordon Highlanders from Fly Kraal, a post at the foot of Cæsar's Camp. One company under Captain Hon. R. F. Carnegie was immediately despatched to the support of the Manchester pickets on Cæsar's Camp, the remaining company and a half was taken by Major Miller-Wallnutt to Wagon Hill, one half company under Lieutenant Baird being left in a breastwork on the first saddle below Manchester Fort. At 4 o'clock the four companies of the same regiment which were in camp in the town were ordered up to Cæsar's Camp. They marched out at 20 minutes past 4, and just as they were across the Klip River bridge, a bullet, which must have travelled over 3,000 yards, struck Colonel Dick-Cunyngham, inflicting a mortal wound. Other reinforcements were on the move. The remaining two squadrons of Imperial Light Horse dashed off to Wagon Hill, where they arrived not a moment too soon. The Dawson City half battalion of the 1st 60th followed them, while four companies of the Rifle Brigade were drawn from King's Post and sent up to Cæsar's Camp. As day broke there were indications that the enemy contemplated attacking both Helpmakaar and Observation Hill. The 21st Field Battery was sent out to cover the approaches to Wagon Hill on the west ; the 53rd Battery took up a position in the scrub jungle covering the southern slope of Cæsar's Camp.

The situation on Wagon Hill at daybreak was strange. The Boers had effected a lodgment on the plateau and the nek connecting with Wagon Hill West. They were lying, some on the reverse of our sangars, others among the stones on the ridge. A remnant of the Light Horse with some stragglers of the 60th were ensconced among the boulders of an eminence to the left of the saddle, from which they checked the Boer advance. Cross fires were coming from every direction, and to show a head was to court instant death. On this part of Wagon Hill proper Boer and Britisher were barely 30 yards apart. Wagon Hill West was clear save for a buck-wagon and its in-spanned team, loaded with the foundation for a gun-carriage. Our men were all huddled in groups along the inside slope of the hill. The enemy occupied similarly the outside slope. The plateau itself had become a " Tom Tiddler's Ground." Neither side dare show upon it, for the 60th Rifles covered it with a cross fire from the reverse of Wagon Hill and the Boers from the boulders on the crest-line of the kotal. But the Boers holding the incline were pushing more men up the waterway by which they had made their way up to the nek. The augmented firing line was sorely pressing the remaining handful of Light Horsemen. The arrival at this moment of their two squadrons from camp could not have been more opportune. Led by Colonel Edwards they reinforced the little band of resolute men among the boulders. But this addition to the fighting strength could not move the Boers. They were evidently picked men and their marksmanship was deadly. It was at this period and amongst these very rocks that the colonel, two majors, and four other officers of the Light Horse were hit ; simply sacrificed in ascertaining the possibilities of the situation. Lord Ava, Colonel Hamilton's orderly officer, was wounded a little higher up. The position of affairs became most critical. If the Boers succeeded in reinforcing and seized the knoll which the Light Horse held, it meant that we should have been driven with cruel loss out of Wagon Hill, and this would have rendered Cæsar's Camp untenable. No infantry fire could dislodge the enemy. It was scarcely possible to see them and live. To effect a rush necessitated the passage of 60 yards of open. Major Mackworth, attached to the 60th Rifles, attempted to make the rush with what men he could collect. He fell shot through the head by an explosive bullet, and casualties amongst his men rendered the attempt abortive. Captain Codrington, 11th Hussars, commanding a squadron of the Light Horse, went forward to find cover for his men. If successful he was to signal back. Thirty yards away he fell, and just had strength enough to wave the Light Horse back. Lieutenant Tod, another attached officer of the 60th, with 12 men, made a further attempt to rush the open. He was shot dead three yards from cover, and seven of his men were hit. After this the men could not be brought to face the fire. Firing then slackened, and news was passed round that the whole of the position, Cæsar's Camp included, was clear of the enemy with the exception of the few men ensconced on Wagon Hill. It was resolved to wait until dark before attempting to clear them out with the bayonet. This information ultimately proved to be incorrect, but for the time being it was believed and acted upon.

But to return to Wagon Hill West. The mixed troops here were gallantly rallied by Lieutenant Digby Jones, R.E., the only officer present, until they were reinforced by the company of Gordon Highlanders under Major Miller-Wallnutt. Colonel Gore-Browne, of the 60th, also sent two companies to the support of the western post. With these reinforcements it was possible to regain a portion of the plateau and crest-line, and about 10 o'clock the firing slackened considerably. But everyone had to lie as they were, for any movement caused the action to reopen. Hundreds of mounted Boers could be seen moving in the plain to the west. These were kept in check by the 21st Field Battery and the 18th Hussars. The battery was particularly exposed, no fewer than five intrenched hostile guns playing upon it, including a 6in. position gun. But its losses were mainly confined to the gun teams, 11 horses being wounded and four killed. Though the musketry fire slackened towards midday the fire of the enemy's artillery increased. The heavy gun on Bulwana fired over a hundred rounds, dividing its attention between the 53rd Battery

and Cæsar's Camp, while three very vicious field pieces raked Wagon Hill with common shell or burst shrapnel over the crest-line.

A little after 11 the force on Wagon Hill was reinforced by three companies of the Devonshire Regiment under Colonel Park. They joined the two reserve companies of the 60th Rifles on Wagon Hill proper. Everything went well until about 2 o'clock, when suddenly the mixed troops holding the flimsy sangars on the crest-line of Wagon Hill West, broke their ranks and rushed back to the reverse slope. The Boers had appeared on the crest-line. Luckily it was but a handful of desperate men. If they had been followed by 20 burghers as resolute as themselves the plateau would have been lost a second time. The situation was much the same as the one which had cost us Majuba in the last campaign; the Boers appeared suddenly when not expected, and the men, without officers and practically without non-commissioned officers, broke and fled as soon as the felt hats were level with their feet. Yet out of the eight men who made the brow of the hill only two had nerve enough to continue. Grasping the situation, de Villiers, the commandant, and one other dashed for the gun epaulement. Major Miller-Wallnutt, the only regimental officer there, and a sapper were shot dead at the gun-pit. Fortunately the sappers who, with fixed bayonets, were stationed near the emplacement, stood firm. Lieutenant Digby Jones, who had commanded them with great gallantry since the night attack, led them forward, and shot de Villiers, falling himself a moment later with a rifle bullet through his brain. It was all the work of a moment, but six brave men lay extended on the ground. It is hard to think which were the more valiant, the middle-aged farmers, who, unsupported, had faced a hundred, or the brave boy who had stemmed his men in the stampede, and had sacrificed his own life to save the position. Colonel Hamilton, who was just below when this sudden attack was delivered, at once sent down and ordered up a dismounted squadron of the 18th Hussars. The plateau was then reoccupied. Our losses by this had been very heavy, and in the majority of cases the wounded were lying where they had fallen. It was impossible to recover them. Lieutenant Denniss, R.E., went on to the crest-line to search for Digby Jones. He likewise was shot dead, and fell beside his brother officer.

Wagon Hill West was to be the scene of another assault. Shortly after 4 the rain which had been threatening all day came down in a perfect deluge. It was an extraordinary storm even for South Africa. We had all imagined that the firing would slacken during this rain and that the Boers would seize the opportunity of clearing off the slopes of the hill. But we were mistaken, rather we did not know what force they were really in. Instead of retreating they chose this as the moment to make one last desperate struggle to force us from the hill. Suddenly the men on Wagon Hill West came rushing back, just as they had done the previous time. There were shouts of "retire." Major Rice pushed forward his sappers again. A subaltern rallied the broken Rifles, and the Highlanders faced round. Then they swung back again with levelled bayonets, and the Boers went headlong down the slopes.

On Wagon Hill the situation was as bad; under cover of the sluicing rain the Boers were massing all their energy. Colonel Hamilton saw that they must be dislodged at all hazards. He sent for Colonel Park and asked him if the Devons could clear the plateau. "We will try," was the Colonel's answer. The three companies extended, F company, under Lieutenant Field, leading, Captain Lafone's and Lieutenant Masterson's companies following in order. There were 60 yards of plateau to cross; a hundred Boer magazines waiting to sweep it. Three lines of naked bayonets scintillated against the hillside. Then the Colonel rose to his feet, and the three companies rose with him as one man. With a cheer that foretold success the Devons dashed into the open. The fire with which they were received was simply awful. It might have staggered any troops. Leaving the cover of the stones the Boers stood upright and emptied their magazines into the advancing line. But it never wavered, never checked, though the ranks were sadly thinned. The Boers fled back from the boulders which they had held with such tenacity throughout the day, and turned at bay upon the edge of the crest, hoping yet to stay the deadly rush of steel. They were augmented from below. But the stand was of no avail. Though charging, the Devons steadily changed front and bore down upon the hillside. The enemy broke and fled headlong down. The day was won. Such was their dread of the bayonet, they did not even attempt to rally in the spruit below, but leaving prisoners and ammunition behind, without turning, made their way to their horses. Fighting on Wagon Hill was done. After 17 hours of desperate battle we had recovered every inch of the ground which we had lost. But the price of purchase had been heavy. Captain Lafone, Lieutenants Field and Walker lay dead upon the very crest, shot by a cross fire from a neighbouring ridge, while directing the fire of their men upon the fleeing enemy. Lieutenant Masterson lay wounded. In that charge the Devons lost all the company officers, 15 men killed, and 40 wounded. Colonel Park was the only officer untouched. In Captain Lafone the regiment has lost one of the kindest-hearted and best officers that ever led a company. By dark the firing had died out; Cæsar's Camp was also clear. Ladysmith for the time being was safe, but the price had been heavy. The first official casualty list was 14 officers killed, 35 wounded, 100 men killed and 225 wounded.

THE ASSAULT ON CÆSAR'S CAMP.

In my preceding letter I furnished a topo-

graphical description of the flat-topped hill which constitutes the western defence of Ladysmith and is known as Cæsar's Camp. It is distant from the town about 4,000 yards. To arrive at the base from which they delivered their attack the enemy had considerable open country to cross; but, as a net-work of nullahs lead round the foot of Cæsar's Camp, at night there is an abundance of cover. Moreover, the southern lower slopes of the hill itself are covered with thick bush. The Heidelberg commando was entrusted with the attack on Cæsar's Camp.' The laager of this commando is situated behind Bulwana and Lombard's Kop, some six miles distant from the scene of operations. The 400 picked men who were to deliver the assault rode across the plain which stretches from Ladysmith to Bulwana, and arrived at some low kopjes which overlook Bester's Farm just after nightfall. Here they bivouacked until 1 o'clock in the morning, waiting for the reserve from Colenso which was to support their attack. At 1 a.m. the assaulting party moved down off the kopjes and pushed noiselessly along the nullahs until it arrived at Fourier's Spruit. Here they divided into two parties and removed their boots. One column worked round to the south-east end of the hill, the other attempted the ascent at the nearest point to the spruit. Half-way up the slope of the hill is a shelving plateau covered with bush. This level area the Boer right assaulting party made without being discovered. They were then able to push up the steep slope which leads to the main plateau in a more extended formation, and thus arrive at the crest-line pickets in considerable force. What actually occurred we shall never know, as the pickets of the Manchester Regiment were practically annihilated. But there is no doubt the surprise was absolute. After establishing themselves in our breastworks the enemy appear to have made but little headway. They rather contented themselves with returning the fire of the inlying pickets, which by this were thoroughly on the alert. Thus a squadron of the Natal Mounted Volunteers and a company of Gordon Highlanders were able to reinforce the Manchesters before any further serious developments took place. As soon as the gravity of the situation was realized further reinforcements from the Gordons and the Rifle Brigade were sent up to Cæsar's Camp. A squadron of the Natal Carbineers was ordered out to support the permanent picket of Natal Mounted Rifles and Natal Police on the plain between Cæsar's Camp and the town. And as soon as this reinforcement had cleared the bush the 53rd Field Battery was despatched to the same flank. This little force contributed greatly to the success of the day, for they prevented the enemy's second line from intervening between the position and Ladysmith. They virtually confined the assault on the hill to one slope. At daybreak the company of Gordons which had arrived first on the scene was pushed forward along the lower crest-line to ascertain the fate of the outlying Manchester pickets, and if possible to recover the ground which had been lost.

Captain the Hon. R. F. Carnegie extended his men and, placing half the company under his colour-sergeant, advanced cautiously in the semi-light. He met Lieutenant Hunt-Grubbe, of the Manchester Regiment, who volunteered to go forward and see if the pickets still existed. When 30 yards in front of the Gordons he disappeared. Carnegie then made out figures moving against the sky. Their felt hats betrayed them. Carnegie ordered a volley and rushed the sangars. The Boers stood up to meet the attack, and fired point-blank at the advancing Highlanders. But nothing could stay the rush, and they were driven from the breastworks and over the crest-line with heavy loss. Carnegie shot four with his carbine, and was himself severely wounded. One of his men was killed and ten were wounded. But they had cleared their front of the plateau. The Manchesters and Goulburn's Battery were busy clearing the western front, where the left assaulting column had secured a lodgment. Hunt-Grubbe was rescued; the Boers in their headlong flight had missed him. After he had left the Gordons he had seen figures in the sangar. He called out and asked if the sergeant was present. "Yes, here I am" came the answer in English, and the next moment the officer was surrounded by the enemy. Our own fire had put a bullet through his field-service cap. Although the Boers were swept from the plateau, they still held tenaciously to the reverse slope. They had admirable cover, upon which no cross-fire could be brought to dislodge them. For the time being a frontal attack was impossible.

But in the meantime the 53rd Field Battery was doing great execution below. Major Abdy had brought the battery into action under the partial cover of the scrub which skirts the river. From here he had been able to burst shrapnel over the line of the Boers' right ascent at a range of 2,200 yards. The cone of its burst swept the bush-covered plateau which shelved out from the main hill. The effect of this fire was awful. The whole slope where the enemy's reserves were collecting was torn from end to end. When we visited it in the night it presented the appearance of a shambles. So perfect was the ranging that as the Gordons advanced after having won the crestline our shrapnel was bursting but 30 yards in front of them. But the battery was not left undisturbed. The gunners on Bulwana and Lombard's Kop were not slow to discover it, and for two hours it was swept with the fire from the 6in. Creuzot gun, and its auxiliary battery of 15-pounders. Shell after shell buried itself and burst between the sections, or, just missing the gun groups, fell amongst the wagons and limbers. Though splinters constantly hit the guns and gunners, yet no piece was put out of action, and there was no diminution in the regularity of

the service. The spirit which animates this battery may be gauged by the action of one of its sergeants. As he was sitting on the trail of his gun a shell carried away his left arm and leg. Yet as they bore him off he waved his only remaining arm and shouted—"Buck up, No. 2 section." The Bulwana heavy calibre gun must have fired 60 rounds at the battery. At last they seemed to weary of attempting to put it out of action and turned upon Cæsar's Camp. The Volunteer Cavalry were in the scrub in advance of the battery, and they pushed the enemy's scouts before them. The Natal Mounted Rifles, advancing parallel with the Gordons, supported them with dismounted fire until the enemy were driven clear of the reverse slope. It was only on this flank that the issues of the engagement were controlled by any system other than the individual leading of company commanders. On the hill tops the conformation of the ground paralysed all attempts at concerted movement.

The main body of the Gordons and the supporting companies of the Rifle Brigade were kept for some hours lying under cover on the inner slope of the hill. Then the four companies of the Rifle Brigade were pushed on, and extending on the left of Carnegie's Company came into the firing line. "A" Company of the Gordons, under Captain Macready, was then worked into the centre of the line, and, pressing forward, was able to occupy some ground which gave it an admirable field of fire. In the front of this company, when the fighting was over, no fewer than 43 bodies were found. The loss which the company itself suffered in comparison with this was absurd. After an hour of very severe skirmishing, in which we lost a heavy percentage of officers, the firing slackened, and it seemed that the Boers had practically been dislodged. Then came the thunderstorm with its deluge of rain. Just as they had done on Wagon Hill, the Boers, under cover of the wet, gathered themselves for one more desperate effort. The initiative lay with them for a few minutes, and then the fire with which they were received hurled them back again over the crest. For the rest it was a rout. They threw themselves headlong down the steep incline. The reserves which had been idling in the nullahs streamed away towards the river. The 33rd Battery searched the bush country with a withering hail of shrapnel. The dismounted Volunteers shot the fugitives in the open, and the British infantry from the hill slopes delivered a punishment which the Boer has never before experienced. By nightfall the firing had ceased, and after 17 hours of continued battle Cæsar's Camp, as well as Wagon Hill, was clear of enemy.

It is impossible to estimate accurately the losses of the Boers, but they must be very heavy. Not only did they spend the whole of Sunday in searching for their dead, but their ambulances were out on Monday as well. The bush country on the lower slopes of Cæsar's Camp south was a veritable shambles. From what I have seen myself I am positive that their dead exceeded 200. It may be anything over this number. What the total casualty list is it is impossible to guess. Not that our losses were slight; they were heavy, but nothing in comparison with those of the Dutch and the moral effect which such slaughter will have upon the farmer-soldier. But though we are naturally elated with the successful issue of a struggle which throughout the day was extremely critical, yet we cannot but admire the enterprise and sterling determination of the enemy. We have ever been told that the Boer will not attack unless he feels that he has the advantage. If ever men embarked upon a mission of uncertainty it was the four columns of desperate men who scaled our position in the dark. Their tenacity of purpose and their pluck were proved by the manner in which throughout the day they stuck to the advantage which they had gained, and then even at the very end made one last bid for success.

Nor were these two attacks on the west the only attempts which were made that day against our defences. The Pretoria commando attempted to close with our northern breastworks, and the Wakkerstroom column demonstrated as if to attack the Helpmakaar posts. The latter attack never came off, but before it was light the Pretoria men were within striking distance of Observation Hill. In fact, about 50 of the more bold lay in some dead ground within 15 yards of the parapet until the thunderstorm. The attack, which was fainthearted enough, was supported by a heavy fire from the artillery on Surprise Hill and Telegraph Hill. But the total casualties from all causes were only three men of the Devonshire Regiment shot through the loopholes. We delivered to the enemy on the following day nine bodies from in front of these posts, but from the accounts of eye-witnesses their loss must have exceeded this.

Thus ended the sequel to Joubert's order, "Ladysmith must be taken before Wednesday."

23rd February 1900.

THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JAN. 31.

Six weeks have passed since that ill-fated week when the advance of our troops was beaten back at every point of the long line of the Boer defences. Another 30,000 men have landed in South Africa in the interval, and we hear of

preparations still going on to send another division and sundry detachments of Yeomanry and Volunteers, while more mounted men are weekly expected from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, and Ceylon. But as yet comparatively little progress has been made towards crushing the enemy we have allowed to grow so powerful on our frontiers. The relief of Ladysmith, which appeared all but accomplished a few days ago, is once more postponed. Sir Redvers Buller has, it is true, told his men that they are to be in Ladysmith in a week, but in the absence of any special information here, beyond the vague and confused reports that the censorship has allowed to reach Cape Town, one cannot but feel anxious about the position in Natal. That Sir R. Buller has given up his attempt seems hardly likely if his losses in any way approximate to the figures which are reported here. A loss of 15,000, or even more, would not be an excessive price to pay for the relief of Ladysmith, considering the enormous loss of prestige its surrender would involve, the encouragement it would give to the Republics to continue fighting, and the incitement it would offer to rebellion in Dutch districts in the colony, not to mention the direct loss of some 10,000 men made prisoners. But even with the relief of Ladysmith comparatively little may have been accomplished. It is possible that Sir R. Buller may inflict a very crushing blow upon the enemy, capture a large part of their guns, make many prisoners, and perhaps even succeed in seizing one of the Drakensberg passes and pouring his victorious troops into the Free State. But it is more probable that the Boers will get their guns away in safety without excessive losses, and take up a new position in the Biggarsberg or in the Drakensberg passes. In such a case General Buller could construct a series of lines embracing Ladysmith and resting on the Tugela behind, or actually evacuate Ladysmith and retire behind the Tugela, in both cases sending a large portion of his troops round to take part in the main advance into the Free State from the south and the west.

That advance is now in preparation and will very shortly begin, as soon as Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener have completed that work of organization which has kept them at Cape Town since their arrival, and whose good effects are beginning to show themselves at every point and in every department. The main force which the Commander-in-Chief and his staff will accompany will probably advance eastwards from Modder River on Bloemfontein. Large quantities of transport are being collected for the task of moving an army of 30,000 men over the 100 miles of country to be traversed without a railway. In addition to the large transport already at De Aar, Orange River, and Modder River, almost the whole of the transport at Queenstown, some 400 odd wagons and 7,000 odd transport animals, has been sent round by road to Cradock and is now in process of being sent round by rail. Enormous reserves of supplies are being piled up at De Aar and other points at the front, to facilitate the task of keeping the army supplied when once it begins its march across Free State territory. Another large column will most probably advance from Norval's Pont, towards which General French has been gradually working his way, skilfully spreading out his force of 8,000 to 10,000 men over so large an area that the activity of the Boers is almost completely paralyzed. One is tempted to ask whether, if General French can safely extend his force over a front of more than 40 miles, Lord Methuen might not have joined hands with Kimberley without serious loss of life simply by working round the Boer positions at Magersfontein and Spytfontein and establishing a chain of detachments. General Kelly-Kenny, with such part of his division as has not been transferred to General French, has moved to Thebus, an important point on the line from Rosmead Junction to Stormberg, and, no doubt, as soon as General Brabant's colonial division is ready to advance, a combined movement will be made from Dordrecht, Sterkstrom, and Thebus upon Stormberg and Burghersdorp, which will eventually oblige the Boers to fall back upon Bethulie bridge, taking with them such of the Dutch population of the invaded districts as have hopelessly compromised themselves by acts of overt rebellion. Preparations for repairing the much-broken line between Thebus and Stormberg and throwing a temporary bridge across the Orange River are being quietly completed, so that when once the military operations are in full progress there need be no unnecessary delay in the advance. In the north Colonel Plumer has been getting nearer and nearer to Mafeking. The report recently circulated by Reuter that Mafeking has been relieved may or may not be true, but it probably indicates that something is being done in that direction. It is not too much to hope of men of such energy and initiative as Colonel Baden-Powell and Colonel Plumer that they will not be content with joining forces and remaining on the defensive, but will make some diversion which may considerably disconcert and weaken the enemy's defence on his southern and western borders.

Meanwhile, affairs in Cape Colony itself have been very quiet. There is no doubt that a strong

agitation for peace at any price is being quietly prepared, in the hope that the British public may be beginning to tire of the war, which has already lasted so many months longer than was at first expected, and that thus the national aspirations of Dutch Afrikanderdom, as embodied in the Republics, may once again be preserved, as in 1881, for a better occasion to renew the struggle. A great deal will depend on what passes in the Imperial Parliament during the next few weeks, as the leaders of the Dutch party will undoubtedly try to take their cue from the attacks made on the Government by the less responsible members of the Opposition. The one thing necessary is that, even at this late hour, statesmen at home hould be under no misapprehension as to the serious character of the war and as to the importance of finishing it as quickly as possible. This is not a war like the Sudan war, which can be left to spread over a number of years. Enormous material interests are at stake in the Transvaal and all over South Africa. Even now the revenues of Natal and Cape Colony have suffered very serious falling off. Every month that the war lasts means at least an extra year added of bitterness after the war is over. Nor can we be absolutely sure that some hostile European combination, however unlikely, may not suddenly spring up against us. We cannot leave anything to chance. It is possible, in fact most probable, that there will be a general collapse of serious resistance by the Boers when once we have inflicted an effective defeat upon them. But we cannot reckon on that. It is by no means impossible that the chapter of our failures is not yet quite complete. Even now a rising in the colony or native trouble is a possibility which the Government ought to bear in mind. This country is so vast that operations without overwhelming forces are almost hopeless. To ensure absolute security we ought to have at least 20,000 men in South Africa, over and above the army fighting at the front, available for concentration at any point. But it would seem as if the Government had not yet looked the facts fully in the face and the War Office were still waiting to be pushed along by the public instead of itself giving the lead. There is much talk of patriotism, but what does it come to? If the Boers can raise every male from 15 to 70 when their country calls, if Natal with a white population less than that of Oxford can put some 5,000 men in the field, Great Britain with her 40 millions ought to be able to afford more than a few thousand Yeomanry and Volunteers. Why not send out as many more Regulars as possible and all the Militia who are ready to serve? That would leave the ground clear at home for the creation of an army on a new model, unfettered by traditions, and lead to that separation of our foreign service and national defence which has been so long advocated. It is no use talking only of reform after the war. How do we know that before this war is over we may not be embroiled in serious trouble in some other part of the world? It is a matter of vital importance that the war be brought to the earliest possible conclusion, and the more overwhelming our forces the speedier will be the end.

Not only should men be sent, but guns. We shall want a large number of guns, not only for the present purposes of war, but also for the future maintenance of order. We cannot afford to keep a very large force in South Africa after the war, but we ought to see that that force be well equipped. For some years it will be necessary to fortify and garrison the most important strategical positions all over the country. We cannot wholly deprive a white population of rifles, and it will not be necessary to do so if we take proper precautionary measures. Our fortified posts will have to be armed with guns, though for the purpose in view they need not necessarily be of the latest and most expensive type.

26th February 1900.

SOME THINGS WHICH HAVE GONE WELL.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, FEB. 6.

So dismayed has the British nation been at its failure to carry through in three or four months with 100,000 men a war no other nation would have undertaken with less than 200,000, setting no limit of time to the performance of the task, that it has hardly realized how well in some respects it has succeeded and how utterly it might have failed. The essential difficulties of the present war, the enormous distances which separate the various forces at the front from each other and from their bases on the sea coast —bases themselves only created since the war began and largely depending on other bases 6,000 miles and more away—the lack of provision, of water, of easily-procurable transport, the mountainous or hilly nature of a great part of the scene of operations, are hardly mentioned, or mentioned only as trifling matters. How many people at home have tried to think out for themselves what is implied by the single fact, no doubt well known to the British public, that the supplies for our forces along the frontier from Steynsburg to Modder River have hitherto been sent up almost entirely from Cape Town? What it means is that 70,000 men and 30,000 horses, mules, and oxen, scattered along a front of some

350 miles in length, have been supplied by a single 3ft. 6in. line of railway from a base 500 miles from the nearest point of that front. Everything the British Army consumes at the front it has to bring with it, in some cases even its water. To quote an instance, the troops at Rensburg require one or two trains of water tanks daily from Naauwpoort for their subsistence. Blunders have been made in plenty by everybody, from the War Office downwards, mistakes in preparation and equipment, mistakes in strategy, mistakes in tactics, but some of the gravest blunders which might have been made have not been made. It is, no doubt, distressing to find that we might have been prompter than we have been to make use of quick-firing guns or so-called guns of position, that we might have begun with more mounted infantry and less infantry, that better intelligence and scouting might have saved us from many an ambush, that a better appreciation of the effect of modern firearms might have led our generals to adopt different tactics. But it would have been still more distressing if our troops had failed to get to the front in time to prevent the invasion of the colony from spreading further, or if they had been rendered helpless by delay in the arrival of supplies, or poisoned by bad food. What would the outcry in England have been if this war had been managed on the same lines as the expedition to the Crimea, as the French expedition to Madagascar, or even the American expedition to Cuba? As it is, there has never been a moment's delay in the despatch of troops to the points where they have been most needed, or a single instance where a British commander at the front has been hampered by a thought for his supplies. It might well have been otherwise, and our generals might have found themselves to-day at Durban and Cape Town laboriously organizing expeditions to relieve Pietermaritzburg or to force the passage of the Hex River Mountains.

The sending of so large a force over sea from England, from India, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand was in itself no small undertaking. And, if there were certain hitches and delays here and there, due to unwise parcimony in the period just preceding the war, the army as a whole was brought from every end of the world with remarkable speed and freedom from mishap. At this end of their journey the arrangements for bringing the transports alongside the shore, for landing the men and horses, and for unloading the stores were everywhere admirable. At Cape Town and Durban, where there are proper harbours, the soldiers were as a rule simply marched out of the ship into trains standing ready on the other side of the quay and run up to the front before they had time to realize that they had landed in South Africa. Cavalry, however, were throughout sent to the "rest camp" at Maitland, one of the suburbs of Cape Town, to allow the horses three or four days to recover from the effects of the voyage. A striking feature of the despatch of troops up country has been the secrecy of the whole operation—a secrecy invaluable in a land swarming with spies. Most people in Cape Town heard of the arrival of certain regiments only when they saw their names mentioned in some engagement at the front. Regiments went up from Cape Town and vanished in the unknown realms beyond De Aar to reappear unexpectedly in Natal. As a rule the destination of a military train was kept secret till within a few hours of its arrival at De Aar, when a telegram would go up to the railway authorities there with instructions where to forward it. Everywhere the Imperial landing officers and local harbour-masters have done excellent work; not least among them Sir Edward Chichester at Cape Town, better known to the public as the hero of a certain incident at Manila two years ago, which served more than any number of after-dinner speeches to cement the friendship between England and the United States.

Still more important has been the part played in this war by the railways. No words of praise can be too high for the work done by the Cape Government Railways, for the patriotic zeal and devotion displayed by every member of their staff from highest to lowest. Nothing could have been more fortunate than that in this colony, permeated as a great part of it is with a spirit of disaffection, so widespread an organization as the railway is manned almost entirely by Englishmen. The experience of this war ought to supply a lesson which we shall do well not to disregard when the time comes for taking over the Government railway in the Free State and buying out the Netherlands Company in the Transvaal. Few men have done better work for the Empire in the last few months than Mr. Price, the chief traffic manager of the C.G.R., who from the moment that war seemed inevitable took into his own hands the task of organizing the traffic so as best to fit in with the requirements of national defence—undeterred by the precepts of the "neutral" Ministry whose subordinate he is—and has ever since been an invaluable ally to Colonel Girouard, the Military Director of Railways. Even Mr. Price's efforts would have availed little but for the splendid spirit shown by the whole of his staff. The local station-masters have everywhere been the best friends and helpers our commanders could find, ready to do everything and anything whether within or without the strict scope of their duties. Thus they have in many cases done admirable work for the Intelligence Department owing to their exceptional opportunities of watching the movements of the population. There have been few finer things in this war than the quiet dutifulness with which everywhere along the frontier the station-masters stuck to their posts when every one else had hastily fled before the invading Boers. Even this does not exhaust

the activity of the C.G.R. Everywhere the railway workshops and toolsheds and the railway engineers and carpenters have been at the disposal of the troops. It is the railway people who are carrying out the successful experiments in mounting 6in. guns on railway trucks which are taking place at Simonstown. It was the railway engineers who constructed the various armoured trains that have been used for railway patrolling at the front, though they have not been responsible for the foolish manner in which they have sometimes been employed. Everywhere, too, they have constructed additional sidings for military traffic, above all, at DeAar, where there are now hospital sidings, cattle-truck sidings, and a troop siding, which will be 900 yards long when completed. The praise that applies to the Cape Government Railways applies no less to the Natal Railway, though, of course, the difficulties the latter has had to contend with have not, perhaps, been quite so great.

When Colonel Girouard arrived he found that the whole military traffic could practically be left in the hands of the civil railway staff, and that the most important thing to be done was to perfect a regular system of co-operation between the railways and the military authorities. To this end he created a complete administrative system composed of Royal Engineer railway officers, parallel throughout with the civil administrative system of the Government railway. Thus, while Colonel Girouard, as Director of Railways, is himself parallel to the general managers of the whole Cape and Natal railway systems, he has under him assistant directors at Cape Town and Durban, parallel to the chief traffic managers of the two colonial systems and the single line of the Natal railway; deputy assistant directors at important centres, such as Cape Town, De Aar, Naauwpoort, Queenstown, Maritzburg, &c., parallel to the district traffic managers; and railway staff officers parallel to the stationmasters. Many of these officers have had long practical experience of railway traffic in Egypt and India. Thus Colonel Girouard himself is president of the Egyptian State railways, Major Murray, the A.D.R. of the Cape railways, is traffic manager of the Burma railways, Major Cowie is directing manager of the North-Western railways of India, Captain Waghorn is chief consulting engineer to the Indian State railways, and Lieutenant Leggett traffic manager for the War Department at home. On the other side, these railway officers are connected with the military through the officers on the lines of communication, the general commanding lines of communication (General Forestier-Walker), the inspector-general of lines of communication (General Settle), the assistant inspector-general, and the station commandant. The chain of responsibility is thus everywhere parallel, and any question, for instance, which a stationmaster would have to refer to his sectional traffic manager would go simultaneously from the R.S.O. and the commandant at the same place to the D.A.D.R., and A.I.G.L. of C., who are both at the same centre and in immediate and constant touch with the same traffic manager, thus saving all the writing and delay and friction which might occur if the stationmaster's immediate superior were at one place, the R.S.O.'s superior at another, and the military commandant's at a third. The system also serves to create a most effective buffer for the protection of the railway officials from the exigencies of military officers and from their own excessive zeal, which would inevitably lead to hopeless congestion of sections of the line, to the serious delay of the more important through traffic. The railway officers have not only a knowledge of the practical working of the whole railway system and of the distribution and sequence of the military traffic, but can also insist, as against local commanding officers, in a way that civilians cannot, on the strict observance of certain necessary regulations. Thus the railway officer enforces all the rules dealing with the entraining and detraining of troops and horses, the limitation of officers' luggage, the off-loading of stores, &c. It would be impossible for a civilian to go through regimental baggage as it is being loaded on to a train and take out articles which he thought heavy and unnecessary, as was done to the mahogany mess table which a certain crack cavalry regiment fondly hoped it was going to carry up to Rensburg. Off-loading is a matter of special difficulty, for regimental officers, as a rule, require a great deal of pressure to induce them to unload their belongings quickly in order to set the trucks free. So great did this difficulty become that Colonel Girouard organized a special labour bureau at De Aar, employing about 1,800 Kaffirs, who can be sent in gangs of 30 or more to any place where they are wanted on requisition by an R.S.O.

The original idea of the military authorities was to run the most advanced sections of the railway purely on military lines with a military staff, repairing the line, and restoring it to the civil administration as soon as a further advance was made. Thus for a short time the section between Orange River and Modder River was worked entirely by the railway company of the Royal Engineers, as described in an article by your Correspondent with Lord Methuen's force. But the experiment was not very successful, and at the present moment the line is run entirely by civilians right up to the most advanced posts. Even when the advance into the Free State takes place, though for political and other reasons it would be inconvenient for the Cape Government railway directly to take over portions of the Free State railway, the military railway engineers will be largely supplemented by men borrowed from the staff of the C.G.R. and by the evicted English engineers of the Free

State railway, of whom there are at present nearly 100 retained by the authorities and employed in various capacities till they can be used again in the Free State. The financial arrangement between the Cape Government railway and the military authorities is a very reasonable and simple one. There are no elaborate scales of reduced fares per passenger or per ton, but the military pay a comprehensive charge of 7d. per truck per mile irrespective of contents, whether they are men or horses, groceries or guns. The system, among other advantages, encourages the railway officers to devote due attention to the proper packing of both men and supplies. Thus in the storage of supplies considerable reduction in the cost of carriage per ton has been effected since the beginning of the war by increased attention to packing. The average cost on the present arrangement works out at about one-third of a penny for each man, three farthings for each horse, and one penny farthing for each ton of supplies per mile. As far as can be gathered from the traffic returns the railway cannot be losing heavily by the war, as, though the gross returns are considerably less than those from the Transvaal transit traffic which the war has put an end to, there is nothing to be written off for the share of the total belonging to the Free State.

A few through trains to the Republics have been knocked off on account of the war, but, otherwise, the military traffic has been arranged so as in no way to interfere with the ordinary traffic on the lines. The capacity of the three main branches of the Cape railways for military trains is seven a day on the western line, five on the Port Elizabeth-Cradock-Naauwpoort line, and three on the line from East London to Stormberg. Owing to the unfortunate evacuation of Stormberg this last line is for the present cut off from its cross connexion with the others and serves only as feeder to General Gatacre's force at Sterkstrom. The other two lines form a complete system, connecting the two bases of Cape Town and Port Elizabeth with the main advanced bases at Orange River or Modder River and Naauwpoort. Hitherto the western line has carried almost the whole military traffic, but the whole system has been recently reorganized by Colonel Girouard, and the work is in future to be divided between the two lines, on the principle that, as far as possible, all the men and horses should go up by the western route and all the supplies by the midland. The western is the quicker route, as, though it is 500 miles to De Aar from Cape Town as against 338 from Port Elizabeth, the latter is over 400 miles, or nearly two days further by sea, from London, a delay increased by the fact that the transports naturally put into Cape Town first and cannot be cleared of their cargo at once. Moreover, there are considerable difficulties in the way of landing troops in rough weather at Port Elizabeth, which is really only an open roadstead. Supplies, on the other hand, can wait and can be stored up in large quantities at the docks, so that a regular supply of trains can be sent up every day. It was also calculated that this distribution of work involved a saving of about £10,000 if the main force advanced from Naauwpoort, and of about £20,000 if it advanced, as it is now doing, from Orange or Modder River. The western line has carried up altogether since the beginning of November, roughly, 47,000 men and 18,000 animals and 37,000 tons of stores, its record week being the one ending on January 26, when it took up 7,650 men, 3,535 animals, 11 guns with 799 tons of ordnance, and 1,184 tons of supplies. Altogether, taking into consideration that these lines are single lines with a very narrow gauge, with very steep gradients passing through a country where watering stations are scarce, and where all the coal has to be carried up 500 miles or more from the coast—as has been the case since the Boers have broken the line from Sterkstrom to the Indwe collieries—their success must be admitted to have been most signal.

Detachments of Colonial Volunteers and of Regular troops are posted at all the more important points along the various lines, but the work of guarding and patrolling the line itself has been undertaken by the railway, which maintains for this purpose a very large staff of white and native patrols. Their task is by no means an easy one, for, though there has been no concerted movement to destroy the line, attempts have occasionally been made by individuals either to damage some culvert or to put stones on the line in order to derail the military trains. For the repair of the line the military authorities have at their disposal, first, the civil railway engineers, to whom most of the large and permanent work, the repair of large bridges, &c., will be left. It was the civil engineers who repaired the bridge across the Blaauwkrantz at Frere, who are engaged in restoring the permanent bridge across the Modder, and who will, no doubt, afterwards restore Norval's Pont, the Tugela-bridge, and the Vaal-bridge at Vereeniging. The temporary repairs at the pont are to be done partly by the Royal Engineers, of whom there are two companies at Modder River, who did excellent work in the construction of a temporary low-level bridge by the side of the permanent structure, and two companies along the section of the line from Rosmead Junction to Stormberg, which they are busily engaged in repairing as far as Thebus, the furthest point held in force by our troops. Besides the Royal Engineer companies there is the regiment of Railway Pioneers, over 1,000 strong, composed of Rand miners, whose task will be to repair the line through the Free State. Of this force, which Major Capper and his subordinate officers, Imperial or Rand, have in a few weeks brought to an admirable state of efficiency, great things are

expected. At present three companies of them are at Cape Town busy with the putting together and testing of skeleton bridges, of wire hawser tackle for ponts, of pile-driving machinery, &c., and will shortly be sent up to the front. The rest are still in camp at Stellenbosch.

Hardly less important than the question of railway transport in South Africa is the question of wagon transport. Colonel Richardson, a soldier of great South African experience, who came out shortly before the beginning of the war as chief director of transport and supplies, began at once buying up oxen and ox wagons on a large scale. A contract for the supply of oxen and wagons and drivers was made with Mr. Julius Weil, the well-known contractor who organized the Matabele war of 1893, and large transport depôts were organized at De Aar, Orange River, and Queenstown. Thousands of mules were also purchased by the War Office authorities in Italy, the United States, and the Argentine. But during all the earlier operations of the war the transport, though present in considerable quantities, was neglected by commanding officers who preferred to stick to the railway—a much more convenient proceeding than organizing a field transport and reloading all the supplies from the trains on to wagons, but one which absolutely fixed the line of advance beforehand and gave the enemy full and undisturbed choice of suitable positions for defence. But after his defeat at Colenso General Buller was forced to recognize the necessity of abandoning the railway. His last attempt to relieve Ladysmith, which failed only on the very verge of complete success, was made with a transport train of 400 wagons and nearly 5,000 beasts of burden. Lord Roberts is certainly not going to be tied by his leg to the railway. A projected march upon Bloemfontein is to take place across 100 miles of open country with a transport train of 500 or 600 wagons which have during the last fortnight been steadily concentrated at Orange River. Over 400 wagons and 7,000 cattle for this concentration have come all the way by road and train from Queenstown.

The supply of the Army in the field has been admirably worked from the very first. In Colonel Richardson the authorities selected a man who at once perceived the magnitude of the demands that would be made upon him, and did not hesitate to act on his own responsibility in order to meet those demands. If Colonel Richardson had relied solely upon the stores sent out by the War Office the Army might very well have been in the most serious difficulty in November for want of supplies; fortunately, instead of waiting for what was to come from home, he had the foresight and initiative to buy up during all October and November every shipload that touched the coast of South Africa, provided it contained anything that could be eaten by man or horse. The result has been that never has an army in the field been so well fed. Excellent bakeries were organized at all the advanced bases and the troops at the front supplied with fresh bread daily. There has hardly been a single instance during the present campaign where the troops have had to have recourse to biscuit. As regards meat the soldiers have been supplied as far as possible with frozen meat, of which enormous quantities now arrive weekly from New Zealand and Australia. The advantage of frozen meat over fresh meat for a camp is that the meat is actually better than that of driven cattle, that no butchers and attendants are required, and, most important of all, that by its use all the filth connected with the presence of large droves of cattle, and still more with the offal from slaughtered animals, is entirely avoided. What this means to the health of a large camp it is almost impossible to overestimate. Colonel Richardson is a firm believer in the virtues of jam as keeping the soldier not only contented but fit for hard work, and his experience only confirms that of the German military authorities, who, as a result of recent experiments on the marching capacity of soldiers with various foods, have introduced the "Zuckerdiät" into the whole of their army. Not only has the Army at the front been supplied with absolute regularity throughout, but enormous reserves of supplies have been accumulated at Naauwpoort, De Aar, and Orange River sufficient to last the Army for several weeks, even if trouble in Cape Colony or the interruption of the railway line for a time cut it off from its bases at the coast.

These are the things that have worked well in this war. They are matters that are not telegraphed about. Most people take them for matters of course. But in war they are hardly less important than the fighting itself. If our transport or our supplies had failed us we might by now have lost almost all South Africa and found ourselves face to face with a difficult, almost impossible, task of reconquest. As it is, we have not won a single decisive victory, and yet we have by no means had the worst of the war. The Boer advance has been checked at every point, and a single success may suffice to crumble up the whole of the thin and scattered line of the enemy's defence.

24th February 1900.

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH.

AWAITING RELIEF.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, JAN. 22 (81st day of investment).

The weary state of siege still drags on. One day is so similar to another that we have begun to lose all account of time. A week ago a flutter

of excitement roused the garrison. The distant rumbling of artillery, heavy and continued, foretold relief. Already we knew that the southern column was in the vicinity of Potgeiter's Drift; the heliograph had told us this. But the booming of the heavy guns was the first substantial evidence of relief. Would it be a day—two days—before Buller was here? Excitement spread through the town. Some hurried to the post-office with three months' collected correspondence. Others, seizing binoculars, climbed to the highest eminences and swept the horizon. Women, who for weeks had forgotten how to smile, stood laughing on the river banks, holding their babes that they too might hear the muffled sounds, which meant so much. Buller is coming! These magic words were in every mouth. But as hours grew into days and days into the week they lost their charm, and the garrison sank back into its previous state of apathy; the sounds of distant artillery were accepted as a side-light in the three months' drama. On occasions a disturbance among the pickets will precipitate an artillery duel. The apathy for a moment breaks, and the garrison strains for some more definite "sound of the pipes" than the monotonous rolling of the siege train 20 miles away. Hitherto such hopes have been dispelled as soon as they have arisen, and the garrison subsides to snatch a frugal meal during the intervals in the practice of the enemy's 6in. guns.

This morning dawned with another of these upheavals. The tension on the preceding evening had been increased by news from the signal stations. Broken masses of the enemy were reported to have scattered northwards from the slopes of Taba Myama. Fertility of imagination, which has developed a history of its own during the investment, filled in the gap which existed between the truth and the picture of the lens. The Boers had broken. Their positions shelled by day, their laagers made hideous by night, they had given before the strain and were dispersing to the passes. Consequently when daylight was heralded in with artillery fire from our own defences Ladysmith hurriedly dressed itself and hastened to the hill-tops.

Observation Hill has been my morning beat for days, so when the firing opened I made my way to a little crevice in the rock of which I knew—a nook which gives cover from the sharpshooters on Surprise Hill and Thornhill Kop, and affords a fine panorama of the great plain west of Ladysmith, the enemy's present positions, and the road by which it is anticipated that relief will come. Once reached, my cleft is a haven. But it is difficult of approach. It is necessary to leave your horse behind. Having ridden so far, you choose some dip which provides a modicum of cover and tether him that he may crop a fill of rich grass, which here grows plentifully. The spot is too exposed for the grass cutters to lay its verdure bare. It makes one's heart bleed to see the rapacity with which the animals turn to their natural food, so long denied to them. Often when no grass was procurable in camp have I ridden out to Observation Hill simply that my horse might feed. Having secured the animal you walk up towards the crest-line. If the day is peaceful you may boldly make your way. If not, it is wise to stop under some boulder and watch the direction of the fire. There is a burst on the summit of the hill—a splinter worries viciously overhead. Now is the time to cross, before another round is fired. Experience teaches you to avoid crest-lines and to mark out a line of consecutive stones that will give you cover. You cannot afford to dispense with precautions, for Dutch sharpshooters jealously watch the bursting of the shells, in the hope that the disturbance of the explosion may bring them a mark. If a bullet chips a neighbouring rock or sings past your ear you must drop to the ground and finish your journey on your hands and knees, or, if the cover be flimsy, even on your stomach. If single bullets come near you in succession, you may rest assured that some rifleman, whom you cannot see, has marked you and your direction down. Thus by alternately lying close and worming forward between the stones you reach your destination, squeeze into a niche, and unsling your glasses.

The panorama which rises before you practically covers the whole history of the siege. At your very feet lies the edge of the plain which the Rifle Brigade crossed on the night of their memorable sortie. Surprise Hill, Thornhill Kopje, and Bell Kopje rise in front of you. The atmosphere is so clear that you look at the enemy's sangars in alarm. It seems suicidal to be so close. Away in front stretches Telegraph Hill; as you adjust your glasses two pillars of smoke rise simultaneously from its rugged sky-line. One is pure white, the other a murky grey. The former precedes the report of a Creuzot gun, the latter is the burst of a projectile from our own 6in. howitzers. Telegraph Hill partitions the great plain of rolling veldt which lies to the west of our defences. Its rugged outline is prolonged in the more modest slope of Rifleman's Ridge, finally merging into the broken chain of kopjes, which, commencing with Middle Hill, mass one upon the other until they become the labyrinth of Onderbrook and the Colenso fastnesses. The left of the prospect is the valley of Ladysmith itself. Amid the eccentric windings of the river Klip the little town nestles in one of the junctions of the star of ridges, auxiliary to Observation Hill. You find clearly pencilled before you Wagon Hill and Cæsar's Camp, you can make out the very crest-lines which for some time the enemy wrested from us on January 6. To the

left, in the valley proper, the morning sun glints on the white canvas of Intombi Camp. Ill-fated retreat, unique in the histories of war! With the naked eye you can distinguish the alignment of the tents. With glasses you discover the moving figures. Civilian refugees and convalescent patients fretfully pacing the solitary path which lies between the boundary flags of the neutral zone. Behind Intombi, in shadow from the early sun, rises Bulwana, the tableland from which the enemy have been hurling iron and steel into the town for 80 days. If you turn in your retreat, your vision will rake the slopes of Helpmakaar, honeycombed with fortifications. For a background it has Gun Hill and Lombard's Kop. Directly in your rear lies Pepworth Hill, now abandoned by the enemy as a gun position. But to look back is to expose yourself. Activity in the Leicester picket above you shows that the enemy are on the watch. It is sufficient to content yourself with the prospect to the west.

The Great Plain stretches away, with but few serious breaks until Taba Myama is reached. This is the ominous-looking range of hills for the possession of which the Boers and the relieving force are now battling. Taba Myama is a matter of 14 to 20 miles from Ladysmith, and even with a telescope little can be made out except the position of three of the enemy's laagers and the bursting of our shells. As far as can be gathered from our view of the position, and from the meagre detail which the twinkling helio with the southern force vouchsafes us, it would appear that the passage of the Tugela was effected in two places. The Boers have taken up a defensive position, which, though it does not necessarily bar the way to Ladysmith, yet, if untaken, remains a standing menace to the communications. Apparently, to judge from the direction of the fire, the relief force is working up between Taba Myama and the Drakensberg, presumably with the object of seizing the Free State Railway connexion. Therefore we live in daily expectation of a battle—a decisive battle, or a general withdrawal on the part of the enemy. When once Taba Myama is taken we may consider ourselves relieved. Consequently the tension is great when conditions point to imminent battle. The issues in the balance are great—to Ladysmith everything—and men look hourly for some indication that the crisis is past. Ourselves we can do little, we can guide the artillery officers through the heliograph. We can point out the positions of laagers and masses which they cannot see.

Having satisfied myself that the morning bombardment was brought about by "an affair of outposts," and foreshadowed no serious move, and that relief was no nearer than heretofore, I crept back to my horse and returned to camp. It is thus that our days are spent.

Thursday, January 25.

During the last two days the interests centring in Taba Myama have increased. Yesterday, at 3 30 a.m., the sounds of heavy bombardment from the south-west were distinctly audible. At daybreak I made my way to the little niche on the slopes of the signal post on Observation Hill. The sounds of bombardment continued in unabated fury for hours. It was impossible, even with a telescope, to decide the exact nature of the attack. But it seemed that field guns were in action against the reverse of Taba Myama, and that heavy ordnance was acting in concert with them from Spearman's Kop, the position on the south bank of the Tugela. The firing was incessant, and about half-past 4 in the afternoon it seemed to reach its climax. The southern extremity of Taba Myama forms two conical peaks, locally known as "the breasts." These are connected by a saddle to a hill like a hog's back, which latter appeared to be the main object of the bombardment, though shrapnel was bursting all along the succeeding ridge. When the firing reached its zenith the "hog's back" for a period seemed wreathed in a cloud of bursting shrapnel. Then suddenly the centre of the wreath seemed to die away abruptly, the white puffs appearing on the flanks and stretching away to the north. This looked exactly like the last moments of an infantry assault. But we were too far away to form any definite opinion. About 10 o'clock that evening, after I had turned into bed, a staff officer brought me the welcome news that a message had been "lamped" in to the effect that the hill had been taken, and that all was well. And for two whole days this is all the information that we have had to live upon.

Friday, January 26.

I changed my beat on Thursday morning, and at daybreak was upon Wagon Point (Wagon Hill West), thirsting for news of the success which had attended General Buller's column. Luck was against us, for day broke with a heavy and overcast sky. Just for a moment the silvery shudder of a heliograph reflector was visible on the saddle below "the breasts." But it was impossible to say whether it was "calling up" a station across the river or our post on Observation Hill. Later in the day, when the situation still remained shrouded in doubt, the horrible suggestion was put forward that this heliograph might have belonged to the Boers, and that the lamp message of the preceding evening might also have been a Dutch subterfuge. We were able, however, to make out considerable movement amongst the Boers. And that morning there seemed every indication that the issue of the attack had been successful. A black mass on the slope of a far hill proved to be a large herd of cattle being driven up the road which leads to Van Reenen's Pass—long strings of white tilted wagons were slowly crawling northwards, away from the laagers—ambulances were loitering over the plain as if in search of wounded. Figures could be seen on the

top of the "hog's back" working at breastworks, and they were certainly intrenching the inner slope of the hill. The enemy, it was argued, would have found no necessity to build fortifications on the reverse of their positions. But the sky remained clouded until late in the afternoon, and even when the heliograph was able to work no message concerning the engagement came through. It is impossible to describe the uncertainty and anxiety which existed in Ladysmith at this period. Nor was it dispelled to-day, when the sun rose from behind a bank of cloud which developed into a mist, precluding all chance of visual communication between the forces. Nor was the anxiety allayed when it was seen that many Boer wagons were returning to the camps which had been evacuated on the previous day. In fact, some in the garrison went so far as to say that Boers were moving among the tents at the foot of "the breasts." There the matter stands. As I write this there are some in camp who believe that the enemy are still in possession of the "hog's back." But the consensus of opinion takes a less gloomy view of the situation. To my mind all the indications seem to point to a British occupation of the hill. To begin with, there has been a complete cessation of the bombardment since it ended abruptly at the time of the presumed assault. And latterly there has been almost a lull in hostilities round Ladysmith. Since yesterday the position gun on Bulwana has remained silent, after expending its final energies in what appeared to be an attempt to ruin the railway bridge over the Klip River, just south of the station. Is it to be wondered at that the tension in Ladysmith has been great and that the garrison has been anxious for news? This, it must be remembered, is the 84th day of its investment.

Saturday, January 27.

The tension is over. We know the worst. About midday a gleam of sunshine allowed the passage of a visual message from below. From this message we learned that Sir Charles Warren assaulted Taba Myama on Wednesday, January 24, carried it just before evening, and was in turn driven out by the Boers before daylight. By 4 p.m. the news had circulated through the garrison. After the anxiety of the last 72 hours it might have been anticipated that this intelligence would have been received with deep concern. I was prepared for a wave of despondency worse than anything that we had hitherto experienced. But it has not been so. Some may say that the garrison received the news, which means a prolongation of real hardship for them, with resignation. To me they appear to have accepted the intelligence, bad as it is, with a bearing somewhat akin to relief. Whatever has happened, the uncertainty of the last few days is past. This uncertainty was more cruel than the truth. An ammunition column, followed by the Devonshire Regiment doing its nightly health march, has just passed my window. The men of the former, to judge from their voices, were cheery, the latter were gaily whistling a popular air. There was no depression here. The anxiety of yesterday had lifted. Yet the ill-success of the relieving column means much to us. We have long been quit of the luxuries of life, and a few days more will bring the curtailment of many of the necessaries. But with the sound of General Buller's guns still in our ears there is not a man in the garrison that will hold that the situation is hopeless. This week, while there is no moon, we may experience another assault. But we are prepared for this contingency.

As I write we have no details of General Warren's battle, but from what one has seen in previous assaults it is easy to surmise what occurred. The effect of the artillery preparation is reported by natives to have been terrific—nothing could live on the summit of the hill. The infantry stormed the position with comparative ease. If error in judgment or indifferent leading is responsible for the loss of the hill after the infantry had taken it, the fault must lie in the want of due precaution after success. The natural result of an assault is chaos, especially if a position be carried shortly before nightfall. In our recent wars we have had abundant example of this. The storming of the Malakand Pass, the assault on Dargai Ridge, and the occupation of Omdurman were in each case followed by a hopeless paralysis of discipline. Brigadiers lost their battalions, battalions their companies, baggage their units, and staff officers their control. The questions of food for the men and succour to the wounded add to the general disorganization of the whole. If the disorder consequent on an assault is not grappled with before nightfall, an enterprising enemy, if it has troops left with the nerve to make the effort, has opportunities which occur under few other conditions. Units for the most part separated and detached, men weary and worn out, officers new to the conformation of the ground which they are called upon to defend, can be taken at a disadvantage. Such conditions require but little enterprise on the part of the enemy to be rendered disastrous. A hundred determined Swatis, if they had attacked at nightfall, could have changed the slopes of the Malakand into the scene of a disaster. If the Afridi Lashkar which watched the second action at Dargai, without joining in the struggle, had scaled the reverse of the hill in the dark they could easily have driven in the weak containing force. If the Khalifa had kept 5,000 picked spearmen in hand and had precipitated them upon the troops that bivouacked in Omdurman on the night after the battle, the victorious army might have been hurled into the Nile. Instances in the present war could be furnished when a hard earned day has been followed by a careless night. In nine cases out of ten the counter-attack is not delivered, the lesson

is ignored or forgotten. In the tenth case the effort is made and succeeds.

To those watching from the end of a telescope, it would appear that a reinforcing commando arrived and delivered the successful attack, possibly in the spirit of a forlorn hope. This is, of course, theory, but I make my deductions from what we saw through our glasses on the following morning, and from the information which the scouts brought in. There is no doubt that on the morning after the assault there was a retrograde movement amongst the Boers ; many wagons and much cattle were driven off in the direction of the passes.

It was not until the following day that the wagons returned to their original camping grounds. This gives colour to the belief that many of the burghers were under the impression that the hill was lost. And natives certainly brought information that the " hog's back " was in our possession. That we had the whole ridge we never believed, as the length of the chain of hills is about nine miles. From our point of vision the " hog's back " certainly appeared to be the key of the position. With all this conflicting evidence, and the deductions from the field of the telescope,it can readily be imagined how great was the feeling of suspense in Ladysmith, especially when official information was so long denied us.

But to ourselves. There has been little to break the monotony and daily routine of the siege. It would appear from the inactivity of the enemy that Joubert has withdrawn every available man from investing Ladysmith to oppose the force from the south. Since the guns of the relieving column have been in action in the vicinity of Potgeiter's Drift we have remained unmolested, except for an average of 50 rounds a day which have been fired into the town and defences. The law of chance has again veered round in our favour, and the casualties have been few. We have the mark of hardship upon us, but there is no talk of any alternative but ultimate relief. Nor will there be, as long as the breastworks can be manned and there are horses and mules within the lines.

24th February 1900.

THE WAR AS A TEST OF THE PRESENT EQUIPMENT.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

MODDER RIVER, JAN. 31.

Among the questions that are finding answers in the present war by no means the least interesting is the fitness of the kit of our men for work under the new conditions of warfare. This question is not unconnected with the experience hitherto gained as to the increased importance of taking cover, and the increased necessity for endurance in the individual.

It is not an over estimate that cover may now have to be taken from the hour after sunrise to the hour before sunset at any less distance than twelve hundred yards, and that such cover may at lesser distances have to be occupied throughout an entire day. It is impossible to attach too much importance, in these circumstances, to the uniform and accoutrements of the soldier. By any means possible invisibility must be attained, and it is only fair to say that the present khaki uniform secures that to a sufficient degree. It should always be remembered that the soldier, except in unusual circumstances, must lie down to take advantage of such slight undulations of the ground, veldt-scrub, temporary earthwork, or other cover ; and both his invisibility and his comfort and convenience as a fighting unit in that position must be among the chief points to be secured.

It may be said that cover 12 inches high (which is the usual growth of South African scrub) is the least that can be regarded as sufficient when facing an enemy upon the same level. It follows that the present custom of carrying a rolled up blanket upon the shoulders and an overcoat upon the back,each of dark colour, constitutes at once a serious danger, as the target presented is particularly conspicuous. This has been realized during the present campaign and the expedient of a khaki case for these necessities has been suggested as a makeshift until the two articles can be turned out in the now universal colour. The Cheshire Regiment have solved the difficulty by sewing a patch of khaki cloth on the lining of the overcoat and rolling it up inside out. A more drastic method has been adopted during the later stages of General Methuen's advance; the coat and blanket have, in many cases, been discarded before starting from the previous night's camping ground. This has one disadvantage that is probably of little actual importance, though of considerable discomfort. Troops often have to retain the positions taken up during the day for the following night, and in the case of a chilly morning, as happened after the battles of Modder River and Magersfontein, the hardships suffered may be considerable. But the gain in the fighting line must be held to outweigh all temporary discomfort that does not actually lessen the fighting value of the unit.

The suggestion above referred to that the two bundles should be of khaki colour—it seems worse than negligent that they were not made of that coloured material as soon as the hue was selected for the rest of the uniform—is insufficient because it demands cover of at least 4in. greater height, a condition which any soldier of expe-

rience will see the frequent impossibility of satisfying; and it in any case imposes upon the soldier the weight and inconvenience of carrying two unnecessary bundles.

A vast amount of care and experiment has been spent upon the question of so distributing this weight that it falls upon the man just where he is best able to bear it, but the question is still hotly discussed, and the untutored mind of the Kaffir woman who carries her 15lb. baby at her back astride of the hips and kept from falling or swaying by a light sling round her shoulders may have solved the mechanical problem better than even the War Office. In any case, if the mobility and endurance of the soldier are endangered by the bundles, as is incontestably the case, it is better to increase the transport than cripple the fighter. The number of lives saved at Modder River by the rejection of the blanket and coat can only be guessed at by remembering the long list of casualties suffered by the Highland Brigade while lying under so-called cover and presenting in their kilts just such a target to an enemy shooting from above as would at Modder River have been offered to the Boer rifles behind the intrenchments of the river banks.

Another matter that calls for attention is the method of carrying ammunition. The system at present in vogue of carrying the rounds in two square shaped leather pouches attached to the front of the belt and supported from the shoulders was the work of men who did not foresee the necessities of modern war. In the first place it is inconvenient to lie prone for any time with these boxes pressing against the lower edges of the ribs. In the second place, grotesque as it seems, the pouches have to be stretched by wetting before they will admit the regulation cartridge. The cartridges are shrunk into the leather and can hardly be pulled out. When, however, one or two are extracted the remainder fall out. One section, tested for the purpose, lost 26 rounds of ammunition at one time when taking cover on the ground in the usual position. This defect has been hitherto unnoticed because in peace time the cartridge pouches are tightly packed. In the case of a man stooping to get between the wires of the inevitable South African fence ammunition is lost in great quantities; I saw a heap of ammunition lost in this way and picked up on the field after the battle of Enslin that could hardly have consisted of less than 1,200 rounds.

The important point is to suggest an alternative. Many officers of considerable experience advocate a haversack, but the friction to the thigh and the uneven distribution thus set up of the weight are serious drawbacks. Brigadier-General Hector MacDonald is known to be in favour of the bestowal of the cartridges in a bandolier and belt as having neither the disadvantages of the ammunition wallets nor those of the haversack. The chief argument for the retention of the wallets is that their weight balances the weights carried on the back. Even this recommendation would of course cease to exist if the latter burdens are removed.

The matter is of the first importance and the experience gained now should be collected at once. As I write, experimental bandoliers are being tried in place of the complicated harness and pouches, the men being put through all necessary movements. Each man pronounced the bandolier infinitely preferable. Before leaving the subject it may be added that the soldier's habit of throwing a handful of cartridges beside him when firing leads to waste, and is only necessary because of the impossibility of getting ammunition easily from the present pouches. Bandoliers should of course be khaki-coloured, as brown leather affords a very conspicuous target.

A matter that should have been foreseen is the target afforded by the mess-tin unless painted khaki. The only improvements in this that can be suggested are that the tin should be more easily detachable and that the lid should be removable and so strengthened that it can be used as a scraper or digger in light soils. To have had such an instrument—and even the present cover is not to be despised for the purpose—would have saved many casualties at Modder River.

The wearing of the present kilt during an action should be at once definitely prohibited. It is no time to consult prejudices that militate against the fighting strength of a regiment, and those regiments that composed the Highland Brigade at Magersfontein have fully recognized the impossibility of retaining the present colours of their national dress while under fire. Aprons are in this case useless, as might have been foreseen, and the most serious disadvantage of the kilt in a hot country is the inevitable blistering of the back of the knees when the wearer is lying prone in the sun. The suffering thus caused at Magersfontein positively crippled the Highlanders for three or four days afterwards. In any case the kilt worn on active service should be of khaki cloth, and the stockings, of the same colour, should be long enough to protect the knee and entire thigh when pulled up, because in flinging himself on the ground the soldier, in four cases out of five, throws up his kilt and exposes the entire thigh to the sun.

Other points calling for attention have been emphasized by the new custom of dressing officers in all points like the men. This has been the means of reducing to more or less reasonable proportions the ratio of officers' casualties to men's, and must in future be the rule. Swords and brown belts have been as decisively proved impossible in action by the present war as the carrying of colours into action was by the Zulu war of 1879. But this over-ruling advantage is accompanied by one or two drawbacks. Officers are now,

in the semi-darkness or under the stress of excitement, unrecognized even by their own men, and this is calculated to affect the general confidence in the leading of officers that has carried every regiment in its time through an emergency. It should not be impossible to devise some scheme by which the texture of the officers' uniform, or some distinctive marks thereon, should be obviously distinct at distances less than, say, 50 yards, and yet completely indistinguishable at distances over 200 yards. To hide entirely the identity of the officer is impossible, as his position must always be betrayed to some extent by his actions and precedence ; but this, while sufficient in many cases to distinguish him to the cool observation of the intrenched enemy, is quite insufficient to enable a body of his own men, much less one of another regiment, to recognize and follow him in a moment of confusion. Perhaps some such badge as the " queue " mark on the collars of the 23rd, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, might be used. Incidentally it may be remarked that this war has provided innumerable examples of that partial confusion of units and regiments that is always theoretically anticipated ; and one of the best pieces of work of the war, the crossing of the river during the Modder River engagement, was achieved by a body some 400 strong, composed of men drawn from the K.O.Y.L.I., Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 5th Fusiliers, Coldstream Guards, R.E., Mounted Infantry, Northampton Regiment, and one or two of Rimington's Scouts. In view of the certainty of this being of frequent occurrence it becomes doubly necessary that officers should, at very close range, be distinguished by some sufficient mark of rank. Another disadvantage is that the orderlies and gallopers of the G.O.C. have frequently lost valuable time in discovering the officer for whom the message is intended. Of minor matters connected with the equipment of the forces, the need may be suggested for a larger water-bottle, in view of the continued exposure in the sun probable under the new circumstances of warfare, and some kind of protection for the lock of the rifle, which, if left exposed in the sun for 20 minutes becomes too hot to touch, and last, but by no means least, the alteration of the place where identification tickets are sewn on. This, at present, is the inside of the front corner of the tunic, whereas it is the experience of the R.A.M.C. that not one man in six brought into field hospital has his coat on. The instant tendency is to cut the coat off to treat the wound more conveniently, and the retention of the identification ticket is at such a moment a small matter in comparison. The motive in placing it where it is is obvious—that it may not become illegible or discoloured by sweat—but it would be an easy thing to write the information with indelible ink on a prepared strip of linen and attach it to the band on the trousers. Finally, the need for some larger mark distinguishing the stretcher-bearers and R.A.M.C. than the present " brassard " has been proved by recent experience.

These suggestions, among others, for improving a kit that in many ways is probably the best in the world have for their aim little besides some small reduction of danger, weight, and discomfort now more than ever needed to eke out that endurance which is yearly becoming of greater and greater importance in the successful conduct of war against modern armies.

6th March 1900.

THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING.

THE ATTACK UPON GAME TREE.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, DEC. 27.

Barely had the celebration of Christmas Day passed in Mafeking when the order to prepare for immediate action was sent out from headquarters, and in the early hours of Boxing Day two dismounted squadrons began to move to the front. Nothing could have been in more complete contrast to the happiness of Christmas Day, imbued with much real meaning to beleaguered Mafeking, than those early morning preparations which were made as the day closed. For some little time we have been desirous to attack the enemy's position at Game Tree, and in my last letter I mentioned the fact that in anticipation of such an event I had camped one night recently with Captain Vernon at his western outpost. That attack, however, did not take place, and, although the town and garrison were disappointed, there was a very strong feeling that it would not be long before they were compenpensated for their disappointment.

Game Tree, against which our force moved, is a strongly fortified position of the enemy, about two miles from the town, and it has been from this spot that our front to the north-west has been subjected to a persistent rifle and artillery fire during many weeks. The attack was ordered for the purpose of breaking the cordon around Mafeking, with a view to ultimately reopening our communications to the north. D and C Squadrons of the Protectorate Regiment, under the Imperial Service officers, Captain Vernon, of the King's Royal Rifles, and Captain FitzClarence, of the Royal Fusiliers, were detailed to carry out the attack from the east, under the protection of the armoured train, and Captain Williams and 20 men of the British South Africa Police, with a 1-pounder Hotchkiss and Maxim. This right flank was further supported by Captain Cowan and

70 men of the Bechuanaland Rifles, the whole of the wing being under the command of Major Godley. The left wing comprised three 7-pounders, one cavalry Maxim, and a troop of the Protectorate Regiment under Major Panzera; Captain Lord Charles Bentinck with two troops of A Squadron holding the reserve. The entire operations from this side were conducted by Colonel Hore. Colonel Baden-Powell and his staff—Major Lord Edward Cecil, Chief Staff Officer, Captain Wilson, A.D.C., and Lieutenant the Hon. A. H. C. Hanbury-Tracy—watched the progress of the fight from White Fort.

Our guns moved into position during the night, throwing up emplacements for the attack, and as soon as they could see Major Panzera opened fire. It was yet dark, although there came a faint glimmer of light from the east, but not sufficient to prevent the flashes from the muzzles of the guns and the glow of the burstings hells from being plainly visible. Until that moment there had been no sign of any living thing about the veldt between us and the Boer lines, and there was no sound. We had seen C and D Squadrons creeping to their positions under the guidance of the scout Cooke. Captain Lord Charles Bentinck had deployed across the front of the Boer position, taking up his place upon the left of the line. Close to him and but little in advance the gunners had ensconced themselves behind a few sods of earth and sacks of sand. These operations marked the preliminary of the fight, from which, as the armoured train steamed to its post, completing the units in our attack, nothing had been omitted which might increase our chances of success.

At 4 15 a.m. our first shells were thrown upon the enemy's position, the shells bursting over and about Game Tree in magnificent range, but with no very striking effect. Upon the left of Game Tree and extending to the receding wall of the fort, some 60 yards distant, there was a heavy overgrowth of bushes, upon which, as the enemy seemed to be firing from concealed pits in their midst, the cavalry Maxim concentrated its fire. Away to the right there was the automatic rattle of the Maxim in the armoured train and the sharp crack of the Hotchkiss. For the first three-quarters of an hour the attack was left to Major Panzera, who, it was hoped, would effect a breach in the parapet through the agency of his guns. But, unfortunately, the damage inflicted upon the fort did not materially aid the charge which our men were so soon and so very gallantly to make. A few of the enemy were put out of action by our shrapnel shells bursting in such a manner as to sprinkle the interior of the fort with their sharp-edged segments, but the strength of the fort was so great and had been so increased during the night that the artillery which was available was not sufficiently heavy for our purpose. Presently, as we watched, we could see the signal being given to the armoured train "to cease fire," and a moment afterwards the base notes of the steam whistle boomed forth, when, as though waiting for this signal, Big Ben, whose emplacement was some 6,000 yards to the south-east in the rear, began to shell the armoured train. As the echoes of the big gun died away, a roll of musketry from our own line and from the fort swept across the veldt, and for a few brief moments the hail of bullets was like the opening shower of a tropical deluge. Upon the east Captain Vernon with C and D Squadrons had begun the charge. Their position at this moment was in echelon—Captain Sandford with a troop of C Squadron was upon the right extremity, with Captain Vernon in the centre, and Captain FitzClarence upon his left. As Captain Vernon gave the word to charge they opened out into skirmishing order, maintaining the while successive volleys with perfect accuracy. The advance was well carried out; indeed, its order and style were worthy of the best traditions of our Army, and received tributes of admiration from all the commanding officers present. As they advanced the fire of the enemy was principally delivered from the front of the fort and the rifle intrenchments in the scrub. For a moment it seemed as though the face opposed to the rush of Captain Vernon and Captain Sandford was a mere wall requiring only to be scaled for the fort to be captured. But, when the men approached within 300 yards of the fort, rifles rang out from every possible point, and the ground was swept by Mauser and Martini bullets. The men who charged through this zone of fire suffered terribly, and the conclusion must have forced itself upon their minds that they were going to their death. As each face of the fort became engaged the fire of the enemy began to have a telling effect upon our charging line. Captain Sandford was the first to fall, mortally wounded with a bullet in the spine. He fell down calling to his men to continue the charge; but where he had fallen he died. Our men now began to drop rather rapidly, and Captain FitzClarence was disabled with a bullet in the thigh. His place was taken by Lieutenant Swinburne, who at once continued the charge, that officer and Lieutenant Bridges, of the same squadron, being among the nine who, upon the termination of the fight, were unwounded. The ground around the fort was becoming dotted with the figures of our wounded men, who, although they were but an irregular soldiery, followed their officers with the pluck and dogged determination of veterans. The brunt of the fight now fell upon the companies under the immediate command of Captain Vernon, who, undaunted by the impossibility of his task, steadily fought his way forward. As they approached still nearer, his men, undisturbed by the shower of bullets which fell about them, cheered repeatedly, the echo of those cheers giving rise to the impression

that the capture of the position was imminent. The steady rush of our men, undeflected by the worst that the enemy could do, was rapidly demoralizing those who were firing from behind the loop-holes in the fort, and it may have been that, had we not had our responsible officers shot or killed before we reached the walls of the fort, a different story might have to be told. As it happened, when Captain Vernon, with whom was Lieutenant Paton, steadied his men for the last charge, a bullet struck him in the body. For a brief interval he stopped, but, refusing the entreaty of Lieutenant Paton that he should fall out, he joined that officer once more in taking the lead. From the point which they had gained the character of the fort was seen and the heavy fire under which it was defended showed it to be impregnable. It rose some 7ft. from the ground, from the edges of a ditch with sides that it was almost impossible to climb. It was certain death which stared them in the face within 25 yards, but not a man was dismayed. They continued. The ditch was before them, the fort before them, and through three tiers of loop-holes came the enemy's fire. Our men from one side of the ditch fired point blank at an enemy who from behind his loop-hole fired point blank at him. Here those who had survived until now were either killed or wounded, and it was here that Captain Vernon was hit again, as he, with Lieutenant Paton and the scout Cooke, whose tunic at the end of the engagement was found to be riddled with bullets, endeavoured to clamber into the fort. Captain Vernon and Lieutenant Paton managed by superhuman efforts to reach the loop-holes, into which they emptied their revolvers. Their example was eagerly copied by the few who remained, and who were shot down as they plied their bayonets through the apertures. Here Captain Vernon, Lieutenant Paton, Corporal Pickard, Sergeant Ross, and many others were killed. Captain Vernon was shot in the head, the third wound which he had received within 200 yards. Lieutenant Paton was shot in the region of the heart. Bugler Morgan, who was the first to ply his bayonet, was shot in three places, but it is believed that he will live Then a mighty roar rose up, and we who had not taken part in the charge again thought that the position had been carried. But it was the triumphant shout of the Boers. Those of our men who were left fell back savagely and sullenly, with a contempt of the enemy's fire and the desire to renew the attack. Further assault was impossible, and, although we continued to fire upon the position until stretcher parties were sent out, the fight was practically over. When they fell in again, out of the 60 men that had been engaged in the charge only nine were unwounded. Our killed were 21 ; our wounded 30, of whom four have since died. There were also three who were prisoners in the hands of the enemy.

Soon after the commencement of operations the chief staff officer gave me permission to move forward from the White Fort, and I, therefore, rode over to the position occupied by Captain Lord Charles Bentinck and afterwards to Game Tree, joining Surgeon-Major Anderson, when the Red Cross flag was hoisted on the scene of the engagement. The heavy vapour from the shells still impregnated the air, and hanging loosely over the veldt were masses of grey-black and brown-yellow smoke clouds. Boers on horseback and on foot were moving quickly in all directions, and mounted detachments were seen advancing at a gallop from the big laager upon the eastern front, with their rifles swung loosely across their knees. They had been proceeding to reinforce Game Tree Fort, upon an order from Field Cornet Steinekamp, when the cessation of hostilities had taken place under the provisions of the Red Cross. Game Tree Fort presented an animated picture. The enemy thronged its walls, held noisy conversation in scattered groups, that, breaking up in one spot, congregated the next moment in some other. The bushes about the fort were alive with men who, with their rifles in their hands and a few loose cartridges at their side, were prepared at any moment to resume hostilities. The fort itself showed no traces of the shelling, although it was impossible, from the 75 yards' limit, up to which we were permitted to approach, to examine it very thoroughly. It has been claimed that the fort was strengthened during the night, but signs were absent by which one could detect traces of the new work, and, in view of this fact, one is disinclined to impugn the statement of Commandant Botha, who told me that he had been expecting the attack for the past two weeks. From where we were the strength of the fort was very apparent, seeming altogether unnecessary for the requirements of such a post, unless definite information had been carried to the enemy about our plans. It may be that the night attack which Captain FitzClarence had led against the Boer trenches upon the east of the town earlier in the siege had prompted the enemy to strengthen all their positions. The fort itself had been given a head covering of wooden beams, earth, and corrugated iron ; the entrance in the rear was blocked, and in every other way it appeared impregnable. When the order came for our men to retire Dr. Hamilton proceeded from the armoured train with the Red Cross flag, making his way to the wounded in the face of a heavy fire. But as soon as it was recognized by the enemy that he was desirous of helping the wounded the firing was at once stopped and Commandant Botha himself apologized. The character of the charge and the severity of the fire had confined our losses within a very small radius of the position. The scene here was intensely pathetic, and everywhere there

were dead or dying men. The Boers moved out from their trenches, and swarmed around with idle curiosity to inspect the injuries which they had inflicted upon their foe, while a constant procession came from the immediate precincts of the fort, bearing those of our men who had fallen within its actual circumference. In their way they assisted us, although for some time they would not permit the wagons of the ambulance to approach nearer than half a mile, nor at first would they entertain our proposal that the services of the armoured train should be employed to facilitate the conveyance of casualties to the base.

As Surgeon-Major Anderson proceeded with his work, assisted by Dr. T. Hayes and Dr. Hamilton and a staff of dressers, the character of the wounds which our men had suffered gave rise to the impression that the enemy had used explosive bullets, although it is perhaps possible that Martini rifles fired at close range would account for the wide area of injury on those who had been wounded. In one case a bullet in the head had blown off rather more than half the skull ; in another a small puncture in the thigh had completely pulverized the limb ; while in a third, in which the bullet had struck just above the knee-cap, it had raised a mass of shattered flesh and bone into a pulpy mound. With these fearful injuries before one it was scarcely possible to believe that the wounds inflicted had originated through the impact of Mauser or Martini bullets. The Field Cornet, with whom I conversed at some length, upon being shown the dreadful condition of the wounds, admitted that at one time explosive bullets had been served out, but that it was not possible that they could have been used that morning, since he was convinced that that particular ammunition had already been expended. He then produced a bandolier filled with Dum-Dum bullets, and suggested that since so much of the Mark IV. ammunition had been taken by them from us our men had been hit by bullets which we ourselves had manufactured. I pointed out that this particular ammunition had been recalled, so far as Mafeking was concerned, since it had been found to strip in the barrel of the rifle. The Field Cornet then said that he and his men were already aware of the uselessness of this particular pattern of bullet, since upon many occasions they had been hit by some curious missile from which it was evident that the casing had stripped, and from which no injury had been sustained. It was a strange conversation to have with a man against whom the moment before we had been fighting, but from time to time, as we were waiting for the wounded to be brought up, the conversation was reopened between us.

The attitude of the Boers around us was one of stolid composure, not altogether unmixed with sympathy. At one time almost 100 had assembled around those who were dressing the wounded. With their rifles upon their backs and two bandoliers crossing each other upon their chests they appeared a stalwart body of men ; for the most part they were big and burly, broad in their shoulders, ponderous in their gait, and uncouth in their appearance, combining a somewhat soiled and tattered appearance with a truculent air of triumph. Their clothing was an ill-assorted array of patterns and materials, altogether incongruous and out of keeping with the campaign upon which they were then engaged. Some of them, with quite unnecessary brutality, had doffed their own rifles and bandoliers in order that they might show and swing somewhat aggressively before our notice the spoils of the battlefield. But for the most part they behaved with a certain decorum. Here and there they made some attempt to rob the wounded and despoil the dead, but when I remonstrated with the Field Cornet he expressed with every appearance of sincerity his very keen regret, ordering the transgressors from the field, and explaining that he was unable to accept the responsibility for such acts, since, although they had instructions to respect the dead, the younger men were so unruly as to be beyond his control. The Field Cornet proceeded to assert that the acts of his men were neither so barbarous nor so inhuman as those which our own soldiers had committed after the battle of Elandslaagte, where, he said, Imperial troops had stripped the body of General de Koch, leaving him to lie upon the field wounded and naked, and adding that we were morally responsible, and held as such by every right-minded person in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, for the subsequent death of the Boer general. This opinion was loudly endorsed by a number of the enemy, who had collected around us, one of whom stated that he had received orders from Commandant Botha to take possession of any effects which were found upon the bodies of the wounded or dead. I referred this man's statement to the Field Cornet, when quite a lively altercation in Dutch ensued. The Field Cornet denied that any such order had been given by Commandant Botha, and that, had any orders at all been given, they referred merely to papers and to the removal of side arms and ammunition. I pointed out to him the bodies of five of our men whose pockets had been turned inside out, and who were at that moment being brought up under an escort of the enemy. He was also confronted with three wounded, who declared that they had had their personal effects stolen as they lay about the Boer trenches, their rings taken from their fingers, and their money taken from their pockets. The Field Cornet then promised that if any man who had done such a thing could be identified he would be immediately punished, while the more reputable of those who gathered round us guaranteed, if not the restitution of the property, summary conviction

for the offenders. And in this connexion it must be said that during the course of the afternoon a Boer orderly came in under a flag of truce to our lines to restore to Bugler Morgan his silver watch and £3, which had been taken from him as he lay, shot through each thigh, in the trenches of the enemy.

Very striking was the tone of harmony which characterized this temporary intercourse upon the field of battle between Boer and Briton. People who had been pitted against each other in mortal combat the moment before were now fraternizing with every outward sign of decency and amity. This is doubtless due in some measure to the strange composition of the two contending forces, since so many upon the one side have friends and even relatives fighting against them that it seems the most natural thing in the world for any mutual acquaintance of one particular individual to make inquiries about his welfare. These greetings impressed the scene with a note of pleasantness and good feeling, a most happy contrast to the surroundings.

9th March 1900

THE DRIFT AT MODDER RIVER.

PREPARING FOR THE ADVANCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

MODDER RIVER, FEB. 10.

The drift is the centre of the life of Modder River. Now, while the troops are concentrating here in their tens of thousands, every night bringing its three or four battalions more, it is the scene of restless activity from before dawn till long past sunset. All day long squadrons of cavalry horses come down to water, horses of all kinds, from the high-withered, sloping-quartered pony of the country to the great giants of the Household Cavalry; all day long in endless lines the ten-muled wagons jolt and creak across the shallows, and the hurrying mounted orderly splashes past them.

The drift is 300 yards wide—perhaps more—and the bleak, black rocks, with their flat backs a foot or so above the water at lowest tides, spread themselves to the sun for three-quarters of the distance. In between them grow rushes and a white-flowered spray of water-weed; seven foot reeds, too, here and there. All over the rocks the kivikes run and flutter in hundreds, little brown and white sandpipers with absurdly long legs, hardly moving to avoid one as one comes upon them; a few yards up stream you may often see a solitary crane, quite the most awkward walker, almost the most graceful flier, of all winged things; but neither he nor the hawks that can be found in pairs all over the veldt dare to come now near the drift itself.

A few yards down stream is the low temporary railway, spanning the river on heaps of grey boulders, and ascending on either side through the cuttings of the banks to the level of the permanent rails, by a gradient unknown to the calculations of English engineers. Here, with a garrulous cock crow or an insistent whistle, the trains go night and day, and overhead the strong men of the army are lifting the wrecked bridge on new piers to its old place. The dynamite used so lavishly by the Boers has done curiously little harm to the material. Only the concrete blocks of the piers have been shattered, the damage penetrating in a latent form far within the broken surface of the piers. These are being repaired by natural stones quarried a mile or two up the river, where the fire was hottest at the beginning of the battle, and are being hewn into shape on the banks, the ceaseless clicking of the mason's hammer adding another to the many noises of the place.

But, of all sounds, the incessant clatter of hoofs is that which is always uppermost, marked now and again by a jarring clash, as some horse misses his step in a crevice and regains his footing with a plunge. The birds in the primrose-scented bebel-thorn trees, on the tongue of land that comes down between the "Twee rivier" to Watersmeet, are cheery little whistlers, but very little more, and one has to be sitting beneath them to hear the thin notes at all. Here and there a rat runs for cover, or a tortoise flaps his paddles at the mud-edge, hardly distinguishable at ten yards from the mud he moves in.

In flood time the water comes over the rocks with a long droning roar that warns one a quarter of a mile away that the pontoon is the only means of getting over. Theocritus remarked upon the sinewy lines of water overrunning stones. Here they are giant's muscles indeed, and a foot of such water will sweep off his feet the steadiest horse. And there is another danger. Flood water is here so muddy that the underlying rocks are invisible with even a three-inch coat of water. It is better to go round. A boat has been swept down stream from Jacobsdal and has landed with the bottom torn out of her on the very middle of the late causeway; weed and branches of willow form a dense, and soon an unsavoury, zariba, until the deepening stream throws them over the bar and they go spinning down to Koodoesberg. The Modder River rises some three inches more than the Riet during an ordinary flood, and the angry swirl round the point of land leading into the stagnancy of the back eddy on the northern bank of the Riet is worth watching. Here, indeed, is a limbo of useless orts. Just under the khaki walls of the row of rooms called out of civility the Island Hotel, jagged and spattered with shrapnel and rifle

bullets, this curious mass of flotsam heaves during a flood, bits of wood, boxes, dead animals, heaps of river weed, scraps of flannel or khaki, half a bundle of oat-hay floated down from God knows where, half a broken scull and the seat of a boat, a cap—all that ever went down rivers collects and heaves in a mass tangled about with lengths of water-grass, a sargasso that moves heavily down stream with the slackening tide, and lodges itself in the crannies and clefts of the drift.

The Modder, 60 yards from Watersmeet, is crossed by a pont. We should call it a ferry in England, if we gave any name at all to the water-logged raft with its wire rope leash. Few rivers are so crossable as the Modder. Two railway bridges, four pontoons, one pont, and two drifts afford wide choice. As if these were not enough, the foundations of a road bridge, built upon piers of railway sleepers and rails, have been laid near the Guards' dam a mile up. But the centre of interest is still the drift. Any man with an hour to spare comes and fishes, comes and washes—strictly against orders—comes and lies lazily under the willows and the thorn trees. A few Kaffirs with their women folk in electric blue and Indian red-printed cotton gowns group themselves round their watering-place, sometimes singing a hymn tune in harmony, either without words or with words that should not be translated to a missionary, always of the long-drawn evangelical type that appeals so strongly to the native taste.

The general rides across, perhaps still a little stiff from the wound, followed by two or three of the Staff with little red tabs at the throat like goldfinches, and even a casual " resident " stiffens as he passes, so deeply imbued with militarism is this little African imitation of Maidenhead.

All day long from the drift the railway sidings diverge and lengthen slowly, as the rails are borne to their place, each by 15 natives calling out " huh-ya-hee !" as each step is taken. One siding in particular is worth notice. It runs from the drift east by south, along the river bank 40 yards from the Boer trenches, and as a siding it has long become remarkable. Surely a siding a mile long is sufficient for the needs of even this camp ; but at the end of the mile an accumulating heap of sleepers, rails, and fish-plates betrays the birth of the much-talked-of railway to Bloemfontein.

Half-way along this siding stands a camp of marquees and tents of a class somewhat better than that of the ordinary regimental tent. Round this camp go the flying sentries night and day armed with a bayonet only,and within the largest marquee the general we had just seen is closeted with Lord Roberts.

Here on the spot,to us tired with the monotony of the day that never differs from the last, too much accustomed to the boom and drone of our 4·7in. shells even to watch the explosion on the purple violet hills of Magersfontein to the north, to us the place has perhaps little of the interest that will attach to it in future as a battleground, as a camp, and as the starting-place of the great expedition. The evening and the morning alone to us make the day. The weaver birds in their scarlet and velvet-black robes, like little doctors of divinity, hustle and hop among the willows, and the vertical flutter up and the despairing whine of the kohran, who never moves or sings his ascending note—six tones in perfect chromatic scale—after the sun is risen, comes across from the worn and dusty veldt and the morning rises over Jacobsdal. The cranes croak and the peckers knock among the willows as the sun sets. To those who have never seen an African sunset it is difficult to speak of it without seeming preposterous. To say that the reflection in the eastern sky would often provide in England a notable sunset is but the bare truth, and it would be difficult to find a better place from which to watch the never-failing glories of the evening than the drift at Modder River.

Up to the last moment the river keeps its steel-blue tinge, running among the blackening grasses and rocks of the ford, while overhead the sky stretches and sweeps its barbaric splendour, set off by the sharply-etched black girders of the broken high-level bridge ; then, as the colour mounts and darkens into crimson, the water, surrendering in one short minute, flows into the west a moving waste of blood. and the silhouette of the water-wheel on the south bank, with its broken and shrapnel-pierced vans, dominates the scene of black and red.

But, whether in the evening or the morning, whether in the heat of the day or the semi-darkness of the moonlight just tinged with blue, whether in the brown twilight of the tingling dust-storm or the shimmering haze of the noon-day, the wagons creak and blunder for ever through the drift.

10th March 1900.

THE ACTION AT KOODOESBERG DRIFT.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

MODDER RIVER, FEB. 10.

The recent action at Koodoesberg Drift, though not in itself of much importance, was in many respects typical of the minor engagements of the war, and at one time seemed likely to result in a battle of first-rate importance.

Orders were received from Lord Kitchener that the drift should be taken and held by the Highland Brigade, and General MacDonald in consequence moved out of Modder River Camp on Sunday, February 4, with the four regiments

under his command—the Black Watch, the Seaforth Highlanders, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and the Highland Light Infantry.

The first day's march took them forward only some seven miles to Fraser's Drift, which was held by two companies of the Yorkshire Regiment. The heat was excessive and the men who fell out numerous, but, in spite of a persistent rumour that five men died on this march, one only succumbed. This march has raised again in an acute form the unsuitability of the modern attachment of kit and balance of the weight borne, to which General MacDonald himself has drawn attention.

On the following day, Monday, after a march of 12 miles, the column arrived at Koodoesberg Drift to find it unoccupied.

The importance of the drift lies in the fact that it offers the only direct and convenient means of communicating between Prieska and Douglas and Kimberley and North Griqualand west of the Modder River drift. It is a picturesque spot hidden some 30ft. below the general surface of the veldt, shadowed by willows, and offering a fairly good passage even to foot passengers during low water. On the north it is commanded by Koodoesberg Kopje, a hill that resembles somewhat a dumbbell over a mile long bent into crescent form, the two ends pointing south-west and south-east, the latter being somewhat the higher of the two and entirely dominating the country for some miles ; a pair of kopjes of small size lie to the east, but afford little cover from any one holding the summit referred to. To the north a long ridge runs north-east to Kameel's Hoek and Magersfontein, beginning about two miles to the west of Koodoesberg Kopje.

Arriving late on Monday, all necessary precautions were taken, but the kopje, found deserted like the drift, was not occupied till the following morning. Then the highest point was garrisoned by a half battalion of the Highland Light Infantry, and intrenchments were made across the neck of the kopje close to the eminence held.

Some preparations for a redoubt and camp capable of being held by 200 men were then made, though the General reported by field telegraph that in his opinion the drift could not be best held by a small permanent garrison. Later in the day a trooper of the 9th Lancers out on vedette duty returned to report the approach of some six or seven hundred Boers of the Zulani commando with 40 wagons.

Many of the men were bathing at the time and went to their positions with their kit in hand—an incident that subsequently gave rise to the rumour that Lieutenant Tait was killed while bathing. Some long-distance sniping took place, and General MacDonald, sending two guns round towards Painter's Drift, some two and a half miles to the west, cleared this position of Boers by shell fire, inflicting some considerable loss upon the latter. Hitherto our own casualties had been confined to one trooper shot, and the position we occupied on the hill and to the west gave promise of a successful operation on the following morning if cavalry and horse artillery could be sent to cut off the retreat of the Boers, who had by this time been reinforced by about 700 more, to the north.

A message was therefore sent on Wednesday morning to Lord Methuen, and a strong force of cavalry under General Babington came out on the north bank of the river, arriving about half-past 4 three miles to the north of the drift, after having been under fire for a short time while passing the southern kopjes of Kameel's Hoek, a line of country that took them perhaps unnecessarily far north.

Meanwhile matters had developed at Koodoesberg Drift. The first intimation that reached the British force was the firing of a nine-pounder gun from the western eminence of the kopje. The Boers had succeeded during the night in occupying the western side and mounting their gun with which they shelled, at 1,600 yards' range, the position held now by the entire battalion of Seaforths, reinforced later on by four companies of the Black Watch and an equal number of the Highland Light Infantry. The remainder of the Highland Light Infantry intrenched themselves between the kopje and the river, the Black Watch half-battalion holding the ground between the eastern slope of the kopje and Kister's Farm. On the south side of the river the Argyll and Sutherlands and a company of Royal Engineers were placed.

Throughout the day a sharp fire was exchanged, and our casualties, though always less than those of the Boers, were more than might have been expected. Lieutenant Tait—well known as a distinguished golfer—was shot through the head on the slope of the kopje, and Lieutenant Blair received a bullet through the mouth that made its exit through the side of the neck, severing a great artery, which was held together for an hour and a half by two of his own men, thus prolonging his life, though under any circumstances the wound must ultimately have pr ved fatal.

The cavalry made their appearance too late to effect anything, a misunderstanding as to the rendezvous having had something to do with the delay. General MacDonald expected the cavalry to come to water as soon as they had finished their long march, when he would have had an opportunity of discussing the position with General Babington. The latter, however, felt uncertain whether the drift were really in our hands or not, and awaited intelligence on the open veldt.

Night closed in, and under cover of the darkness the Boers moved themselves and their gun from the kopje. The latter had been silenced by

two guns sent round to the south side of the river by General MacDonald earlier in the day, and the fact that seven dead Boers were found in their position suggests that their retreat had been hasty. On the following morning orders were received from Lord Kitchener to retire to the Modder River camp, and, after a demonstration on the north bank of the river, the cavalry brigade returned, followed on the next day by the Highlanders. Koodoesberg Drift was, therefore, once more abandoned and is at the present moment in the hands of the enemy.

The reconnaissance may perhaps have been meant only as a feint, and in that case it was certainly a success, as information was received on Wednesday afternoon that large reinforcements of Boers were starting from Magersfontein, otherwise the apparently forced abandonment of a post once held would seem to be for many reasons regrettable.

13th March 1900.

THE FIGHTING ABOUT VAAL KRANTZ.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CHIEVELEY CAMP, FEB. 13.

After General Warren's retirement across Trichardt's Drift on the night of January 25 the only position we retained on the north bank of the river was Krantz Kloof, the line of kopjes occupied by General Lyttelton's Brigade. The rest of the force went into camp between Spearman's Farm and Springfield, where they had a week's rest and had extra rations served out to them. This time it was not long before there were signs that we were going to make another attempt. On January 30 and 31 the Engineers were busy making a road along the southern side of Zwart's Kop. Zwart's Kop is a solitary wooded hill, flat-topped, about two miles to the east of Mount Alice, where the 4·7in. naval guns were mounted. Zwart's Kop stands some distance in advance of the line of hills of which Mount Alice is the westernmost and highest, and between the two lies a valley almost tropical in its fertility, and thickly wooded. Along this valley wound the Engineers' road, mounting slowly until it came to the last hundred yards, the steepest part of the whole hill. Two naval officers—Lieutenants Ogilvy and James—had inspected the place and were of opinion that guns could be pulled up this part with ropes. The road, therefore, made a sharp turn and went perfectly straight up the steep part. A tackle was rigged to two trees on the top, and during the night of February 1 and the following day six naval 12-pounders and two 15-pounder field guns were hauled up by men. The first gun, a naval 12-pounder, which was being pulled up in the dark, was overturned by a rock, but this was the only accident and the rest came up safely. On the afternoon of the 2nd the 4th Mountain Battery was sent up and, so steep was the hill, several mules lost their footing and rolled down.

The top of Zwart's Kop is flat and open, save only for a thick fringe of trees along the northern edge, which effectually masked the guns. At either end of Zwart's Kop the river, which here takes an extraordinarily tortuous course, runs close along the foot of the hill, but between the two a long tongue of land runs out almost to the foot of Brakfontein, the name given to the ridge running eastward from Spion Kop along the other side of the Tugela valley. Opposite Zwart's Kop Brakfontein practically comes to an end in a sharp knife-like spur called Vaal Krantz, very bare and rocky, with a few trees on it, running very straight almost due south, over a mile in length, and terminating in a round, steep kopje close to the river and dominating the flat ground all round it. Round Vaal Krantz turned the whole of the operations of February 5, 6, and 7. To the immediate east of Vaal Krantz lies flat ground much intersected by dongas sloping gradually up on the north-east to the plateau which runs from behind Brakfontein nearly the whole way to Ladysmith and on the east up to Doorn Kloof, the highest hill in the neighbourhood and most irregular in shape, whose sides are a mass of sharp peaks, deep gullies, wooded kloofs, and big dongas. When we first attacked Vaal Krantz, Doorn Kloof was not strongly held by the enemy, though they had an elaborate line of trenches on the lower slopes of it guarding Schiet Drift. During the later stages of the fighting the Boer position was an almost complete semicircle from Spion Kop on the right to Doorn Kloof on the left, with only one small break in it, the gap between Brakfontein and Doorn Kloof through which the Ladysmith road runs. Even this, being much cut up by dongas, was always held in considerable force by Boer riflemen. This great semicircle, nearly ten miles across, completely overlapped our position, where we had a front not more than four miles long.

On Sunday, February 4, the troops struck camp. General Clery's Division marched to the valley behind Zwart's Kop and General Warren's to Potgeiter's. In the evening General Wynne's Brigade crossed over the drift, followed by six field batteries, and relieved General Lyttelton, whose brigade was to make the attack on the right on the following day. The plan of battle was as follows. In the morning General Wynne's Brigade was to advance from Krantz Kloof (the kopjes where he had relieved Lyttelton) and

make a demonstration in front of Brakfontein, supported by all the field guns; the latter were then to retire, battery by battery, and, recrossing the river by a pontoon bridge in front of Zwart's Kop, come into action on the tongue of land in front of that hill and assist the main attack which was to cross the river by another pontoon further east and advance upon the southern spur of Vaal Krantz. It was to assist this attack that the guns had been mounted on Zwart's Kop.

Monday morning dawned fine, but very hazy. As the haze cleared away the army on the plain below Mount Alice appeared like some great beast slowly awakening and stretching out its limbs. From the main body, bivouacked below Zwart's Kop, long sinuous arms of infantry, artillery and wagons stretched slowly eastward, winding along between the river and the foot of the hill; whilst from Krantz Kloof long lines in extended order began the advance upon Brakfontein. Their advance was slow, and it was not till 7 o'clock that the field batteries advanced and took up a position in the middle of the open ground between Krantz Kloof and Brakfontein. Then the howitzer battery on Brakfontein opened, quickly followed by the 4·7in. naval guns, one of which had been moved a mile to the eastward of Mount Alice, and in a few minutes a heavy bombardment was in progress. Very slowly General Wynne's Brigade, the York and Lancaster Regiment leading, supported by the South Lancashire Regiment, advanced in widely-extended order, and several hours elapsed during which the Boers did not reply to our artillery and only maintained a desultory musketry fire upon the advancing infantry from a farmhouse and donga on their right front. At 10 the first battery limbered up and withdrew, keeping to the north bank of the river till it crossed by the pontoon bridge north of Zwart's Kop. The rest followed at the rate of about one every half-hour, and by 1 o'clock the last had retired. But long before this the enemy, thinking perhaps that the attack was really repulsed, had opened a very heavy and well-directed shell fire upon the batteries with every available gun, the most telling fire coming from Spion Kop. Our guns were under quite as heavy a shell fire as were Colonel Long's batteries at Colenso, though here they were not, as on that occasion, under a deadly musketry fire as well. The gunners worked their guns splendidly, though they were utterly unable to silence the far heavier guns that were firing down upon them. The casualties were not heavy considering the severity of the fire, for the Boer shells do not seem to burst with much power. Colonel Montgomery was wounded by shrapnel. The 78th Battery, which was the last to leave, suffered most heavily. At 1 o'clock, the object of the demonstration having been achieved, General Wynne's Brigade, which had come within about a mile of the Brakfontein position, received the order to retire. Hardly had the first line faced about when a perfect storm of fire arose from the trenches in which the Boers had hitherto not shown the faintest sign of their presence. Fortunately, the range was a long one or the casualties would have been far heavier, but the York and Lancaster Regiment were pursued for nearly a mile with musketry and were shelled until they got under cover of Krantz Kloof. Their casualties numbered 23, which is heavy considering the range.

As the fire on the left slackened that on the right increased in volume. All the morning a continuous stream of horse, foot, and wagons had been pouring eastward, and now lay only very slightly concealed at the foot of the wooded re-entrants of the northern face of Zwart's Kop. It had been pretty generally considered that the one possible flaw in the plan of battle was the bridging and crossing of the river. As it turned out, however, this was carried out with scarcely any loss. The spot chosen was to the north-east of Zwart's Kop, close under it, and about 1,200 yards from Vaal Krantz. The Engineers were under musketry and Maxim fire from the broken ground at the foot of Doorn Kloof as they were making the bridge, but the high banks gave them shelter, and they lost only eight wounded. By 12 o'clock the bridge was finished, the gunners on Zwart's Kop had unmasked their guns by felling the trees that hid them, the 5in. garrison guns on a small kopje to the west of Zwart's Kop had opened fire, and the main attack had begun. After two hours' bombardment General Lyttelton commenced his attack. The Durham Light Infantry were the first to cross, supported by the Rifle Brigade. Under cover of the high bank they advanced nearly half-way to Vaal Krantz, but there the shelter came to an end, and they were forced to extend across the open. They immediately came under a rifle fire which, though not so heavy as we have usually gone through in attacking fortified positions, was quite as searching. It came from the kopje in front and it also came from Monger's Farm on their right flank, and from the broken ground to their right rear. To meet it the attack spread out like a fan, and, though the main body still advanced straight toward Vaal Krantz, a part were forced to turn aside, and, after crossing a very open bit of ground, took possession of the farmhouse. Meanwhile all the artillery that could be moved had come into action on the right, and the concentrated fire of 70 guns at comparatively short range was poured into Vaal Krantz. Notwithstanding this terrific fire, however, many Boers remained on the hill, and could be seen dodging about among the rocks, and when at last the Durhams fixed bayonets and charged up the hill nearly 50 of the enemy fled precipitately down the other side. Our men rushed across the hill firing into them as they fled and killed about 20. Ten or 15 had been killed by shell fire, and five or six prisoners

payment of the purchase money and the execution the works appear to have been struck by the generey of the language whereby the railway company were e released, and by way of caution they inserted a enthetic exception pointing out that this general re- e was not to operate to relieve the company from statutory obligations as by law they were already er. Notwithstanding the generality of the language annot think that such an exception was necessary. arbiters would have no authority to override the of Parliament, and, as I have said, drainage was not atter dealt with by the arbiters themselves, and, in- d, under the circumstances, I doubt if they would e had authority to do so. The framers of the dis- ition in endeavouring to give effect to the decreet itral inverted the mode in which the rights of the way company were to be preserved as well as rights of the adjoining proprietors, and put the disposition, as a positive obligation, what only been preserved in the decreet arbitral itself way of exception. But it seems to me that this can e no difference in the operation of the deed. It is nifest that what was intended was to draw a deed in suance of the directions of the decreet arbitral, and ntirely agree with the Lord Ordinary that, reading two instruments together, it is impossible to doubt at is the meaning and intention of the deed itself. my view this disposes of the case, because, though stions of fact have been entered into, if the obliga- founded on them is limited in the way which I e suggested there is no fact in proof which ablishes that the railway company have not fulfilled r obligations, and to my mind it would be a very ous thing indeed if many years after the railway had n constructed it could be contended that entirely new igations could be created so that questions which ht to have been determined at the formation of the way should be raised many years afterwards when umstances, and indeed the natural conditions of the or the flow of the river, might have entirely changed. o not think it necessary to enter into the question of ether or not the complete diversion of a stream a portion of a stream would carry with it, apart n any specific directions of the statute, any igations in respect of the drainage of adjoining ds. *Prima facie* one would suppose that a section horizing a diversion should itself provide for the con- ons under which such a diversion was authorized, if not provided for the rights and incidents of the erted portion of the stream would carry with it the e rights and incidents as existed in the original tion of the stream diverted. But I say that in this e that question does not appear to me to arise, ause, in either event, it either was or was not a con- on of things which required the execution of drainage ks. If it did, they should have been executed with- he five years ; if they did not, no subsequent action any one but the railway company themselves could upon them a new obligation. As to the matters of with which the Lord Ordinary has dealt, both in ect of the nature of the action now raised and in ect of the proper parties to be called if some action er than the present one were in debate, I am in ire agreement with his Lordship, and I have nothing dd to what he has said. For these reasons I move r Lordships that the interlocutor appealed against be ersed ; that the judgment of the Lord Ordinary be ored ; and that the respondent do pay to the ellants the costs both here and below.

ORD MACNAGHTEN, after stating the facts as above, tinued :—Now the first observation which occurs to in reference to the interlocutors under appeal is t, if the railway company have indeed undertaken obligation which the learned Judges of the First ision fasten upon them, they have taken upon them- es a burden from which the Railway Clauses expressly and in terms protects railway com- ies. Section 65 of that Act provides that the pro- ers shall not be compelled to make any further or itional accommodation works for the use of adjoin- advances. On January 14, 1895, the defendant gave Peed a promissory note for £800 with the express stipulation that he should not negotiate or part with it. On January 31 and April 4, 1896, he gave Peed two notes for £500 each. On February 6, 1897, the defendant received an account from Peed showing the amount due to Peed to be £3,500, and at his request the defendant gave him two more notes on February 8, one for £1,500 and the other for £2,000. The defendant did not ask for the return of the notes that he had previously given to Peed, and they were left in Peed's hands, together with the two fresh notes. All the notes were made payable on demand to Peed or order. In March, 1897, Peed called on the plaintiffs and told them that he required to raise £5,000, for which he had excellent security to offer—viz., five promissory notes of his client, Major de Freville, which he said would certainly be paid on June 30, when Major de Freville's eldest son would come of age and the property would be resettled. The plaintiffs, knowing something of the position of Major de Freville, gave Peed a cheque for £4,800. Peed endorsed the five above-mentioned notes generally and handed them to the plaintiffs. The plaintiffs' cheque for £4,800 was endorsed by Peed and was duly met. On June 30, 1897, the amount advanced by the plaintiffs was not repaid, and they applied to Peed for payment, but Peed put them off with an excuse as to a difficulty in getting the signature of a trustee. In July, 1897, after the defendant's eldest son had come of age, the entail was barred, and a mortgage over the estate was created, and in that month and in August, 1897, two sums amounting to £22,000 were paid by the defendant to Peed for the purpose of discharging various liabilities, including a sum of £4,000 to meet the two notes for £2,000 and £1,500. The notes were not handed back by Peed to the defendant. The defendant did not then know that the notes had been negotiated with the plaintiffs, and he was justified in assuming that they were in Peed's possession. On September 28, 1897, at an interview between Peed and the plaintiffs, a sum of £5,581 was agreed upon as due upon the notes, this sum including principal and interest from June, 1897, and Peed gave the plaintiffs his cheque for £5,581, and the five notes were handed to Peed. Peed then sent the five notes by post to the defendant, who received them on September 29, and immediately burnt them. On the same day Peed absconded, and his cheque for £5,581 was dishonoured. The plaintiffs then brought this action against the defendant, suing on the notes, and at the trial it was agreed that the action should be treated as if there were an alternative claim for conversion of the notes. The Lord Chief Justice found that when Peed drew the cheque he knew that it would not be met, and that he was contemplating the perpetration of a fraud on the plaintiffs. He held that by virtue of section 61 of the Bills of Exchange Act, 1882, the notes had been discharged, the defendant having himself become the holder of them after maturity in his own right, and he therefore gave judgment for the defendant. The plaintiffs appealed.

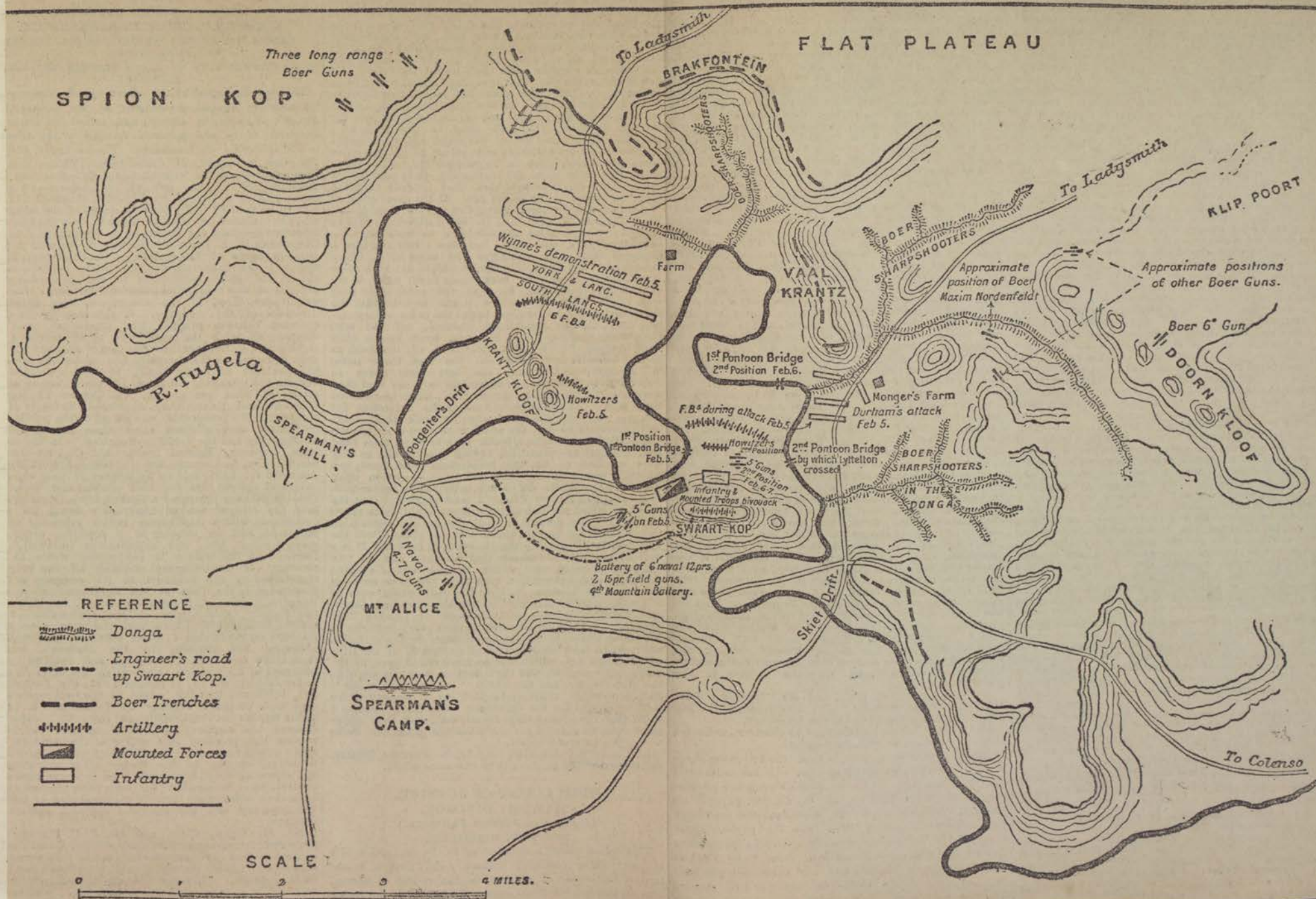
Mr. Herbert Reed, Q.C., and Mr. Montague Lush appeared for the plaintiffs ; Mr. Rawlinson, Q.C., and Mr. Harry Dobb appeared for the defendant.

The COURT having taken time to consider, delivered judgment to-day, allowing the appeal.

LORD JUSTICE A. L. SMITH read the following judgment :—In this case the plaintiffs, who are tailors and moneylenders, sue Major de Freville upon five promissory notes amounting in all to £5,300, payable on demand, of which notes the defendant was the maker and a solicitor named Peed was the payee. These notes at one time had been in the plaintiffs' possession, though they had been fraudulently induced by Peed to hand them back to him, and the notes then got back into the defendant's hands, as hereafter will appear. There is also a count in trover. This case is compli-

cated, as ordinarily is the case when fraud intervenes in

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE FIGHTING ABOUT VAAL KRANTZ.



were taken, together with about 20 ponies. Our first attack was a brilliant success ; it remained to be seen whether it could be followed up.

Of the enemy, who remained on the hill till our men reached it, more than half were armed natives—of what tribe it is impossible to say, though probably they were Basutos from the conquered territory. They were undoubtedly fighting. One of them, slighty wounded, remained in the trench when the Durhams reached it. They were about to bayonet him, when Lieutenant Lambton, perceiving that he was wounded, ordered his men to spare him. This was done, and the native promptly picked up his rifle and shot Lieutenant Lambton through the wrist. This is not the first time that armed natives have been seen with the Boers. During the fight on Spion Kop they were seen on the hill, and at Colenso they came across the river after the fight was over in order to pick up what they could in the way of loot.

There is no doubt that the enemy were not in the least prepared for our main attack. The prisoners themselves admitted as much, and to this was due the comparative slightness of our loss. The total casualties in the Durham L. I. for the day were only 35 including, unfortunately, two officers killed.

In a very short time, however, the Boers were making every preparation to prevent our further advance. Even before the kopje was taken a gun had come round the back of Brakfontein, run the gauntlet of all the naval 12-pounders on Zwart's Kop, and disappeared into one of the big dongas on Doorn Kloof. It was a plucky ride on the part of the gunners, for they were within easy shot of the long-range guns and the last shell enveloped them in dust ; but they got safely through. On the far side of Vaal Krantz a steadily increasing rattle of musketry very soon drove us off the eastern face of the hill altogether. The western face was under a less severe fire from a large donga running from the angle where Vaal Krantz and Brakfontein meet to the river. By the evening of the 5th General Lyttelton held about half a mile of Vaal Krantz, his men being all on the western side of the hill, taking what shelter they could amongst the trees and rocks. It was now becoming increasingly evident that the strategic value of Vaal Krantz for turning the Brakfontein position had been over-estimated. Between General Lyttelton and the nearest of the Brakfontein trenches lay half a mile of bare knife-edged hill, commanded on one side by any amount of broken ground culminating in a line of kopjes, and on the other by an unbroken line of trenches stretching away to the eastward. Besides this he was already being considerably harassed by guns the enemy had mounted in the deep kloofs of Doorn Kloof, invisible to our artillery.

During the night the enemy mounted a 100-pounder gun on the very top of Doorn Kloof. This gun, probably a 6-in. Creuzot, was mounted on some sort of a disappearing carriage. When it fired its muzzle could be seen quite distinctly against the skyline for 12 seconds before it disappeared. As it took our shells 18 seconds to reach the place, it did not make a very good mark. Till well on in the afternoon there was nothing but an artillery duel, in which, so well had the Boers placed their guns, we were unable to silence a single one of them. At 4 o'clock there was a sudden burst of musketry at the far end of Vaal Krantz. At the same moment the Boers began to shell the kopjes heavily. They were making a desperate attempt to retake the hill, and had already driven back the first line. For a few minutes it looked critical. Then half a battalion of the 60th Rifles advanced in support with fixed bayonets, and under a heavy rifle and shell fire the attack failed as quickly as it had begun. The whole affair lasted only about half an hour. That day the pontoon, by which the field guns had crossed the river the day before, was taken up and thrown across just below Vaal Krantz, and after dark General Hildyard's Brigade relieved General Lyttelton's.

That night and the following morning the kopjes were shelled again, and more heavily than before, and it was obvious on the 7th that, unless the enemy were attacked in their present positions, Vaal Krantz would be untenable. We found ourselves in what was in reality a defile bounded by Spion Kop on one side and Doorn Kloof on the other, both well-nigh impregnable mountains. Merely to get through meant an assault on Brakfontein, an extremely strong intrenched position impossible to turn, and the cost of such attacks we had learnt at Colenso ; but there is not the slightest doubt that, had General Buller ordered it, it would have been promptly and successfuly carried out. To establish lines of communication through the valley would have entailed the taking of at least Doorn Kloof as well, and Doorn Kloof, a vast pile of kopjes rising one above the other, was the ideal fighting ground of the Boer. The strength of the Boers on our right flank was the new factor in the case that had arisen during the three days' fighting, and we were now in the unpleasant position of being ourselves outflanked by the enemy we had been attempting to outflank. It was this that had wrought the deadlock of the last two days, and at the end of them, finding our efforts to clear away the obstruction with our artillery absolutely fruitless, there was nothing left but to retire. At 9 o'clock on the night of the 7th General Hildyard's Brigade received the order to retire across the river. The pontoons were taken up and all night a continuous stream of wagons passed up the hill on their way back to Spearman's Camp. In the

morning the mounted troops and infantry followed, pursued by an occasional shell from the Boer 100-pounder. That night the guns on Zwart's Kop were lowered and marched to Springfield, escorted by General Warren's Division. All attempt at crossing by the Upper Tugela was abandoned and in three days most of the force was camped at Chieveley.

19th March 1900.

THE RELIEF OF KIMBERLEY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

KIMBERLEY, FEB. 17.

Within the last fortnight the aspect of the war has undergone a change indeed. Kimberley on the tenth of this month was suffering from a bombardment far severer than any that it had experienced before ; the mines were crowded daily with thousands of women and children huddled together in the 1,200ft. levels, and even lower, while above ground the 100lb. shells crashed into the heart of the town. Cronje was still established in the Magersfontein and Spytfontein positions, and Lord Methuen still sat impotently upon the northern bank of the Modder River. At Colesberg, Sterkstrom, and the Tugela matters had not improved, and only to a few was the presence of Lord Roberts at Modder River and the slow concentration of the Army becoming known.

GENERAL FRENCH'S RIDE.

One of the Boers recently captured expressed characteristically one of the traits of the national character when he said that the day of intercession appointed in the English Church marked the change in our fortunes, and no doubt it will also have been pointed out long ago in not a few of the pulpits of England that, while the dawn broke on February 11, the great cavalry division was silently gathering at Enslin and Graspan, and that as the day closed the force moved out south-east across the veldt on their high mission.

From that moment the march was pressed on, and the Free State was traversed by the invading force with a rapidity that bewildered even the "slim" Cronje, who is said to have dismissed as foolishly incredible reports of the movements of the "rooineks." Farms were abandoned by terrified burghers in a state that showed more and more clearly as the division moved on the utter unexpectedness of the attack. Coffee was found still hot in the jugs, mealie porridge untouched in the Kaffirs' kraals ; in one case warm shaving water and an unwiped razor told an amusing tale of sudden panic. From Ramdam, a little watering-place eight miles from Enslin, the division turned sharply to the left, and swept across the veldt, that is here as bare and pastureless as the Karroo itself. Through the two districts of Waterval General French pressed on and for the first time found the enemy on the 12th posted at Dekiel's Drift, 15 miles from Ramdam. The Boers, taken by surprise and attacked by a storm of shell from the 42 guns of the expedition, held the outer kopjes on the southern bank of the drift for half an hour only.

A final stand was attempted at the drift itself, but the mounted infantry and Roberts's Horse soon cleared the ford. Dekiel's Drift, like most South African fords, is commanded by a series of kopjes, and a winding road between them avoids alike both them and the ramifications of a huge donga with a hundred arms that cuts deeply into the bank. These kopjes are, indeed, here and there marked by the metallic green of the giant cacti or the glaucous branches of the wild tobacco, but in other respects the monotony of landscape that has been one of the features of the war was as depressingly present here as elsewhere.

Our casualties were few indeed, but the loss of Captain Majendie, second in command of Roberts's Horse, was one that we could ill afford. He was shot through the body at long range from the drift kopje, at the foot of which he is buried, and which, far more than the rude cross over his grave, acts as his monument. From Dekiel the division moved forward at noon on the following day, making the most rapid march of the journey. In hot haste they crossed the districts of Poortje, Zwart Kopjes, and Kromkuil, the scattered inhabitants fleeing in terror before them. Halting a moment at Wegdraai, they again pressed on to their destination, Klip Drift, on the Modder River, through the great dry pan of Aschboschdam and skirting the similar plain of Blaauwboschpan. These pans are peculiar to South Africa, and are the necessary result of the collection of sudden floods in the lower levels of the veldt, which latter are unprovided with any channel of relief in the shape of a stream. Evaporation and absorption are the only means of emptying the pan, which, in consequence, becomes carpeted with a smooth stretch of the finest sand, deposited in perfect stillness from the water which has held it in solution. Some of the pans are three and four miles wide, every yard of which is as level as a frozen pond, and, with the exception of a little annual with the foliage of a stonecrop and a crimson gloxinia-like flower, absolutely bare of vegetation.

From these pans the column took its way due north to Klip Drift, and secured the passage of the river there and at Klip Kraal, a few miles to the east, without difficulty. News was despatched

to Lord Roberts, then at Dekiel's Drift, which reached him in the early hours of Wednesday, February 14.

At Klip Drift the Cavalry Division halted a night. The breathless haste of a dash through the enemy's country, carried out with a rapidity probably without a parallel, had left its mark on the horses, and the transport was hopelessly in the rear. Five days' rations and forage were carried by each man, and scanty indeed was the amount doled out day by day. Some of the horses used had but recently been disembarked, and the unexpected climate had impaired their health, apart from the inevitable slackness caused by a long sea voyage. On the whole, the horses stood a high trial well, and it was only when the long ordeal was over and Kimberley safely relieved that any large percentage of them broke down.

It had not been possible to spare them. Day after day the cavalry moved at high pressure over the shadeless veldt during the hottest hours of the day. It is difficult to convey to English readers the burden that this alone entails. The absence of shade is not a relative matter. Often for 20 miles continuously there is not a bush that a child could creep under for shadow, the very leaves of the trees that are found near watering places are thin or deeply serrated—poplars, willows, and babel thorns giving little or no shelter from the tremendous heat of the midday sun.

To have planned this march and carried it out successfully is not merely a strategic success; the estimate of the quality of the men and horses that composed the column, the accurate knowledge of the country and its varying advantages in affording water for ourselves or disadvantages in providing cover for the enemy, the shrewd judgment that counted upon the culminating excitement as the climax of the quest was reached, as no small part of the strength to be drawn upon; the balance of the advantages of haste as against the doubled embarrassment of a possible check with the transport four days in rear; and, above all, the unteachable gift of making all engaged understand the spirit of the movement, all these many sides of the enterprise deserve consideration; but it will probably be as the consummately successful cavalry venture only that the march will be remembered. There was in it no weakness, no failure, not even a temporary check, and the Duke of Wellington's *dictum* that "You cannot write a true history of a battle without including the faults and misbehaviour of part at least of those engaged" seems for once at least to have been disproved.

There has been of late years a tendency to attach less and less importance to cavalry. It has been pointed out that modern weapons of precision hold cavalry at arm's length when held by one-tenth of the men formerly necessary, that machine-guns have rendered useless the "shock" tactics in which cavalry are trained, and it is urged that the only great opportunity for cavalry—that of turning a defeat into a rout—comes to them in modern warfare with ever-diminishing frequency. Therefore it is no small satisfaction to be able to record a great movement carried out wholly by mounted men, handled with consummate skill, and effecting its purpose with an ease that might well deceive the onlooker as to the careful forethought that each advance had necessitated, and with a suddenness that caused a demoralization in the enemy that the slow-moving ranks of infantry, however victorious, are unable to produce.

Full of promise as the future is, and however proven the powers of conception, organization, and execution in those responsible for the conduct of the campaign, it can hardly be expected that the final record of this war will show another incident combining as perfectly completeness of success with the dramatic colour and perfection of General French's ride through the Orange Free State.

THE RELIEF OF THE TOWN.

The last chapter in the story of the siege has been worthy of those that had preceded it. That Kimberley should have been relieved exactly at the time and in the manner in which General French burst through the cordon drawn so tightly round the town will always remain one of the dramatic climaxes of history. Kimberley was feeling the pinch of hunger severely, and had also been suffering since the previous Saturday from a more severe bombardment than before. The new 6in. Boer gun mounted on the kopje at Kamferdam had for six days been sweeping the entire town, and for the first time during the siege women and children to the number of 3,000 were taking refuge in the lower levels of the diamond mines. It is hardly too much to say that on the previous Sunday a state of panic prevailed in the place. But during that day the first move in the great game was played. From Modder River, from Rensburg, and from De Aar the cavalry, mounted infantry, and horse artillery came in long lines silently concentrating at Graspan and Honeynestkloof. On Monday the march began, Ramdam, eight miles to the south-east, was soon passed and a sharp skirmish secured Dekiel's drift on the Riet. After a halt of a day the column moved on, and on Wednesday, as we have seen, announced the capture of Klip drift on the Modder River to Lord Roberts, who had followed with General Tucker's division to Dekiel.

On Thursday, the 15th, at 10 o'clock the critical advance was made, and the shelling and capture of two laagers a few miles out of Klip drift on the northern side of the river cleared the way for the junction of the force encamped on the Modder, some five miles east of the border fence. This

body was composed of Kitchener's and Roberts's horse and two more regiments of mounted infantry. Before they entered the great plain of Alexandersfontein the contingent from Modder River—the Scots Greys, Household cavalry, and two Lancer Regiments—also joined the force, which now numbered some ten thousand men, seven batteries of horse artillery, and three field batteries. Their entry into the plain was the signal for the great event of the day. The plain is perhaps three miles in width and five in length, converging slightly to the north and fringed with kopjes. Wild quinces and babel thorns in scattered groups of threes and fours are the only trees in this wide and level expanse, and the whole force, headed by the Lancer regiments and the Scots Greys as advance guard, deployed to ten-yard intervals and thundered across it.

The kopjes on either side were held by Boers who poured bullets and shells into the advancing mass, almost hidden by the curtain of dust that rose from under the hoofs of the horses. These were quickly cleared of their occupants by the impetuous rush of mounted infantry. Lieutenant Sweet Escott, of the 16th Lancers, was the first officer to fall, shot dead at 50 yards by a Boer, who received a lance through his throat almost before he could produce the invariable cry for mercy. Kopje after kopje was cleared, and the Boers were driven from them right and left, as the column crashed forward like some great ploughshare, thrusting aside the enemy on either side, helpless to withstand this tremendous charge and almost powerless to harm it. A barbed rinderpest fence stretching across the plain checked the advance a moment, and the halt enabled the Boers to withdraw their guns. It was no time for a flank movement to capture them.

At De Villiers farm, at the northern end of the plain, the column halted and re-formed in column after watering the horses. They had come ten miles and broken the ring round the besieged town. The pace at which the advance had been made had both minimized the casualties and prevented Cronje from appearing with 10,000 men to line the kopjes of the plain. The latter realized that he was defeated, and acted with his usual sagacity. The cavalry column had barely gone five miles beyond the plain before the ox-wagons of the Boers were inspanned, and the long lines of transport were trekking back across the very line of the advance he had been powerless to check. Cronje acted with promptitude and acted with decision. By the evening of this same day not a man of all the thousands of the investing force, beyond a few straggling bodies of men out patrolling or foraging when Cronje gave the order to retreat, was left on the hills and ridges that had been their camping-ground so long.

Meanwhile the cavalry pushed on. From De Villiers farm the country resembles some great English park studded with single trees and undulating under the long sunburnt grass, through which the guns ploughed long tracks in the crumbling red soil. Here the pace began to tell, and horse after horse that had struggled on so far fell dead from some wound unnoticed in the heat of the fight. The strain upon the horses of the R.H.A. had been extreme, and it is impossible to praise too highly the handling that brought nearly all of them safely through the *mêlée*.

There was no time to pause, and at last, some three miles on, the first sight of Kimberley burst upon the column through the fringe of trees. As one approaches from the south-east the first view of the Diamond City, lying stretched along the line of hills on the horizon, is striking enough. The long, low town of white-walled houses, confused in the distance among the green gardens that surround nearly every house, divided by huge bluffs of railings, each crowned with its timbering, or the occasional spire of a church, all shivering in the heat of the ground haze that is never entirely absent here in the heat of the day, present a picture to which there can be few parallels. Sentiment apart, this isolated town of Englishmen, raised far higher than the crest of Snowdon above the sea, is noteworthy enough, but the interest born of the treasures below it, and of the surpassing climax through which it was passing, gave it an attraction on this sunny afternoon that it will never again possess.

"A passage perilous makyth a port pleasant," and the long weary weeks of anxiety and hardship, the disappointment of Magersfontein, and the heart sickness of deferred hope were alike forgotten. Kimberley was relieved, and the remainder of the march might as well have been a review, as the immense column emerged from the trees and moved down the long slopes that oppose the rising ground on which Wesselton stands.

The Boers on the north of the town at the intermediate station and Kampherdam were firing their last shots from their great gun in ignorance of their failure on the south, but these soon stopped, and General French entered the town which in a moment had put out its flags and decorations. The panic that had been caused by the continuous bursting of the huge shells over every part of the besieged town vanished, and from the 1,200 foot level of the diamond mines thousands of women and children emerged into the light of day.

Provisions were not as deficient as had been expected by some of those outside. With care the feeding of the multitude inside the walls might yet have been protracted for six weeks. Soup, made and distributed by Dr. Smart at the prison, to the extent of 15,000 pints a day, kept the poorest from actual starvation. Good thick broth with vegetables from

Mr. Rhodes's gardens at Kenilworth was carried home by each, and, with the bread and mealies served out, was perhaps as good a daily meal as Kaffirs outside the town are accustomed to expect. The numbers of the coloured population, even after 8,000 had been sent away from the town, were larger than the population tables had led the authorities to expect, and the task of feeding 46,000 persons—according to the military census taken towards the end of the siege—was, of course, a severe one.

Perhaps it was only natural that the great corporation that rules Kimberley should take upon themselves the task of providing for the safety of their own property, but the work done and the expense borne by the De Beers Company in holding for over four months against a bitter foe the town of second importance in Cape Colony should not be forgotten. To De Beers' foresight everything is due. The laying in of provisions, the purchase of guns and ammunition, the provision of labour, the construction of shell-proof protection, the offer of shelter from the peculiar terror that was caused by the later bombardment, directed chiefly against the residential and totally unprotected portion of the town in defiance of an elementary principle of warfare, and finally even the making of a large gun and of shells for the military authorities, whose own scanty stocks of everything soon ran out—all has been done by this gigantic trust. To the fact that Mr. Rhodes was present throughout and took upon himself the responsibility of drawing freely upon the resources of the company for what was deemed by himself and Lieutenant-Colonel Kekewich to be necessary for the defence of the town the present security of the place is due, though the military activity of Colonel Scott-Turner—whose death caused irreparable loss to the military authorities of Kimberley—must be regarded as one of the first defences of the town.

19th March 1900.

LIFE IN KIMBERLEY DURING THE SIEGE.

OCTOBER 15, 1899, TO FEBRUARY 15, 1900.

BY THE HON. MRS. ROCHFORT MAGUIRE.

On Friday, October 13, I arrived in Kimberley, having left Cape Town on the day of the declaration of war, and found the railway and telegraph to the north were both interrupted. On the evening of the 14th communication with the south was also cut off.

THE DEFENDING FORCE.

The work of defending the town had for a fortnight before this been proceeding rapidly. A town guard of over 2,000 men, under Colonel Harris's command, had been enrolled. The Kimberley Rifles, consisting of 600 well-trained volunteers under the command of Colonel Finlayson, had been called out, Mr. Rhodes was busy buying horses to the number of about 800 for a new mounted force which was being formed by an amalgamation of the Diamond Fields Horse (a local volunteer force of De Beers workmen chiefly), of the Cape Police (numbers of whom had come in from outlying districts which it was found impossible to hold), and also of a number of raw recruits, making in all about 800 men. This composite regiment was under the command of Major (afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel) Scott-Turner, of the Black Watch. They soon were drilled into shape, and under Colonel Turner's leading inspired great terror amongst our besiegers. The town had been garrisoned since September 20 by 500 men of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, some Engineers, and one battery of mountain guns, 7-pounders, under Major (afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel) Chamier, added to which there was a very efficient corps of volunteers under Major May, called the Diamond Fields Artillery, who were also provided with some 7-pounders. The size of our guns left much to be desired; some 15-pounders which were on their way up were too late and remained at De Aar. The whole force was under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Kekewich, of the Loyal North Lancashires, with Major O'Meara, R.E., as Intelligence Officer.

The defences of Kimberley were about 11 miles in circumference during the first months of the siege and later were somewhat enlarged—the area thus enclosed included the town of Kimberley with the adjoining town of Beaconsfield on the south-east, and on the north the model village of Kenilworth built by the De Beers Company for their *employés*. This village is a real oasis in the desert, for here alone in Kimberley are there avenues of trees along the roads making shady boulevards, and here also are the wonderful fruit gardens and long vine-covered walks created by Mr. Rhodes. Without this green spot to refresh us in our evening walks and rides the four months spent in Kimberley would have been almost unbearable. The town itself is exceedingly unattractive, dry and dusty, no fine buildings, and the houses mostly miserable tin shanties. Some of the houses, however, have very pretty gardens, but owing to a not too plentiful water supply during the siege and to the great drought these poor little gardens had, most of them, almost withered away by the end of two or three months of siege. The town is almost surrounded by a series of "tailing heaps"—*i.e.*, hillocks formed of the refuse earth after the

diamond-washing. At the foot of these heaps stretched the huge diamond fields covered with blue ground containing many millions worth of diamonds. On these tailing heaps were placed the sand-bag forts, each manned by a number of the town guard, who proved themselves well able to justify the trust placed in them as defenders of the town. Somewhat outside Kimberley on the south-east is situated the Premier Mine, called after Mr. Rhodes when he was Prime Minister at the Cape. This was our most important fort, as, at an early period in the siege, the Boers cut off our supply of water from the Vaal River to the north and we had to depend entirely on that pumped from the Premier Mine by the De Beers Company. The garrison here, which was a strong one, was under the command of Captain O'Brien, of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, who did first-rate work throughout the siege. Here also were some guns under Lieutenant Rynd, R.A.

The sieges of Ladysmith, Mafeking, and Kimberley have been compared, and perhaps the differences between Kimberley and the other two may be pointed out. Ladysmith consisted almost entirely of a military garrison with a small civilian population; Mafeking, though defended largely by a volunteer force, was very well provided with Imperial officers, and most of the women and children had left at the beginning of the siege. At Kimberley the defence, with the exception of the 600 Regular troops, was conducted entirely by citizen soldiers, literally fighting for their hearths and homes, as most of them had their families with them in the town, the siege having come upon them more or less as a surprise.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Kimberley is De Beers and De Beers Mr. Rhodes, so huge is the property and wealth of the company and so great the power exercised over it by Mr. Rhodes. Their property consists in Kimberley and surrounding districts of 271,000 acres, on which are situated the De Beers, Kimberley, and Premier Mines. They also possess nearly the whole of two other mines—Bultfontein and Du Toitspan. Their *employés* number about 2,000 white men, who have something like 4,000 women and children depending on them; while in addition to this at the beginning of the siege they had about 10,000 natives in the mine compounds. Of the 2,000 white men nearly every one served in the volunteer forces. The directors of the company also—Colonel Harris, M.L.A., Mr. Oates, M.L.A., Mr. Compton, Mr. Ryersbach, and the secretary, Mr. Pickering—did their duty manfully in the trenches and on the forts of the town guard. Almost from the beginning of the siege the mines had to stop working, partly owing to the necessity for economizing our coal supply, partly because the Boers blew up the store of dynamite which had been placed for safety some distance outside the town; so the work at the mines had to be restricted to pumping in order to keep them clear of water, and even this had to be stopped at the beginning of February owing to lack of coal.

THE SUPPLY OF FOOD.

Kimberley is the second largest town in Cape Colony, with a population of 50,000. The Europeans and half-castes number about 33,000. The rest are natives of various tribes. As may be imagined, with so many mouths to feed, the food question soon became one of absorbing interest, and it was a matter of wonder to many people how so large a population and such a number of animals, about 6,000 horses, cows, &c., could have been kept alive so long without any fresh supplies coming in. It is owing to a variety of fortunate circumstances that this was possible. For some months previous to the declaration of war the De Beers Company, who appear to have anticipated the possibility of a siege, laid in large supplies of food stuffs, coal, fuel, and other mining requisites. Many of the townspeople also after the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference laid in private stocks sufficient to support them for several months. Kimberley of to-day is a large commercial and distributing centre. Whereas the population immediately surrounding the mines is only 50,000, the town supplies a large and extensive tract of country in the Free State, in Griqualand West, and in Bechuanaland, which probably represents double or treble the population of Kimberley itself. A regular business is done in foodstuffs by large firms in Kimberley, such as James Lawrence and Co. and Hill and Paddon, with the villages of Jacobsdal, Petersberg, Hoofstad, Boshof, Quarrenton, Windsorton, Klipdam, the River Diggings, Barkly West, Campbell, Schmidts Drift, Griquatown, Douglas, Taungs, Vryburg, Mafeking, and other places. In addition to this nearly all the food stuffs for the country west of Kimberley to the border of Great Namaqualand are drawn through this centre. A further factor to be taken into account is that the new crops of mealies and Kaffir corn had just been secured by the firms interested in this line.

These supplies, owing to the unsettled state of the Free State, from which they are largely drawn and where they are often held for the purpose of taking advantage of other markets, had been rushed into Kimberley. It must be recollected that both mealies and Kaffir corn (maize and millet) are most useful food, as they can be used either as food for human beings or animals. The mealies during the siege were largely used for horses; the Kaffir corn was converted into meal and sold to the natives. In addition to this was the fact that the new crops of forage and oats were expected somewhat earlier in the western districts; as a result the old stocks were cleared out from the colonial towns to business places north. Then, again, Kimberley railway-station has furnished a considerable supply of stores, stopped in transit. Kimberley is what is known as a transship depôt for the northern system of railways, and this

means that there are always a large number of trucks under load here *en route* for the north. These, together with the goods which arrived immediately before the line was cut, came in very opportunely. The railway authorities as soon as the line was cut north of Vryburg ran all goods from that station back to Kimberley. One parcel included 1,000 bags of meal intended for the Transvaal Government. This meal had a very narrow shave on its way back. It arrived by almost the last train that got through from Vryburg. The train itself was rather heavy, and at Border Siding under the very nozzles of the Boer big guns part of it had to be left behind as the engine was unable to pull it up the incline. However, the second part was fortunately got into Kimberley in safety just in time, the engine having been sent back to get it. Several parcels of grain which had been sent to Modder River for Jacobsdal were also brought back. The produce merchants just previously to the declaration of war, finding that large orders were coming in for grain, &c., from places such as Vryburg and Jacobsdal, informed the military authorities of this, and advised them to put a stop to all foodstuffs going out of the town. This advice was acted upon and materially added to our supplies. We were not cut off entirely from supplies of fresh meat from outside till nearly a month after the beginning of the siege—the stocks of the De Beers Company, amounting to about 2,600 head, and others kept the town going for a considerable part of the siege.

MANAGING THE FOOD SUPPLY.

In spite of all these stores, the management and regulation of them soon became a very serious question, as, although we hoped for speedy relief, it was always possible that we might have to wait longer than we anticipated. Martial law having been proclaimed soon after our communications were cut off, all power rested in the hands of Colonel Kekewich and his staff, and they proceeded to regulate the price of necessaries, which had begun to go up to an alarming extent. They took over the supplies of tea, coffee, &c., on December 20, regulations as to foodstuffs were issued, and permits were given for weekly supplies in limited quantities per head. On January 3 the meat ration was reduced from ½lb. to ¼lb. per *diem* for adults, and the meat was sold under the control of the military authorities in the market buildings. Horseflesh was first served out on January 8,and from that date on it became almost the staple food of the white and coloured population. Towards the end we had a few mules and donkeys thrown in, which were pronounced a great treat ; but we never had recourse to dogs or cats. The natives during the last two months of the siege had to subsist almost entirely on a meal diet, and scurvy became terribly prevalent amongst them—in one hospital alone there were 400 cases. On January 19 provisions of all sorts began to run short, and Mr. Rhodes started a soup kitchen for the town. Everybody who wished could give up their meat ration to be converted into soup, and he gave the vegetables from the Kenilworth gardens. The soup was sold at 3d. a pint, and was of inestimable benefit to the public at large, who were beginning to suffer from lack of vegetables, and who also found it almost impossible to procure fuel for cooking operations. It began in a small way, but gradually more and more people brought their rations, and in a very short time the men of the town guard,the mounted force, and even the Regular troops, who had at first rather looked down upon it, clamoured to be allowed to add their rations of horse to this excellent *pot au feu*. It certainly helped to keep at bay the scurvy which had been beginning to appear amongst the white population. The number of people fed daily in this way amounted, by the end of the siege, to about 15,000,while one day, when the shelling was at its worst, about 23,000 were fed. The whole movement was most ably carried out by Dr. Smartt, M.L.A., and Captain Tyson,who distributed soup at the various shelters, very often under heavy shell fire, in the most plucky way. The health of the town was thus, owing to the unceasing efforts of Colonel Kekewich and Mr. Rhodes, fairly good, though, of course, it must be taken into consideration that the siege took place at what is the most unhealthy time of year, a time at which most of the well-to-do people go away with their families for change of air. The heat is very great, the thermometer standing constantly between 80deg. and 95deg. in the shade. Typhoid is always prevalent at this season, and this year was much more so than usual owing to the unavoidable crowding together of the people and to other insanitary conditions. Owing to the lack of milk the infant mortality was also very high. The deaths from different causes averaged about 200 a week during the last part of the siege.

I have endeavoured to show briefly the conditions under which the siege of Kimberley was conducted and to indicate how it was possible for its defenders and people to stand a four months' strain as they did, taking into account the very large population. It must always be remembered that, though, as it turned out, the Boers never did actually attack us, there was always the possibility that they might do so, so that our vigilance could never be relaxed for one moment, added to which it was important to keep them at a distance as much as possible by constant sorties. Our line of defence was of great length, and our defending force of 4,000 could certainly never be accused of being idle. The time allowed for sleep was cut down to a *minimum*, but their health did not suffer ; rather it improved from the open-air life.

THE EARLY DAYS OF SIEGE.

When the siege first began everybody was very cheerful and happy, thinking it would last at most three or four weeks, and that on the

whole it was rather amusing and exciting—a novel experience. The only alarming times in the first few weeks were when parties of Boers were seen hovering about in the distance (who might possibly be going to attack). Then hooters were blown from the different mines as a warning to non-combatants to retire to their houses. These hooters made the most weird and melancholy sound and had a most disastrous effect on the nerves of the people, so they were discontinued in a short time, to the relief of everybody. The whole town was dominated by a conning tower built over the hauling gear of the De Beers Mine. In this tower, which commanded a wide stretch of country, Colonel Kekewich and his officers kept watch day and night, so we had the security of feeling we could never be taken by surprise. At night we had three or four most brilliant search-lights which flashed unceasingly over the surrounding country and inspired some terror in the Boers, who called them " Rhodes's eyes."

The chief reason why we were never attacked was that the enemy believed the town was surrounded by mines, ready to explode and blow them to pieces if they attempted to advance. Meantime, with the hooters stopped and no Boers to be seen (although they were all round us they seldom or never showed themselves), everybody was in good spirits and life went on much as usual. We had siege sports at the different camps, cricket matches, &c., and for most people the chief hardship consisted in not being able to pass beyond the barriers of the town, and in a slight but steady diminution in the supply of the little luxuries of life. Up to the end of October, beyond one or two reconnaissances with the armoured train, and the sound of distant explosions, when the Boers blew up railway culverts and destroyed the dynamite magazine at Dronfied, nothing particular happened.

THE BEGINNING OF THE BOMBARDMENT.

On November 4 a letter came in from General Wessels, the Boer commandant, stating that he was going to bombard the town if Colonel Kekewich did not surrender before Monday, the 6th. The contents of the letter were not made public, and we did not know till the end of November the terms of its contents. In one of our sorties a copy of the *Volksstem* was found in a Boer trench, giving the full text of the letter. A translation was published in the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* of November 28. General Wessels, after threatening bombardment, went on to say :—

In case Kimberley declines to surrender, I hereby request your honour to allow all women and children to leave Kimberley, so that they may be placed out of danger, and for this purpose your honour is granted time from noon on Saturday, November 4, 1899, to 6 a.m. on Monday, November 6, 1899. I further give notice that during that time I shall be ready to receive all Afrikander families who wish to remove from Kimberley, and also to offer liberty to depart in safety to all women and children of other nations desirous of leaving.

To the first proposal Colonel Kekewich in his reply returned no answer, and in the view of the British inhabitants, when the fact became known, he was considered to have incurred a grave responsibility by not informing them of the offer made to their women and children. If the offer had been made known I do not think that very many would have availed themselves of it, as at that time they firmly believed the relief column would be in Kimberley in a very short time, but later on in the siege there was a general wish that the offer had been published. Also, the more people that went away, the better it would have been for the town, short of food as we were, in fact they ought to have been encouraged to go. Colonel Kekewich published only the following notice to the Afrikander families :—

Head Commandant Wessels, of the Western Division Burgher Force, O.F.S., having made known to the Commandant, Kimberley, that he is willing to receive into his camp any Afrikanders who are desirous of leaving Kimberley, the Commandant hereby gives notice that any persons accepting this invitation will not be allowed to enter Kimberley on any pretext whatever as long as the siege lasts.

This offer was accepted by a few, but a very few, of the population, most Afrikanders not caring to put themselves in the position of being debarred from re-entering the town, and many also feeling that, by accepting the offer, they would gibbet themselves as Boer sympathizers, which would render their future lives in Kimberley extremely unpleasant. On our refusal to surrender the bombardment commenced, the enemy directing their fire at first on the Premier Mine, then the town itself came in for their attention for the week (Sunday excepted, according to the Boer custom), but luckily they did not at this time bring very heavy guns to bear upon us. People, of course, were considerably alarmed, and it was very unpleasant, but very little damage was done, beyond a native woman being killed in the middle of the town, and two Dutchmen and another man wounded. One or two buildings in the town were hit, and there was a general feeling of insecurity. Our ammunition was getting a little short, so on November 16 the De Beers Company began to manufacture shells, under the direction of their head engineer, Mr. George Labram. These were most successful.

SORTIES AND SUSPENSE.

On November 16 we made a sortie, had one killed and seven wounded, and inflicted some loss on the enemy. So far, the town had not run any great risk, but it was felt that at any moment the enemy might place a siege gun in position, which we, with our pop-guns, should be powerless to resist, so a telegram was sent from the principal citizens to the High Commissioner urging that we should speedily be relieved. He replied in a most encouraging way, that the relief of Kimberley should be the first object of the column, and, he hoped, the turning point of the campaign. This was on November 7. After this we remained without any news for a fortnight, till on

November 24 it was announced that a relief column had left Orange River on November 21. Our spirits went up with a bound. On the 25th the Kimberley Light Horse and others made a brilliant sortie, capturing 33 prisoners and driving the Boers out of their redoubts with serious loss. Our own losses were six killed and 29 wounded. Our forces were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Scott-Turner, and were brilliantly led. On November 28 Colonel Scott-Turner again led an attack on Carter's Ridge, but it was a sad day for Kimberley, for, after having secured our line of trenches by a most gallant rush with about 80 men, Colonel Scott-Turner was killed, and with him 21 others, while 28 were wounded. With their leader gone, the few sound men that remained had to retire, being in an untenable position, exposed to the full blaze of the Boer riflemen, strongly intrenched behind sandbags. In Colonel Scott-Turner the Kimberley garrison sustained an irreparable loss, and the people of the town felt that in losing him they lost their most gallant defender, a man who was always ready to risk his life in order to keep the enemy at a safe distance from their town. He was beloved by his men, and, as organizer of the Kimberley Light Horse, he deserved all praise for his untiring energy, and for the patience with which he drilled what were in many cases absolutely untrained men. Lieutenant-Colonel Peakman was appointed to succeed to the command of the mounted troops, but since our losses at Carter's Ridge it was felt that the storming of Boer positions with a few men and no big reserves to fall back upon was too serious and difficult, as well as useless, a task for the inhabitants of a beleaguered town to attempt, so from this time on our efforts were principally concentrated on keeping clear a sufficient space of ground outside the town for our rapidly-dwindling herd of cattle to feed on in safety. On December 1 we got into touch with the relief column signaller, and on the 4th Lord Methuen reported that he had crossed the Modder River. Then we thought that the relief of Kimberley could only be a matter of a few days, and when, on December 11, we heard a great battle going on beyond the hills of Spytfontein and could see the shells bursting on the ridge, we felt it was only a matter of hours till we welcomed our deliverers. We looked anxiously across the plain, hoping to see the advancing troops.

All we did see, however, was the Boers heliographing to us these words :—" We have smashed up your column." This, though it cast rather a cloud, we did not credit, but so isolated were we that though we thought something had gone wrong, it was not till six days afterwards that we heard the whole truth.

AFTER MAGERSFONTEIN.

Now began the second and most dreary portion of the siege. Until then we had always had something outside the town to think about and speculate upon, and hope was always in the ascendant. After this, gloom settled down upon us, as we knew that the Boers, having been given time, were turning Spytfontein into a fortress ; in fact, had done so largely after the battle of Modder River, and we felt our troops had small chance of success if they tried to push their way through it instead of coming round on the flat, as we at the time thought they could have done, and as General French eventually did.

Some time before this, Mr. Rhodes had felt that, in view of the uncertain duration of the siege, it was necessary to get rid of as many mouths as possible. This idea had been at first opposed by the military authorities, but they gave way eventually, and he managed to get rid of some 8,000 out of the 10,000 natives in the compounds. This was splendidly managed by Mr. L. Finn, his agent, who, understanding the natives thoroughly, won their confidence and explained the position to them and then led them out of the town in detachments. They started on their way in very good spirits, carrying their belongings, cooking pots, blankets, &c., together with some rations, fully intending, many of them, to return when the war was over. As a rule the Boers allowed them out ; in the case of the Basutos and northern tribes nearly always, as they wished to remain on good terms with them, and also, we supposed, they wanted to employ them in digging trenches. In some cases they turned back the Cape Colony Kaffirs, as they said, on account of their friendliness with the English. The behaviour of the natives throughout the siege was very good ; they were quiet and orderly and there was little grumbling. In the early part of the siege the Boers pursued a different policy with regard to the natives, as on one occasion, the occupants of the Wesselton compound, between 2,000 and 3,000, having become restive under shell fire, they were sent out of the town, but returned the next day, the Boers having stopped them, telling them " They must go back to their father, Rhodes."

After the battle of the Modder Lord Methuen, who expected to be in Kimberley almost immediately, sent a message to Colonel Kekewich that we would not be able to remain any time, and so practically all non-combatants must leave. A little food would be sent in and the town would be only occupied by its defenders. This idea caused great consternation among the people, who thought it very hard that, after enduring a siege of two months, they should be called upon to leave the town, and go, nobody knew where, at almost a moment's notice. It was strongly felt also that it would be a humiliation for them *vis à vis* of the Boers. Colonel Kekewich stated at a meeting of the town council that the people would have to leave immediately on the entry of Lord Methuen, but all the same numbers of people said they intended refusing to go, the great proportion of them being not at all

well off, and having nowhere to go to. At the same time they were too proud to wish to be treated in Cape Town and elsewhere on a refugee basis, and did not enjoy the prospect of exchanging their comfortable houses for, possibly, tents on a beach at Cape Town ; so altogether there was a good deal of feeling. A telegram was sent by the principal men in the town setting forth the difficulties of turning out 30,000 people suddenly without provision having been made for them. Affairs were in this state when the battle of Magersfontein took place,and it slowly dawned upon every one that not only was the question of their being turned out over for the present, but that also the date of their relief was exceedingly difficult to fix, and as time went on it seemed to recede more and more into the dim and distant future.

WEARY WEEKS OF WAITING.

Now came the most trying part of the siege, and now was it especially that Mr. Rhodes and the De Beers Company came forward with noble generosity to the help of the town, Mr. Rhodes heading and generally originating every movement for the help of the people. Since the beginning of the siege the De Beers Company had settled to continue giving their *employés* full wages, and Mr. Rhodes had also started relief works, by which every able-bodied man willing to work could earn his livelihood. On these works 13,000 men were employed at a cost of £2,000 a week. They were employed largely in road-making, and did an immense amount of useful work in this way for the town ; in fact a new quarter has been laid out on high ground at Newton, beyond the hospital, with wide roads and proposed boulevards, and Mr. Rhodes hopes that future extensions of the town will be in this direction. At the meeting of the four roads at the top of the hill Mr. Rhodes proposes to erect a monument to those who fell during the siege. There was also a relief committee for aiding refugees from outside and those who were not able to work, by which 650 persons were relieved at a cost of about £100 per week. It was suggested that applications should be made by Kimberley for a portion of the funds being raised in England and elsewhere for the relief of distress caused by the war, but Mr. Rhodes considered that Kimberley was strong enough to bear its own burdens, and this accordingly was done. A fund is now being raised for the widows and orphans of those killed in the defence of the town, which De Beers headed with a first subscription of £10,000. The company also had a cold storage house of 14,000 cubic feet built by Mr. Labram ; this was begun and finished in the marvellously short time of nine days. Mr. Labram also built several armoured engines and an armoured train. In January Mr. Rhodes told Mr. Labram that he might make a gun, which for some time past he had been most anxious to do, and in three weeks he had begun and finished a 4·1 gun with carriage and shells complete. This huge gun, made in a besieged town situated in the heart of Africa, without any special apparatus, and at a time when materials of all kinds were running short, is really one of the wonders of the age. It fires with great accuracy at a long range, and caused the greatest consternation amongst the Boers when a shell landed at the intermediate station, where they thought they were in perfect safety out of range. This occurred on January 19, the first time the gun was fired. A letter was found on a Boer prisoner describing his feelings as he sat eating his " sweet mealie pap " and had to run for his life on the arrival of this most unpleasant visitor from Kimberley.

Our Intelligence Department did not succeed in getting much information, so Mr. Rhodes organized a system of native runners and scouts, by which we were enabled not only to receive occasional papers and letters from the outside world, but also learnt what our besiegers were about, where their laagers were, &c. We gathered that there were probably never more than two or three thousand round us at any time, with about six or seven thousand (if as many) more in Spytfontein impeding Lord Methuen's advance, but so mobile are these irregular troops that whenever we made a sortie they collected from all parts in a very short time and made any action on our part very difficult,if not impossible, without great loss of life.

A NEW TERROR.

The siege continued to drag on its weary way without much incident for some time ; nothing particular happened except that provisions got scarcer and scarcer, and such things as chickens and ducks could only be procured at fabulous prices, and then by great luck. Chickens cost 25s. each, eggs 2s. apiece, and so on. Shelling continued, but in rather a desultory way, when on February 7 the monotony was broken by the arrival of a 6in. Creuzot gun, firing 100lb. shells. This gun opened upon us from Kamfersdam, a high tailing heap which we had not occupied, about 3½ miles from the market-square. The consternation was universal, as, though the enemy had been erecting earthworks on the top of the heap for some time past, the arrival of this new terror was not anticipated by us. It seemed to play all over the town, and hardly a street was safe. It could also be fired very quickly. The chief objects aimed at, however, seemed to be the conning-tower and the sanatorium, where Mr. Rhodes was staying. This horrible firing went on till the following Sunday, doing a great deal of damage among the houses ; several people were also killed and wounded. The greatest loss we sustained was on Friday, February 9, when Mr. Labram was killed instantaneously by a shell in his bed-room. His death was a great shock to us all, as, in the exercise of

his brilliant talents in our service, he had rendered incalculable service to the town. His funeral was on Saturday evening. In spite of the darkness, the big gun, which up till then had not been fired at night, commenced to fire just as the procession left the hospital, and continued all the evening. Rockets were sent up in the town from Boer sympathizers (of whom there were many) to indicate the time of starting and the route of the procession. The alarm amongst the women and children now became very great. They felt helpless in the dark, and large numbers passed their night in the streets, or in the poor shelters afforded by the railway bridges and culverts, or behind *débris* heaps. There was no shelter to be found in the thinly-built houses against 100lb. shells. It is true a few bomb-proof shelters had been hastily put up, but they were not of sufficient size to accommodate large numbers. Mr. Rhodes, seeing the position was serious, determined to offer the women and children the shelter of the mines. Arrangements were accordingly made, and on Sunday afternoon streams of people could be seen wending their way, some to the De Beers, some to the Kimberley Mine. They were carrying such little comforts as they could, and seemed relieved at this solution of their troubles. Mr. Rhodes, his friends, and staff worked hard till the middle of the night, by which time, without the slightest confusion or difficulty, 2,600 people had been put down the mines, at depths of from 1,200ft. to 1,500ft. Everything was done for their comfort by the De Beers staff, who worked with untiring devotion, supplying them with food and everything they wanted. The people themselves looked upon it as a picnic and were as cheerful as possible, especially when the big gun began to boom again on Monday morning, and they expressed great thankfulness to Mr. Rhodes for having devised this plan for their safety. They remained there quite comfortably till the end of the siege, when they returned to the surface with great joy, after four days of subterranean life, none the worse for their unique experience. There were also many other people in shelters, some in a long tunnel near the entrance of the Kimberley Mine, others in holes dug in *débris* heaps, some again in places built in their own gardens; in short, Kimberley became for the time to a large extent an underground town.

RELIEF AT LAST.

And the big gun went on steadily spreading havoc. There were one or two fires, but these were speedily got under. We had been cheered on Saturday, the 10th, by Lord Roberts's announcing that he was going to begin active operations on the following day. On Tuesday night the Boers evacuated Alexandersfontein, which was promptly occupied by the Beaconsfield Town Guard, who found quantities of supplies there abandoned by the Boers in their hurry to get away. All Thursday morning the big gun continued to shell us from Kamfersdam, but about 2 p.m. the great news was telephoned round the town from the conning-tower that General French and his Cavalry Division were advancing across the plain towards Alexandersfontein, and we knew that our troubles were over and our 124 days of siege at an end. We could now see the Boers hurrying away from the outskirts of Alexandersfontein, where some of them lingered, carrying their field guns, which they had been firing till the last moment, with them. In the distance great clouds of dust covered the advancing column. Riding out beyond the town we soon found ourselves among the vanguard of our deliverers, and gleaned the first details of the great feat of arms that had just been performed on our behalf. Passing from squadron to squadron, British, Irish, Australian, New Zealander, in turn joined in congratulations to us on their having arrived in time, to themselves on having taken part in General French's great ride.

Kimberley owes much to the foresight, tact, and resolution of Colonel Kekewich, to the genius, breadth of mind, and unwearying and unfailing resourcefulness of Mr. Rhodes, but these would not have sufficed without the stout hearts of the inhabitants themselves. The British population of Kimberley has always been conspicuous in South Africa for energy, independence, and public spirit, and at this crisis of its fate it proved itself well worthy of its reputation. Determined and uncomplaining, the citizens did their duty at their posts, encountered hardships, stimulated by their example their coloured and native brethren, and were fully prepared to endure to the end any sufferings they might be called upon to bear in defence of her Majesty's flag.

19th March 1900.

THE ADVANCE INTO THE FREE STATE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

PAARDEBERG CAMP, FEB. 26.

Early on Monday, February 12, began the long-deferred invasion of the Free State, so busily prepared for by Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener from the moment of their arrival in South Africa, and so carefully concealed. In a sense the invasion began even earlier, for on the preceding Friday Colonel Hannay's Brigade of mounted infantry had invaded the Free State from the Orange River and fought an action with a smal Free State force, under Commandant Jacob, at Wolveskraal in order to cover the advance of their transport to Ramdam, where they were to meet the main force on Monday morning.

The latter, most of which came down by train from the Modder River in the course of the two days immediately preceding, marched to Ramdam from Graspan, Enslin, and Honeynest Kloof. The whole force, which passed through Ramdam that hot and dusty morning, consisted of three divisions of infantry, a cavalry division, and two mounted infantry brigades, with their due complement of artillery and transport. The Sixth Division, under General Kelly-Kenny, comprised the 14th Brigade under General Knox—composed by Oxford Light Infantry, the Gloucesters, the West Ridings, and the Buffs—and the 18th Brigade—composed by the Essex, Welsh Regiment, Warwicks, and Yorks, under Colonel Stephenson. General Clements's Brigade, the remaining brigade of the division, had been left at Rensburg. The Seventh Division, under General Tucker, comprised the 14th Brigade under General Chermside—consisting of the Scottish Borderers, Lincolns, Hampshires, and Norfolks—and the 15th Brigade under General Wavell—consisting of the North Staffords, Cheshires, South Wales Borderers, and East Lancashires. The Ninth Division, under General Colvile, comprised the Highland Brigade under General MacDonald—composed of the Black Watch, Seaforths, Argylls and Sutherlands, Highland Light Infantry—and the 19th Brigade under General Smith-Dorrien—composed of the Gordons, Canadians, Shropshires, and Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. The cavalry, under General French, consisted of three brigades—the 6th Dragoon Guards, 2nd Dragoon Guards, 6th Dragoons, Carabiniers, Scots Greys, Inniskillings, and New South Wales Lancers under General Porter; the Household Cavalry, 10th Hussars, and 12th Lancers under General Broadwood; and the 9th Lancers, 16th Lancers, Roberts's Horse, and Kitchener's Horse under General Gordon. Kitchener's Horse, however, remained with the infantry. The two brigades of mounted infantry were under Colonel Hannay and Colonel Ridley. The artillery, under the command of General Marshall, consisted of two brigade divisions of field artillery—the first comprising the 18th, 62nd, and 75th Batteries under Colonel Hall, and the second comprising the 76th, 81st, and 82nd Batteries under Colonel Macdonald—and three brigade divisions of horse artillery—U Q under Colonel Rochford, O R under Colonel Eustace, and G P under Colonel Davidson; besides these there was a howitzer battery and a naval contingent of four 4·7 and four 12-pounders under Captain Bearcroft, of the Philomel. Since then, the artillery has been reinforced by the arrival of a battery of 6in. howitzers, casting 100lb. shells, and three Vickers-Maxim quickfirers; while the Brigade of Guards has been brought across from the Modder River to Klip Drift. But on February 12 the whole force which invaded the Free State amounted to 23,000 infantry and 11,000 mounted men, with 98 guns of all kinds and a transport of over 700 wagons drawn by nearly 9,000 mules and oxen.

CRONJE FORCED TO EVACUATE MAGERSFONTEIN.

The object of the move was to turn General Cronje's position, which extended west and east from Magersfontein to Koodoesberg Drift and almost to Klip Drift on the Modder, in order both to relieve Kimberley and, if possible, to cut off Cronje's retreat towards Bloemfontein and invest his whole force. The plan was skilfully conceived and no less skilfully modified when Cronje's flight from Magersfontein changed the whole direction of the march and made his overtaking and heading off the one object to be accomplished. General French's ride to Kimberley is described in a separate article. The Sixth Division, with Lord Kitchener, marched early on Tuesday morning to Waterval Drift on the Riet, marched on the next morning to Wegdraai, and thence on to the drift, which they reached on the morning of Thursday, February 15.

The Ninth Division and mounted infantry followed by the same route, while the Seventh Division crossed the Riet at Dekiel's Drift and stayed at Jacobsdal till February 17. Splendid as was the performance of the cavalry in their ride to Kimberley, no less credit is due to the infantry for the cheerfulness and endurance shown by them in four days of almost incessant marching. The complete success of the march was only marred by one mishap, the loss of a convoy of 180 wagons full of forage and provisions at Waterval Drift, a loss so serious that its results have been felt ever since. This convoy, which came entirely unescorted from Ramdam to Waterval Drift, laagered on the south side of the drift on Wednesday. On Thursday morning it began to cross. Owing to the steepness of the banks the crossing was attended by great difficulties, and three teams of oxen were required to help each wagon up. The drift was guarded by one company of the Gordons and by about 150 mounted infantry under Colonel Ridley. Early in the morning a party of 300 or 400 Boers, probably part of the same force which Hannay had engaged at Wolveskraal, seized a range of kopjes commanding the drift within rifle range and began shooting down the oxen. Colonel Ridley immediately advanced with the Gordons and mounted infantry across the open ground, but his force was far too small to drive the Boers out of the very strong position they occupied. Towards midday Kitchener's Horse and a field battery came back from Wegdraai. The Boers had meanwhile been considerably reinforced, and an attempt made by Kitchener's Horse to turn the flank of the Boer position

failed. Towards dusk General Tucker marched down from Wegdraai with the 14th Brigade. The Boers were now increased to over 1,000, and were in a position which would have required a larger force to drive them out than General Tucker had at his disposal. It was essential to Lord Roberts's plan that the whole force should be able to move forward with all possible speed. Sooner than delay, and also owing to apprehensions of an attack on Jacobsdal by Cronje's main force, he decided to sacrifice the convoy. Accordingly the wagons were left to their fate and the force marched back to Wegdraai during the night. So many oxen had been shot during the day that it is doubtful if the Boers were able to get more than a third of the wagons away. Nevertheless, the loss was a very serious one and by no means compensated for by the capture of 78 of Cronje's wagons, which he was obliged on the following day to leave at Drieput owing to the exhaustion of his transport.

As soon as the 6th Division and mounted infantry, accompanied by the 76th and 81st Batteries and two naval 12-pounders, arrived at Klip Drift General French, who had been waiting a day for them to come up and protect his left flank on the side of Magersfontein, hurried off for Kimberley. The others were to have followed when the next division caught them up. In the afternoon Cronje, who had just failed to intercept French's movement by seizing a ridge of kopjes by Benaauwheidfontein Farm, sent back orders post-haste to Magersfontein to his main force to inspan the wagons and guns without a moment's delay and hurry eastwards. With a true general's insight he at once perceived the net that was being thrown about him, and determined to break through before it was too late, and escape far enough east to be able to reform and present a new line of defence to the British advance on Bloemfontein. On Friday morning Kaffirs brought news into Modder River that the laager at Magersfontein was deserted. Those who rode across the trenches that morning found the whole laager littered with provisions, clothes, books, and other personal effects, all indications of the hurry and confusion with which the scuttle of the past night had been carried out. At daybreak that morning the troops at Klip Drift descried a vast dust cloud drifting eastwards across the plain to the north-east. Lord Kitchener, at once realizing what that cloud meant, gave orders for the mounted infantry not to follow French, but to follow up and attack the convoy. The mounted infantry rode in pursuit across the plain, endeavouring to get to the north of the convoy, while General Knox's Brigade was pushed along the north bank of the river, which makes a large bend to the north between Klip Drift and Klipkraal Drift, to strike the convoy on its southern flank. Cronje sent on his wagons to Drieputs Farm, at the north-eastern end of the bend, where they laagered at about 11 and maintained a running fight with our troops all day. The skill with which the Boers conducted this rearguard action extorted unqualified praise from all our officers. As the detachments on the extreme right of the Boer line were driven back by our mounted infantry they rode round behind their centre and took up fresh positions on their left against the 81st Battery and Knox's Brigade, which were advancing along the north bank of the river. At midday the Boers attempted to hold three low kopjes two miles north-east of Klip Drift, but were driven back to a stronger position at Drieputs. The formation of the ground consisted of one line of kopjes, extending from the river to W.N.W., based on a plateau of 1,000 yards wide, 10ft. above the plain. General Knox's Brigade, in the following order from right to left—Oxfordshire Light Infantry, West Riding Regiment, and Gloucesters—encircled the plateau under cover of a rise above the plain, with the Buffs, which were used to make feints first on the river and afterwards on our extreme left. The 81st Battery poured a heavy fire upon the southern largest kopje, protected by the Oxfordshires. Lord Kitchener watched the proceedings from a point a quarter of a mile west of the guns. The infantry dispositions were but little altered throughout the day, but the mounted infantry, holding the river banks, made a plucky attempt under heavy fire to cut off the enemy's retreat upon the retiring convoy. Captain Vaughan, commanding Kitchener's Horse, received a wound in the neck, but continued in the field. The artillery was then redisposed into three groups, each pair of guns shelling the hill from the south-west, south, and south-east, but not succeeding in dislodging the enemy before nightfall, by which time a naval gun had also been brought into action at long range on the south bank. Our casualties during the whole day's fighting were about 100; among the wounded was Colonel MacDonald, commanding the artillery, who was shot through the lung.

THE BOERS' STAND AT PAARDEBERG.

At nightfall Colonel Stephenson's Brigade, excepting the Warwicks, who were left behind at Jacobsdal, recrossed the river at Klip Drift and marched off at 3 o'clock in the morning of the 17th to the south of the river, in order, if possible, to head off Cronje at Paardeberg or Koodoosrand Drifts. They were joined about 10 at Klipkraal Drift by Knox's Brigade, which marched along the northern bank. The mounted infantry, pushing on, reached Paardeberg Drift that evening and encamped on rising ground close to the south bank. The infantry, leaving Klipkraal at 6 in the evening, made a night march for Paardeberg Drift, but missing their way slightly passed the drift and bivouacked on some rising ground nearly two miles beyond, separated from the river by a smooth plain shelving gently down to it. The mistake was a fortunate one, as it brought the infantry almost opposite to the place where Cronje had determined to cross. Cronje

had left Drieputs during the night after the battle, abandoning 78 wagons, and pushed on along the north bank of the river during Saturday for Koodoosrand Drift. Soon after passing north of Paardeberg Drift he heard that French had already returned from Kimberley and was holding a line of high kopjes running north-west from Koodoosrand Drift and completely commanding the drift. Wheeling his wagons to the right across the plain, he laagered on the north bank of the river at Wolveskraal Farm. This was opposite to a drift of the same name, about halfway between Paardeberg and Koodoosrand Drifts, being about four miles in a straight line from each. Here he intended to cross on Sunday morning. But already, during the night, he became aware of the presence of the mounted infantry south of Paardeberg Drift, and decided that he could not get his convoy away without fighting. Probably Cronje did not realize that Kelly-Kenny's infantry could have already marched up and occupied the rising ground not 3,000 yards south of Wolveskraal Drift; still less could he know that General Colvile's Division was but a few miles behind and was to reach Paardeberg Drift before daybreak. If Cronje had known this, there is little doubt that he would have promptly sacrificed all his transport and all his guns in order to get his men away and escape from the trap in which he was now caught. As it was, he sent a great part of his force to line the river bed all the way down to Paardeberg Drift, in order to act as a rearguard and check any attempt to interfere with his crossing Wolveskraal Drift at his leisure.

Before giving an account of the battle of February 18, it is necessary first to give some description of the country between Paardeberg and Koodoosrand Drifts which formed the scene of action. Here, as along most of its course, the Modder flows along the bottom of a deep cutting —excavated some 30ft. deep in soft soil and from 30 to 100 yards in width—the sides and edges of which are thickly grown with mimosa and willow trees. On both sides, but more especially on the south, numerous small dongas project at right angles from the river bed, affording excellent shelter against an enemy advancing either across the open plain or along the river bed. The general course of the river from Koodoosrand Drift is west-south-west, with short bends to the south about two miles on each side of Wolveskraal Drift. On the south bank was a smooth grassy plain shelving down to the river, about 2,500 to 3,000 yards wide at its widest point, bordered by slightly rising ground, and running, roughly speaking, due east from behind Paardeberg Drift till it is south of Wolveskraal, when it turns north-east and rises into a crater-shaped ring of kopjes, 2,200 yards south-south-east of Wolveskraal, known now as Kitchener's Hill, to the east of which is Osfontein Farm. South of Koodoosrand Drift there are three or four kopjes lying east and west, not more than 1,500 yards from the river. From Koodoosrand Drift a range of high kopjes runs north-west; at the foot of these runs the Kimberley road past Kameelfontein Farm. On the north bank of the river there is a plain like that on the south, but rather more shelving and broken by humps, almost deserving the name of kopjes, coming down within 1,000 yards of the river. Several kopjes are scattered along the edge of the plain two or three miles back from the river, while immediately north of Paardeberg Drift there is a large flat-topped hill, perhaps 300ft. high, which gives its name to the drift.

CLOSING IN ROUND PAARDEBERG.

The battle began soon after daybreak with a heavy rifle fire, opened by the Boers from the river bed upon the mounted infantry while still at their breakfast. After some fairly severe fighting the mounted infantry succeeded in driving back the Boers and clearing the river bed for about a quarter of a mile above Paardeberg Drift. Meanwhile, at the sound of the firing, the Sixth Division—after first marching a short distance in the direction of Paardeberg Drift till in the growing daylight Lord Kitchener perceived that the enemy's main position was not there, but at Wolveskraal—was marched down into the plain, Colonel Stephenson's Brigade being on the right and General Knox's on the left. Colonel Stephenson, with the Welsh and Essex, marched right across the plain, past Cronje's laager, and then deployed opposite the river at the bend below Koodoosrand Drift, leaving the Yorks on the right of Knox's Brigade, which had deployed right across the middle of the plain. The Highland Brigade, at the same time, marched down into the plain from the Klipkraal road, and extended on the left of Knox's Brigade, the Argylls being on the right, the Black Watch in the centre, and the Seaforths on the left. The Highland Light Infantry had been left at Klip Drift on the lines of communication. The whole line rapidly advanced across a perfectly smooth plain, offering even less cover than the ground across which Lord Methuen advanced at Modder River. While the infantry advanced the 76th and 81st Batteries, with one naval gun, and the 65th Howitzer Battery, which had just arrived with the Ninth Division, posted themselves on a slight rise about 2,000 yards south-south-east of the laager and 1,600 yards from the nearest point of the river. The naval gun, owing to some accident in the mechanism, was unable to fire; but the others did great execution on the laager, setting the wagons on fire in several places. During the day three loud explosions were heard in the burning laager, due probably to the setting on fire of ammunition wagons. The laager became practically untenable, and the Boers made very little attempt to use their guns except the Vickers-Maxims, which they used freely in the afternoon.

About 9 o'clock General Smith-Dorrien's

Brigade, except the Cornwall Light Infantry, which was kept in reserve, crossed the Paardeberg Drift and fought their way nearly a mile up the north bank among the bushes. Finding it impossible to get any further up the bank at that point, the brigade made a curve at some distance to the north-east, so as to get above the lower bend, which was tremendously strongly held, and extended, the Shropshires on the right, the Canadians in the centre, and the Gordons on the left, but considerably advanced to the north-east, rather separated from the others. The Shropshires and Canadians advanced by a series of short rushes in the most gallant style, the Canadians especially showing a magnificent and almost reckless courage. These two battalions and the 82nd Battery, which Colvile had sent in support, did great execution among the Boers in a stretch of the river bank above the bend, where they were able to some extent to enfilade them. At about 11 o'clock French's horse artillery planted itself on the rising ground north of the laager and shelled the laager and the river bed. Some of their shells went a little too far, and at one time their shrapnel was falling unpleasantly freely into the fighting line of the Highland Brigade. As the morning went on our troops pressed steadily forward across the open ground, in spite of a terribly hot fire kept up by the Boers and in spite of unexampled fatigue and privation gone through during the last few days of marching. Towards midday the mounted infantry, who had occupied a kopje south of Koodoosrand Drift, crossed the river and advanced some distance along the north bank under a very heavy fire. It was here that Colonel Hannay is believed to have been killed early in the afternoon. Soon after 1 o'clock the Welsh and Essex rushed the river bank below the point crossed by the mounted infantry, and, after crossing, worked their way down among the bushes on both sides and in the river bed. The work done by both of these regiments was splendid, and both suffered very heavily. In one of the rushes made by the Welsh towards the end of the afternoon 24 out of a party of 25 who attempted to storm the laager were killed or wounded. About the same time the Thirteenth and the Highland Brigades, whose brigadiers were both wounded, General Knox through the shoulder and General MacDonald through the foot, made a most determined attempt to get down to the river, the Highlanders being reinforced by half of the Cornwalls. At about 2 o'clock Knox's Brigade and the Yorks got down to the river bank just above the bend, while three companies of the Seaforths and three companies of the Black Watch crossed the river below. The bend itself was so strongly held that the rest of the Highland Brigade were unable to get within 400 yards of it. Though our troops held the river bank both above and below this bend, the Boers maintained their position in it till nightfall, when they withdrew to the laager. The Canadians and Shropshires, by 3 o'clock, found themselves unable to advance any further. At 3 30, Colvile sent three and a half companies of the Cornwalls to support them. Passing through the Canadians and Shropshires, and picking up a certain number of them, the Cornwalls advanced to within 800 yards of the Boer position and then made a charge which, with the advance of the Welsh on the other flank, may be considered the most striking performance of the day. No troops could have carried a charge home against such a position, and it in nowise detracts from the gallantry of their performance that the Cornwalls, after the fall of Colonel Aldous, failed to get more than 400 yards further.

Kitchener's Hill was the scene of some rather purposeless operations. Early in the morning Kelly-Kenny posted three companies of the Gloucesters on the hill, which was unoccupied. Afterwards these were recalled to strengthen the fighting line, and a small party of Kitchener's Horse was sent up. About 4 o'clock most of these were watering their horses and cooking a meal in Osfontein Farm, when their horses were stampeded and they themselves surprised by some Boers coming from the south ; 30 men and four officers, out of 45, were captured.

A SOLDIER'S BATTLE.

When once the battle had begun, it was almost entirely a soldier's and regimental officer's battle. And the way the soldiers fought reflects the greatest credit on them. Exhausted by a week's marching and fighting, many of them without food or drink since the previous afternoon, their steadiness and courage could hardly be surpassed. Perhaps the most reckless bravery was shown by the Welsh, the Cornwalls, and the Canadians ; but all the regiments behaved splendidly, and it would be invidious to distinguish specially any single one. The heaviness of the casualty list, over 1,100, and the evenness with which the casualties were distributed bear witness to the bravery displayed equally by every battalion of the two divisions engaged. One cause of the heaviness of the casualty list was the extreme thirstiness of the men, who, when they got near the river bank, could not be prevented from rushing down to the bed of the river and drinking regardless of the fire poured into them. By nightfall we held the whole river on both sides except a stretch of about a mile on each side of the laager, into which Cronje's whole force is now cooped up, and from which it cannot possibly escape unless relieved by a very large force. His position is in a way very defensible, being, in fact, one enormous shelter trench, with numerous short cross-trenches, and a supply of water running through it. It would be difficult to take it by storm without a very heavy loss ; but any attempt to escape from it would mean that the Boers would have to attempt to cross open ground enclosed, for a complete circle, by a vastly superior force.

The only question that may be asked about the battle of February 18 is whether it was really

necessary and whether the object of surrounding Cronje might not have been attained just as well by occupying all the high ground we now hold, so as to surround the Boers, and then gradually pushing our way up from Paardeberg and Koodoosrand Drifts. Looking back, one feels inclined to think that this course would have been better, but at the time it probably did not seem quite certain whether Cronje might not get his men away unless seriously damaged by fighting. And no doubt Lord Kitchener entertained some hope that the whole force might have been captured that day, and that Cronje's transport and provisions might be utilized for pushing on the advance to Bloemfontein. If there had been time to arrange the battle after a previous study of the ground, the attack would probably not have been so strongly pressed in the middle of the position. But the battle developed very suddenly and unexpectedly, and it would have been very difficult to withdraw any of the battalions when once they had advanced in extended order within the zone of a dangerous fire. In such cases retirement is almost more dangerous than advance. One may reckon it to the good that the Boers undoubtedly lost heavily in both men and horses, and that the loss of the latter would render them practically helpless, even if not invested.

On Monday Lord Roberts and his staff arrived, followed by General Tucker's Division. Cronje asked for 24 hours' armistice to bury his dead, which was refused as it was feared he would only use the opportunity to strengthen his position. Owing to some misunderstanding of the Dutch phrases in which Cronje's reply was couched, Lord Roberts first believed that Cronje intended to surrender ; but that stubborn warrior had no such intention, and replied contemptuously to the suggestion that he should come out of his camp and surrender personally to some senior officer. Since the 19th the enclosing circle has been steadily drawn closer. The laager and river bed have been shelled daily, while Smith-Dorrien, astride of the river to the west of the laager, and Chermside, succeeding Stephenson to the east, have been steadily pushing their way along. The Cornwalls, helped by the Engineers in constructing trenches, have in the last two nights pushed their way to within a few hundred yards of the Boer laager. Kitchener's Hill, which the Boers captured on Sunday and occupied by a force of over 500 men, was taken on Wednesday by a combined operation of the artillery batteries, on the rise opposite the laager, and Broadwood's cavalry. The Boers who held it escaped to the north-east, and, after being hunted all round the plains from one detachment to another like driven game, got away with the loss of some prisoners and about 30 casualties. On Friday a party of about 500 Boers, mainly belonging to the Winburg and Heidelberg commandos, who had come straight from Ladysmith, made a very determined attempt to drive the Yorkshires off the kopje. But the Yorkshires held their own and, being later supported by the Scottish Borderers and Buffs, drove off the enemy, 87 of whom, having had their horses shot, surrendered to the Buffs after keeping up a sniping fight for two or three hours. Numerous other parties of Boers have been hovering round our positions lately and have had skirmishes with our outposts, usually losing more heavily than our men. The investment of Cronje is not only useful in drawing off Boers from Ladysmith and Colesberg, but it gives rest to our forces, especially to our horses, which, owing to want of forage, are in a very poor condition. Many of them are quite useless.

One can only hope that the War Office authorities realize fully how absolutely our Army in South Africa is dependent on its cavalry and mounted infantry, and how absolutely helpless those forces are without horses. The necessity for making up the constant drain in horses is even more necessary than that for replenishing the casualties made in the ranks of our men. At the present moment a horse is worth more than a man ; and no surer proof could be given of the incompetence of the War Office than if a sudden outbreak of horse sickness, or the fatigues of a march on Bloemfontein found us without horses. The Boer supply of horses is strictly limited ; but we have absolutely unlimited supplies to draw on from all the world over. Our present success is entirely due to the rapid movements of French's Division, which the infantry admirably supported, but without which the infantry would have been perfectly useless.

19th March 1900.

BULLER'S ADVANCE TOWARDS LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

COLENSO CAMP, FEB. 27 (by telegraph to Cape Town).

Very little time was lost after our retirement from Springfield before we were again advancing. By February 11 the whole force, with the exception of Colonel Burn-Murdoch's Cavalry Brigade and the York and Lancaster Regiment and Lancashire Fusiliers, left at Springfield, was once more at Chieveley. The first intimation of our next move was given on the 10th, when General Buller reconnoitred Hussar Hill, six miles north-east of Chieveley, with the Mounted Infantry Brigade.

Hussar Hill, so called because a Cossack post of Hussars had been cut up there soon after the battle of Colenso, is the point where the open veldt, in which we have hitherto always moved,

ends and the bush country begins. In front lies the thickly-wooded valley of the Gomba Spruit, a small stream running eastward from Hlangwane Hill, and to the south lies the equally bushy Blaauwkrantz Valley. The bush consists chiefly of stunted mimosa and is intersected by innumerable dongas, so, though it forms excellent cover for troops, their advance is necessarily very slow. The point reconnoitred by General Buller was the left of the vast Colenso position. Since the battle of Colenso the Boers had considerably extended their fortifications on the south side of the river, and a practically continuous line of intrenchments now ran eastwards from Hlangwane Hill along the north side of the Gomba Valley. They terminated on Green Hill, a steep kopje, barren of trees, nearly three miles from Hlangwane. East of Green Hill rose Monte Cristo, a great range of hills, nearly 1,000ft. high, running in a north-westerly direction to the Tugela, and extending far away to the south-east. The Boers' position is, in fact, a spur of the Monte Cristo range. The reconnaissance having ascertained this returned to camp. It was not considered necessary to hold Hussar Hill, as it was not a strong position.

On the 14th tents were struck, baggage packed, and we moved out towards the hill, leaving General Hart's Brigade to guard the camp. Lord Dundonald took the hill, which he found weakly held. The Boers were evidently in the habit of occupying it, and, when they found it attacked, came across in considerable numbers from Hlangwane to defend it. They were too late, however, for the South African Light Horse and the Colts Battery were already on the top. There was a sharp fight for about half an hour, when the Irish Fusiliers and a field battery came up, and the Boers were driven back. That practically ended the fighting for the day. The Irish Fusiliers met with very slight resistance as they advanced eastwards, securing the low hills, known as Moord Kraal, which form the southern side of the Gomba Valley. General Lyttelton's Division, composed of his own brigade, under Colonel Norcott, the Rifle Brigade, and General Hildyard's, making a detour through the Blaauwkrantz Valley, occupied the eastern extremity of Moord Kraal, which gave us a front of about two miles.

On the following day, which was excessively hot, little was done, except that a very strong battery of heavy guns, including two 5in. garrison guns, two 4·7in. and four 12-pounder naval guns, and the howitzer battery, were brought into position on Hussar Hill. Behind Green Hill the Boers had one large calibre gun and probably two smaller ones, and a desultory artillery duel continued all day. On the 16th General Hildyard's Brigade reconnoitred the slopes of Cingolo, one of the hills in the Monte Cristo range. The conformation of the hills takes something the shape of an irregularly-formed letter T, the base being Hlangwane and Green Hill, the cross stroke to the northward being Monte Cristo Hill, and that to the southward being Cingolo. The two latter hills are divided by a deep nek. The fighting of the next two days was exceedingly hard to follow in detail. Both sides were practically invisible in the dense bush, and, as the only intrenched position the Boers had was Green Hill, which was not attacked till the afternoon of the second day, the relative position of the opposing forces was often difficult to discover. Our ultimate object was Green Hill, which was to be achieved by the capture of the heights commanding it, and the first day's operations were confined to the taking of Cingolo.

We had three brigades engaged. On the left, General Barton's advanced under good cover towards Green Hill and kept up a heavy fire upon it all day. On the right, General Hildyard's, with Colonel Norcott's in support, advanced up the nek between Cingolo and Monte Cristo. After crossing the Gomba the Queen's was detached and sent with the composite regiment of mounted infantry on a flanking movement to climb the hill at the far end, nearly two miles away. The march through the thick bushes was a long and trying one, but it was accomplished very successfully, and at 12 o'clock they were seen crossing a little bare space on the very top. This movement took the enemy completely by surprise. The hill was weakly held, and before reinforcements could come up the mounted infantry was sweeping along and driving what few Boers there were from ridge to ridge. Meanwhile, the rest of General Hildyard's and Colonel Norcott's brigades had reached the nek. Judging from the intensity of the fire, there must have been a considerable number of the enemy, but, though they were very often at close range, our casualties were very slight, owing to the thickness of the cover. In the evening the Queen's descended into the nek, and all the men bivouacked there for the night.

Next day the same manœuvre had to be repeated. At dawn General Hildyard's Brigade and the mounted infantry brigade marched through the nek and climbed the eastern side of Monte Cristo. The hill was higher and steeper than Cingolo, and was far more strongly held. Profiting by their experience of the day before, the Boers were in considerable force on the hill, and they came a good way down to meet the advance. The actual ascent took six hours, and the Queen's and the West Yorkshire Regiment, who led it, fought almost every yard of the way. The Boers had no trenches and fell back slowly as our men advanced. The mounted infantry guarded the flanks, and when they had nearly reached the top, and the Boers began to retire, the Natal Carbineers did a very smart piece of work. Seeing the Boers making for a crossing of the river to the north, they galloped off and, taking up a position between it and the retiring enemy, headed them

back so that they had to pass under the fire of the Queen's. On the other side of the hill the attack had changed front on the left and Colonel Norcott's Brigade was advancing along the side of Monte Cristo towards the nek between that mountain and Green Hill. Their advance was slow, for they were encountering a heavy fire from Green Hill and also from some trenches on the western side of Monte Cristo. On their left were the Scots Fusiliers and beyond them were the Irish Fusiliers. The two latter regiments were to attack straight up Green Hill, which had been heavily bombarded since dawn. At 12 o'clock General Hildyard's leading companies appeared on the skyline, and, as if the Boers knew exactly where to expect them and had their guns ready trained, they instantly came under a heavy shell fire, chiefly shrapnel and Maxim-Nordenfelt. From where we were watching it looked terribly accurate, and, only seeing their movements very indistinctly in the bushes, it seemed as if their advance was checked. For over an hour it lasted, and all our guns were unable to find the range of the two or three Boer guns that were doing the mischief. Then suddenly the fire slackened and we became aware that the whole line was pushing rapidly forward. In a very few minutes the Fusiliers were rushing up the bare face of Green Hill. They gained the top with scarcely a shot fired. A few shrapnel burst over them, and then, save for a few shots far forward on the right and an occasional shot from the batteries far behind, all firing ceased. What had happened was this. Unperceived by us, and probably also by the Boers on Green Hill, General Hildyard had pushed very rapidly along Monte Cristo and had appeared, still on the top of the hill, threatening their right rear. Before the main attack could reach them they fled incontinently, leaving everything behind. The Rifle Brigade, who, with three companies of the Durham Light Infantry, formed the firing line of Colonel Norcott's attack, were considerably in advance of the left. They passed rapidly through the nek and the hollow beyond where the Boers had made their laager. When they saw half a mile beyond them a body of mounted men, two or three thousand strong, manœuvring apparently in troops and squadrons, they thought it was Lord Dundonald's Brigade, and forbore to fire. They only realized when it was too late that it was the main body of Boers whose retirement had been checked for a moment. Then guns were brought up, and a few who had made a stand in a farm half a mile beyond were quickly driven out. Our success was complete.

Seeing us in possession of Green Hill, the Boers evacuated Hlangwane, and their first and strongest line of defence south of the Tugela was in our hands. They had a large camp at the back of Hlangwane and another very scattered one behind Green Hill. These we were free to examine. There were not many tents, and it looked as if most of the Boers bivouacked under trees or, if they were near trenches, in exceedingly well-made bombproof shelters. The trenches themselves were marvellous. There must have been several miles of them, cut or blasted in many cases out of the solid rock, often as much as 6ft. deep so that it was difficult to know how they could fire out of them. They mostly had sandbags in front, and a carefully screened way in or out. It is not to be wondered at that our shell fire does little damage when the Boers are in their trenches. In the camp a considerable amount of ammunition was found, including, I regret to state, a quantity of expanding bullets of various patterns, including Dum Dums, soft-nosed, and split bullets. The Boers did not appear to be short of food. A great many oxen had been slaughtered, and a quantity of biltong was found hanging to dry in the sun. Besides this there were sacks full of bread, potatoes, onions, and tea. The Boer's personal effects were limited in most cases to a blanket, a saddle, and a Bible, which he did not apparently take into battle with him. That night the troops bivouacked on the position they had taken.

The following day Hlangwane was occupied, but no advance northward was made. A small force of Boers recrossed the river and occupied a wooded hill above the wooden bridge by which they usually passed to and from Hlangwane. They were not attacked, and, after keeping up a desultory rifle fire all day, they retired in the evening. That evening two companies of the Composite Rifles Battalion entered Colenso and found it, and the kopjes beyond, evacuated, except for a few snipers. The Fort Wylie group of kopjes formed the right of the Boer position, and our occupation of Hlangwane rendered it untenable. That day the heavy guns were moved forward to Green Hill. The following day, February 20, General Hart, leaving the Border Regiment to guard Chieveley, occupied Colenso with the rest of his brigade, and Colonel Thorneycroft, crossing the river with some of his men, reconnoitred the kopjes beyond. They found them only weakly held and all the guns gone. Colonel Norcott advanced to the Tugela and occupied the south bank, from the point where Monte Cristo touches the river to Colenso. On the other side the Boers could be seen in small numbers digging trenches, but they did not show anything approaching to the same vigour as they had shown during the first days of our arrival at Spearman's Hill. In fact, their tactics appeared to be those of a rearguard action.

201.

20th March 1900.

THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, JAN. 3.

The New Year has brought to Mafeking and the garrison that is beleaguered within its walls no signs of the fulfilment of the prophecy that relief would come by the end of December. Indeed, the closing year of the 19th century was ushered in with the boom of cannon and the fire of small arms, and in a style generally which does not differ from any one of the many days during which the siege and bombardment have lasted. There was no cessation of hostilities similar to that which characterized Christmas Day ; firing began at an early hour in the morning from the enemy's artillery, and did not terminate until the evening gun gave a few hours' peace to the town. For quite a fortnight there has been no such heavy fire, and it would seem that for our especial edification the authorities in Pretoria had sent to the commandant of the Boer forces that are investing us a New Year's gift of three wagon-loads of ammunition. A new gun as also despatched to them, and, its position being constantly shifted, its fire has since played upon every quarter of the town. For the moment we had attached no great importance to this new weapon, but after the first few rounds it was discovered to be employing what are called combustible bombs. These new shells do not usually explode, seeming to discharge a chemical liquid which ignites upon contact with the air. They are also filled with lumps of sulphur, and so severe might be the damage from this new agency of destruction which the Boers have turned against Mafeking that the most stringent orders have been issued for any one finding these shells to see that they are immediately buried. At present, beyond a few unimportant blazes in the gardens of the town, no damage has been caused, while in the meantime our situation here has in no way altered.

THE INHUMANITY OF THE BOERS.

It would appear that our resistance is beginning to exasperate the enemy, driving him to a pitch in which he is determined to respect neither the Convention of Geneva nor the promptings of humanity. Again, despite the innumerable warnings which he has received, for two days in succession has he made the hospital and the women's laager the sole object of his attentions. Yesterday the shells fell sufficiently wide of these two places to justify the broad-minded in giving to his artillery officers the benefit of the doubt ; but to-day it is impossible to find any extenuating circumstances whatever in his favour, and your Correspondent very much regrets to have to state that through the shelling of the women's laager many children's lives have been sacrificed, many women mutilated. From time to time, every effort has been made to give to the gentler sex the most perfect immunity, but it would seem as though we can no longer consider as safe these poor innocent and helpless non-combatants. The children of some of the most respected and most loyal townspeople have been killed in this manner, just as they were romping within the trenches which encircle their retreat. For two hours this morning the quick-firing guns of the enemy fired into the laager, creating scenes of panic and consternation which it is not fitting to describe. These actions upon the part of the Boers, as Colonel Baden-Powell has repeatedly pointed out to them, make it almost impossible for us to regard our foe as other than one which is inspired with the emotions of a degraded people and the crude cruelty and vindictive animosity of savages. Just now, when the press of our feelings is beyond confinement, there is nothing but a universal wish that we may speedily be relieved and so enabled to enjoy the initiative against the Boers. When that moment comes it must not be forgotten that we have suffered bitterly, and in a way which must be taken as excusing any excesses which may occur.

A NATIVE CHIEF DEPOSED.

During the time which has elapsed since Christmas the only other event has been the deposition of Wessels, the chief of the Baralongs. At a *kotla* of the tribe, to which the councillors and petty chiefs were bidden by the Imperial authorities, Colonel Baden-Powell and the Civil Commissioner, Mr. Bell, notified the tribe of their decision. The deposed chief, a man of no parts whatever, but one who unfortunately reveals all the vices of civilization, has been put upon sick leave, the reins of government being placed in the hands of his two chief councillors. Wessels has been instigating his tribe to refuse to work for the military authorities here, and through his instrumentality it has become difficult to obtain native labour and native runners. With the change which has been adopted and which has been given the sanction of the *kotla*, it is hoped that matters may progress more smoothly and the tribe itself increase in prosperity. It was an interesting meeting, and one which recalled the early days of Africa, when the authority of the great White Queen was not a power paramount in

the council chambers of the tribes. Wessels, unwilling and assuming an air of injured dignity, filled his place in the *kotla* for the last time; around him there were the chiefs of the tribe, his blood relatives, and his councillors. Their attire was a weird mixture of effete savagery and of the civilization of the sort which is picked up from living in touch with white Africa and missionary societies. Many black legs were clothed in trousers, many black shoulders wore coats. Here and there, as relics of the past, there was the ostrich feather in the hat, the fly whisk, composed of the hairs from the tail of an animal, the iron or bone skin-scraper with which to remove the perspiration of the body. A few wore shoes upon naked feet, a few others sported watch-chains and spoke English. At the back of the enclosure there was a native guard who shouldered Martinis or elephant guns, Sniders or sporting rifles. A few of these were garmented with skins of animals upon the naked body. After a stately and not altogether friendly greeting to the two white men who had ordered the assembly to meet, the reasons which had brought about the contemplated change in the head of the tribe were stated in English and then translated by the interpreter. The old chief snorted with disgust and endeavoured to coerce his people to reject the demands made upon them. But they had been made before a body of men who were capable of realizing the worthlessness of their chief, and who, under the protection of the Imperial delegates, did not mind endorsing the suggestions and expressing their opinions. The younger and more turbulent, who recognized in the failings of the chief follies dear to their own hearts, were inclined to express sympathy for the man who was so soon to be compelled to relinquish the sweets of office. They spoke at once in an angry chatter and confused chortle of sounds, which, if eloquent, were wholly insufficient. The chief then threw himself back upon his chair, spat somewhat contemptuously, and finally acquiesced in the decision, obtaining some small consolation from the fact that his official allowance would not be discontinued. Then the *kotla* ended, and the indunas rose up and left, standing together in animated groups around the palisades, for the discussion of the scene in which they had just taken part. Then, as the decision spread throughout the tribe, children and women, young and old, banded together to watch these final indabas.

A NATIVE DANCE.

The scene had been solemn enough beneath the *kotla* tree, but outside the natural instinct of these children of the veldt soon asserted itself, and they began to dance. They formed into small groups of about 40, to the sound of hand-clapping, a not unmusical intoning, and much jumping and stamping of feet. It would seem that they were dancing an old war dance which had degenerated into one symbolical of love and happiness. Around the joyous groups the old crones circulated, clapping their withered hands, shrieking delight in cracked voices, and generally encouraging the festivity. The dance was curious, and appeared to catch echoes of many lands. There was a diffident maiden, anxious to be loved, but bashful, modest in her manner and in her gestures, until she saw the man that could thrill her; then she glowed, and her steps were animated, buoyant, and caressing. A smile irradiated her face, while a slight, almost imperceptible, movement pulsed through her body. Behind her were her companions, the same age as herself, who imitated her with feverish sympathy, instinctively reproducing her moods of body and of mind. The vibration that stole through the bodies of the dancers increased gradually as the potency of their feelings grew steadily stronger. The air became heavy with noise, thick with a veritable tumult, as the dancers jumped more wildly. As they glided their actions seemed always to be marked with the same regularity, with the same regard to rhythm, and with an innate conception of grace. As they rose to the pinnacle of their happiness, when their countenances were suffused with love and tenderness, they infused into their emotions an appearance of sadness. It was as though a cloud had suddenly fallen upon them, revealing that they had been flouted. Then there stole upon them the incarnation of sorrow, in which, finding themselves alone, uncared for, unconsidered, they resolved, in a burst of artificial tears, to have done with giddiness, and to take up with the delights of placid domesticity. Then the dance terminated, she, who had by her graceful contortions and sympathetic bearing moved her audience to laughter and tears first, being considered the victorious. Thus did these simple natives celebrate the new era.

THE DEFENDER OF MAFEKING.

As your Correspondent returned from the staadt, the man who had instigated this important change in the tribe was lying in his easy chair beneath the roof of the verandah of the head-quarters office. Colonel Baden-Powell is young, as men go in the Army, with a keen appreciation of the possibilities of his career. His countenance is keen, his stature short, his features sharp and smooth. He is eminently a man of determination, with great physical endurance and capacity, and extraordinary reticence. His reserve is unbending, and one would say, quoting a phrase of Mr. Pinero's, that fever would be the only heat which would permeate his body. He does not go about freely, since he is tied to his office through the multitudinous cares of his command, and he is chiefly happy when he can snatch the time to escape upon one of those nocturnal silent expeditions, which alone calm and assuage the perpetual excitement of his

present existence. Outwardly, he maintains an impenetrable screen of self-control, observing with a cynical smile the foibles and caprices of those around him. He seems ever bracing himself to be on guard against a moment in which he should be swept by some unnatural and spontaneous enthusiasm, in which by a word, by an expression of face, by a movement, or in the turn of a phrase, he should betray the rigours of the self-control under which he lives. Every passing townsman regards him with curiosity not unmixed with awe. Every servant in the hotel watches him, and he, as a consequence, seldom speaks without a preternatural deliberation and an air of incisive finality. He seems to close every argument with a snap, as though the steel manacles of his ambition had check-mated the emotions of the man in the instincts of the officer. He weighs each remark before he utters it, and suggests by his manner, as by his words, that he has considered the different effects it might conceivably have on any mind as the expression of his own mind. As an officer, he has given to Mafeking a complete and magnificent security, to the construction of which he has brought a very practical knowledge of the conditions of Boer warfare, of the Boers themselves, and of the strategic value of the adjacent areas. His espionage excursions to the Boer lines have gained him an intimate and accurate idea of the value of the opposing forces and a mass of *data* by which he can immediately counteract the enemy's attack. He loves the night, and after his return from the hollows in the veldt, where he has kept so many anxious vigils, he lies awake hour after hour upon his camp mattress in the verandah, tracing out, in his mind, the various means and agencies by which he can forestall their move, which, unknown to them, he had personally watched. He is a silent man. In the noisy day he yearns for the noiseless night, in which he can slip into the vistas of the veldt, an unobtrusive spectator of the mystic communion of tree with tree, of twilight with darkness, of land with water, of early morn with fading night, with the music of the journeying winds to speak to him and to lull his thoughts. As he makes his way across our lines the watchful sentry strains his eyes a little more to keep the figure of the colonel before him, until the undulations of the veldt conceal his progress. He goes in the privacy of the night, when it is no longer a season of moonlight, when, although the stars are full, the night is dim. The breezes of the veldt are warm and gentle, impregnated with the fresh fragrances of the Molopo, although, as he walks with rapid, almost running, footsteps, leaving the black blurr of the town for the arid and stony areas to the west, a new wind meets him, a wind that is clear and keen and dry, the wind of the wastes that wanders for ever over the monotonous sands of the desert. He goes on, never faltering, bending for a moment behind a clump of rocks, screening himself next behind some bushes, crawling upon his hands and knees. His head is low, his eyes gaze straight upon the camp of the enemy; in a little, he moves again, his inspection is over, and he either changes to a fresh point or startles some dozing sentry as he slips back into town.

JANUARY 16.

Since my last letter news has reached Mafeking of the departure from England for the seat of war of Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, with Major-General Lord Kitchener as his chief staff officer. The tidings has been received here by the inhabitants, as apart from the garrison, as confirming the gravity of the general situation. We would hope, of course, that so sombre a view may prove to be mistaken, and that up to the present there has been nothing at which to cavil in the conduct of the campaign; but, despite the uncertainty of the news, there can be no doubt that it has in one way had a cheering effect upon the garrison, since there is no one here who thinks that, with such a warrior at the head of affairs, England can do aught but achieve an immediate supremacy. We are inclined to believe that Lord Roberts will bear in mind the position of Mafeking and despatch a column immediately to our relief.

"SNIPING" AND CATTLE RAIDING.

This week has seen the return to Mafeking of a gun which accompanied Cronje when he moved south, but what this implies we cannot tell, and although it has since taken part daily in the bombardment of the town it has not secured to the enemy any great advantage. The result of one day's shelling, however, was unfortunate, since, in conjunction with a five-pounder, the Boers shelled the Cape Police fort at Ellis's Corner. Since the siege began sharpshooters have been in the habit of going regularly to this fort, which is in reality merely a trench with a mud wall, roofless house at either end, for the purpose of sniping the outlying trenches of the enemy. At one end of Ellis's Corner, beneath the tarpaulin, which has been spread across the four walls of the hut, is the Maxim position, while the building at the other is more or less open to the sky and used as a coign of advantage from which to fire. This Cape Police post is the most advanced of any upon the eastern front of the town. Trenches have been made so that a safe passage can be secured between the town and the fort, while a trench running at right angles with the position leads to the Kaffir church and to another sniping point in the river bed. From the fort itself one can obtain an excellent view of the enemy's advanced earthwork, the range being some 1,200 yards. It is therefore an interesting place to visit, and one eminently adapted to the somewhat exciting pastime of sniping. Such sniping, however, as this is in no way so

dangerous as is the case when one is situated in the most outlying of our positions. In these cases the snipers take up their posts during the night in trenches which have been dug within 700 yards of the enemy and maintain during the day a steady fire upon the position against which they have been pitted. Along the eastern front of the town there are numerous posts which are in occupation by snipers, and from which it is impossible to move during the day. Occasionally these advanced trenches are shelled, and this is taken as a compliment to the accuracy of their fire, since the Boers have by now learnt that it is inadvisable to dress their guns when within reach of our snipers. Recently these men were instructed to direct their attention to the emplacement of the big gun, and so hot was the fire that was poured upon Big Ben that the enemy were found on the following morning to have raised the parapet of their emplacement, while a few days after it was found that they were preparing to withdraw the gun to a position in which it could not be reached by our fire.

Black and white alike take part in sniping, but to the native here the siege has brought the means and opportunity of indulging in a pastime of quite a different character. If sniping be the rule by day, cattle raiding by night gives to the natives some profitable employment. During last night the Baralongs secured by a successful raid some 24 head of cattle, and in the course of last week another raiding detachment looted some 18 oxen. The native enjoys himself when he is able to participate in some cattle raiding excursion to the enemy's lines, and, although the local tribe may not have proved of much value as a unit of defence, their success at lifting the Boer cattle confers upon them a unique value in the garrison. We were deploring the poorness of the cattle which remained at our disposal only a few days ago, but the rich capture which these natives have made has given us a welcome change from bone and skin to juicy beef. These night excursions are eagerly anticipated by the tribe, and almost daily is the consent of the colonel sought in relation to such an object. During the day the natives who have been deputed to take part in the raid approach as near to the grazing cattle as discretion permits, marking down when twilight appears the position of those beasts that can be most readily detached from the mob. Then, when darkness is complete, they creep up, divested of their clothes, crawling upon hands and knees, until they have completely surrounded their prey. Then quietly, and as rapidly as circumstances will allow them, each man " gets a move on " his particular beast, so that in a very short space of time some ten or 20 cattle are unconsciously leaving the main herd. When the raiders have drawn out of ear-shot of the Boer lines, they urge on their captures, running behind them, and on either side of them, but without making any noise whatsoever. As they reach their staadt, their approach having been watched by detached bodies of natives, who, lying concealed in the veldt, had taken up positions by which to secure the safe return of their friends, the tribes go forth to welcome them, and when the prizes have been inspected and report duly made to the colonel, they celebrate the event with no little feasting and dancing. Upon the following day merriment reigns supreme, and for the time the siege is forgotten.

MAFEKING BEFORE AND AFTER SIEGE.

JANUARY 20.

Yesterday we completed the first 100 days of our siege, and when we look back beyond the weeks of our investment into those earlier days it is difficult to realize the trials and difficulties which we have undergone and to believe that the period which has elapsed has witnessed the inauguration of a new era for South Africa. In those early days when we first came here Mafeking was a flourishing commercial centre, contented with its position, proud of its supremacy over other towns, and now, perhaps, if outwardly it be much the same, its future is impressed with only the faint echo of its former greatness. The town itself has not suffered very much ; here and there its area has been more confined for purposes of defence, while the streets and buildings bear witness to the effects of the bombardment. Houses are shattered, gaping holes in the walls of buildings, furrows in the roads, broken trees, wrecked telegraph poles, and that general appearance of destruction which marks the path of a cyclone are the outward and visible signs of the enemy's fire. We shall leave in Mafeking a population somewhat subdued and harassed with anxiety for their future, since the public and private losses will require the work of many anxious years before any restoration of the fallen fortunes can be effected. The pity of it is that all this distress might have been so easily avoided, and would have been, had the authorities in Cape Town and at home taken any heed of the very pressing messages which were despatched daily to them ; but it was decreed that Mafeking should shift for itself for so long as it was able, and then—surrender. This, however, did not meet the approval of Colonel Baden-Powell, with the result that we are still fighting and still holding our own. We have even achieved some little place in the sieges of the world, and our present record has already surpassed many of the more prominent sieges. We have not yet equalled the siege of Azoth, which Herodotus tells us lasted for 29 years, nor come within appreciable measure of the siege of Troy. But there is not much consolation to be gained from contemplating the position which we may eventually take up in the records of famous sieges, and, truth to tell, there is such glorious uncertainty about the date of our relief that it is perhaps possible that we may surpass the longest of historic sieges. At one time we confidently anticipated that the siege

would be over in ten days. This, however, was in the days of our youth; since then we have learned wisdom, and eagerly seize opportunities of snapping up any unconsidered trifles in the way of bets which lay odds upon our being "out of the wood" in another month. Events are moving so slowly below that it does not seem as though we shall be relieved by the end of February. The relief column, which a month ago appeared almost daily in "Orders," now seems to have passed out of existence, although there is little reason to doubt that, at some very remote date, the troops may make their appearance here.

SIEGE PRICES AND SUPPLIES.

We have now begun to prepare for an indefinite sojourn in Mafeking, and almost all food-stuffs beyond a few luxuries have been taken over by the military authorities. Although we have enough food to last several months, this precaution is necessary, as when the siege is raised many weeks must elapse before supplies can come in. The garrison has been put upon a scale of reduced rations—½lb. of bread, ½lb. of meat per day. The reductions in bread took place in the early part of the year, while the orders in relation to the meat supply were issued during this week. Matches and milk are prohibited from public sale, and the latest order prevents the shops from opening. All supplies of biscuits, tea, and sugar—preserves also—have been commandeered. It is, perhaps, difficult to define precisely what in the present circumstances are luxuries, but, lest there should be any doubt upon the point, the price of every variety of comestible has been inflated to an abnormal value. The shopkeepers and the hotel proprietors, and indeed anybody who can find any possible excuse for doing so, have trebled the price of their goods, pleading that the inflation is due to the siege. In many instances there is no reason which justifies such an action, but each merchant in his turn puts the blame upon some one else. Accordingly, meal and flour have jumped from 27s. per bag to 50s.; potatoes, where they exist at all, are £2 per cwt.; fowls are 7s. 6d. each; and eggs 12s. per dozen. Milk and vegetables can no longer be obtained, and rice has taken the place of the latter upon the menus. These figures mark the rise in the more important food-stuffs as sold across the counter, but the hotels have, in sympathy, followed the example, they upon their part attributing it to the increase which the wholesale merchants have decreed. A peg of whisky is 1s. 6d., dop brandy 1s., gin 1s., large stout is 4s., small beer 2s. In ordinary times whisky retails at 5s. per bottle. This rate has now advanced to 18s. per bottle and 80s. per case. Dop, which is usually 1s. 4d., is now 12s. per bottle; the difference upon beer is almost 200 per cent., and inferior cigarettes are now 18s. per 100. Upon an inquiry among the publicans here your Correspondent was informed that the chief reason for the increase in their prices was to hinder the local soldiery from becoming intoxicated, but this sudden regard for the moral welfare of the garrison on the part of the saloon keepers is oddly at variance with their earlier practices, and is in reality the flimsy pretext by which they seek to condone an almost unwarrantable act. Hitherto the constantly recurring evils arising from the sale of drink to soldiers and others performing military duties have been openly encouraged by the hotel proprietors, who, although they now profess a fine appreciation for the moral obligations attached to their trade when prices are high and profits great, took no very serious steps at the outset to allay what was becoming a very serious menace to the community. Moreover, the hotels have demanded from such people as war correspondents and others brought here through business connected with the siege rates which are far in advance of the ordinary tariffs, with equally preposterous demands for native servants and horse-feed. Indeed, whatever Mafeking may lose through the absence of business with the Transvaal, many will receive ample compensation from the high prices by which those who are able are endeavouring to recoup themselves, and in a way which it is not possible to consider other than extortionate. Stores of all kinds are, however, rapidly giving out, and it would not have been possible for Mafeking to have sustained the siege so long had not the Government contractor, upon his own initiative, laid in far greater stocks of provisions than were provided for by his contract, and in this respect every credit should be given to the commercial foresight and sagacity by which these arrangements were inspired. For everything which is in daily want, in fact for the bare necessities of life upon the existing scale of reduced rations, Mafeking now depends upon the stores and bonded warehouse which represent the local branch of the contracting firm, Messrs. Julius Weil and Co. In their hands lies the issuing of the daily allowances of bread and meat to the garrison, of the forage for the horses, of the feeding of the natives. There have, of course, been numerous complaints, but one is inclined to regard the spirit which inspires them, when we are oppressed by the siege and upon short commons, as more extraordinary than the cause at which exception is taken. Upon the whole it is generally allowed that such arrangements as were made by the contractor have been eminently satisfactory, and when the time comes to give honour to whom honour is due, notice should be taken of the important *rôle* which this firm has fulfilled during the siege of Mafeking.

24th March 1900.

OUR WARS AND OUR WOUNDED.

I.

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, FEBRUARY.

The intrinsic merit of the performance of the Royal Army Medical Corps in this campaign is likely to conceal from view some grave underlying dangers which nothing but good fortune has averted, as well as certain deficiencies in this department of the War Office which it is equally important to examine. To raise such a question is in no way to impugn the character of the actual work done here; and if it bears to some extent on the principles which govern our whole Army medical system, the final responsibility must still rest with Parliament which supplies the means. It is not, therefore, the quality that has to be criticized so much as the quantity, measured first by its numerical strength, for which the country is responsible, and secondly by its power of automatic expansion in time of war, which is a matter largely under the control of the department itself.

The necessity for rendering the British Army Medical Service capable of meeting great emergencies must be clearly demonstrated before we proceed. England realizes now that her Empire can only be sustained in the last instance by the sacrifice of human life; but for each man who dies on the field there are five wounded carried away from it, pierced by bullets or shattered by shell, subjected to physical pain and torture which the hand of man—aye, of woman—can do much to alleviate, and to the final risk which the highest science can in most cases avert. For every wounded man there are, or have been in former wars, at least three struck down by sickness who require as much science as, and more nursing than, the wounded. In the Franco-German war the proportion of actual deaths from disease to those by wounds was four to one, in the Russo-Turkish war 44 to 16, and in the Cuban war ten to one. This long procession of human suffering, which starts up in the train of every great war and increases in volume and insistence as battle succeeds battle and the conditions which germinate disease are prolonged, makes a demand on patriotism and humanity to which no nation, least of all England so rich in both, can possibly turn a deaf ear. So far as voluntary assistance, individual and collective, is concerned, the nation has stood with both hands open in this war. But voluntary assistance is not enough. Largely as we may rely upon it in all times of national stress, it is not right or prudent that such reliance should be carried to the point indicated by the present strength of the Army Medical Department in relation to the needs of a great war. The dawn of the new century has brought with it a sudden awakening to national responsibilities; and, amongst those to which political recognition must be given, not the least important or least pressing is the condition of the Army Medical Service, the mere mention of which during the past few years has been sufficient to empty the benches of the House of Commons.

The case may be stated in a nutshell. A single Army corps—in round numbers, with lines of communication, 50,000 men—sent to South Africa exhausted the whole available Army Medical Department of England. There was not a man left at home; the source was dried up. By latest official statement, which in spite of the surprise it has caused here must be accepted, we shall shortly have 194,000 men under arms in this country. This leaves a balance of 144,000 men for whose medical service Parliament has made no organized provision.

Let us look at the figures in another way. In the opinion of the highest military authority the provision for wounded should be 6 per cent. of the whole force taken into action—not merely what is under fire. In the third battle of Plevna—the battle of the Green Hills—in the days of now old-fashioned weapons, the Russians, assaulting a position little stronger than some of the Boer intrenchments with 92,000 men, lost nearly 20,000 killed and wounded. Taking the official estimate of 194,000 men in South Africa, and leaving the odd 44,000 for bases and lines of communication, the normal 6 per cent. on 150,000 would necessitate provision for some 9,000 wounded. The same authority states that in a campaign the provision for the sick should be double the ordinary sick rate of soldiers in the particular country in time of peace; the latter for the "Cape of Good Hope" is 5 per cent., which would give 10 per cent. in time of war. But, modifying this by the more healthy climate "up country," we might take 8 per cent. as the allowance which should be provided for here, or about 15,500 men. In the march to Kandahar Lord Roberts is said to have made provision for sick transport up to 7 per cent. of his force. On the above calculations the total provision for sick and wounded in this war should be equal to 24,000 men. To what extent this large number should be modified by the fact that the whole would not require accommodation at the same time it is very difficult to say. Two or three big battles concurrent with an epidemic of typhoid might leave no room for modification at all. But a mean of 10 per cent. of the whole force under arms is generally accepted; this would be 19,400 beds. Putting aside "field"

hospitals, which are only temporary *entrepôts* and must be evacuated as fast as they are filled, the utmost capacity of the present hospital accommodation for the wounded in this campaign does not exceed 5,000 beds.

We are bound to examine how even a far less startling disproportion of demand and supply can be remedied in the future. The best intentions and the most honest work on the part of the Army Medical Staff out here could never have brought the two into line, unless aided by singular good fortune. At Gravelotte 10,000 French wounded lay out for two days in charge of four doctors; we do not want a single wounded British soldier to go untended or unhoused. The accommodation has been sufficient up to now; but it is none the less obvious that such a state of things has been arrived at, and that a catastrophe has been averted, only by a happy combination of circumstances which it was impossible to foresee at the outset. In this campaign the fighting force has been broken up into four isolated columns of attack, to which must be added three besieged towns. If we had moved our whole strength up the centre and fought a decisive action with the whole strength of the enemy, armed as they are, where would have been the hospital accommodation for the wounded? The actions fought have been mostly small and insignificant; even amongst these we cannot forget Elandslaagte, where the wounded lay out on the rocky slopes they had won all through the night. Moreover, no considerable action has been pushed home. Had Colenso been fought to a finish Sir William MacCormac could never have written his thrilling account of the clearance of the wounded from the field, which, as it stands, was a splendid performance by both bearer companies and Army surgeons, but one that taxed their capacity to the full. Had the trenches at Magersfontein been taken the slaughter of the Highland Brigade would have been only an item in our loss. We can only suppose that in estimating their war establishments the Army Medical Department at home had a special prophetic vision of both the strategy and the tactics of the campaign, which Victoria-street did not impart to Pall-mall. If the casualty list has been lighter than might have been reasonably expected, the sick roll has been a far greater stroke of good fortune. The climate in which most of the fighting force has lived is notoriously healthy, and although convoys of enterics and dysenterics have lately been coming down from Orange and Modder Rivers in rapid succession, the proportion of sick to wounded in this war will form a record in strong contrast to the past, and one which it will be unsafe to rely on in the future.

These notes of warning must not be taken in any way to reflect on the merit or efficiency of the Army Medical Staff at present in South Africa. On the contrary, I desire to pay an early but emphatic tribute to Surgeon-General Wilson, the principal medical officer of the campaign, and to the able and devoted staff of Army surgeons serving under him, for the success with which they have distributed inadequate resources over a large and varied area and for the personal zeal and professional skill which they have brought to bear on the performance of their individual duties. The condition of the hospitals and of the wounded at Cape Town at the present moment affords the most satisfactory proof—that of results. It is not proposed to examine matters of detail dating back to the opening of the war. Some deficiencies of apparatus at that time have been alleged; but this is only hearsay, and, if true, probably lies at the door of some storekeeper at home. It is said also that the earliest pressure of wounded fell upon an inadequate organization; but the authorities maintain that they have always been "ahead" from the first. No doubt some friction has existed between the Red Cross Society, the Army Medical Department, and the Good Hope Society, a local movement which has given most generous and useful assistance to the hospitals. Complaints have been made about the meat and cooking in spite of the Swiss *chef* whose *cordon bleu* is pointed to by the authorities with as much pride as a Victoria Cross; one officer-inmate of considerable service told me that the beef was tough and unpalatable, and that they could hardly eat it. But the beef is the worst thing in South Africa—except perhaps the mutton. These minor defects have as far as possible been remedied since the hospitals were opened. The object of these letters is to discover the nature and extent of a more important deficiency than that of a few stores, and to consider certain methods of improvement which do not seem either to be difficult of application or to entail an undue strain on the resources of a country liable to great wars.

26th March 1900.

THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, FEB. 24.

Three times have I taken up my pen to write a review of the events in Ladysmith during the investment. Three times have I been disappointed. But now it seems that the time has really come. As I write I can hear the distant skirr of automatic guns, and the full boom of heavy volley firing. It would appear that night fighting is taking place at Groobelaar's Ridge, ten miles away. If General Buller succeeds in gaining

possession of this ridge, the road to Ladysmith and our relief is open.

In a letter, written shortly after the invasion of Natal, it was suggested that the true strategical line of defence which presented itself at the moment when the frontier was violated was the Tugela River. For political reasons, which have already been given, it was decided to pursue a more forward plan of campaign. The disposition of the small British garrison in the colony, in accordance with this forward policy, was in the first instance made by the late General Penn Symons. When Sir George White, with the tail of the reinforcements, arrived at Pietermaritzburg, war had practically been declared. At that moment, however much Sir George White may have desired a strategic withdrawal from Upper Natal, such a move was impossible. Already three months' stores had been pushed forward. The enemy had been allowed to take up such a position on the reverse of Langs Nek that they commanded the situation on the pass. Consequently, if uninterrupted, the enemy would have appeared upon the Tugela before any definite organization to hold the river line could have been perfected. This being the case, Ladysmith forced itself upon the general commanding in Natal. And,as events have turned out, it is probable that, with the troops at his command, no better move could have been made to prevent the enemy from occupying Natal proper. It is now accepted that at one period the Republics had over 30,000 men under arms in the colony. At the most, during the first four weeks of hostilities, Sir George White had only 15,000 men to stem this tide of invasion. I have no hesitation in saying that this force was inadequate to hold the Tugela. From the Drakensberg to the Buffalo River it would have been necessary to maintain a line extending considerably over 100 miles. The most that a general officer could have done under the circumstances would have been to have held the principal drifts as observation posts; and for the rest to have trusted to the Boers to throw themselves against his main position and for reinforcements from the seaboard. We now realize the extreme mobility of the enemy, and it is not too much to surmise that, if it had not been for the series of actions which opened the campaign in Natal and the subsequent concentration at Ladysmith, the Boers, at the end of October, would have been in position to cross the river in force at any place or places which they chose to select.

It was not until November 9 that General Clery's reinforcements arrived in Natal. In these nine days the whole complexion of the campaign might have been altered. If, when established on the Tugela, the Natal Field Force had been worsted, it would have been forced to fall back along the railway line, possibly as far as Pietermaritzburg. If this eventuality had occurred the enemy, in their mobility, could have operated on either or both of the flanks of the retreating force with the choice of ground and time. Take for example the action fought outside Ladysmith on October 30. If this engagement had taken place below the Tugela and there had been no Ladysmith for the force to fall back upon, what would have been the result? The occupation of the town in the early stages of the siege not only cut the enemy's main communication with the south, but it caused them to deliberate upon the advisability of pushing seawards. It was this delay which saved the situation. Their conflicts with the garrison in the field had taught the Boer commanders to respect the garrison. It was still mobile, and, as far as the Boers were aware, was still well equipped and efficient. It is not surprising that Joubert hesitated to press forward while this considerable force lay upon his communications. It was during these few days of vacillation and doubt that the Boers lost their real opportunity. While they were placing heavy artillery in position round Ladysmith to incarcerate the garrison, and while they waited to intrench Colenso, General Clery and his three brigades were disembarking at Durban. Thus Pietermaritzburg was saved, though the enemy arrived within 40 miles of the town.

The feature of the present struggle in South Africa has been that the lessons of modern warfare have been learned on the field of operations. There has been little in our small wars of recent years which has trained either general, staff, or fighting unit for the stern realities of war under its changed conditions. The reams of theory and speculation which have been written on the subject have for the most part been blasted in a single engagement. To one and all the teaching of the lesson has been rough—to the pioneers of the campaign more rough than to those that have come after. In Ladysmith we have been learning new lessons each day of the protracted siege. An inkling of what might be expected to occur under the influence of the mechanical improvements in weapons of precision had been grasped by the troops from India. The campaign of 1897 on the North-West Frontier had opened the eyes of those who had taken part in it. But for the rest the "bow-and-arrow warfare" in which we have been so constantly engaged during the last decade, and which has pushed so many junior officers into the senior ranks, and has covered the staff of the Army with decorations, meant nothing. Rather have the influences of such operations been detrimental. They have taught men to underrate their opponents, and have alienated the true instinct of strategy.

In no case was this more clearly defined than in the original precautions which were suggested for the protection of Ladysmith. When it became evident that it would be necessary to risk a siege in Ladysmith the following line of protecting

posts was chosen :—Cove Redoubt, Leicester Post, Junction Hill, Poundberry and Pavilion Hills, Gordon Post, and Range Post. A glance at the map will suffice to show how far those responsible for the safety of the garrison had realized what a siege under modern conditions would entail. Not only was every post commanded at short range, but there was also indecision as to whether the fortifications should be made shell-proof or be mere field works. If the original scheme for the defence of Ladysmith had been adhered to, either we should, long before this, have been reduced by shell fire or the extension of the perimeter would have been forced upon us at such an expenditure of life that there would not have remained sufficient men to make the extension good. Luckily the Boers did not realize the free gifts which were presented to them, and under appreciation of the effective range of the position gun which the enemy mounted on Pepworth Hill, 7,500 yards distant, the staff awoke to the fact that our only chance of enduring a siege lay in so extending our perimeter as to keep the enemy's heavy artillery at ranges beyond its power. Then it was that Cæsar's Camp, Wagon Hill, Helpmakaar, Observation Hill, and Observation West were occupied and placed in a state of defence.

As to the retention of the cavalry, I still hold the same view which was expressed in an article written earlier in the siege. In certain quarters it will be maintained that without the cavalry we should not have had sufficient men to supply a reserve in the case of emergency. Also January 6 and the action of the Imperial Light Horse will be quoted to refute my argument. But I adhere to the original statement that three cavalry regiments would have made a great difference to the relief force. If they had been sent down to Colenso the Dublin Fusiliers might have remained in Ladysmith. The mounted Volunteers would have furnished sufficient cavalry for the purposes of defence. As to the matter of reserve, every able-bodied civilian should have been enrolled as soon as Ladysmith was invested. Three months' training in the trenches would make serviceable men out of the majority of Englishmen, even if they had never previously handled a rifle. The fact that in February a corps of civilians about 2,000 strong—consisting of railway *employés*, artisans, and transport riders—was raised is a proof that the last resources of the garrison were not strained to man the breastworks from the beginning. In my opinion, the British cavalry on January 6 played no part in the defence of the threatened posts which could not have been carried out by the Volunteers. If the defences had been what they became eventually there should have been no need for reinforcements on this occasion. But the defences only grew as experience was gained. It must ever remain a matter for congratulation that this experience was not purchased at a heavier price.

When the enemy finally invested Ladysmith at 3 o'clock in the afternoon of Thursday, November 2, the staff found that they were called upon to provide for about 21,000 souls. At the close of the siege the list of persons on the ration list was as follows :—16,000 Europeans (including 750 Cape boys, who received a white man's ration), 2,440 Kaffirs (1,590 of whom were in Government employ), and 2,470 natives of India. There were also 150 children under ten years of age who received half-rations. In round numbers, the civilian portion of the garrison, including both sexes, amounted to 2,000. With the enormous consumption of foodstuffs which these numbers would entail it became imperative upon the military authorities to requisition all the staple food material that could be found in the town. The troops had about eighty days' supplies. A considerable quantity of this had been forwarded to Dundee and there abandoned when General Yule fell back upon Ladysmith. As a result of this general requisition, Colonel Ward, chief supply officer, collected 1,700 slaughter cattle, 14,000 tins of preserved milk, many hundred thousand pounds of mealies, and the whole grocery stock of the stores in town. In several instances the tradesmen hid part of their provisions, hoping to sell them at great profit when the state of siege became acute. This unpatriotic conduct, if it had succeeded, would have seriously affected not only the troops, but the civilian inhabitants as well. Over and above the slaughter cattle there were 1,600 trek oxen, 5,500 horses, and 4,500 mules within the perimeter. The slaughter of these draught animals for food commenced towards the end of January and continued until the end of the investment. The first serious commissariat difficulty which presented itself was the rationing of Intombi camp. The origin and history of this neutral zone and refuge camp has already been mentioned in a previous paper. From the very commencement it was a drag upon the supply department. It will be readily understood that when four or five thousand people have to be fed, at a distance of six miles from the main depôts, with only the service of one daily train, the difficulties of the executive increase. Intombi camp possibly furnishes the most pathetic history of the siege. During the closing weeks of the investment the situation there was hopeless. It is my intention to treat of Intombi in a future article, as hitherto having kept my health I have not, under the provision of the agreement between General White and Joubert, been allowed to visit the spot. But from the pathetic stories which have reached us, it seems that Intombi will be able to furnish a history of its own.

FEB. 28.

I feel that I may say that we are relieved. The ending has been strange. On Monday, February 26, the garrison was sunk in a slough of despondency. On the previous Thursday General Buller had

signalled from below in such confident language that the force had been placed upon full rations. Then, day by day, we had watched for some sign of the promised relief. Daily the guns had boomed, and occasionally we had caught a glimpse of the burst of an "accidental," but nothing more. Heavy weather had settled upon us and had blinded the little winking reflector on Monte Christo Hill. On Sunday the relieving force must have been engaged in a night attack, for the sound of volley firing was distinctly audible in Ladysmith. Then came a day of silence. The helio was veiled in cloud and there were no sounds of war. The spirits of the garrison fell. Grave rumours circulated. Men even said that for the third time the relief column had recrossed the Tugela. Monday brought a wave of hope, for at midday there was a gleam of sunshine, and we learned the news that Cronje had been surrounded in the Free State. Still there was no news from Buller's column. It was evident that the staff were also becoming anxious, for although the following day brought the news that Cronje had surrendered, yet the evening saw the garrison again reduced to quarter rations. This was only a precautionary measure, for Buller had helioed, "Everything progressing favourably." But the man in the street was sceptical. If favourable, why reduce the ration? Thus it was that Tuesday, Majuba day—although on that date the tide of fortune had turned in our favour—marked the lowest pitch of despondency into which the garrison was ever plunged during the 118 days of its investment.

But the tide was to turn. On Wednesday morning it was reported from the observation posts that the enemy were in full retreat on both sides of the town. There was no doubt about it. Some extraordinary movement was taking place. Both the wagon roads leading to Modder Spruit and Pepworth were choked with transport. Long lines of tilted wagons lurched forward as fast as the teamsters could urge them. Droves of cattle were heading to the passes. Spider buggies could be seen threading their way between the blocks of heavy vehicles. And then we saw the crowning sight—five field guns falling back at the trot. It went to our hearts to see it thus. If this had taken place six weeks ago, we could have sallied forth and turned that retreat into a rout. But in our present reduced condition we were unable to horse a single gun and feel satisfied that the team would survive four miles. The cavalry were no better. And it is doubtful if the infantry could have fought a battle after an hour's march. It was heartbreaking. But it would only have been courting disaster to have attempted any counter-coup upon our late besiegers. We had to be content with testing the range of our guns upon the fugitives. The Bulwana "Long Tom" on Majuba Day had treated us to a salute of 21 guns. This morning he fired a solitary round into the town about 10 o'clock. It was then observed that men were hard at work upon his parapet. About noon the heliograph was again able to signal from Colenso. The following message was received :—"Have thoroughly beaten the enemy. Believe them to be in full retreat. Have sent my cavalry to ascertain which way they have gone." This great news, the news which we had panted for for months, spread like wildfire. A cheer rose from the first camp it reached, and in half an hour the whole of Ladysmith rang with the shouts of jubilation. The National Anthem burst out above the uproar, to be followed by "Britannia Rules the Waves." Such was the sequel to Majuba Day.

As soon as this news was received it was realized that the enemy were dismantling "Long Tom." The derrick by which they mount and dismount him was visible above the parapet. The retirement must have been one of haste when they did not wait for the cover of night to dismantle their position artillery. The naval guns at once opened on the crest line of Bulwana, and the Elswick 12½-pounder had the good fortune to carry away the derrick, but not, I am afraid, until they had unshipped the gun. But now we had no need to husband our resources, and it was music in our ears to hear our own heavy guns again, merrily pounding a silent enemy. If Buller had only come early in January the Boers would never have taken that gun away.

But another and greater surprise was in store for the long-suffering garrison. About 5 o'clock, as we sat on Cæsar's Camp watching the effect of our shell fire on Bulwana, a few khaki-clad horsemen appeared over the bluff, across the valley. Some one remarked upon the impertinence of the enemy thus to expose themselves in the open. Then more appeared, and the fan of an advanced guard opened out. Then the truth dawned upon us. It was Buller's cavalry. There was no doubt about it now—a squadron moved out into the open. It was the head of the relieving column. A giant cheer rose from the men of the Manchester Regiment on Cæsar's Camp. The Gordon Highlanders in Fly Kraal caught up the cry "We are relieved," and then it pervaded the whole town. They were coming in between Cæsar's Camp and Intombi Spruit. Then occurred one of the most impressive sights that could be seen. The whole of Ladysmith, excepting the troops on duty in the trenches, surged down to the drift upon the river. One great shout of exultation rose up from the excited throng. The incoming cavalry, which was a column perhaps 300 strong, halted and formed up on the far bank. A silence came over the siege-worn spectators. The men looked so big and strong and well. Their horses were round and sleek and fat, in spite of the rough usage of campaigning. The contrast with our own condition was so striking that for the moment it appalled the crowd into

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silence. Then the little column formed fours and came splashing through the ford with Lord Dundonald, Major Mackenzie, L.H., and Captain Gough, 16th Lancers, at its head. It consisted of Light Horse, Natal Carbineers and some Border Mounted Police. It was a colonial force. This made the incoming all the more touching. Brothers found sisters, uncles met nephews, and the majority found friends, acquaintances, or relatives waiting to give them welcome. Women with streaming eyes pressed forward to grasp the hands of their deliverers. Fond mothers passed their infant children to the saddles of bronzed and bearded men. As the little force marched into the town the cheering passed up and down the line. Ladies flocked to the garden gates, and Ladysmith was wreathed in smiles and gay with waving handkerchiefs. Yet there were many who could not cheer. Their hearts were too full, for the arrival of news from below told of the death of some close relative or dear friend in the struggle of the last two months to set us free. The relief of Ladysmith has cost 6,000 casualties.

In the main street the head of the column was met by Sir George White and staff. It seemed that ten years had been taken off the life of the former, so changed was he from what he had been a week ago. As soon as the newcomers recognized him they burst into a deafening cheer. The garrison joined, and the tumult was furious. It must have carried to the ears of the Boers, if their pickets had not withdrawn. The crowd surged round the general, and when he could be heard he addressed a few words to the assembled mass. He congratulated the relieving cavalry, and, turning to the civilians of the garrison, thanked them for the brave support which they had rendered him. He said that it had gone to his heart to reduce their rations, but he promised that it should not happen again. Then the crowd closed in upon the volunteers, begging for cigarettes, a fill of English tobacco, a piece of wheaten bread—anything of which they had so long been deprived.

It was only 300 men, and it seems that they have arrived without the knowledge of General Buller. Their orders were to follow up the Boers and to see where they had retired to. They followed up but found no enemy, and came straight in. Buller's headquarters they believe this night will be at Pieter's Station. I am therefore riding through with a native guide, so that I may be with General Buller's force at daybreak to-morrow (March 1).

THE SURRENDER OF CRONJE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

PAARDEBERG, MARCH 3.

From the reports of scouts and deserters and from such observation as is possible from a balloon, supplemented by the stories of prisoners and careful inspection of the laager, this account of the last stand of the great Boer general is compiled. Written within four days of the surrender, and on the spot, it cannot, perhaps, be claimed that accuracy in details has been always secured, but the following is substantially a true history of the internal history of that brief resistance.

On Sunday, February 18, Cronje realized that the trap in which he found himself had no outlet. With the instinctive knowledge of an able general, he recognized that not a kopje ringing the even plain that gently shelved down to the river bed in which he found himself was without its hidden complement of troops, and that the escape of any considerable force even by night was, without outside relief, an impossibility. He was in possession of perhaps a mile of the river bed on either side of the Wolveskraal Drift, with the 19th Brigade of the English troops intrenched and sapping up towards him from the west and General Tucker's division slowly encroaching from the east.

To the south he was exposed to continual bombardment from the field guns massed on Gun Hill at a range of hardly more than a mile ; from the north he received the shell of the naval guns and another battery of howitzers. It is said that he deliberately retreated into the river in order to try again the tactics that might, if vigorously persevered in, have beaten off Lord Methuen's column at Modder River ; that he expected a general advance from all sides, and relied with some reason upon having ample men, rifles, and ammunition to man the line of trenches which he hastily threw up. But the more probable solution of his having entered this *cul de sac* is simply that he had no option. To retreat further was impossible, and defence for even three days was equally out of the question except in a position where water could be obtained. It is difficult to say what expectation of relief he had. Heliographic communication from one of the hills of the Petrusberg range, 20 miles to the south-west, undoubtedly reached him, as that communication was resumed after our occupation of the laager,

but no signalling apparatus was found there after the surrender and the value of a one-sided conversation by heliograph is very small. His stores were terribly deficient in everything but ammunition; wagons containing provisions had been outspanned and abandoned during the retreat to help those containing munitions of war, and the actual supply of food was not more than sufficient to last a week. The presence of a few women and children added to his difficulties, and with the gravest misgivings he ordered Monday, February 19, to be spent in preparing a system of trenches that deserves more than a passing mention.

Reference to the map will show the general disposition of the earthworks, but the skill with which they were constructed as defences against both rifle and shell fire is worthy of the highest praise. All except those of the outer lines of pickets were made so narrow and deep that it seems as though they were in many cases entered from one end rather than the top, as any such ingress must even in a week's time have considerably widened the neck of the excavation. At the top they are, perhaps, 18in. wide, at the bottom about 3ft., and by crouching down the most complete protection is afforded from bursting shell.

Every natural protection, such as the ramifications of the dongas which eat into the banks on both sides of the river, has been utilized, though the bombardment from both sides compelled them to abandon their first hasty breastworks cut into the actual top of the bank, which is here from about 50 to 100 yards from the river itself, and 30ft. in height.

For the first time here the "T" trenches, of which much has been said during the present campaign, were used. Frankly, they do not seem to present the least advantage over the ordinary shapes except that in an exposed angle they may provide additional protection against an enfilading fire.

The Red House—a kind of dak-bungalow which is found near every drift in South Africa—was used as Cronje's headquarters. Here his wife slept, though during the daytime she joined the women in the carefully-made shelter constructed for them. Albrecht probably remained in the northern intrenchments with the guns, though the ammunition for the Krupp guns ran out on Tuesday. Speaking of his experiences in the trenches, he says that one of our lyddite shells burst within five yards of him, covering him with dirt and leaving a foul taste in his mouth, but otherwise not affecting him, even to the extent of knocking him down.

It is extraordinary that so few should have attempted to escape. Burnham, the well-known American scout, who for several nights crept up to the very trenches on either side of the river under cover of the scanty scrub, reports the "spoor" of only three or four deserters a night, of whom quite half must have been secured by our outposts and sentries.

Tuesday, the 20th, was marked by the severest bombardment of the entire investment, and a Boer doctor describes the position as awful. Nothing could be done but crouch in the trenches and wait till dusk prevented further attack, while wagon after wagon in the laager caught fire and burnt away into a heap of scrap iron amid a pile of wood ashes. The desolation produced was fearful, and it soon became impossible to make any reply. The losses inflicted upon the horses were the turning-point of the siege. So enormous a proportion (estimated by some at 75 per cent. of the total number present) of the horses, for which no protection could be made, were lost that any dash for freedom by night was impossible, and the condition of the laager rapidly became so foul that that alone, apart from the want of food, would have compelled an early surrender. There was no opportunity of getting rid of the vast number of dead animals; burial was impossible, and the low state of the river prevented them from sending them down stream for several days; all they could do was to drag them to leeward of their camp. Meanwhile decomposition set in, and the absolute need of clean air caused a serious rebellion in the camp, most of the 4,000 men demanding that surrender should be made at once. When on Sunday, the 25th, the flood brought down past our lines an unending series of dead animals that cannot have been less than 1,500 or 2,000, the desperate straits of the enemy were apparent indeed.

More to get rid of this plague than for the ostensible reason, General Cronje sent in asking for a day's armistice to bury his dead. Lord Roberts, suspecting that the delay was asked for merely to give time for the relieving force of Boers to come up, refused it, offering in turn to send doctors in to look after the sick and wounded. This offer, though subsequently accepted in a modified form, was refused, and Cronje, criticizing our Field-Marshal's attitude as "inhuman," closed his letter with the words, "Under the circumstances I have no other choice." By this the Boer commander merely meant that he had no option but to continue the struggle, but the mistake of an interpreter led to its being regarded as an offer of surrender. An answer framed on this misunderstanding led to an

indignant refusal by Cronje, who announced his intention of holding out till we should take the position by storm.

As a matter of fact a day's grace was given the besieged force, and the active bombardment only began again after the triple assault of small bodies of Boers, amounting in all to perhaps 4,000, on Wednesday and Thursday from the Kameelfontein, Osfontein, and Poplar Farm directions.

Hopelessness now settled down upon the imprisoned Boers, and among the arguments used to lessen Cronje's authority was that he had wilfully suppressed Lord Roberts's offer of safe-conduct to the women and children before the bombardment was begun. Hunger and nausea worked upon the despairing Boers, and all that could be put forward was used to compel Cronje to yield. For one whole day the struggle went on, and then a compromise was arrived at. If no help should have come by Wednesday morning, the 28th, the place should be surrendered, but Cronje, pointing out the abundance of rifles and ammunition, absolutely refused to surrender on the anniversary of Majuba-hill.

From that moment the Boers scarcely obeyed orders. A sharp division between the Transvaalers and the Orange Free State Boers ensued, and the only bond of sympathy that united them, besides their common adversity, was a long-hidden hatred of the Germans in their ranks. Albrecht, who had worked for them faithfully and well, whose orders had been hitherto implicitly obeyed, and to whom indeed the credit of nearly the whole of the successful opposition to the relief column is due, was openly accused of incompetence and even disloyalty. He, in turn, took no pains to conceal his opinion of the fighting powers of the Boers when on equal terms with the enemy, and the breach was complete. Until sunrise on the 27th the state of affairs among the Boers was pitiful. Apart from the ever-increasing hunger, despair of relief, and unhealthiness of the position, mutual recriminations destroyed the last consolation of adversity, good-fellowship, and Cronje sat aloof, silent and unapproachable.

The events of the early morning of the 27th can best be told from outside.

Brigadier-General MacDonald sent from his bed a note to Lord Roberts reminding him that Tuesday was the anniversary of that disaster which, we all remembered, he had by example, order, and threat himself done his best to avert, even while the panic had been at its height; Sir Henry Colvile submitted a suggested attack backed by the same unanswerable plea. For a moment Lord Roberts demurred to the plan; it seemed likely to cost too heavily, but the insistence of Canada broke down his reluctance, and the men of the oldest colony were sent out in the small hours of Tuesday morning to redeem the blot on the name of the mother-country.

From the existing trench, some 700 yards long, on the northern bank held jointly by the Gordons and the Canadians, the latter were ordered to advance in two lines—each, of course, in extended order—30 yards apart, the first with bayonets fixed, the second reinforced by 50 Royal Engineers under Colonel Kincaid and Captain Boileau.

In dead silence and covered by a darkness only faintly illuminated by the merest rim of the dying moon, "with the old moon in her lap," the three companies of Canadians moved on over the bush-strewn ground. For over 400 yards the noiseless advance continued, and when within 80 yards of the Boer trench the trampling of the scrub betrayed the movement. Instantly the outer trench of the Boers burst into fire, which was kept up almost without intermission from five minutes to 3 o'clock to ten minutes past the hour. Under this fire the courage and discipline of the Canadians proved themselves. Flinging themselves on the ground they kept up an incessant fire on the trenches, guided only by the flashes of their enemy's rifles, and the Boers admit that they quickly reduced them to the necessity of lifting their rifles over their heads to the edge of the earthwork and pulling their triggers at random. Behind this line the Engineers did magnificent work; careless of danger the trench was dug from the inner edge of the bank to the crest, and then for 50 or 60 yards out through the scrub. The Canadians retired three yards to this protection and waited for dawn, confident in their new position, which had entered the protected angle of the Boer position, and commanded alike the rifle pits of the banks and the trefoil-shaped embrasures on the north.

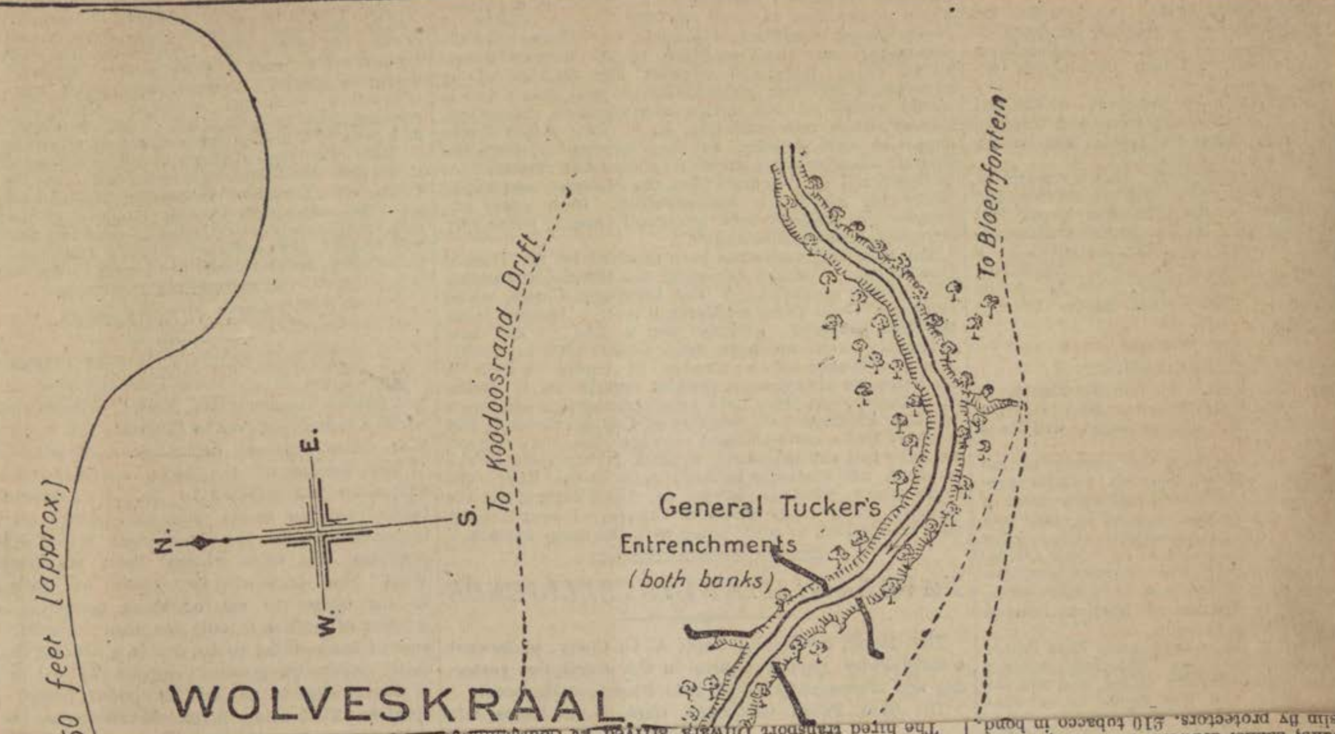
Cronje saw that matters were indeed desperate. Many Boers threw up their hands and dashed unarmed across the intervening space; others waved white flags and exposed themselves carelessly on their intrenchments, but not a shot was fired. Colonel Otter and Colonel Kincaid held a hasty consultation, which was disturbed by the sight of Sir Henry Colvile, General of the Ninth Division, quietly riding down within 500 yards of the northern Boer trenches to bring the news that even while the last few shots were being fired a horseman was hurrying in with a white flag and Cronje's unconditional surrender, to take effect at sunrise.

Of the three Canadian companies the foremost, and that which suffered most, was the French company, under Major Pelletier.

Meanwhile, a few formal preliminaries were being arranged at headquarters, and General Pretyman went out with a small escort to meet the Boer commander and his secretary.

Lord Roberts, in the plainest of khaki, without a badge of rank except his Kandahar sword, awaited the arrival of his distinguished prisoner. "Commandant Cronje," was the brief introduction as the Boer swung himself off his white pony and, curtly answering the Field Marshal's salute, shook hands. "I am glad to see you, I am glad

PLAN TO ILLUSTRATE CRONJE'S POSITION AT PAARDEBERG.



. Murray Hilton writes to express much
ll those who, in response to the Countess
ppeal, contributed to the collection of
took with them, which included over
ocks, 1,100 warm caps, 222 shirts, 450
lkerchiefs, soap, stationery, comforters,
rray Hilton is still collecting, and is
re flannel shirts, woollen drawers, socks,
es, &c. Address North-court, Finchamp-

Currey, The Pit-house, Ewell, Surrey,
oled, through the continued generous
r appeals, to send off on the 15th inst.,
to Lady Charles Cavendish Bentinck at
ith comforts for the troops and hospitals,
thing for refugee women and children—
total of 12 cases sent out by her since the
February. Mrs. Currey will be grateful
ntributions, especially of cardigans and
or the troops, and warm clothing (new)
omen and children, for whom as winter
e need is very urgent. All the supplies
Cape Town, to Lady Charles Bentinck,
s the various gifts where most needed.
Burton wishes to thank all those who
usly responded to her appeal for comforts
s Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment, of
Fowler Burton, C.B., is hon. colonel.
re despatched to the soldiers last week,
l-glasses, caps and helmets, worsted and
cholera belts, handkerchiefs, flannel
cuffs, flannel drawers and vests, knitted
uslin fly protectors. £10 tobacco in bond.

The following appointments were made at the Admiralty yesterday :—

Captains.—E. D. St. A. Ommanney, to the Northampton for the Calliope, and H. P. Routh, to the Juno, to date March 26 ; and G. H. Cherry, to the Pembroke, additional, to date March 26, and to the Argonaut, to date April 19.

Commander.—J. D. Daintree, to the Pembroke for the Amphitrite (N), to date April 5.

Lieutenants.—T. Brandreth, to the Pembroke, to date April 5, and to the Argonaut, to date April 19 ; R. L. C. Muntz, as 1st, F. C. Brown (G), W. J. B. Law (T), F. Payne-Gallwey, R. S. J. Wigram, and H. B. Mulleneux to the Argonaut, to date April 19 ; B. R. S. Winter, to the Cambrian, to date March 26 ; W. N. England, to the Melampus (1st), to date April 5 ; P. V. Oliver, to the Trafalgar (G), to date April 19 ; C. P. Beaty-Pownall, in command, and H. B. Wilson (in lieu of a sub.), to the Pembroke for the Desperate, to date March 13.

Sub-Lieutenants.—A. V. Rose, to the Argonaut, undated ; F. C. Harvey, to the Duke of Wellington for the Violet, to date March 23, and to the Argonaut, on commissioning, to date April 19 ; and G. T. Pickford, R.N.R., to the Excellent, to date March 24, for short course (G) as Acting-Lieut., commencing March 26.

Midshipmen.—W. C. Lucas, J. O. Elliot, K. Stobart, F. B. Coppin, C. C. Bell, M. B. Birkett, W. J. S. Green, and H. G. O'Brien, to the Argonaut, to date April 19.

The hired transport Dilwara arrived at Southampton

defects which do not appear upon the surface
contractor acknowledging no obligation beyond
ing something which outwardly conforms to the
patterns, and the inspector having no respo
beyond seeing that the outward conformity is
follows, of course, that with the fact of the boots
well or not, or of the hay being fit for food
neither contractor nor inspector has anything to

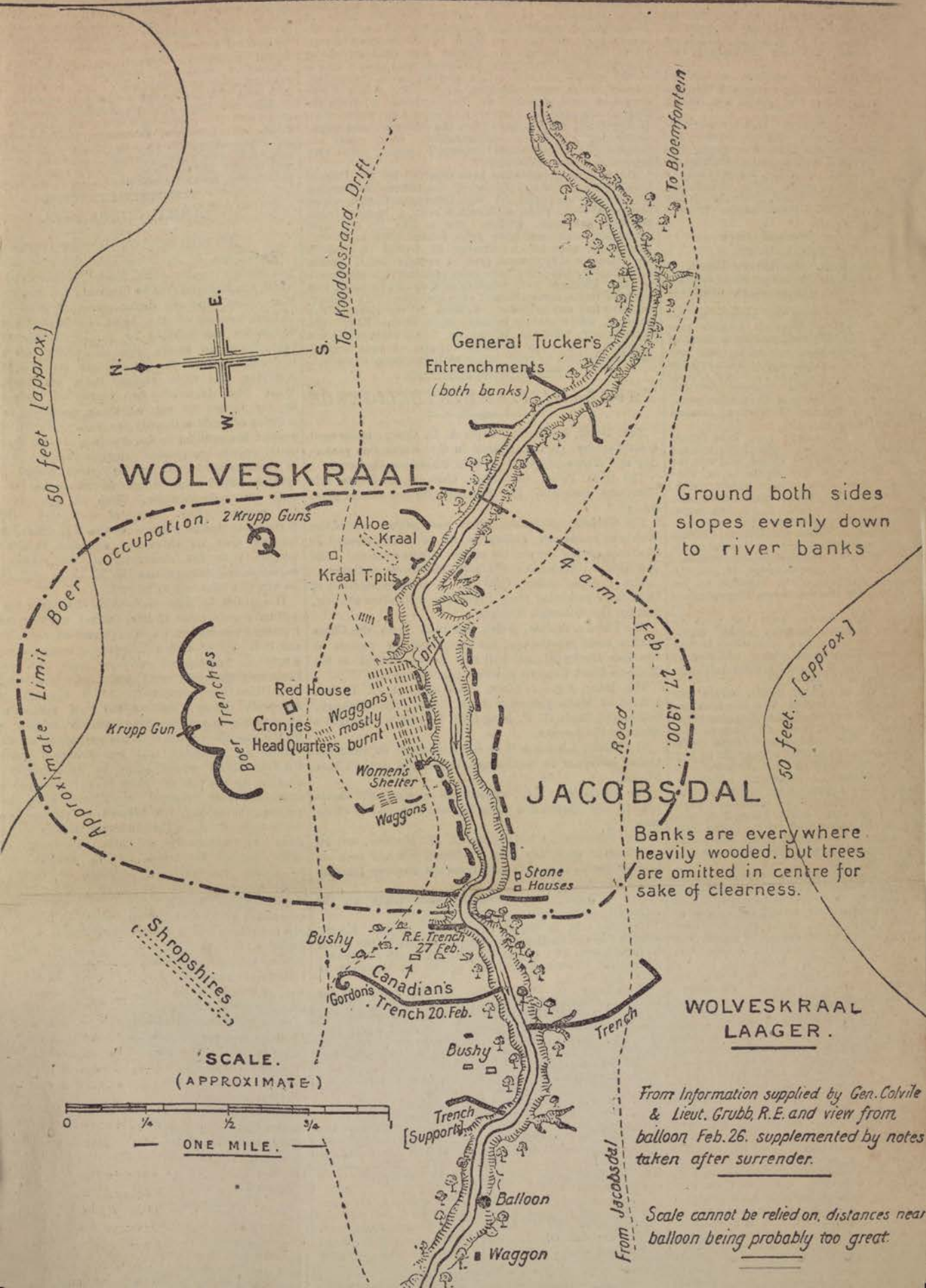
In fact, we have here another illustration of
great principle which the War Office consistently
alike in small things and in the greatest. Tha
ciple is—always divide responsibility in such a w
however disastrous the ultimate results may be
country, it shall always be possible for everybo
cerned to point to his formally correct discharge
narrow functions assigned to him by the "
Then when the system is attacked all will
defending the common screen for all individ
feasances. I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

March 26.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I agree with your latest correspondent
this matter the War Office should copy the
business-like procedure of the Admiralty.
form of tender with which the former
favoured us (quite recently) arrived—mirabile

PLAN TO ILLUSTRATE CRONJE'S POSITION AT PAARDEBERG.



From Information supplied by Gen. Colvile & Lieut. Grubb, R.E. and view from balloon Feb. 26. supplemented by notes taken after surrender.

Scale cannot be relied on, distances near balloon being probably too great.

to meet so brave a man," was Lord Roberts's brief welcome, and a formal surrender followed, the conversation being interpreted by Cronje's secretary.

The general, a man of few words, sat deeply sunken in his chair with his hands in the pockets of his overcoat, and sullenly regarded the scene. Every consideration was paid him, but until the last was seen of his bulky form driving away to Modder River in the closed carriage which had been provided for him, his set, hardened face only suggested that the bitterest hour of his life was being barely endured by the man whose pluck, whose capacity, and whose straightforwardness we his enemies are the first to admit.

29th March 1900.

BRITISH AND BOER MILITARY SYSTEMS.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT AT CAPE TOWN.)

Riding out from Paardeberg Camp on the afternoon of Majuba Day I met the long procession of Boer prisoners marching on their way to Modder River Station. It was a truly striking picture they presented. Here were the men that had checked the guard at Modder River and shot down the Highland Brigade at Magersfontein, the men who for a month held their own against our superior forces, who, even when in flight and hunted down into the ditch at Paardeberg, had repulsed Lord Kitchener's first onslaught with such heavy loss and for nine days after had stuck with limpet-like tenacity to their holes in the river bank, in spite of shrapnel and lyddite and the intolerable stench of hundreds of dead horses and oxen. Only the slow and sure pushing up of our lines along the river bed, ending in the final gallant rush of the Canadians, had led them to surrender. Here they were, these terrible fellows, placidly jogging along the high road, with their few personal belongings wrapped up into bundles with bright-coloured handkerchiefs, looking for all the world like English rustics going haymaking. Many of them carried umbrellas to protect their weather-beaten complexions from the sun. A few of the older men were allowed to ride on ponies to save them the fatigue of such unwonted exercise as marching. They were of every age, from mere boys to grey beards. A few looked sullen and depressed, but most of them were in good spirits, glad that for them at least the war was over, and without anxiety as to their future treatment. The question inevitably suggested itself, how was it that an army composed of men like these could have fought as these men had done? What was there in them to counterbalance the elaborate training of a European army? Some months ago, just before the outbreak of the war, I had the good fortune to spend a week in the Boer camp at Sandspruit, near Langs Nek; had seen something of their organization and discussed with them their methods of fighting. But nothing I saw there quite prepared me for the success those methods were destined to achieve—for there can be no doubt that the Boers have hitherto had a great measure of success, even when all due deduction is made for the fact that they have been mainly acting on the defensive. They have by no means always been on the defensive. The series of operations ending in the investment of General White at Ladysmith and the incursion into Natal as far south as Mooi River can hardly be called purely defensive movements. The moment our force at Rensburg was weakened by the withdrawal of troops for the concentration at Orange River the Boers turned the tables upon it and drove it back upon Arundel. That they have throughout failed in their attacks on intrenched positions is true, but the same applies with hardly less force to ourselves. It is by no means certain that, supposing for a moment the *rôles* inverted, 20,000 British troops would have been able to capture 10,000 Boers in Ladysmith while at the same time resisting the advance of another 30,000 Boers from the south.

The success of the Boers—after all allowance has been made for the extreme difficulty of the task imposed upon us by the natural conditions of warfare in South Africa, the enormous area of operations, the lack of provisions, and the scarcity of water—has been the success of their military system against ours. The Boers have undoubtedly a military system of their own, naturally developed in their wars with British troops and with natives, a system in many ways admirably adapted to the peculiar conditions introduced into modern warfare by the long-range quick-firing rifle. As a military system it is still very rudimentary; it has never been developed by discipline and training. Yet, rudimentary and unorganized as it is, it has had no slight measure of success. What the potentialities might be of an army effectively organized on Boer lines yet remains to be seen. In any case, there can be no doubt that the Boer system contains features from which we may well draw lessons of the utmost value. The Boer military system is primarily a national military system. It is not a thing learnt in books by a few among the senior officers, but something that exists in the mind of every single citizen of the two Republics. It may be said that almost every man in the ordinary Boer commando is not only a tolerably good shot, but has an excellent eye for country and for cover; he is able to realize whether a hill or a fold in the ground is defensible or not, whether it

offers facilities for retreat or attack. There have been no instances in this war hitherto of detachments of Boers blundering into traps in the way British forces have so repeatedly done. The nearest approach to such a blunder was the incautious advance of the Johannesburg commando, with its motley crowd of townsfolk and foreigners, which led to the defeat at Elandslaagte. But these were not the real Boers ; they would never have advanced into so dangerous a position for so little purpose. How opposed the whole performance was to the Boers' idea of soldiering can be seen from the references made to it by General Joubert in his despatches ; not a word of praise for the bravery with which they maintained an unequal fight, simply unqualified blame for the rashness which brought them into a difficult position. The art of digging trenches and erecting *schanzes* or breastworks of stone, and putting them in the position where they are most effectually concealed from any advancing force, seems also to come natural to the ordinary burgher. There is no reason to suppose that the Boers have learnt anything in this matter from foreign instructors.

Another feature of the Boer army is its extreme mobility. The whole force is mounted ; the Boers have been thus able naturally to throw their strength to any given point, leaving other vital positions almost undefended for the moment. They have hardly anywhere met us in equal numbers, but they have almost invariably been superior to us at the actual point of contest in a battle. A still more important feature in the Boer system is the individual initiative allowed to each burgher, and the knowledge each burgher possesses of what is going on. As far as possible the plan of an intended battle is communicated to the whole Boer army beforehand ; each man knows the general plan, and each man also has in himself a clear idea of the right thing to do in the ordinary emergencies which arise in the separate parts of a scattered battlefield. In the British Army very few men except the generals have much idea of what is intended to happen. If anything does go wrong at any particular point, if the conformation of the ground differs from what the intelligence officer has been led to believe, if the enemy are not found at the spot indicated, but suddenly appear somewhere else, individual soldiers and officers,as a rule,do not know what to do to meet the emergency. The fact is,such tactics as are possessed by the Boer army are possessed by each individual soldier. Such a national system of tactics the English possessed in the days of Cressy and Agincourt. To some extent, again, the English Army possessed a system of tactics of its own in the days of Waterloo. But the British Army of to-day has no system of tactics of its own ; the only tactics possessed by the British soldier consist in the performance of certain slow, cumbrous evolutions, all of them wholly and entirely useless in action. They were useless already in 1870, but new life was given to them by the German victories, victories due not to drill, but to superiority in organization, to superior strategy, superior transport, and, not least of all, to superior numbers. The average British officer knows how to teach his men to perform these useless evolutions, to exact obedience from them, and to obey his own superiors, but that,as a rule, exhausts his acquirements ; he has no tactical knowledge or insight, either natural or acquired by study. In generalship, at least,we ought to have been able to show decided superiority over commanders who had never led more than a thousand men at a time, but it is not easy to prove that such has been the case throughout. The truth is that our system, with its presupposition of unreasoning unintelligent obedience,with its promotion by seniority and not by merit, militates against the development of good generalship. How is a man who has been trained to be stupid all his life long suddenly going to show ability and initiative as a general at 50 ? In an army where the system lives in each man, each man is capable of being a general. In our Army there are very few men indeed who survive the system and remain fit to be generals.

Generally speaking the most striking difference between the Boer army and ours is the difference of intelligence. The Boer army has no great general, its officers and men are untrained, nevertheless there is a great deal of practical military sense and alertness of mind distributed through the whole mass. On the other hand, our army is a huge complex of organized stupidity ; not that our officers are all fools, but that the system supposes them to be such, and is calculated to make them such. With superior intelligence goes superior moral courage. The Boers have had no training in physical courage, such as is given in a regular army ; they are peasants who value their lives highly, and are not inclined to run great risks even for great ends. But it cannot be denied that the Boers have shown great moral courage during this campaign. Their generals have attempted tasks that no British general would have undertaken with similar forces. In action they have thinned their lines to an extent we should never dream of doing, in order to preserve their front against larger forces. They have held on to position after position as long as possible, never yielding further than was absolutely necessary for the moment. No troops could have shown greater skill in rearguard fighting than Cronje's showed in the action at Drieputs on February 16. Another advantage, though perhaps a doubtful one, possessed by the Boer army is its homogeneity. All the parts are freely interchangeable. There is no difference of cavalry or infantry, of officer or soldier. Detachments can be sent off separately of any magnitude, from five

men to several thousands, and composed of any men that may be available, quite irrespective of the commandos from which they may be drawn. In the absence of drill and all the complicated evolutions invented by drill sergeants in times of peace to keep the soldier from mischief, the Boer possesses another great advantage. The Boers in camp never seem to be harassed by all those multitudinous parades, inspections, and fatigues, which keep the British soldier occupied from morning to night.

In treating of the Boer military system I have purposely left out of account their artillery. The Boer artillery has surprised us in many ways; it is handled with considerable skill and freedom, and the Boers have shown great resourcefulness in turning every kind of gun, whether originally intended as a field gun, a gun of position, or a naval gun, to some useful purpose. Nevertheless, the essence of the Boer system lies not in the artillery, but in the riflemen. A great deal has been said during this war of foreign mercenaries serving with the Boers. The remark has often been made that we are fighting not the Boers, but all the nations of Europe. Unfortunately, that is not true. If the Boers had been led by European advisers, it is not very unlikely that our troops would have been in Pretoria by the end of last year. There have been a good many foreign experts with the Boer artillery, and many foreign adventurers have joined the Boer commandos, or, as in the case of the Germans, Scandinavians, and Hollanders, formed commandos of their own, organized on the Boer model. But the Boers have much too good an opinion of their own military skill ever to allow a foreigner to interfere actively with the direction of their operations.

The advantages possessed by the Boers are, however, combined with great defects. The Boer army is practically untrained; the cohesion given by the commando system is not sufficient to serve as a real substitute for training, and without discipline no army can ever be really effective. The Boer generals have rarely been able to persuade their men to overcome their natural instinct for keeping cover and to cross a wide zone of dangerous ground in order to deliver an attack, or secure an important position. They have never been able to execute a rapid counter-stroke when our troops have made an attack and been repulsed, and they have often had great difficulty even in getting the majority of their forces to advance into the firing line. Want of discipline, too, means that a Boer army, when once thoroughly routed, rapidly tends to become a rabble, and to dwindle away by desertion. Of the 4,000 prisoners taken with Cronje, only about 1,000 were Free Staters, out of a very much larger number who had accompanied him on the flight from Magersfontein.

An answer frequently made to those who would urge the advisability of studying Boer methods is that those methods are inseparable from the defects just mentioned. That individual initiative is incompatible with discipline, or that it paralyses an army's power of attack, is a statement that need hardly be taken seriously. It is true enough if by discipline is meant merely automatic obedience to words of command bellowed out in stentorian tones. But that is not the only sort of discipline possible. There is a higher discipline, the discipline of the man who endeavours faithfully and unquestioningly to carry out instructions, whatever the risk, to the best of his ability and by the use of all his powers, physical and mental. Such discipline can result only from careful training; it is even harder to teach than the discipline of the automaton, but it is far more valuable, whereas the latter has come to be almost useless. The importance of mobility and of intrenching on the field are among the chief lessons taught by this war; but the most important of all is the value of individual skill, energy, and initiative as against numbers. One man who can shoot with unfailing accuracy is worth 20 who miss, one battalion at the right spot is worth a brigade marched to a spot where it can be of no use. Relatively to ourselves the Boer army is an army of skilled fighters. Hence there is little reason for surprise that 50,000 Boers should have required an army of nearly 200,000 to overcome their resistance. But the skill is only relative. It is a bold statement, but probably a true one, that an army of 30,000 mounted infantry highly organized as a whole, and in which each individual unit was a trained expert in fighting, accompanied by a due proportion of artillery, would have overcome the resistance of the Boers in less than three months.

28th March 1900.

CLEARING CAPE COLONY.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

RENSBURG, MARCH 3.

The past week has been quite an eventful one. The visit of Lord Kitchener, to begin with, put every one in good spirits and inspired the troops with more confidence to go forward to meet the enemy. There followed almost immediately afterwards the news of Cronje's surrender, at which the whole camp was so elated that cheer after cheer was raised until the men could cheer no more. In the meantime we were driving the Boers from their positions right and left of Arundel, and we had no sooner moved camp forward again to Rensburg than the welcome news of the relief of Ladysmith was officially announced to the troops. This was the occasion for a further

demonstration of joy on the part of "Tommy," and for fresh expressions of determination to press forward and gain still more glory for Queen and country.

After the fighting of Saturday, February 24, which I have previously described, Sunday followed; no fighting took place, but the Boers were observed still in the same positions, fortifying with sandbags and stone walls with as much energy as if they intended to remain for ever. The night after the Saturday's fighting was a dreadful one—thunder, lightning, and heavy rain all the night through. Two batteries of artillery (J of the R.H.A. and No. 2 of the R.F.A.), which were busy shelling until sunset on our extreme left, were caught in the storm and lost their road completely when returning to camp, and, after marching about for a considerable time, halted for the remainder of the night, to find themselves at daybreak within 500 yards of the Boer position. They might just as easily have been within the Boer lines, so stormy and dark was the night.

I took up a position of observation on Sunday, the 25th, and could distinctly see the Boers moving guns towards Vaal Kop from the west of Kuilfontein. It was the general opinion that after the shelling of February 24 the enemy would retire to the Colesberg Hills again, but he was in evidence in all the Rensburg positions, busy fortifying, on Sunday and Monday, the 25th and 26th. Two scouts who approached within rifle range of the two large kopjes just west of Kuilfontein were both wounded, one in the head and the other in the shoulder.

On Tuesday, the 27th, I went as far as the furthest infantry outpost north of Arundel Camp, where I obtained a splendid view of the 4th Battery of Field Artillery (supported by the Inniskillings and Australians), which was busily engaged shelling Taaibosch Hill on our right. At 10 a.m., it having become apparent that the enemy's guns had been withdrawn and his force retired to Rensburg, the artillery was ordered to take up a position at Vaal Kop, when a few shells were dropped into the kopjes on the west of Rensburg near Slachter's Kop. At this point the enemy fired on our artillery and mounted troops with a Vickers-Maxim, the heavier guns evidently having been sent on. In the afternoon Major Butcher shelled the Rensburg position vigorously, and was enabled to march into Rensburg at 4 p.m., to find that the Boers had left very hurriedly, leaving clothing, camp furniture, provisions, wagons, &c., behind in our possession.

The following day (Wednesday, the 28th) General Clements, with the whole column, moved forward at daylight from Arundel, arriving at Rensburg about 8 30 a.m. Here the main body was ordered to encamp. Men and horses having had a rest, an advance guard, composed of one battery of artillery (the 4th Field), the Inniskillings, under Colonel Page-Henderson, and a squadron of the Mounted Australian Regiment, were marched forward along the road which runs parallel with the line of railway *via* Plewman's Siding to Colesberg Junction. The Boers having left this position, the General, with an escort of Inniskillings, then formally marched into Colesberg and reoccupied the town, which had been held by the enemy for close on 100 days. I regret that I am unable to give any descriptive account of the rejoicings of the English inhabitants who had been locked up in this little colonial town with the enemy for such a length of time. The General's order, however, at Rensburg was that no correspondents were to proceed any further than that point. I was therefore unable to telegraph an account of the triumphal entry of the General into Colesberg, nor am I now able to describe the feelings of the grateful Britishers who were relieved. It is a matter of fact, however, that two correspondents who knew of the order given at Rensburg were allowed to enter the town (in fact, were there before the General himself) and were enabled to telegraph the news the same afternoon.

Two Englishmen, who had been Transvaal refugees and commandeered by the enemy against their will, in the retirement from Colesberg had made their escape, and gave themselves up at Rensburg when the General arrived there on the 28th. From these men he was able to gain considerable information as to the enemy's movements. They had been ordered with the rest to retire quickly to Norval's Pont bridge.

On our arrival at Rensburg I saw several telegrams which had been picked up from the floor of the telegraph office. The most important of these was the following, which I had translated :—

From President Steyn, Bloemfontein, to Hoofd Commandant De Wet, Rensburg.
Dated Feb. 14, 1900.

As long as you are able to hold the positions you are in with the men you have do so ; if not come here as quickly as circumstances will allow, as matters here are taking a serious turn.

The other telegrams were not important, but the fact of their being left behind shows that the retirement from Rensburg was made in great haste.

On March 1, there being no intention of moving camp again for a day or two, I took the opportunity of visiting different parts of the battlefield of Saturday last, where we had shelled the Boer position on Vaal Kop and Kuilfontein so vigorously, with both shrapnel and lyddite. The top of Vaal Kop was simply strewn with shrapnel, the effects of lyddite being principally noticeable on the sides of the hill, where rocks were torn up and split, splinters of the shell were thrown in all directions, and several dead horses were found lying around, all having been killed by shells.

The position of the Vickers-Maxim gun which had harassed both our Artillery and mounted men so much on Saturday was found on the highest part of the kopje. The gun-pit had actually been cut out of the rock. Our shrapnel was picked up all round the position, and there can be no doubt that the Boer gunners must have had a very warm time of it.

Whilst on the hill I met Captain Hennessy, who had been in command of the Artillery working the 5-inch gun at Arundel which shelled Vaal Kop with lyddite. He seemed very satisfied with the work his gun had done, especially with regard to accuracy of range, the distance at which he was firing being over 5½ miles.

On March 2 the troops in camp were all cheering again, having received the information that Ladysmith had been relieved. The news put every one in a good humour. I saddled up and rode over to Colesberg, visiting on my way the older positions held by the Boers south-east of the town. The effects of lyddite on the gun position at Horse Shoe-hill, where the Vickers-Maxim gun was always a menace to our troops, was terrible. The sandbag emplacement was one mass of bags and earth all jumbled together. The rocky prominence on which the gun position was built, forming as it were the point of a horseshoe, bore the appearance of having been a quarry where recently quarrymen had been blasting the rocks and hurling the broken pieces down the hill into the plain. This was caused by the lyddite shelling which took place on February 9, and which was witnessed by your Special Correspondent and myself at Porter's Hill, a description of which I have no doubt you have already received. I learned, however, on my arrival at Colesberg, that what appeared to us, after the bursting of one of the shells on this "Horse Shoe" position, to be a sandbag sent flying 30ft. or 40ft. into the air, had in reality been the body of a Boer gunner.

On my way to Colesberg I also passed through an old laager of the Boers, but, owing to the filth of the place and the malodorous remains of uneaten meat, &c., I was glad to fly. How the Boers escape sickness as they do is miraculous. No Britisher, I feel certain, could live half an hour amidst such filth without being ill.

Arrived in Colesberg, I found the place as quiet and still as a churchyard. Most of the places of business closed for the simple reason that the owners had nothing to sell, all having been taken by the Boers. I put up my horse at the Masonic Hotel, the proprietor of which (Mr. Darlin) apologized for having no forage, and very little to eat for a human being. He related how he and other prominent townsmen had been imprisoned for 90 days during the Boer occupation of the town, and had been released only when the Boers left the place a day or two before our troops entered the town. They had been most harshly dealt with, and the only bit of news they had managed to get was from books they had received to read from friends. At every tenth page a word was found from which they were able to learn that Lords Roberts and Kitchener were on their way to South Africa. The women and children whose husbands and fathers had either been imprisoned or compelled to leave the town, although not molested by the Boers, had been on short rations of food for some time and could not have held out much longer. Our advanced guard was now at Colesberg Junction with the Berkshire and some Victoria Mounted Rifles camped just to the north of the town under "Suffolk" Hill.

I am informed by the most trustworthy authority that, had we pushed on, the day of the occupation of Colesberg, towards Norval's Pont with mounted troops and a few guns of the R.H.A., we should have caught some hundreds of Boers who had remained behind the main body with a large convoy of wagons, which were stuck owing to the wet and muddy state of the roads. These had now been got away, and our patrols were within a short distance of the Orange River. It is reported that Norval's Pont bridge is blown up, but as yet there is no official confirmation of this.

To-day (March 3) baggage is being got ready and men are preparing to move camp, which will be done, I hear, to-morrow, the next camp to be near Colesberg Junction on the road to Norval's Pont bridge.

2nd April. 1900.

GENERAL JOUBERT.

(DIED MARCH 27TH, 1900.)

With those that bred, with those that loosed, the strife
He had no part whose hands were clean of gain;
But, subtle, strong and stubborn, gave his life
To a lost cause and knew the gift was vain.

Later shall rise a people, sane and great,
Forged in strong fires, by equal war made one,
Telling old battles over without hate—
Noblest his name shall pass from sire to son.

He shall not meet the onsweep of our van
In the doomed city when we close the score;
Yet o'er his grave—his grave that holds a man—
Our deep-tongued guns shall answer his once more.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

4th April 1900.

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, FEB. 15.

The public appear to have rushed into a sweeping condemnation of the 15-pounder breech-loading gun with which our field artillery is now equipped. It is not within my province to defend this gun, for I do not believe it to be the best weapon of its kind upon the market, though it must be borne in mind that at the present moment it is undergoing sundry improvements in its breech action and its limber and wagon equipment. But from the few papers of late date which have found their way to us here in Ladysmith it appears that, in the general condemnation of the weapon, the main and most serious point touching the efficiency of modern field artillery has escaped notice. In the present struggle it is not so much a question between the ranging of the rival field pieces which constitutes the gravity of the question of efficiency, but it is rather the small margin which the recent hostilities have proved to exist between the effective range of time-shrapnel and infantry small-arm fire. Our field guns, as the majority of gunners will maintain, are excellent weapons at such ranges up to which shrapnel is effective. The gun itself is sighted up to 5,200 yards, but the time-shrapnel with which it is served is only fused up to 4,100 yards. At 4,100 yards most gunners allow that the effect of their time-shrapnel, if accurate, is not severe, as the remaining velocity of the projectile is so small as to seriously impair the efficiency of the burst. The range which the gunners consider ideal for shrapnel fire is 1,800 to 2,500 yards. Beyond this they become less sure of good and accurate practice as the range increases. But at the shorter ranges the effect is simply deadly; that is when a suitable target is found in the open.

But we have now realized that the Boer marksman, with a modern rifle in his hands, is also effective at a similar range; and, further, it is a moot question whether shrapnel is in reality as searching and deadly as we suppose when employed against infantry in trenches or taking advantage of the cover afforded by the surface of broken land. Besides, as the range increases it becomes more difficult to ascertain the effect of the fire, and even in a greater degree to discover where the enemy are firing from. Protected as the infantryman is by the use of smokeless powder, the difficulties and the dangers of the battery commander have been multiplied. We, that is the force shut up in Ladysmith, have had but little opportunity of studying the effect of the enemy's field guns at short ranges. We have rarely had shrapnel fired into us from within 3,000 yards. But early in the campaign we fully realized what practice their infantry were capable of at 2,000 yards. So much so, that, given 200 Boers in the possession of a bouldered hilltop opposing a battery of our field guns coming into action, as I have always seen them, in the open, I am inclined to believe that at 2,000 yards the advantage would remain with the infantry. At shorter ranges, under the same conditions, the riflemen would put the battery out of action. The loss of the guns at Colenso was a practical demonstration of the power of infantry at short range. How truly effective shrapnel fire can be when it has a fair target was proved on the attack on Cæsar's Camp on January 6. The 53rd Battery R.F.A. succeeded in ranging the enemy at 2,200 yards, and enfiladed the men as they crept up the hillside. The carnage in this instance was hideous. But, as far as has come under my personal observation, we have had no marked instance in the fighting round Ladysmith in which artillery unsupported has been allowed to come into action against the enemy intrenched at a range less than 2,500 yards. But even at greater ranges than this batteries in action have been severely handled by infantry fire, thereby clearly proving how vulnerable an arm field artillery has become in a country where the field of fire and the power of vision are so great as in the kopje veldt of South Africa.

As to the question whether the field artillery in the possession of the enemy is superior to that of our own, the only conclusive evidence that we have in Ladysmith lies in the fact that we have for four long months been the target for long-ranged fire. We have the two Maxim-Nordenfelt field guns which were captured at Elandslaagte. But they certainly tend to disprove the alleged superiority rather than otherwise. They are equipped with fixed ammunition, fitted with a time fuse (Krupp), which registers up to 5,200 yards. But the gun itself has a lower muzzle velocity and a lighter and less effective shell than ours, and the extreme sighting of the gun is 600 yards less than the extreme sighting of our own. During our four months sojourn we are beginning to understand something of the methods of our enemy. One fact we have learned is that the Staats Artillery get ranges out of their weapons which our gunners have never contemplated. But that the effect of this forced fire is satisfactory is open to doubt. Of the 12½-pounder Maxim-Nordenfelts I can speak with some confidence, as I was more or less under their fire for two hours, at all ranges, on October 21. In the morning, when they were discovered by the little 7-pounders of the Natal Naval Volunteer Artillery, the superior calibre naturally prevented the screw-guns from remaining in action; but in the evening, when the general assault of Elandslaagte was developing, they caused no serious impediment to the two

field batteries which came into action against them, though they had every opportunity of turning their reputed length of range to account long before our batteries unlimbered. Judging from the effect of the shell fire which has been directed against Ladysmith since the siege began, and the number of projectiles which have been hurled into the defences (computed at about 12,000); there has been nothing to show that the enemy's guns deliver a more destructive fire, with a fuse up to 5,200 yards, than would our own field guns if firing percussion shrapnel at extreme range.

Since December 15 we have constantly had our own 15-pounders in action against us. The enemy, with their sublime indifference to the consequences, appear to get as great a range out of them as they do from their own field guns. Doubtless they dig a trench for the trail and use the weapon as a howitzer. They have sent dozens of missiles, made at the Royal Laboratory and marked with the broad arrow, into the town from guns stationed over six thousand yards away. They have also used their own shell in the guns captured from us. Now that we have discovered that the Boer artillerist does not bind himself during siege operations to the sighting of his weapons, but trusts to getting an extreme range out of them by elevating the muzzle and sinking the trail, a valuable sidelight is thrown upon the original impression that the enemy were possessed of weapons of wonderful range. With the aid of an extra driving charge, under Boer manipulation most guns would increase in range, above the expectations of the manufacturers, who had intended the weapons to be accurate and sighted them accordingly.

I venture to suggest that this practice of the Boers may have been responsible for much of the alarm which has been circulated with regard to the field artillery. We in Ladysmith were certainly deceived for a considerable period. Seeing the small effect of this long-range fire, we, not unnaturally, concluded that the ammunition was faulty. But when our own ammunition was used with similar effect the true state of affairs was realized. As a whole the enemy's smaller calibre ammunition has been of a superior quality to that of their heavier ordnance. The shell supplied them for their 4·7 howitzers in many cases was either a trade fraud or it may have been intended for a high explosive, probably melinite, and the composition not being forthcoming the shell may have been filled with powder instead. Even the large calibre guns have been used at a range which is beyond their power. From the sight which was taken from the Gun Hill "Long Tom" we found that the 6in. Creusot guns are only sighted up to 7,500 mètres (approximately 8,100 yards). This doubtless accounts for the comparatively small damage which the Bulwana gun has caused in the town. The effect which the fire of the short-lived battery on End Hill had on the parapets on Cæsar's Camp showed the real effect of these big guns when firing within their effective range. The most remarkable circumstance with regard to the heavy ordnance which the enemy have brought into the field has been its great mobility. We were in the first place led to believe that it would be a physical impossibility for the enemy to mount a 6in. gun on the Bulwana tableland. Yet, within a few days of the discovery that the hill was unoccupied, they had one in action. The expeditious manner in which they have moved heavy guns to confront General Buller on the Tugela has been a source of astonishment to many gunners here. It is believed that these heavy guns are slung between two "buck" wagons for transport, but upon this point I am not certain. But there is no doubt that the control which the Boers exercise over native labour has been no mean instrument in the success of their operations in Natal.

But though in this particular instance the nature of the country has allowed the Boers to use their heavy ordnance, and to turn its mobility to advantage, caution should be exercised before the mobility of heavy guns be accepted as indicating a direct bearing on the operations of an army in the field. The country in the vicinity of the Tugela abounds in positions which it was possible for the enemy to occupy before an attack could take place. In this the peculiar conformation of the country helped them. But the battles of the world are not to be decided in the *krantz* country of Upper Natal. In the near future these very guns may prove to the Boers a greater hindrance than they have been an aid in the past.

As to the question of fuses. The struggle in the vicinity of Ladysmith has not shown that the burst of the enemy's time-shrapnel, at ranges between four and five thousand yards, has greater man-killing effect than our own percussion shrapnel fired at the same ranges. And although the firms which have supplied the enemy's field artillery may claim long-range powers for it, yet the fact remains that the time-shrapnel which has been burst over Ladysmith from long-range fire has never possessed sufficient remaining velocity to be dangerously effective. It has been shown that the claim to long range has been based on conditions not applicable to general service. As far as it has been possible to judge from the fighting round Ladysmith there is nothing at present to show that either the gun or its carriage is in any way inferior to the field guns brought against it by the Boers; it is in fact in many respects superior. Improvement in the equipment is necessary, and I venture to say that the direction this improvement should take is the provision of a longer ranging time-fuse, and the provision of bullet-proof shields, which would protect the gunners when coming into action at ranges within which rifle fire is effective. This latter course is essential, even

though it necessitates a reduction of the number of rounds carried by the gun limbers. But as the limbers must, in any case, be removed at once out of fire in order to preserve the horses, this does not appear a matter of importance. Any deficiency could be made up by supplying extra wagons.

5th April 1900.

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT LATELY IN LADYSMITH.)

The Intelligence Department with Sir George White furnishes much food for criticism. What amount of information they were able to supply to the executive staff I am unable to state, but, from the results of "Mournful Monday," one is disinclined to believe that their local information at that period was of value. The operations on October 30 were undertaken solely upon the information supplied by the officers of the Field Intelligence. The results were deplorable. But our Field Intelligence suffers, not so much from a want of ability on the part of the officers who guide the department, but from a false economy which limits expenditure of money on secret service. The Boer understands these matters much better than we do. The British intelligence is content to buy the information of a Kaffir for five pounds, where the Dutch would attempt to suborn the heads of departments with £5,000. Lavish expenditure is the secret of intelligence; it is a marketable commodity, and, the market being an unpleasant one for all concerned, the prices must naturally run high. Havelock realized this, when he refused to move from Allahabad to the relief of Lucknow until he was furnished with unlimited credit to purchase information concerning the movements of the enemy.

Sir George White's intelligence officers trusted for the most part to information cheaply purchased from Kaffirs. Its value was consequently small. Moreover, before the investment, no check was placed upon the civil inhabitants. There is not the smallest doubt that during the early weeks of the invasion of Natal Ladysmith was full of Dutch spies and Boer sympathizers. No steps were taken. As a result the enemy were in absolute possession of all our movements, as I believe them to have been throughout the siege. The information which they possessed of all the military movements in Natal was wonderful. When the relief force took Cingolo Mountain they found among Botha's papers a file of General Buller's orders, translated into Dutch. This file contained the memorable speech made after Spion Kop. Knowing the cupidity of the enemy, it is not saying too much to state the belief that if the money had been supplied that some high official on the Boer staff could have been bought. But this never entered the system of the Field Intelligence. And they rested on the lying testimony of natives, many of whom doubtless came direct from the Boer Hooflaager, which was cheaply bought, and the scouting proclivities of the Corps of Guides. The latter was a corps selected from the farmers of the neighbourhood and from late residents of Johannesburg. As a corps of brave and loyal men they could not have been surpassed. But the information which they gained was limited to the cover which darkness would give them outside the perimeter. They led Colonel Carleton's ill-fated column badly. But on all other occasions their leading at night was excellent, especially in the case of the sorties to the Surprise and Gun Hill batteries.

Since the Field Intelligence placed such reliance in Kaffir information it is only fair that I should state that they had great difficulty with their Kaffirs. They had but a limited supply of intelligent men to draw upon, and, though these men were keen enough to leave the starving garrison, yet it was hard to induce them to return. In fact, only one in six ever returned. From below, no attempt was made to feed us, either with news or Kaffirs. While there were hundreds of Kaffirs who could have been tempted to come through by the high prices which we were paying, yet no attempt was made by General Buller's Intelligence Department to help the beleaguered garrison. Thus I may fairly state, without prejudice to the officers who conducted it, that during the siege the Field Intelligence was poor. It always will be so until more money is expended upon it in the right direction. The whole system is faulty.

Of the defences of Ladysmith you will have gathered the truth from my previous letters; but in regard to the defenceless state in which Wagon Hill was left, I quote the following from my diary:—

"It struck me that the slopes of Wagon Hill are the most vulnerable in our chain of defences. The sangars are nothing, cover no field of fire, and, in the majority of cases, are without loopholes. Consequently, if the place should be attacked the men holding the sangars would not be aware of the enemy's presence until the latter were upon them, and then would be constrained to expose themselves to fire over the breastworks. Sangars constructed to hold four to half a dozen men are a mistake. Neither do I agree with the scheme which seems to have been followed in these defences. This is light

breastworks for the picket posts at the fringe of the plateau, and strong loop-holed block-houses for the men to fall back upon. The principle to me seems to be wrong. In the first place, pickets should not be driven in. They should hold their original line until reinforced or destroyed. If men realize that they have a second line to fall back upon, stronger than the one which they are holding, their natural impulse, under very little provocation, will take them back to the stronger line. These remarks, of course, are only intended to hold good in the case of pickets protecting a hill-top. The defences on Cæsar's Camp invite an enemy to occupy the crestline. On Wagon Hill there are practically no defences of any kind. As to the gentle slope between Wagon Hill and Maiden Castle, a determined enemy, mounted as the Boers are, could gallop up in waves and gain a footing." (This entry was made in my diary on November 27, five weeks before the Boers attacked Cæsar's Camp and Wagon Hill.) I must allow that 1½ battalion was not sufficient adequately to defend Wagon Hill and Cæsar's Camp. But this does not exonerate those responsible for failing to make the best use of the material to hand. I thus revert to this question, because the Press censor removed my criticisms from the letter descriptive of the attack on January 6, which I sent through the Boer lines. While agreeing in all that I said, he was unable for obvious reasons to allow the criticism to pass as long as the enemy might chance to profit by it.

Much has been said about the inactivity displayed by the garrison. The question was even asked why Sir George White made no simultaneous attack when General Buller moved against Colenso. One glance at the country intervening between Ladysmith and the Tugela would answer this question. It is certain that the Natal Field Force, with its limited supply of gun ammunition, could not have forced a position which it has taken the relief force and their siege artillery three months to occupy. The query is answered by the results of the recent fighting. There are some that hold the opinion that more could have been done in the vicinity of Ladysmith. I certainly think that earlier in the investment more might have been accomplished by the cavalry, since it was found necessary to keep them at Ladysmith. Modder Spruit Station, the Boer terminus, will live as a standing disgrace to this branch of the service. This great emporium of the Boer supply department stood well within sight of our posts. We could see the daily arrivals and departures by trains, and on a clear day the derisive scream of the steam-whistle was audible. But our cavalry was badly handled, and the horses were worn out early in the investment. Turning to my diary I find that on January 21 I have the following entry :—

" I cannot but make a remark about the condition of the cavalry and artillery horses. They are leg-weary and worn out. I do not think that there is seven miles in them. In my opinion, this sad state of affairs could have been obviated. They are not worn out by work but by inconsiderate treatment. The gun teams have been kept with their heavy harness on ' standing to ' day and night. The cavalry horses have been saddled up and collected in dips to keep them out of the range of shell fire. All exercise has taken place at night, when the animals should have been recouping. One cannot blame the authorities for being ready to take the field at any moment ; but I would suggest that half-batteries and half-regiments should have been subjected to weighted inactivity, which is far more wearying and trying to animals than active exercise. The cavalry staff has been wanting in resource, energy, and originality throughout. But the way the animals have been fed has been marvellous. Thanks to an army of Kaffir and Indian coolies, *doob* grass has been cut in the Indian fashion and the animals have taken to it. Another advertisement to the Indian commissariat ! The ' waler ' again has gone to the wall ; the omnibus horse has thrived as have the Arab ponies ! "

Ladysmith has taught us much about cavalry. The question of the use of cavalry in the warfare of the future is one which will require the greatest attention. In South Africa shock tactics have been proved impossible, except under conditions the most rare, when the enemy was so broken and demoralized that pursuit could be safely undertaken. But all warfare must not be judged from calculations drawn from operations in South Africa alone. In this country atmospherical conditions, as well as physical, allow of accurate rifle-fire up to 2,000-2,500 yards, even up to 3,000 yards. In Europe and other enclosed country this range would be modified. Therefore, a compromise will be necessary. In an enclosed country there will be moments when it will be possible to employ shock tactics. Therefore, a portion of our cavalry should remain as such ; the remainder should be mounted infantry—mobile riflemen. Now, the mounted infantryman to be successful must be something more than a foot soldier sitting on a saddle. He must be as highly trained a horseman as the cavalryman. Able to do anything and go anywhere with a horse. Until he is trained to this end you have a mongrel, whose services are lost to the marching battalion, and whose mobility is hampered and nerve impaired by contact with an animal which he does not thoroughly understand. The Imperial Light Horse and other mounted irregular corps in South Africa give a very fair line of what our cavalry in the future should be. And the Boer, he is the best mounted infantryman in the world.

5th April 1900

SIR R. BULLER'S ADVANCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, MARCH 3.*

The result of the week's fighting from February 14 to February 20 had been to drive the Boers back into the mountainous country between Colenso and Ladysmith. In what force they were it was quite impossible to say, but the general impression conveyed by their movements since their defeat at Monte Cristo was that they were fighting a rearguard action. From the top of Monte Cristo we could see that a large laager to the east of Bulwana and two more to the south of Ladysmith had been broken up, and for two days an almost continuous line of wagons could be seen trekking northward along the Dundee road, which passes over the eastern slope of Bulwana. Moreover, though they were intrenching the hills north of the river on our right front, only small parties of Boers were engaged, and the schansjes they were throwing up were not of the elaborate kind used by them on previous occasions. We now held the south bank of the Tugela from Colenso to where the Monte Cristo range runs down to the river, a point about three miles east of the junction of the Klip River with the Tugela. Our left rested on Colenso, and the kopjes immediately opposite it, which were the most elaborately fortified position the Boers had, were occupied by Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry on the 20th, the Boersonly offering a very slight resistance. The occupation of Colenso was of great advantage, as it brought the base from which supplies had to be carried by wagon some five miles nearer, but it was not supposed that Colenso would be the place from which we should make our advance. About two miles north-west of Colenso lies Grobler's Kloof, from which extend to the north and west a group of high and very broken hills known to have been fortified and thought to be held in considerable force by the enemy. Between the eastern face of Grobler's Kloof and the river, which below Colenso turns sharp to the north for a couple of miles, lies the most broken country of all. It is nothing but a series of kopjes, wooded ravines, and deep dongas, the foothills of the heights to the westward, and through them winds the railway and the new Ladysmith road. To our right front, however, the country was more open and, except for a range of low hills running along the north bank of the river, was almost flat.

On the morning of the 21st a pontoon was thrown across the river between Hlangwane Hill and Colenso. The first troops to cross were General Coke's Brigade, and they were followed by a field battery and two battalions of General Wynne's. General Coke's Brigade, with the Somersetshire Light Infantry leading, pushed through the Fort Wylie group of kopjes which lay before them and out into the plain beyond to the north of Grobler's to reconnoitre the strength of the enemy in that direction. They were supported by a heavy fire from the field battery that had accompanied them, as well as from the long-range guns the other side of the river searching the slopes and ravines of the hill. But when just before dusk they reached the foot of the hill they suddenly came under a terrible rifle fire, not from trenches, but from every bit of cover on the face of the hill, some not 200 yards away. The Boers had adopted their old tactics and held their fire till we were within point-blank range, and our scouting had not enabled us to discover their presence till too late. The reconnaissance had more than accomplished its object and retired, but it cost the Somersets 86 men.

All the rest of that day and the morning of the 22nd the infantry and transport were crossing the pontoon. By midday nearly five brigades of infantry had crossed, General Barton's and part of General Hart's being the only ones left on the south side. The Boers had several guns in the hills, and the pontoon bridge and the troops that had crossed it were under fire. As on Doorn Kloof, the Boers were able completely to mask their guns, and all our artillery, occupying a front of about three miles on both sides of the river, was unable to silence them. Their fire was not very effective, though several shells fell in the river perilously close to the pontoon.

At 1 30 the advance from Colenso began. The South Lancashire and Lancaster Regiments, with a front of about half a mile, formed the firing line, with the 3rd King's Royal Rifles and the Composite Rifle Battalion in reserve and General Hildyard's Brigade in support. They advanced northwards, with their right resting on the river, through the broken country I have already described. A more difficult country through which to advance it is impossible to imagine. The Boers were, as always, invisible, and, taking full advantage of ground that suited them perfectly, they made a most stubborn resistance. The heaviest fire came from the lower slopes of Grobler's Kloof and from a large wooded donga at the foot of it which lay to the Lancashires' right front, but the Boers had also an intrenched position directly in front. It was impossible for our batteries to keep down the rifle fire, for the enemy were scattered over a space of perhaps three square miles, almost every yard of which, with the exception of the southern and south-eastern slopes of the innumerable kopjes which composed it, gave them cover. Every now and then, as the batteries concentrated their fire on a particular donga or clump of bushes, a few Boers could be seen to run out of it; but their fire never slackened. As the attack developed the Boers coming down from Grobler's Kloof made a counter-attack upon our left front.

To meet it the two battalions of Rifles were pushed forward into the firing line and the left drawn back till it was almost parallel with the river, making our front almost semi-circular, with the right resting on the river. It was by this time about 6 o'clock, and as it grew dark the Boers began to attack the right as well. At about 7 o'clock the East Surrey Regiment, General Hildyard's leading battalion, were sent forward to support the 60th Rifles, who presented, owing to the unevenness of the ground, a rather broken front to the Boer attack. They found three companies of the latter regiment in a very exposed position on an isolated kopje, and in danger of being cut off. The right half battalion of the East Surreys, under Colonel Harris, went out under a very close-range fire from which they lost heavily, and successfully covered the retirement of the threatened companies. The whole battalion then took up their position in the firing line, and under cover of darkness built schansjes. During the night firing was continued almost incessantly, but in spite of it the Boers crept up so close that at daylight the following morning Colonel Harris decided to charge. This was done, and the pressure on the right was relieved ; but, to show how close the Boers were and how hot their fire was, Colonel Harris, who was wounded when they first advanced, was hit in 10 places before he could be brought back under cover. At midday the East Surrey were relieved by the Composite Rifle Battalion, having lost 140 men during the 14 hours they had been under fire. The West Surrey Regiment at the same time relieved the regiments in the firing line on the left.

At the point where our right rested upon it, the river makes an almost right-angled turn eastwards, and the narrow strip of broken ground between Grobler's and the river debouches into more open and rather higher ground. About a mile and a half north-east of our right flank lay what was considerably the highest of the foothills, a flat-topped, triangular hill called for convenience by the gunners, as no other name was known for it, Terrace Hill. To the east of it, separated by a broad, shallow valley, lay Railway Hill, also christened by the gunners. To the east of Railway Hill the railway line, which had followed the river and ran along the foot of these two hills, now turned sharp to the north again through a deep and steep ravine to Pieters Station, a couple of miles beyond. The other side of the ravine lay Pieters Hill, a long hill sloping gradually up from the river. On these three hills rested the left of the Boer position—what was in reality their second line of defence. Terrace Hill was strongly fortified with two lines of intrenchments on the top. The other two had only been fortified during the last few days with stone schansjes. It was absolutely essential for us to gain possession of Railway Hill. Not only did it command the country through which we were trying to advance, but from it we should be exposed to a plunging, enfilading fire if we tried to advance our right. Accordingly, at midday on the 23rd, a strong force under General Hart, consisting of three battalions of his brigade, the Dublin Fusiliers, the Inniskilling Fusiliers, and the Connaught Rangers (the Border Regiment having been left at Chieveley), and part of Colonel Norcott's, the Durham Light Infantry, the Rifle Brigade, and half a battalion of the Scottish Rifles, marched along the railway and the river bank till they came opposite Terrace Hill. There was a long, low kopje, very broken and stony, running from the river to within about 400 yards of the hill, and this the Inniskillings took. It was not strongly held, though most of it was under fire from Terrace and Railway Hills. The fighting having been until now all to the left, the guns were mostly on that side too. With the exception of two naval 12-pounders on the northern spurs of Hlangwane Hill, there was nothing to check the heavy fire that was poured in upon the Inniskillings from the lower slopes of Railway Hill, so their advance was slow, but by 5 o'clock the whole of the lower kopje was in our possession, and the Inniskillings' Maxim was in action on the far end of it.

The attack on Terrace Hill was intrusted to Colonel Thackeray, of the Inniskillings, and he was given only his own regiment and four companies each of the Dublin Fusiliers and the Connaught Rangers. It was probably not realized at the time how large the position was that they were sent to attack, for their right flank, which was exposed to attack from Railway Hill, was only covered by four companies of the Dublin Fusiliers under their colonel who were sent a little way up a donga running along the eastern base of Terrace Hill, and their left had no sort of protection. For about three hours previous to the attack the trenches on Terrace Hill had been heavily bombarded, and the way the Boers held them and continued to fire at the infantry which was then advancing up the lower kopje was splendid. They could be seen distinctly standing up all along the trenches and firing, only ducking for a moment when they heard a shell coming and continuing to fire again immediately after the burst. At 6 o'clock the Inniskillings advanced, with the Connaughts in support and the Dublins in reserve. It was hoped that, by taking the hill just before it became dark, the force would be able to intrench themselves sufficiently strongly during the night to prevent any danger of losing it next day. The men crossed the broken ground that lay between them and the foot of the hill rapidly and without much loss, and when they were on the steep southern face they were in comparative shelter. The Boers in the crestline trenches threw down their arms and ran, and in less than half an hour the Inniskillings had won the southern end of the hill. But the moment they came over the crest the situation changed. Four hundred yards in front of them lay the

second line of trenches, to their left front was a small kopje covered with rifle pits, and to their right lay the long ridge of Railway Hill. Next minute they were under a converging fire which the men of that unlucky brigade who experienced them both describe as far hotter than anything they underwent at Colenso. For a while they struggled on, but the men were being shot down like rabbits. Half way across the hill the Inniskillings had scarcely an officer left, and a third of their men were down. Round their exposed flanks came the Boers, who had run out of the first trench, and shot them down from behind. Two hundred yards from the second trench they stopped. There was no one left to lead them on, and they came back to the crest of the hill. The wounded were left where they had fallen ; it was impossible to bring them back. They had been set an impossible task, and made a gloriously brave attempt to perform it.

It was now dark. Half way down they halted and bivouacked for the night, throwing up a breastwork as protection against an attack in front. General Hart had promised that reinforcements should be sent at daylight. At dawn the Boers opened fire, and at 7 o'clock there was no sign of reinforcements. The flanks of the little force on Terrace Hill were absolutely exposed, and at that hour a party of Boers, creeping round the western base of the hill, which was wooded, began to pour a deadly fire at only about 400 yards range into the men crowded behind the schansjes, rendering it absolutely untenable. Men were being hit so fast that it was decided to retire to the kopje from which they had advanced the night before. This was done with no covering artillery fire, and the losses in the second retirement were extremely heavy. Had they known they would be left unsupported in the morning they would not, in all probability, have attempted to hold a position on the hill. The Inniskillings returned with only five officers unwounded. They had lost their colonel killed, and their casualties were between three and four hundred, including 60 killed. The Connaughts had 150 casualties, and the Dublins 100. Later in the day the schansjes was reoccupied by the Durham Light Infantry, but this time flanking parties were posted who rendered another flank attack impossible.

The attack on the right had failed, and the left was little better off. For the whole of the 23rd they had lain unable to move under a heavy frontal and flank fire from the Boers, whose nearest trenches were within 300 yards. They had built schansjes during the night of the 22nd, but our soldiers do not understand intrenching themselves, and these defences were found in the morning to be altogether inadequate. All day they continued losing men, and it was only whilst the advance on the right was in progress that the Rifle Battalion contrived to push forward its right slightly, in order better to cover the lines of march of General Hart's troops along the railway. Firing was kept up all the night of the 23rd. On the 24th the men were entering on their 11th day of consecutive fighting, the last 36 hours of which had been under heavy fire at close range. It was a day of inaction on our part, though we continued to lose men. The enemy's shell fire was more effective than it had yet been, the howitzer battery suffering considerably by shrapnel, and there were besides several casualties amongst the infantry in reserve. That day it was obvious that we should not get through in the direction in which we were attacking, and, when on the following day an armistice was agreed on for the purpose of burying the dead, it was felt to be a prelude to a withdrawal, at any rate of our left. One thing was obvious. This was no rearguard action on the part of the enemy. The battle of Monte Cristo had turned them out of their first line of defence, and it was their second line we were now attacking. After losing the former it is only natural to suppose that they contemplated the possibility of our also carrying the second, and for this reason they struck their camps and probably packed their baggage somewhere north of Ladysmith. But they took nothing away that could in any way weaken their defence. We could see the 6in. gun on Bulwana firing into Ladysmith every day, and they fired at us with a 5in. Watchers in Ladysmith saw just as many food and ammunition wagons going forward as before. In fact the Boers, who had always said we should never get into Ladysmith, continued till the end to make the most strenuous efforts to keep us out.

All Sunday, the 25th, the dead and wounded, most of whom had lain there for 36 hours, were being brought down off Terrace Hill. The wounded had been well treated by the Boers, who gave them water. Some of the more slightly wounded had been made prisoners, but most were left to be brought back by our stretcher-bearers. Eighty-seven dead were buried at the foot of the hill. The armistice ended at 6 p.m., and that night most of the infantry on the left was withdrawn. The following day the mounted troops and the transport were all brought back to Hlangwane and only the kopjes round Fort Wylie held. Our three days' attack had failed.

2nd April 1900.

THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH.

SIR R. BULLER'S ADVANCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT WITH GENERAL BULLER.)

LADYSMITH, MARCH 13.

All day, Monday February 26, infantry, mounted infantry, artillery, and transport were pouring back across the pontoon bridge. There

was a general retirement of the left, a brigade only was left holding the kopjes immediately above Colenso, and the rest of the force moved eastward to the plateau overlooking the river north of Hlangwane. There was very little rifle fire, but the Boer guns shelled the retirement and one gun fired several shells into the station at Colenso, now busy again after so many months' repose. By Monday evening all the heavy guns were on the plateau behind Hlangwane, and were ranged along a front of about three miles between Hlangwane and Monte Cristo, close above the river. Our position was exactly opposite the Boer position on Terrace Hill between Railway and Pieters hills, which ran roughly parallel to the river and lay from a mile to a mile and a half north of it. The Tugela here runs considerably below the level of the surrounding country, and the hills on either side slope sharply down about 200 feet to it, so that our position on the south bank gave us complete command of it, whilst the steep northern bank, which on our right was held by General Hart, sheltered it from the Boer fire.

Orders on Monday night were to the effect that the river was to be bridged next Monday and the position opposite attacked with successive attacks from the right. They were to be made by General Barton, Colonel Kitchener (who had been given command of General Wynne's brigade when the latter was wounded), and Colonel Norcott, upon Pieters, Railway, and Terrace hills respectively. The following morning we opened a heavy bombardment, at ranges varying between 2,000 and 3,000 yards, and the sappers commenced bridging the river with pontoons opposite the stony kopje held by General Hart. The enemy's artillery replied to ours for some time, but, after the naval guns had silenced two that were firing from the very top of Grobler's Kloof, the rest of their guns, of which there were probably either two or three north of Railway Hill, ceased firing and only continued again at intervals during the bombardment. The river at the point where it was being bridged was about 60 yards wide with a rapid current, and it was noon before General Barton's Brigade crossed, followed by that of Colonel Kitchener. Just as the men were about to cross a mounted officer rode down to them with the news of Cronje's surrender, which was received with cheers. General Barton's Brigade followed the river down for about a mile and a half before they reached the foot of the slope leading up to Pieters Hill. The name Three Knoll Hill, given by the gunners, best describes the shape of those hills. It ran at right angles to the course of the river with the three knolls rising one above the other in a line. The third was considerably larger and higher than the other two and was separated from the second by a nek. Between Pieters and Railway hills ran a deep gorge.

A little before 1 o'clock General Barton began his advance with the Scots Fusiliers leading. For the first half mile they had good cover. The Boers had a few schantzes on the first knoll and slightly strong intrenchments on the second. These had been heavily shelled all the morning and were only weakly held. As the Scots Fusiliers emerged from cover they came under a sharp fire for about 20 minutes. They pushed on and the Boers evacuated their trenches on the first two knolls. The Fusiliers reached the second one at about 2 o'clock, and then, instead of attacking the third knoll half a mile ahead, they swung to the left with the idea, perhaps, of assisting Colonel Kitchener's attack which had already begun. Colonel Kitchener's Brigade was composed of his own regiment, the West Yorks, and the South Lancashire ; and the Royal Lancaster and the York and Lancaster, with the West Yorks, were on the right facing the east end of Railway Hill and the gorge beyond. They were to advance into the gorge and take the hill in flank whilst the Lancashire regiments attacked it in front. The two Lancashire regiments, whose left was opposite the donga at the eastern base of Terrace Hill, had good cover till they reached the railway. Beyond that their right still had very broken ground, but their left had before them comparatively open ground in the re-entrant between the Terrace and Railway Hills, which was, moreover, swept by a cross-fire from both hills. Near the head of the re-entrant was a very small kopje strongly intrenched, and about 150 yards behind it were two long trenches. The kopje was about 500 yards from the railway, and both it and the trench were strongly held. At 3 45 the two Lancashire Regiments crossed the railway. The right was still more or less under cover, but the left came under a very hot fire. They advanced very slowly, taking all the cover they could, but in half an hour they had only gone a little more than 100 yards. For a few anxious minutes the success of the attack looked extremely doubtful. Meanwhile the guns were being worked splendidly. Most of the heavy guns were just opposite this attack, and at a range of only just over 2,000 yards they made most deadly practice. For a time they concentrated their fire on the little kopje at the head of the re-entrant, till at some moments it was almost invisible behind the clouds of white and brown smoke. We saw some Boers rush away from it into the trenches behind, and a tall man, exposing himself recklessly to the fire of our men not 400 yards away, went out and fetched them back. Twice this happened, and then a great lyddite shell burst where he stood and we saw no more of him. Then, as if the worst of the fire was over, the infantry began going forward again until within 200 yards of the kopje. Our guns were all silent

now except the naval 12-pounders, which still continued the bombardment.

The right was considerably in advance of the left, and with the cessation of the shelling they found themselves under a short-range enfilading fire. About a company rose and charged out of the cover, in which they were lying, straight towards the little kopje to their left front. Simultaneously every man in the open was on his feet and racing for the kopje, too. Still, with wonderful rapidity and still more wonderful accuracy the 12-pounders fired shell after shell right into the intrenchment. Then they, too, stopped, and the great wave of men swept up the kopje. Out from behind the kopje came a thin stream of Boers running for their lives, others laid down their arms, and a few were killed with the bayonet. But the wave was hardly even checked in its course. I trushed on and swept right over the first trench and on towards the second, where the white flag was already waving frantically. Then the field guns opened with a crash, pouring shrapnel into the flying Boers till they disappeared round the back of Terrace Hill. But nothing now could stop the impetus this great charge had gathered, and running sharp to the left, whence came the heaviest fire, they went straight up the steep side of Terrace Hill, regardless of the fact that their proper objective lay half a mile away to the right. They reached the top, right at the corner of the very trench from which the Inniskillings had been repulsed four days before. A few shots were fired, and then they went in with the bayonet for the third time that day. They reached the top at five o'clock.

At a quarter to 5 the West Yorks and the South Lancashires had appeared on the sky line of Railway Hill. The West Yorks had advanced along the railway line until they had turned the flank of the line of schantzes on the crest, then, turning to the left, climbed the hill, which was exceedingly steep and rough. The steepness of the hill gave them cover during most of the ascent. They were under heavy fire for a few minutes on the top, but the Boers evacuated their schantzes and ran down the reverse slope into a donga at the foot. The West Yorks lined the hill and kept up a heavy fire upon them as they retired. On the left, the moment the two Lancashire regiments began to charge, Colonel Norcott advanced. The Rifle Brigade on the left climbed the southern face, the East Surreys on the right, attached to Colonel Norcott for the day, swung round their right and went up the eastern face, their right hand man being only about 100 yards from the point where the Lancashires had gone up. Though the latter held the trench at the northern end, they had by no means cleared the hill. There were Boers scattered about all over the top of it and all along the western side, which was covered by the heavy fire from the kopjes beyond. For about 20 minutes there was very sharp firing before the Boers were either taken prisoners or driven off the hill, and then the men immediately began to build breastworks against the heavy rifle and shell fire that the Boers opened on them from the hills to the east the moment the hill was in our possession. About 5 o'clock a heavy firing began again on Pieters Hill. According to the account given afterwards by a Boer doctor, most of the men who should have been holding the hill, during the first attack,were away in their laager. These, with fresh reinforcements from Ladysmith, had now come back and were holding in considerable force the third knoll. At 5 o'clock the Scots Fusiliers attacked it. They had nearly half a mile to go under a heavy fire and had practically no cover. The Boers held a very strong position, considerably higher than our men, with good intrenchments, and the attack failed. The Scots Fusiliers had over 100 casualties, including ten officers. They returned when it was dark and bivouacked on the second knoll. The rest of the force bivouacked on the positions they had taken. Next morning at daylight the Fusiliers renewed the attack and took the position without firing a shot. The Boers had retired in the night all along the line. The victory had been a most decisive one. Seventy-eight prisoners had been taken during the battle and a considerable number of wounded were brought in next day. Nearly 100 dead were buried next day, 28 of them being found in the trench on the top of the Terrace Hill, killed mostly by shell fire. A Maxim-Vickers gun was found buried. A Maxim had been captured by the West Yorks, and quantities of Mauser ammunition lay scattered about.

This time the Boers had no second position to fall back on. Behind this line of hills lay a plain stretching to the foot of Bulwana, and, had they tried to hold another position, it would have been either Bulwana or the defile to the south of it. As it was, they had raised the siege of Ladysmith ; and all the day of the 28th the Dundee road, at the back of Bulwana, was covered with men and wagons trekking northwards. At 7 that morning Lord Dundonald's Brigade advanced and came in touch with the enemy about three miles north of Railway Hill. The enemy were found to be retiring, and scouting parties were pushed forward. One of these,consisting of the squadron of Imperial Light Horse and Natal Carbineers belonging to the composite regiment under Captain Gough, of the 16th Lancers,went through the hills to the westward. They passed a deserted laager and suddenly found themselves in sight of Cæsar's Camp. They galloped forward, struck the road, and just as it was getting dark entered Ladysmith, the first to bring the news of the relief. Later in the evening Lord Dundonald entered with a squadron of South African Light Horse. The next day what few Boers were left were all trekking northward or westward.

With the exception of the attack by the Ladysmith garrison on Pepworth's Hill there was no

attempt to harass their retreat. The relief column bivouacked at Nelthorpe Station, leaving the road open for the convoy of wagons for Ladysmith which was being hurried forward, and got in only 30 hours after the first troops. For two days the wagons continued to pass into the town, but on March 3 all the relief column that were available marched into the town past Sir George White. The Dublin Fusiliers were taken out of their brigade and placed at the head of the column, a high compliment most richly deserved by this gallant regiment. They were followed by General Warren's and General Lyttelton's Divisions, the cavalry, and part of the Naval Brigade. As they passed Sir George White the men cheered him, and marched out of the town into camp to the north of it. Both the relieving force and the relieved needed a rest. The garrison needed food, the relief column needed clothes and boots and tents. They had been bivouacking for three weeks and fighting for a fortnight, and their clothes were in shreds and their boots in holes. But the work that had taken three months and five battles, and had cost us so dearly, was done.

TAKING THE NEWS FROM LADYSMITH TO COLENSO.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT LATELY IN LADYSMITH.)

MARCH 2 (?).

In describing the circumstances in which the relief of Ladysmith came about I cannot do better than by giving a short narrative of the manner in which I joined General Buller's column. I had for weeks been prepared for the advent of relief, and as soon as I realized the conditions under which Major Gough's little column had arrived in the beleaguered town I determined to make my way, at all hazards, to the telegraph office at Colenso. But everything seemed against me. In the first place, the guide whom I had retained for this very service refused, at the last moment, to undertake the risks which the journey might incur. Then just as I had engaged a second guide—a Kaffir—a heavy thunderstorm broke over the elated town. The rain fell in a perfect deluge, and it would have been useless for me to have attempted to ride through until the storm abated and the freshets had run down. This delayed me until midnight. But shortly after that hour the water in the spruits had partially subsided and we started. Crossing the iron bridge over the Klip River we entered the flat bush country between the river and the slopes of Cæsar's Camp, which stretches away to Intombi Spruit. My guide, who understood but little English, was directed to take me by a Kaffir path over the difficult country which lies between Cæsar's Camp and Grobler's Kloof. A valley at the foot of the latter would bring me out opposite Pieter's Station. Though the rain had stopped the storm had left the sky heavy with clouds and the night was dark, so dark that my guide had constantly to dismount to keep the path.

Our first difficulty occurred at our own outlying picket. The Volunteer Cavalry maintained a permanent post in the scrub just before Fourie's Spruit. The sentry seeing mounted figures moving in the scrub challenged so softly that I did not hear him. I was brought to a standstill by hearing a rough voice shout "Halt, or I fire!" followed by the order to the men of the picket, "Ready, present!" It was some time before I could convince the officer in charge of this picket of the harmless nature of my mission. But, by the aid of a match, having examined my pass, he eventually allowed me to proceed, wishing me "Bon voyage" and shouting after me the consoling information that the enemy had been seen moving all that afternoon upon the very hills over which our path lay.

Thus I was clear of our pickets and Ladysmith. It would be necessary to be imprisoned for four months, as we had been, to understand how much it meant to be free again. Even though the next few hours might be full of disaster, as far as I was concerned, yet for the moment I was free of Ladysmith. And I pushed forward with as much elation as is possible to a man riding unarmed into what he believes still to be an enemy's country. The very uncertainty of the situation was in itself fascinating. In the darkness we constantly lost our way. Often the gloom in the valleys was so dense that we had to dismount and feel our way. In this manner we reached Fourie's Spruit. This was the nullah, and perhaps the very hour, in which the enemy's commandes had concentrated before they made the assault upon Cæsar's Camp. The bluff of that gaunt ridge now towered above us. It seemed that we were but a few yards distant from its summit. Here it behoved us to proceed gently, lest our own sentries on the lower breastworks should hear the ring of our horses' feet on the stones. The pickets were only 600 yards distant. And since January 6 the sentries do not challenge moving bodies in Fourie's Spruit. They were very much awake upon the post, for at regular intervals of 15 minutes a great flash showed on the clouds above the hill, and by the crash which followed we knew that the naval gun was shelling the gun epaulement on Bulwana mountain. The great projectile would go shrieking overhead. Then, as we watched the east, a pillar of fire would shoot up on the crest of the table mountain. For a second Lombard's Kop and Gun Hill would stand clearly silhouetted against the sky, and then merge back into the inky darkness of the night.

We struggled down the winding course of Fourie's Spruit until Cæsar's Camp grew less in outline and finally disappeared behind us, the sound of the ¼-hour gun growing fainter as we

plunged into groups of kopjes. Then we waded through two feet of water, and clambered up a perpendicular bank into veldt of knee deep grass. What would we not have given a week ago for such grass in Ladysmith? This veldt brought us to the foot of a stony knoll up which we climbed. It was simply a pile of boulders, and it still remains a matter for astonishment to me that we never broke our horses legs amongst those rocks. When we were half-way up, we came to a stone wall. I thought that we had come upon a breastwork, and I sent the boy forward to reconnoitre, expecting every moment to see the flash of a Mauser pierce the shadow. The boy wormed himself up to the breastwork, looked over, and then stood upright, and came back. It was only a farm fence. Our animals were now making so much noise that I almost despaired of the possibility of taking them further. If there had been a Dutchman within 500 yards he must have heard us. But the guide led me to understand that we should find a path at the top of the hill. We skirted the wall until we found a gap, and, after stumbling along for another half-mile, found a path which led down into a valley-meadow. This path took us into a plantation, and the guide gestured to me that we must now proceed with great caution as there were "Dutchmens" in the vicinity. By this I had lost all grasp of our direction. But, judging from the bursts of shell on Bulwana, I fancy that I was somewhere near the base of End Hill. While in the plantation we heard voices, and the sound of men and stones moving on a hill-side. For a moment I thought that we were discovered, and that Boers were dropping down upon us from some picket post. My guide plucked my sleeve and whispered, "By-an-by, take it away." By which I understood that the enemy were removing one of their guns. "By-an-by" is the Kaffir name for heavy guns.

The situation had now become more than fascinating. But as I listened to the noise upon the hill I felt confident that it would cover any disturbance which our horses might make as long as we could keep the latter from neighing. So we pushed on and in five minutes were upon a path leading up to a saddle between two kopjes. Upon topping a fold in the veldt two fires suddenly stood disclosed. There was little more than the embers, but they were camp fires, and, as in other places, a fire on the veldt has to be lighted. Again I sent the Kaffir to reconnoitre. The five minutes that I waited his return was the most trying period that I ever remember. He came back and motioned that we should lead on. We skirted the fires, but passed so close that the forms of sleeping men were visible. It seemed half an hour before we stopped and looked round. I drew a long breath in relief. A further fold of the country hid the fires. But Dutchmen must sleep soundly to have been undisturbed. Sentry there appeared to be none. I presume that the enemy were busy dismantling one of their positions which command Bester's Valley, and that the bivouac which we penetrated was a covering outpost upon the Pieter's road. We dropped down from the Nek into a valley and then had a stiff climb up a kloof. Then just as the black of night gave way to the first impression of dawn we reached a rolling plateau. "Dutchman finish," shouted the guide, and in spite of the want of light we broke into a canter.

It was magnificent. I took it for granted that we were free, for as the light ebbed up I could see the southern reverse of Bulwana Mountain. It was five long months since I had seen these slopes. We dipped into a valley again, and in the spruit at the bottom found evidences of the haste which had attended the withdrawal of Joubert's army. A mule trolly lay sunk up to its axles in the mud. It contained four cases of large calibre ammunition stamped with the Creusot mark. The traces had been severed with some sharp instrument. Other litter was lying about, but it was not yet sufficiently light to examine it, and I had no time to spare. Half a mile on we had another scare, as we came upon a wall with a Cape cart tilt showing white above it. But, like the trolly, it had been deserted. Here and there we passed tents. All were empty and on every side were evidences of fevered haste. As we rode upon an eminence the guide, who had eyes like a hawk, pointed out some figures which, in the increasing light, were just showing 500 yards away. I thought they were Boers, and my heart sank until I caught sight of a machine gun. In three minutes I was shaking the hand of Lieutenant Ward, S.A.L.H., and learning that I was only half a mile from General Buller's headquarters at Pieters.

Riding in with the outpost, I found the cavalry formed up in the vicinity of Pieters Station, anxiously reconnoitring Bulwana from the south. I gave Colonel Burn-Murdoch such information as I possessed. I also stated that, although we had seen the enemy collecting on Bulwana on the preceding evening, yet I believed that they had simply massed there in order to cover the removal of their gun. I pointed out that the condition of affairs in Ladysmith had forced the garrison to remain passive while the enemy were in full flight on two sides of the town. I also hinted that I believed that a column drawn from the garrison would attempt to reach Modder Spruit Station at daylight, and that if the cavalry of the relief force would push on to the left of Bulwana past Farquhar's Farm, they would have no difficulty in cutting off at least a portion of the Boer rearguard. Having seen the country in which they would be called upon to operate if they made this move, I was able to assure the cavalry staff that it was suited to the rapid movement of mounted troops. It was valuable information which I tendered, and by not making

use of it I am confident that the cavalry of Buller's army lost an opportunity which will never present itself again during the operations in Natal.

As I was told that I should find General Buller's headquarters among the hills about two miles to the rear of Pieters Station, I at once started south. Crossing a low ridge, I found the infantry and the impedimenta of the army already moving forward. The ground in which they had encamped was the theatre of the final operations on Majuba day, in which the defence of the Tugela had been crushed. I found General Buller surrounded by his staff on the summit of one of the very hills which the infantry had carried by assault. Even then, 48 hours after the tragedy, gruesome relics of the desperate battling strewed the hill side. The General received me kindly. I found him much changed since I had seen him last at Aldershot. He seemed thin and worn. But then he had been bivouacking out for the last ten days. I gave him such information as he required concerning the state of affairs existing in Ladysmith, and then turned to seek the telegraph office at Colenso.

From the top of Pieters Hill a comprehensive view of the whole country was possible. The slopes of Bulwana were reached by a flat and open plain, and while I was waiting the staff were debating whether the mountain was still in the possession of the enemy. Then a light twinkled out from its summit. It was a heliomirror catching the morning sun. A signaller picked up the thread of the message. The Imperial Light Horse were on the summit of the hill. The enemy had evacuated in the night, taking their guns with them. Ladysmith, after 118 days of close investment, was relieved.

But to me the view towards the south was of far greater interest than the panorama with Bulwana as its background. At my feet lay the whole theatre of the stubborn fighting of the last week—the fighting to which the Ladysmith garrison owed i s freedom. Rugged kopje succeeded kopje until the plain of Chieveley was reached with the silver streak of the Tugela winding at the foot of smaller hills. I looked and wondered. Wondered that relief had ever come. The country was stupendous. Every hill was fortified, and each crest line was covered by a succeeding line of trenches, or flanked by a superior eminence. Yet these very hills had been stormed and carried by British infantry; carried at the bayonet point, and the defenders slaughtered in the rifle pits. Such infantry must be superhuman. The road down to the pontoon bridge across the Tugela led through what had been the main positions of the enemy. Now their camping grounds were alive with transport wagons and supply parks hastening on to Ladysmith. But on every side were relics of the recent fighting. Boers lay half buried in the trenches in which they had been bayoneted. Rough-visaged soldiers were digging for " pom-pom " shells and hawking for sale articles of female clothing, with which the deserted laagers, and even the trenches. had been littered. There is now no doubt that some of the Dutch women accompanied their husbands and sons into the fighting line, and, as their mothers and grandmothers had done before them, in Kaffir and Zulu wars, aided them in battle. An eyewitnrss informed me that dead women were found with three and four bandoliers over their shoulders. They doubtless loaded the magazines of second rifles for the marksmen in the trenches. One woman was found, a child almost of nineteen years, grievously wounded. Before she died she allowed that she had been detained in the trenches after the majority of the other women had left because she was so expert with a rifle. All this is very sad, but it shows the dogged hatred rooted in the nation. Racial animosity must be intense when it will goad tender women into acts which fall but little short of butchery. Nearer the river we came upon a group of Inniskilling Fusiliers. They were busy placing finishing touches to the graves of five officers and 30 odd men who had fallen in making an assault for which is due the nation's thanks. The 40 victims of the effort which gave the relieving force its first real purchase north of the Tugela lie together in a little thorn grove nestling at the foot of the hill for the possession of which the sacrifice was made. Rough crosses had been placed above them, and sorrowing comrades had marked " In Memoriam " across the grave with empty cartridge cases.

At the foot of Hlangwane Hill I was able for the first time to understand the reason of the enemy's initial successes during the early movements of the relief column. The slopes at the foot of this hill were one mass of rifle pits. At first, as you rode amongst them, you imagined that they had been made at random, after the manner of the rifle trenches in a dervish " dem." But on closer examination you found that each trench had been carefully selected to cover some particular field of fire. Moreover, the natural slope of the hill arranged the pits in tiers. The average depth of each sap was about 4ft. They were banked by their own earth or sandbags so as to give 6ft. of cover to the riflemen. The majority were masked with boughs and grass, so that until you actually came upon them the pits remained unobserved. Thus the inmates escaped the artillery preparation and when the time came for action they were able to cover their field with a fire from five or six tiers of trenches. Even if discovered, the depth of these pits rendered them good cover from shrapnel. To me, Colenso appeared impregnable. I feel confident that our own infantry could hold the positions on the Tugela against overwhelming odds.

5th April 1900.

LORD KITCHENER'S ACTION AT PAARDEBERG DRIFT.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

PAARDEBERG, FEB. 26.

It is now over a fortnight since Lord Roberts's force started on the march which has so far resulted in the relief of Kimberley and the investment of Cronje and a great portion of his force in the river bed at Wolveskraal Drift. Events have followed each other so quickly that it has become impossible to do full justice to the brilliant exploit of General French and the wonderful marching of Kelly-Kenny's, Tucker's, and Colvile's Divisions. Indeed, except with a correspondent to each brigade, a proper and accurate description of their doings is impossible. By merely looking at a map and measuring off the miles covered by the troops, a wholly inadequate idea of their wonderful achievements is obtained. It must be remembered that the first four days of the march were excessively hot and oppressive, that terrible dust-storms raged, that water was difficult to get, and that several marches were made of over fourteen miles without water. But what makes their performance the great thing it undoubtedly was, is the fact that Cronje's flight changed the whole plan of march, and necessitated a great swing of the army to the right in pursuit of the retreating Boers. That this movement could be done at all has aroused the admiration of all the military attachés, but that British infantry, operating in dry, sultry, inhospitable South Africa, was able to overtake the mobile Boer and hem him in at Wolveskraal is surely an achievement of which the whole British public should be proud.

But leaving till some more favourable time a full and faithful account of the concentration and march of the troops under Lord Roberts's command, I will try to describe, with as much accuracy as is possible in the circumstances, the rather "mixed fight" which Lord Kitchener had with General Cronje on Sunday, February 18.

On the Friday General Kelly-Kenny had come into contact with the redoubtable Transvaal leader, who fought a most magnificent series of small rearguard actions to hinder our pursuit. He was, however, obliged to leave many wagons and stores in our hands, so persistently did we hang on his rear. The mounted infantry played a conspicuous part, and kept touch with the retreating Boers all day on Saturday until late in the afternoon, when Cronje's rearguard made a stand near Paardeberg Drift, and was only gradually driven up the bed of the river, holding their ground stubbornly and stoutly and fighting every inch of the way. Meanwhile, General French had left Kimberley at three o'clock on Saturday morning with orders to strike the river east of Cronje, and thus cut off his retreat.

To understand clearly the events of the next day it is best to give as far as possible the position of the various troops on the Saturday evening. The mounted infantry had driven in Cronje's rearguard and remained in possession of the bed of the river west of his position. General French had seized a drift east of Cronje's position, while the infantry, consisting of Kelly-Kenny's Division and Colvile's Division, were following behind along the river. It is not clear whether, when Sunday morning broke, Lord Kitchener was aware that General French had reached the river.

The sun rose on Sunday morning and disclosed a sight which must have delighted the heart of Lord Kitchener. About three miles ahead of the position still held by the mounted infantry was a huge collection of wagons representing the whole of Cronje's laager. It lay on the north bank of the river, towards which on every side the ground sloped gradually. In that tree-covered river bed evidently lay Cronje's force, and "we've got him at last" ran along the lines of the watching mounted infantry, re-echoed from the general's lips. All the night long the infantry had been marching up, and soon after daybreak Lord Kitchener was able to dispose of the two greater divisions. It was here that Lord Kitchener to a certain extent underestimated the stubbornness of the Boer. He certainly was, to use a colloquial phrase, "in a hole," but as certainly he still had a great deal of fight in him. The river bed afforded admirable cover, he had his back to the wall, and it was certain that he would make a stout resistance. To criticize without offering an alternative plan is not difficult work; but Cronje having been shut up and hemmed in with a considerable force under excellent cover, it seems now, and it seemed then to many present who had already been engaged against the enemy, that it was a dangerous experiment to force matters on instead of encircling the enemy and sitting down before him. In favour of the plan adopted by Lord Kitchener it may be urged that to wait for this encircling movement was to give Cronje time to prepare himself for a vigorous defence, and to give time for reinforcements to arrive and attempt his rescue, while an assault on his position when he was still weary with night trekking and harassed by our vigorous pursuit appeared a natural course.

The infantry towards six o'clock had come up on the south bank of the river, and, in pursuance of his plan of crushing Cronje, Lord Kitchener ordered General Kelly-Kenny to move parallel with the river while the Highland Brigade under General MacDonald moved up the river bed, releasing the mounted infantry, who advanced well out of rifle range and succeeded in reaching the river well to

the east, where they ensconced themselves in a nullah, horses and all, and silenced the enemy's fire in the neighbourhood. This, however, occurred later in the day. The movement of the Highland Brigade was in the following order, roughly:—The Black Watch on the left in the river bed, and for some time on the north bank for some little distance, then the Seaforths, and on the right the Argylls and Sutherlands, touching General Knox's Brigade, which formed the centre of the big enveloping movement. The regiments comprising Knox's Brigade were the West Riding, the Buffs, the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, and the Gloucesters. Our right was made up of the Essex and Welsh Regiments.

As I said before, Lord Kitchener's idea was to stretch forth a huge infantry hand, as it were, and clasp within it Cronje and his force. To carry out this idea thoroughly the other side of the river must be held, and somewhat later in the day Smith-Dorrien's Brigade, consisting of the Gordons, Canadians, the Shropshire and Cornwall Light Infantry, crossed the river and worked forward on the north bank. To carry out the simile of the hand, supposing the river to run straight across the palm of the hand the fingers would be represented by the infantry on the south side, while the thumb and its ball would stand for Smith-Dorrien's Brigade. Such practically was the plan which Lord Kitchener adopted, but like other generals during the campaign, he would appear to have mistaken the character of the enemy opposed to him. To give the Boer a natural trench and then send infantry across an open plain to meet him is just what the Boer likes. From a position which affords him almost absolute security he is able to pour a very shower of bullets on our poor fellows lying on the bare veldt. The result was the same as the result of so many of our direct attacks—great loss of life, a reverse, and an increase of *moral* in the enemy's camp. With the exception of the point held in the river bed by the Essex and Welsh Regiments between Cronje and French, the positions held by us on the Monday morning could have been won with the loss of not more than 50 men.

The fight which ensued might be described as an almost exact replica of Modder River fight, with the difference that at Modder River the enemy stood between us and our goal—Kimberley—while at Paardeberg the enemy was practically surrounded, all that was necessary being the establishment of an infantry cordon around him. There were incidents, as in every other fight, where again we proved that our officers and men are as brave and as regardless of death as ever. But the death of so many brave men achieved nothing which could not have been achieved with one-tenth the sacrifice. As a Highlander officer said early on the Monday morning, when the force was beginning to realize what had happened the day before, "It was a hammer-and-tongs fight, only the Boers, as usual, had the best position."

The artillery engaged were the 76th, 81st, and 82nd Field Batteries. The 76th were sent to take up a position on the extreme right of our infantry operating south of the river. On its left rear was a kopje which had been vacated for some unknown and unknowable reason by our men. The Boers eagerly seized the opportunity offered them and occupied the position. From this they poured a galling fire on the battery, which had to face at the same time the deadly fire of the enemy's Vickers-Maxim. It became necessary at one time to work the battery with four guns firing towards the rear and two on the enemy in the river. A detachment of the same battery received the full attention of the Pom-Pom (as our soldiers call the Vickers-Maxim). A bombardier was killed and nearly every man in the detachment wounded. At one gun all except one man were put out of action, and he went on laying his gun as if nothing had happened.

The 81st Battery, if possible, got still more severely handled. It was sent some way up the river in order to enfilade its bed, but I have not been able to obtain full details. The 76th crossed the river after the passage of Smith-Dorrien's Brigade. It was met by a severe rifle fire while retiring, but a company of the Gordons, which acted as escort, was able to subdue it.

To describe the action properly and accurately I frankly confess is an impossibility. Regiments got considerably mixed up during the fight, as the infantry were obliged to edge to the right to allow of the proper extension of the Highland Brigade. Individual acts of bravery were shown as usual, but in several cases portions of the troops were bound to retire under the hell of fire that was poured upon them. The general order given was to advance, but, as many officers remarked to me, "Where were they to advance?" Some of the Buffs reached a donga on the river bank right in the centre of the Boer position, but even if they could have rushed the Boers lining the south bank of the river, they would have been exposed to the fire of the Boers on the opposite bank, as well as to the fire of our own men advancing up the river. The whole thing appeared ill-conceived.

2nd April 1900.

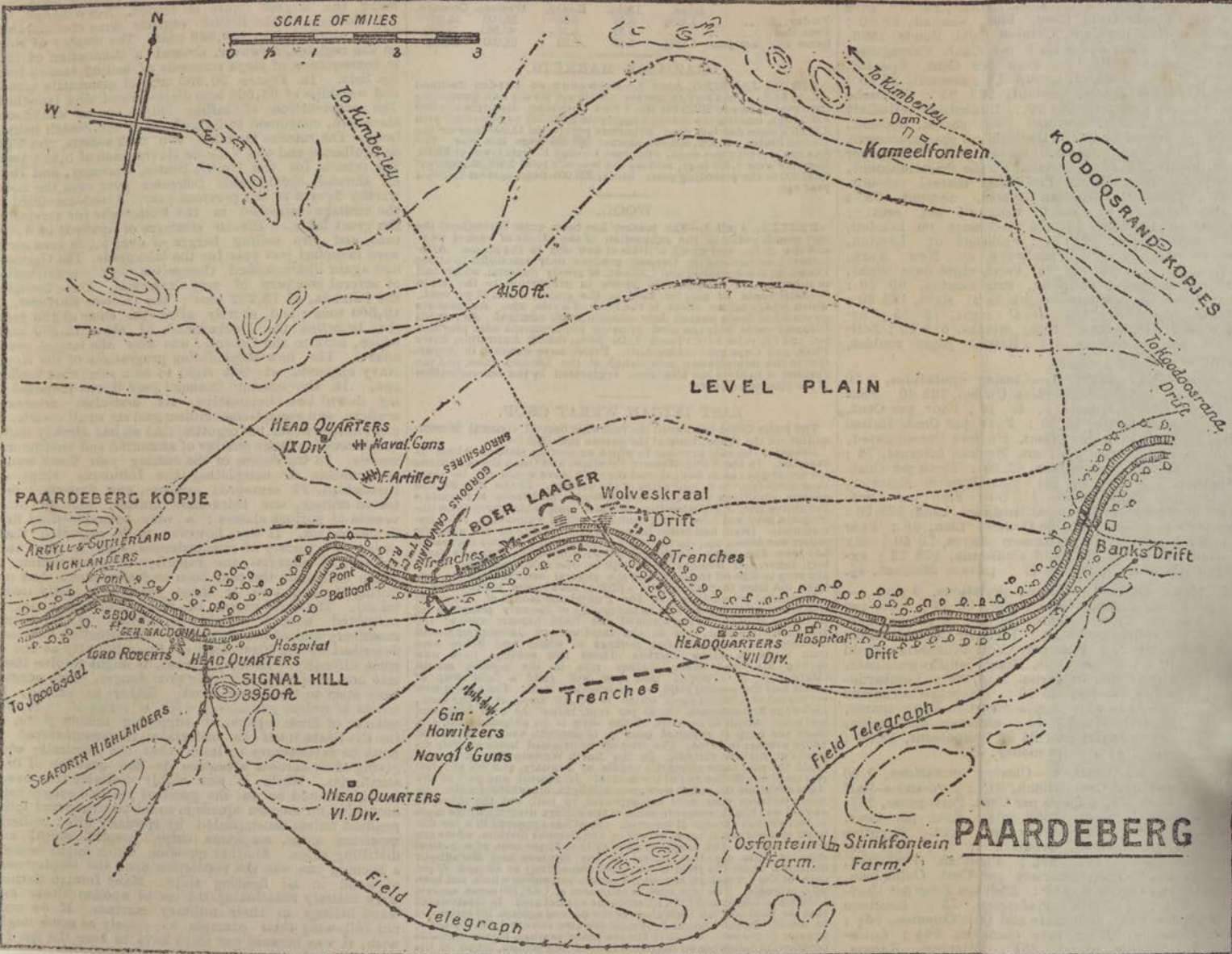
HOW CRONJE CAME TO MODDER RIVER.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

MODDER RIVER CAMP, MARCH 2.

At 12 30 p.m. on February 28 the cry went through the camp, "Cronje is coming," and all hands turned out to get a glimpse of the redoubt-

CRONJE'S POSITION AT PAARDEBERG BEFORE THE SURRENDER.



able guerilla general who had held our force at bay for so long. Hastily mounting a horse, I galloped off after the rest in the direction of the Guards' Drift, over which he was bound to cross. Half-way there the crowd was thickest, and loud cheering told me that the prisoners were near. Then a Dutch cart with a square white top came into sight drawn by a team of six artillery horses with their drivers. On the front seat sat a thin, fair-haired man in a grey suit with gaiters and gold-rimmed spectacles. This was Cronje's interpreter. Beside him was a man I could not see, but who, I was told, was one of the general's staff. On the seat behind sat Cronje and his wife, he stern and sullen, she weeping. The general wore a brownish suit with soft, brown felt hat, and sat looking straight in front of him as if in supreme contempt of the crowds of soldiers that cheered themselves hoarse in their delight at the success that had turned the tide of fortune in our favour. Mrs. Cronje had a very old black dress much bedraggled and an older black hat that in her emotion she had allowed to slip on one side of her head. The poor lady looked very thin and worn, and showed signs of the fearful time she had just gone through. Her husband, on the other hand, was sleek and fat, and appeared to be in robust health—a fact which, as we remarked at the time, reflected great credit on Mrs. Cronje. He has a cruel, contemptuous face, but a very strong one. Amongst his troops his will is law, even though he be obliged at times to use strong measures to enforce it. In a small buggy behind him came his grandson, a rather awkward, fair-haired youth of about 20, who appeared unconcerned in what was going on around him, and naturally did not attract as much attention as his grandfather.

Riding alongside the first carriage were General Pretyman, R.A., and Lieutenant Maxwell, 6th Bengal Cavalry, both members of Lord Roberts's staff. These two officers subsequently accompanied the prisoners to Cape Town. On either side of the carriages rode the escort consisting of 100 City Imperial Volunteers, whose picturesque and workmanlike kit lent artistic effect to a scene which was already sufficiently imposing. As the cavalcade came through the camp it passed a huge forest of tents surrounded by a wire fence, destined to hold the 4,000 prisoners next day. Crossing the railway below the station the party wheeled to the right and came up the centre road to the Crown Hotel, formerly Lord Methuen's headquarters, where Cronje was to rest until the train was ready to carry him south.

As the first carriage drew up at the hotel entrance the escort carried arms and filed away to the front, leaving the road, which had previously been cleared by the military police, free for the proper reception of the captive general. The G.O.C.'s guard turned out and presented arms while the bugler sounded the "general salute." General Pretyman handed the prisoner over to General Douglas, who commands the station. General Douglas received Cronje with a military salute, of which the latter took not the faintest notice. Asked if he would have lunch he gruffly answered, "Yes." "When?" "Now." No word of thanks or acknowledgment of the courtesy with which he was being received. He passed along the verandah of the hotel through the garden to a wing of the house lying back from the road, where his lunch had been prepared. Drawn up in front of the door was a second guard of 18 N.C.O.'s and men of the 37th Field Battery, under Lieutenant Wade, R.F.A. These presented arms, the officer saluting and the trumpets sounding a flourish. This compliment was again unacknowledged, and the general passed from sight into the hotel, where, I understand, he and his party were refreshed with an elaborate champagne lunch. At 4 p.m. he left Modder River for Cape Town in a special train in charge of General Pretyman and an armed guard.

At 9 30 next morning a large cloud of dust on the far side of Modder River was the first indication of the arrival of the prisoners. Once more I hurried down to the pontoon, and was in time to see them pass. The first thing that caught my eye as I came up was a couple of guns of the 38th Field Battery, with teams and detachments, loaded with case, covering the pontoon by which the prisoners had to cross. Two long lines of the 3rd Grenadier Guards crossed first, opened out, and gradually closed round the prisoners as they came over, the remainder staying the other side of the river till all had crossed. Then came the first instalment of prisoners, the commandants, adjutants, field cornets, and other senior officers. These all rode on ponies or were driving in Cape carts. Big, burly-looking men these were in ordinary plain clothes with the inevitable soft felt hats and large, bushy beards; their faces tanned brown, and almost black by exposure to the sun, their carts or ponies loaded with as much kit as they could carry, and their native servants following with more baggage. Behind these, driving a pair of white ponies, came Albrecht, their famous artillery colonel, who has been serving with them for 20 years. He appeared a tall, thin, dark man with a square, dark beard and a keen soldierly face. He had more the bearing of a soldier than the rest, and was dressed in a white double-breasted cotton coat with brass buttons and blue pantaloons. Guarding these was an escort of the C.I.V. and a troop of 1st Life Guards.

Then began the almost unending string of prisoners, and a more motley rabble it has never been my lot to see. Old, grey-bearded men with bent backs, sturdy youths, boys of about 16, black men, white men, Free Staters, Scandinavians, Transvaalers, Germans, Kaffirs. Some

with boots, some walking in their socks carrying their boots, some with no boots at all ; all with parti-coloured blankets which helped to make up a picturesque scene. One man passed me wearing a pair of Stowasser gaiters—evidently loot. Another had a parti-coloured umbrella which he put up when a heavy thundershower came on. Two or three had a fawn-coloured sort of uniform with blue facings, but most were clad in the oldest imaginable clothes.

Then several tiny Kaffir boys went by, the youngest about 10 years old. Some others, evidently officers, had ponies which they had loaded up with their kit and were leading along. All appeared to be carrying as much as they could stagger under, blankets, bags, pannikins, cooking pots, water bags, umbrellas, whilst some had even collected bits of stick on the way to make a fire when they halted. Amongst the older men I noticed several very kindly faces, more like Devonshire farmers than Boers, and one old man touched his hat to me as he went by and said " Good morning." The younger men were a harder-looking lot, many with sullen faces and a few positively ruffianly. I must confess to feeling very sorry for some of the very old men, several of whom were struggling lamely along under heavy loads.

The prisoners passed silently along, each man looking after himself and his kit, but few either talking to or helping another. Amongst the thousands that slouched by me I do not think I saw one with any pretence at soldierly bearing, except one tall, fair man in a green suit and three-cornered hat, who turned out to be an officer.

As the rabble, for I can give it no other name, went by, I could not help comparing the appearance of the soldiers of the two armies and marvelling how the Boers had managed to withstand us so long. The more I think of it the more convinced I am of the great strength of their leaders, who with the sketchiest amount of discipline have hitherto managed to handle and control their troops in the field with such success.

In rear of the prisoners came the women and children who had been found in the laager and sent in here for their own safety, as all their menkind were prisoners and their homes destitute. These, I need hardly say, have been most kindly treated, and were to-day supplied with milk and fruit.

A strong rearguard formed the fourth side of a hollow square with the prisoners in the centre. The square moved on to the back of the great prisoners' camp, which was now guarded all round by a double line of sentries with fixed bayonets and loaded rifles. Most of this guard was appropriately formed of half a battalion of the Loyal North Lancashires, who had been shut up so long in Kimberley by some of these very men. The square halted, and the escort of Grenadiers, their work now over, proceeded to uncharge magazines, a proceeding which I think was watched with a sigh of relief by not a few of the prisoners. The camp guard now took charge of them, and the work of telling them off in batches to their tents began. Fifteen men were told off to a tent, an officer standing at the entrance of the camp to count them as they went through. They passed on to a sergeant, who in turn handed the batch over to a private to point out their tent. The officers who were performing this duty were particularly kind to the prisoners and allowed them to make up parties for their tent, so that men of one commando were together and Transvaalers were not mixed with Free Staters or Kaffirs with Scandinavians. Brothers were in every case allowed to go in together and fathers with their sons. I saw one old man go into the cage, as we call it, with no less than six sons, the eldest not more than 30, the youngest about 14.

Several water-carts were ready filled in their camp, and as soon as they got in buck-wagons came round with bread and tinned meat. This brightened them up considerably, and they were soon laughing and chatting once more. About 600 that were to be sent down by train the same day were seated in lines on the ground outside the camp under their own officers and, of course, a guard. These also were supplied with rations, and I saw each man get a big loaf of bread and a 1lb. tin of corned beef.

At night several " Wells' lights," stationed at intervals round the camp, illuminate the whole place, and the searchlight, lately used to signal to beleaguered Kimberley, now plays the whole night long over the camp to prevent the chance of any disturbance. The prisoners are being sent away every day by train-loads to Cape Town, and most of them now seem fairly cheery and not sorry to have a rest from the horrors of war, of which they had as much as ever they wanted in their shell-swept lines at Paardeberg.

7th April 1900.

THE MARCH ON BLOEMFONTEIN.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BLOEMFONTEIN, MARCH 14.

Lord Roberts has entered the capital of the Orange Free State, and a general view of a march which has had so successful a termination and will probably eclipse in fame even the field-marshal's well-known descent upon Kandahar, can now be taken.

In its widest aspect the movement may be said to have had two distinct parts, of which one, directed upon Kimberley and the eastern side of the Boer force holding Magersfontein and Spytfontein, came to an abrupt end on the evening of

February 15, when it was found that Cronje was conducting in hot haste a retreat upon Bloemfontein ; the other, of which the capture of Cronje was the chief incident, though an incident only, had for its objective the enemy's capital.

We have already traced the movement of the divisions through the Ramdam gate of the country to Dekiel's Drift or to Waterval, thence through Wegdraai or Jacobsdal to Klip Drift, Drieput, Klipkraal, and Paardeberg, but the consideration of the chief feature in this march has been left to the present time. It has been hitherto impossible to realize the full effect of the change of plans above referred to, a change that had of necessity to be decided upon and acted upon in two or three hours only.

To organize the march of a force of 40,000 men and 20,000 horses and other animals needs an amount of preparation which can be guessed at by a layman, but of which the unending labour and anxiety would exceed his wildest estimate. Delay is charged against the organizing department of the Army so often and so easily—often, perhaps, so justly—that the present example of an instantaneous rearrangement of gigantic plans, carried out without a day's warning, deserves most careful notice.

Momentum can only be safely gained by caution, and once gained is a masterful force ; the instant reversal of an army's line of march from west to east is like the reversal of the heavy fly-wheel of a delicate machine that has but slowly gathered speed and is now working at high pressure. In many ways the order was experimental and, from the Commander-in-Chief downwards, heads of departments, powerless now to help the mechanism so carefully built up, could only stand aside and watch with anxiety to see if it would stand the strain. That it did so stand is now a matter of history, but it is doubtful if many at home have yet realized all that is implied in the situation ; indeed, to take that department alone, so delicately adjusted and so long prearranged are the systems of supply adopted by the Army Service Corps that the revised scheme presented difficulties from Cape Town to the Modder that are comparable only to those that would be suggested to an ordinary man by an attempt wholly to reorganize immediately and successfully the train service of a small railway company.

It is said that when Lord Roberts realized the new position he sent for the head of the supply department and asked him if he could promise him full rations for the new movement. "I cannot, sir." "Three-quarter rations ?" "No, sir." "Half ?" "I cannot promise." A pause ensued, and the field-marshal asked gravely, "Quarter rations ?" "Yes." A second pause, and the Commander-in-Chief said, "Well — I think they will do it for me."

Never was confidence better reposed, and it is difficult to say which have deserved more credit, those who were, in spite of all, nearly always able to supply throughout this expedition full rations to the men, or those men who have for their Commander-in-Chief undergone without a murmur the inevitable hardships of a long march through a waterless country scorched by day and drenched by night, without change of clothes, without tents, without the hundred and one little comforts that in a standing camp make a soldier's life by no means an unpleasant one.

It is one thing to cheer a general in the streets of an English town or to flock to see the spectacle of some march past with all its cheerful accompaniments of colour and music ; it is quite another to face the realities of war with hearts as full of quiet confidence in, and blind devotion to, their leader as those of Lord Roberts's command ; and the unshaven, grimy men with outworn khaki that marched into Bloemfontein yesterday—the last few miles of the 40 covered by them since the same hour on the previous day—as freshly and in as perfect a dressing as the parade-grounds of Aldershot ever saw, testified in their own sufficient way to a love of "Bobs" that is one of the most important factors of this campaign.

From the moment when the flight of Cronje changed the situation the army has moved eastwards through a country that offered but seldom the opportunity of successful resistance. Paardeberg, where the surrender of the Boer General took place, is some eight or ten miles from Anselsdale, the position upon which the last hopes of the Free State Boers were centred. The cavalry, with an ease that surprised even the victors, demonstrated that no position can be safely held in South Africa unless it possesses the advantages of flanking mountain ranges, and these are enjoyed by few places in South Africa besides Langs Nek and Van Reenen's Pass. If the cavalry had pushed on a few miles further before daybreak it is possible that the defeat of the Boers, signal enough as it was, would have been turned into a rout sufficient to convince of his folly even Kruger, who stood beside the road and watched his burghers and his mercenaries pursue their retreat careless alike of his exhortations and his sneers.

Our losses on that occasion were trifling indeed, and the only serious casualties that have marked the advance were suffered at Driefontein. This engagement, unexpected on our part, was forced upon the Sixth Division, and in some measure resulted in the abandonment of Lord Roberts's intended rendezvous of the divided army.

On Friday, March 9, he divided his forces in the following way. The Sixth Division, then some five or six miles in advance in the direction of Abraham's Kraal, were ordered to march by the northern road along the river bank, a bad road in rainy weather, and, coming a circuit of some forty miles through Abraham's Kraal, to

meet the central force at Venter's Vlei. This latter, composed of the Headquarters Staff, the Ninth Division, and the Guards Brigade, moved by the direct route to Venter's Vlei, having on their right the Seventh Division under General Tucker, who struck south and followed the Petrusburg road to the point nearest to the rendezvous, not, however, intending to reach it till 24 hours after the rest of the troops.

The battle of Driefontein drew in to the central route the northern force, which never afterwards abandoned it. The history of this engagement, which was, as stated before, unexpected and fought in an almost unknown and a most difficult country, presents several features of interest. Briefly, the course of it was as follows. The cavalry, who had spent the previous night four or five miles in advance of the Sixth Division, found themselves at 10 o'clock on the morning of March 10 confronted by a strong force of Boers, armed with Krupp guns and one Vickers-Maxim. These held a flat-topped kopje, from which a rise, more or less marked, circled in the shape of an incomplete skater's " Q " and terminated in a range of three low kopjes on the enemy's left, which were at this time neglected by the cavalry.

General Kelly-Kenny, upon receiving news of this, deflected his course and came up at 1 30 p.m. to where the action was still suspended, the cavalry being under cover of the last-mentioned kopjes, called the Alexandra Kopjes, after the Princess of Wales (for the sake of distinction).

He received assurance that into the broken circle he could safely advance, while the cavalry at the further extremity of the Alexandra range co-operated. But this combined attack was never carried out. The Alexandra Kopjes proved to be strongly held by the Boers, and the Welsh Regiment and the Buffs, heading their respective brigades, suffered heavily, when too late to draw off and take up another position. Colonel Broadwood, to whom was entrusted the duty of turning the enemy's flank and attacking in the angle of the Alexandra Kopjes and the basin, found himself continually opposed by an enemy as mobile as himself, and eventually, seven miles from Driefontein, determined to abandon any direct attempt upon the Boer position and turned south to intercept their flight if possible. Meanwhile, the Sixth Division, enfiladed from two points, finding itself committed to a frontal attack, was compelled, in spite of definite orders to the contrary, to take the kopjes at the point of the bayonet, and did so with the greatest gallantry under the eye of Lord Roberts himself, who was the first to recognize the pluck and skill displayed. It was an action that in its unpreparedness and by the complicated nature of the ground (which led into a crescent-shaped cockpit two miles in diameter nearly the whole of the two opposing forces, guns and all) gave rise to the greatest difficulty, but in one matter was probably unique in the encouragement afforded to our troops.

The Boers were all Transvaalers who had been withdrawn from Colesberg and were under fire for the first time. They did not, as is customary, carry off or hastily bury their dead, and for the first time in this campaign our soldiers had the satisfaction of knowing that their shooting was far superior to that of the Boers. The Republican papers assessed their losses subsequently at seven killed and 18 wounded, but the burial by us of 127 dead Boers shows how terribly the enemy must have suffered, and may also afford a clue to the general losses of the Boers during the war.

From Driefontein the march was resumed on the following morning, about 16 miles being covered to Doornboom, a farm three miles south-east of Aasvogels Kop.

The direct road to Bloemfontein now lay due east, and the Boers manned the heights commanding the road in considerable numbers. Reports came in that the intrenchments prepared rivalled those of Spytfontein, and that the Transvaalers, dismissing from their ranks as untrustworthy all Free Staters, had here organized their last stand, using to the full the magnificent natural defences of the range. Here Joubert himself directed operations, and the hills probably present as perfect an illustration of the art of guerilla defence as can be seen anywhere.

The hills were alive with the enemy when, before dawn, our advance guard moved away from camp towards the southern end of their position. Upon reaching a point two miles from the enemy's fastness the column turned abruptly to the right, leaving the Boers alone in their strong position, and throughout that day the Boers looked down upon 15 miles of transport passing them without a shot being fired on either side, conscious that 12 miles ahead, beyond all hope of check, the leading troopers of our cavalry were sweeping a clear course before them almost up to the gates of Bloemfontein.

It was a masterly stroke and has succeeded to the full. A few shells thrown into Brandkop, and a few bullets exchanged north of the city, have been the only hostilities that have happened since.

The back of the Orange Free State was broken, and the two long days' marches that intervened before the city was actually reached were cheerfully performed. The night was spent at Venters Vlei, the farm owned by the notorious Judge Gregorowski, who was called in from the Free State by President Kruger to judge the Johannesburg reformers because no Transvaal Judge was of opinion that under the existing law their offence was capital. On the following day, at 5 o'clock, the two divisions moved on, headed by the Guards Brigade, who had only reached camp at 2 30 on the same morning, and were destined to march exactly 38 miles from Doornboom to Bloemfontein between 3 o'clock on Monday afternoon and 1 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon. The

February 15, when it was found that Cronje was conducting in hot haste a retreat upon Bloemfontein ; the other, of which the capture of Cronje was the chief incident, though an incident only, had for its objective the enemy's capital.

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The battle of Driefontein drew in to the central route the northern force, which never afterwards abandoned it. The history of this engagement, which was, as stated before, unexpected and fought in an almost unknown and a most difficult country, presents several features of interest. Briefly, the course of it was as follows. The cavalry, who had spent the previous night four or five miles in advance of the Sixth Division, found themselves at 10 o'clock on the morning of March 10 confronted by a strong force of Boers, armed with Krupp guns and one Vickers-Maxim. These held a flat-topped kopje, from which a rise, more or less marked, circled in the shape of an incomplete skater's " Q " and terminated in a range of three low kopjes on the enemy's left, which were at this time neglected by the cavalry.

General Kelly-Kenny, upon receiving news of this, deflected his course and came up at 1 30 p.m. to where the action was still suspended, the cavalry being under cover of the last-mentioned kopjes, called the Alexandra Kopjes, after the Princess of Wales (for the sake of distinction).

He received assurance that into the broken circle he could safely advance, while the cavalry at the further extremity of the Alexandra range co-operated. But this combined attack was never carried out. The Alexandra Kopjes proved to be strongly held by the Boers, and the Welsh Regiment and the Buffs, heading their respective brigades, suffered heavily, when too late to draw off and take up another position. Colonel Broadwood, to whom was entrusted the duty of turning the enemy's flank and attacking in the angle of the Alexandra Kopjes and the basin, found himself continually opposed by an enemy as mobile as himself, and eventually, seven miles from Driefontein, determined to abandon any direct attempt upon the Boer position and turned south to intercept their flight if possible. Meanwhile, the Sixth Division, enfiladed from two points, finding itself committed to a frontal attack, was compelled, in spite of definite orders to the contrary, to take the kopjes at the point of the bayonet, and did so with the greatest gallantry under the eye of Lord Roberts himself, who was the first to recognize the pluck and skill displayed. It was an action that in its unpreparedness and by the complicated nature of the ground (which led into a crescent-shaped cockpit two miles in diameter nearly the whole of the two opposing forces, guns and all) gave rise to the greatest difficulty, but in one matter was probably unique in the encouragement afforded to our troops.

The Boers were all Transvaalers who had been withdrawn from Colesberg and were under fire for the first time. They did not, as is customary, carry off or hastily bury their dead, and for the first time in this campaign our soldiers had the satisfaction of knowing that their shooting was far superior to that of the Boers. The Republican papers assessed their losses subsequently at seven killed and 18 wounded, but the burial by us of 127 dead Boers shows how terribly the enemy must have suffered, and may also afford a clue to the general losses of the Boers during the war.

From Driefontein the march was resumed on the following morning, about 16 miles being covered to Doornboom, a farm three miles south-east of Aasvogels Kop.

The direct road to Bloemfontein now lay due east, and the Boers manned the heights commanding the road in considerable numbers. Reports came in that the intrenchments prepared rivalled those of Spytfontein, and that the Transvaalers, dismissing from their ranks as untrustworthy all Free Staters, had here organized their last stand, using to the full the magnificent natural defences of the range. Here Joubert himself directed operations, and the hills probably present as perfect an illustration of the art of guerilla defence as can be seen anywhere.

The hills were alive with the enemy when, before dawn, our advance guard moved away from camp towards the southern end of their position. Upon reaching a point two miles from the enemy's fastness the column turned abruptly to the right, leaving the Boers alone in their strong position, and throughout that day the Boers looked down upon 15 miles of transport passing them without a shot being fired on either side, conscious that 12 miles ahead, beyond all hope of check, the leading troopers of our cavalry were sweeping a clear course before them almost up to the gates of Bloemfontein.

It was a masterly stroke and has succeeded to the full. A few shells thrown into Brandkop, and a few bullets exchanged north of the city, have been the only hostilities that have happened since.

The back of the Orange Free State was broken, and the two long days' marches that intervened before the city was actually reached were cheerfully performed. The night was spent at Venters Vlei, the farm owned by the notorious Judge Gregorowski, who was called in from the Free State by President Kruger to judge the Johannesburg reformers because no Transvaal Judge was of opinion that under the existing law their offence was capital. On the following day, at 5 o'clock, the two divisions moved on, headed by the Guards Brigade, who had only reached camp at 2 30 on the same morning, and were destined to march exactly 38 miles from Doornboom to Bloemfontein between 3 o'clock on Monday afternoon and 1 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon. The

reaction of success overcame all weariness, and the brigade marched to their goal with a smartness that Lord Roberts, in speaking to them on the following day, praised unstintedly.

The march was over. With all its weariness, all its haste, and the inevitable loss of beasts of burden, the end had been attained ; and, in looking back over the long red track that our wagon-wheels have beaten into the veldt, the feeling is overmastering that one of the historic marches of history has been brought through to a successful close.

The factors that made the difficulty will probably never again be met with in such numbers and in such force. To move 40,000 men and half that number of animals across open country for a hundred miles is a task difficult enough in circumstances such as would impede its execution in England. To have done so across the dry veldt, where water is met with only once a day and must be the factor deciding the night's stay, to have done so in the burning heat of the day, in the teeth of a watchful enemy, and at a distance of 700—some say 7,000—miles from the base without a man going foodless for a day, without the loss of a wagon except through physical defect of cart or animal, and at a pace that Lord Roberts alone can draw out of his men, is a feat that must silence much untutored criticism of the organization of the Army. It may be at once admitted that it could not have been done at manœuvres ; but, as a test of actual capability, nothing is out here more totally discredited than the foolish outdoor parades which we have been content to trust as experience sufficient of the capacity alike of man and organization.

The latent determination that for some reason we seem able to bring to the front only in an emergency has been realized as a powerful force by Lord Roberts and has been drawn upon freely and with unerring judgment. Endurance, that will in the future decide battles more, perhaps, than any other rank-and-file quality, has had its severest test, and we may be thankful that our troops have to a man proved their strength to suffer even more than their strength to fight. The long march that was finished yesterday deserves one of the first places among the achievements of the Army.

4th April 1900.

LORD ROBERTS'S ENTRY INTO BLOEMFONTEIN.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BLOEMFONTEIN, MARCH 20.

Early news was received of the abandonment of their capital by the Boers, and even at Poundisford Farm we had realized that all that remained was ceremony.

The keys were handed to Lord Roberts at the halting-place four miles out of the town, near where the railway forces itself by a steep gradient up to the rise from which the first view of Bloemfontein is to be had. At first sight the capital looks poor enough. A collection of adobe Kaffir huts on the right of the main road, and a few tin-roofed buildings of brick on the left of the white pyramidal monument to those who fell to protect the State in its early days of struggle with the native tribes, form the first indications of a town.

The road itself is hardly worthy of the name. Merely a rain-scoured track that winds here and there across the veldt, following the line of least effort and willing to go round any donga, however small, rather than bridge its way over it, the highway of the State looks more like a cart-track between fields in England than the Ermine-street of South Africa. At the head of the rise Lord Roberts marshalled his procession. First of all came the Field-Marshal himself, then, as always, the most simply dressed man in his own army, followed by his military secretary and aides-de-camp ; then the general officers on the staff with their staffs, forming a body about 50 strong, preceding the foreign attachés, who, with their slight national distinctions from the ordinary khaki which is worn by all alike, added a slight touch of variety to the monotony of buff.

But the real colour, the only colour that was shown in the column, was provided by Lord Roberts's Indian servants, who followed immediately behind the five correspondents riding in the rear of the foreign attachés. After them came a long line of cavalry and guns about a mile in length, winding down the road and across the railway till the last flat stretch of grazed down veldt was reached and the ascent to the monument was begun. Here the first symptom of what was to follow made itself felt. A burst of cheering came from a small knot of men and women as Lord Roberts crossed the wire gate that served technically as an entrance to the town. Much of the enthusiasm that greeted the invading *cortége* throughout the town was doubtless due rather to discretion than emotion. In fact, the reception by the inhabitants of a capital from among whom most of the English had been compelled to fly long ago was a trifle too warm ; a suggestion of insincerity was always present, even when the cheering was loudest,

MAP OF A PORTION OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE.

though there can be no doubt that the relief that came when the news spread that the town was to be spared the horrors of bombardment had reacted to a great extent upon the population, and that many of them were in consequence genuinely glad to see the British commander.

But these first welcomers were moved by no sordid motives, and the hearty English tones that bade us God's blessing with a rain of tears from the women's eyes were as pleasant to us as anything in the town. Up the slope the cavalcade moved, halting at the top while Lord Roberts sternly rebuked some looters at the artillery barracks.

Over the crest of the hill the real size of the town, spread like a map below us, was realized, and the straight-driven road that crosses the dip where the banked-in river runs in time of flood, and rising on the other side threads the market square, stopping at last before the double-towered *façade* of the Dutch church, was effective enough between its eucalyptus and pepper trees.

Of architecture Bloemfontein is destitute. Stone and brick buildings with maroon roofs and covered with trivial and pretentious ornament are, indeed, found in profusion, but the Dutch church, with its involuntary and ridiculous suggestion of Westminster Abbey, the Presidency, a large expensive building of cut stone constructed solidly enough, but without pretensions to proportion or grace, and the Government buildings, a long narrow erection of brick, with an inadequate tower in the middle, do not suggest to one that the Boers have developed the artistic side of their nature.

Through the market square, amid a shouting, handkerchief-waving crowd of men, women, and children, all decked with red, blue, and white ribbons, Lord Roberts passed on, acknowledging the burst of cheering from the club, and eventually, pausing before the Government buildings, where a knot of leading inhabitants stood round the statue set up to " J. H. Brand " —his knighthood, as an English honour, being characteristically ignored—declared in solemn form the reoccupation of Bloemfontein in the name of her Majesty. Still a moment longer he stayed to speak a word or two about the great man commemorated before him, and then, turning sharply to the left. the procession crossed the river by a small stone bridge and, turning again to the right, paused before the Presidency.

Here the sheet iron gates were ceremoniously opened by the porter, and Lord Roberts passed in between the last of the crowds that waited for him that day, while " God save the Queen " was sung with full-throated chorus by every one present.

Then all eyes were turned to the small flagstaff that stands in the corner of the grounds.

Forms and ceremonies still count for much, and though the actual occupation had been effected hours before, many stood with their watches in their hands waiting to note the exact time at which the Union Jack should run to the masthead.

There was a delay of a minute or two, and then, at 20 minutes to 2, the small silk jack worked by Lady Roberts herself, with a tiny little green trefoil hiding in the upper corner on the white saltire, ran out to the wind, and Bloemfontein realized that it had once again come into the great Empire that had carelessly allowed it to cut itself almost adrift in 1854.

The rest of the day passed without incidents of great note. Everywhere a public holiday was observed, and the streets were filled with crowds, white and coloured, greeting every man in khaki, and never weary of the chorus of " Tommy Atkins." A slight attempt at rioting in the market-place was put down after a Boer had been knocked down and his nose broken ; it was contemptible to see the heartiness with which his own blood ran to kick him when he was down.

The troops remain outside the town, being admitted only in small numbers, under the care of a non-commissioned officer, and the smoothness was remarkable with which municipal life was resumed yesterday without a single complaint of looting of any kind being raised. The military occupation sits very lightly upon the inhabitants, and it is difficult to imagine oneself in the enemy's surrendered capital ; as an example of what can be done to ameliorate the hardships of war it would be difficult to surpass the present situation.

Military bands play a tattoo at night while the market-square is thronged with listeners. Now and then a regiment is marched through with drums and fifes or bagpipes playing ; but, as a rule, there is no other visible sign of capture than the sentries over the post office and the ceaseless rattle of the orderlies' horses over the stones of the square.

We remain here for three weeks while the relief of Mafeking and the western attack is pressed on. Monotonously comfortable though it will be after the excitement and fighting of the advance, it is probably the least time necessary to refit the men and remount the cavalry. The waste of horseflesh has been on this march enormous ; only during the last three days were the cavalry moving through pasture land, and the incessant work to which the horses were exposed and the utter inability to wait for or care for in any way the horses that a few days' halt or good food would have saved have lost us hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of mounts. But here there is time to recruit, and when we move northwards it will be with a perfect equipment of men and horses, a railway running behind us for supply, and, above all, the satisfaction of feeling that behind us we leave a pacified stretch of country free from even a Boer patrol.

Amid the good work done it is right to mention that carried out by two departments that might easily escape notice. The telegraph staff under Captain Godfrey Faussett has wrestled successfully with a heavy demand upon it. To set up an aerial line or trail an earth wire day after day in advance of headquarters and to keep it in efficient working order n spite of wilful interruptions, or, what is far commoner, the accidental breaks caused by wind, wandering animals, or even, as in a recent case, excessively stupid men, over a hundred miles of veldt, is a great achievement, and one for which thanks are due from correspondents more than from others, especially when they have invariably met with the utmost courtesy and consideration from all therewith connected. The other department to which reference has been made is that of the Army chaplains.

Rightly enough, stress is rarely laid in home communications upon the inevitable suffering and death that war brings with it, but in bowing the head before the danger that all must encounter, and before which some must succumb, it is unfair to a fine body of earnest men to forget the ministrations that in the last hours of the dying soldier are his only and his great comfort.

From those whose lips are closed the truest testimony must in this matter ever have come, but it should never be forgotten in the depression of failure or the excitement of victory that of one class alone the work is unaffected by military results, and that with quiet unpretentious devotion the Army chaplains have carried on their divine labours among the troops with a constancy that is surpassed by the exertions of no other men.

9th April 1900.

THE COLONIAL DIVISION.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

PENHOEK CAMP, FEB. 11.

With the arrival of General Brabant and his staff at Penhoek Camp yesterday morning the Colonial Division came into existence. Nominally the General accepted the command about two weeks ago, but for all practical purposes the division as a separate fighting force only dates from yesterday.

The creation of a South African Colonial Division under a colonial commander is an event of much greater importance than would appear at the first blush. It marks an era in the relations between the Imperial military authorities and the colonial Volunteer forces. Hitherto there had been a very patronizing attitude adopted towards the colonial soldier and an almost contemptuous indifference to his advice and judgment. In and out of season the colonial preached the necessity for mounted men to cope with the Boers in the event of war, and for the adoption of colonial methods in fighting an enemy so cunning, cautious, and elusive. The Staff College men, however, appeared to think that their school possessed the wisdom of all the centuries and its teachings were as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Where the warnings of the colonials were not scoffed at they fell on deaf ears, and the old style was still adhered to. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, however, the sheer merit of the colonial Volunteers in Natal drew from our generals their most generous tribute of unaffected admiration for their soldierly qualities. Generals Penn Symons, Yule, French, Sir George White, and Sir Redvers Buller all testified to the extreme value of their services. About this time Lord Roberts arrived, and the greatness of his character was at once evinced. On representations being made to him, he immediately admitted the strong claims of the colonial soldiers to some practical recognition. Within a few days of his arrival at Cape Town several of the well-known colonial officers were summoned to meet him, and the result of the conference was the authorization of the formation of a colonial division, primarily for the purpose of clearing the enemy out of the Cape colonial districts so impudently annexed by President Steyn. To no other force could the task have been more fittingly assigned. The objections brought forward by the Cape Ministry, out of deference to the sentiments of the Dutch taxpayers—objections recognized by Sir Alfred Milner and endorsed by Mr. Chamberlain—could not after the invasion and annexation of several districts of the colony be longer urged with any show of decency, though it is said in well-informed quarters that the attempt was made once or twice. In any case, the purely culvert and bridge guarding day of the well-trained colonial Regulars and Volunteers was plainly over, and they were at last to be allowed a chance of showing their mettle. Many a hearty cheer might have been heard along the thousand odd miles of railway line as the news became known. The Kaffrarian Rifles (an infantry regiment of great merit, with Maxim, signalling and cycling sections, and one mounted company) and the Frontier Mounted Rifles, also a very valuable corps, some 450 of the celebrated Cape Mounted Rifles with six 7-pounders and a couple of Maxims, and a body of the Cape Police were at once attached to General Gatacre's force and did excellent service ; while,on the midland section, the admirable mounted companies of the 1st City (Grahamstown) and of Prince Alfred's Own Volunteer Guard (Port Elizabeth) were used by Colonel Gifford at Rosmead to clear the neigh-

bourhood, occupying Maraisburg and generally acting in conjunction with, though at a distance from, General French, and they also did valuable work, though they had no actual fighting.

In the selection of a commander Lord Roberts had little trouble. By common consent Colonel Brabant stands first among colonial commanders, and to him was the position confided, Lord Roberts conferring on him the rank of Brigadier-General. Recruiting at once received an extraordinary stimulus throughout the Cape Colony. Several irregular corps had meanwhile been authorized, speedily organized, and sent to the front, each succeeding in maintaining the high reputation gained in the earlier part of the campaign. The doings of the various colonial contingents from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, &c., were watched with the keenest interest, and raised to even higher pitch the enthusiasm of the colonists. Districts which had already contributed so many men as to be reckoned exhausted for recruiting purposes were found capable of still further depletion. Town residents, Johannesburg refugees, &c., eagerly offered their services. Corps recruited for purely local defence purposes volunteered to go to the front. The obstacle to speedy action on the part of General Brabant, who means to work entirely with mounted men and guns, was that, of the forces originally assigned to his command, several already mounted bodies, such as those on the midland section referred to above, were, withdrawn from him under the plea that their services were invaluable where they were and that a great part of the volunteers given to him were infantry. Their conversion into mounted infantry would not be a matter of long duration but for the questions of horsing and equipping the men. Horses have already been so bought up that the country has now to be scoured on all sides to obtain serviceable animals, and second-rate horses have perforce in some cases to be accepted. Two regiments of Brabant's Horse, approximately 1,200 men, have been fully horsed and equipped and are a very fine looking lot, under excellent officers whose work has been continuous for the past couple of months. The force now in camp here and in the neighbourhood is as follows :—viz., 1st Regiment Brabant's Horse, under Captain (Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel) Henderson, 478 strong; 2nd Regiment Brabant's Horse, under Major (Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel) Grenfell, 601 strong; Frontier Mounted Rifles, under Major Hart, 145 strong; Queenstown Mounted Rifles, under Captain Williams, 96 strong; Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles, under Captain Maclean, 60 strong; Cape Mounted Rifles, under Colonel Dalgetty, 492 strong; total, 1,872. In addition to these there should speedily arrive from Cathcart, under Major Crewe, several squadrons to form a third regiment Brabant's Horse, made up largely of volunteers from Colonel Bayly's District Mounted Rifles, about 400; Queenstown Mounted Rifles, still equipping, 100; Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles, still equipping, 480; making a grand total of 2,852 men; with two 15-pounders, six 7-pounders, two Maxims, to be worked by the C.M.R., and two Maxims, to be worked by the Kaffrarians.

The ambulance section is under the well-known Surgeon Lieutenant-Colonel Hartley, V.C., with Doctors Carter, Perkins, and Rand as assistants, 60 men and five ambulance wagons and carts. General Brabant's chief of the staff is Captain Ferguson, of the South Wales Borderers, and other officers of the staff are Captain Little, A.D.C.; Major Maxwell, R.E., unattached; Captain Taylor, A.S.C., supply officer; Major Tamplin, Q.C., extra A.D.C.; and Lieutenants Elliot and Leigh as gallopers.

The force must be admitted to be but small for the task given to General Brabant, and the midland section Volunteers taken from him may be much missed. Lord Kitchener is taking a whole-hearted interest in the new force, and has forwarded some 250 horses, complete with saddlery, from Cape Town to expedite the mobilization. No general can view with absolute equanimity the withdrawal from his command of valuable men, but of General Gatacre it must be said that he has managed to conceal his feelings with great success. He is assisting General Brabant wherever possible, and altogether is displaying a spirit as estimable as it is rare.

General Brabant looks for some hard fighting. In his brief, stirring, and soldierly address to his second regiment at Queenstown on the 4th inst., he said that the weary time of probation was nearly over. He could not disclose his plan of operations, but might say that the greatest glutton for fighting among the men before him (and many of them were personally known to him as keen for it) would have his fill. He congratulated Colonel Grenfell and the officers on the admirable result of their arduous labours in the splendid regiment before him, which, he said, was creditable alike to officers and men, and entirely satisfactory to himself. The men had had a gruelling preparation, which they had undergone with great patience, and he was confident they would give a good account of themselves when called upon.

The 1st Regiment of Brabant's Horse under Lieutenant-Colonel Henderson has been hard at outpost and patrolling duties for some time past in the neighbourhood of Penhoek, while the Frontier Mounted Rifles, the C.M.R., and the Kaffrarians have already smelt powder several times with credit to themselves, so that, small though his division be in numbers, General Brabant is beginning operations with men most of whom are hard as nails and inured to the hardships of campaigning. The work of organization has been very hard, and would have been impossible but for the energetic assistance of the staff, notably Captains Ferguson and Little, who worked day and night with but slight intermission.

The eyes of all Cape colonists are fixed on General Brabant and his force, and many fervent prayers are being offered for their success. The operations will probably be on a small scale till the arrival of his full force, which may possibly not be for about ten days, and General Brabant is unlikely to do anything till he is quite sure of his ground. He thoroughly believes in the policy of not taking a step forward till he is fairly confident that he will not be compelled to retrace his steps. His task is undoubtedly rendered more difficult by the policy of conciliation laid down by Lord Roberts, though this may be the most statesmanlike method for the subsequent pacification of the country. Loyal colonists driven from their homes in the occupied districts, deprived of their stock by commandeering, view the matter somewhat bitterly, and many farmer recruits have been in consequence lost to the colonial division. The prospect of avenging their injuries had been a great stimulus to recruiting, but with all looting of cattle and stock strictly forbidden, fighting the Boers had lost most of its attraction to the colonial refugee farmer.

The attitude of the military generally towards General Brabant is most friendly, his own genial character and the presence of many English officers in his force probably accounting for the entire lack of jealousy which would not have been entirely unnatural in professional soldiers ; and so, with good will and good wishes on all hands, the Colonial Division enters on its difficult task.

10th April 1900.

THE ADVANCE OF THE COLONIAL DIVISION.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

ALIWAL NORTH, MARCH 12.

Leaving a strong garrison at Dordrecht, a start was made for Jamestown on March 7 with about 2,000 men, two 15 and six 7-pounders, and again difficulties of transport much hampered the march. The intention was to have pushed through Oorlog's Poort, but a halt had to be made for the night in this very dangerous position. All the lofty hills around had to be occupied in force, as Boers had been reported in front. Fortunately, however, the enemy was not enterprising, and an early start saw the division out of possible trouble. Mr. George Farrar and your Correspondent rode in advance of the column, arriving in Jamestown two hours ahead. The English inhabitants were at the outskirts of the pretty little village and welcomed us most effusively. Their impatience was not to be denied, and an adjournment was made to the Court-house, where the English flag, or rather a hastily improvised but colourable imitation of it, was duly hoisted amid hearty cheers. Then followed " God Save the Queen " from all assembled, most of the ladies breaking into tears.

During the afternoon Mr. Wagenaar, a local rebel who had accepted the position of Landdrost, was made a prisoner and sent on for trial, while his nephew and several others, after being disarmed, were released and sent to their farms under escort in terms of Lord Roberts's proclamation. In the young Wagenaar's haversack were found 160 cartridges, all with soft-nosed bullets. He and several of his friends admitted they had been fighting against us on the 4th and 5th at Labuschagne's Nek, and the clemency of their treatment was acknowledged with almost slavish expressions of gratitude, while it was witnessed with ill-concealed indignation by many of our officers and men. The only plea advanced by any of these rebels was that the Free Staters would not have entered the Colony had there been any force to defend the frontiers. In other words, they claimed that they required protection against themselves and their innate inclination to sympathize with the Republics. Several of them severely blamed the Bond Ministry in Cape Town for the Free State invasion.

The enemy was reported falling back rapidly on Aliwal, and but for commissariat difficulties would have been pursued without delay. On the morning of March 10, however, the advance towards Aliwal was recommenced., and in the afternoon we arrived within 18 miles. The advance guard, composed of 1st Brabant's, with two 7-pounders under Captain Lukin, C.M.R., the whole under Major Henderson, formed a cavalry screen and escort to the guns, and a rapid advance was made. On the road at Elandsberg a deserted broken-down wagon with grain was found—evidence of a precipitate Boer retreat which received further proof by the capture a little later of a wagon and oxen with ammunition.

On arrival on the heights beyond Bekker's Farm, about five miles from Aliwal, a Boer laager over the river could be plainly seen and many wagons trekking away from it. Major Henderson determined on a speedy advance to the town and sent back word to General Brabant of his intention. We rode on at a hard canter, arriving at the bridge at 9 30. Troopers Wilson and Thomas, of A Squadron 1st Brabant's, were the first of the Colonial Division to cross the bridge into the Free State. The inhabitants in great numbers were in the streets cheering madly, natives dancing, while on a pavement in front of the bridge a few ladies vainly tried to sing " God Save the Queen," their emotion, however, in most cases proving too much for them. A few scouts were speedily sent forward in all directions, and several prisoners and horses sent back

in a few minutes. A general advance was made about 1½ mile along the road to the right, and the heights were soon covered with our men. The two 7-pounders opened on the laager, but a party of Boers being observed along a ridge to the left of the laager making their way to a flat-topped hill facing our guns, Captain Lukin sent a couple of shell among them, knocking over three horses and one man being seen carried away. This for the time stopped a Boer advance there, and the men fell back along the ridge to where a number of rocks gave them excellent cover, from which they were not dislodged during the day. Turning his attention again to the laager Lukin sent in a series of shell. Meanwhile Major Henderson sent a squadron to seize the flat-crowned hill, which was speedily done, and a brisk rifle fire soon broke out between them and the sheltered Boers. Soon after the Boers appeared still further on the left from a spurred ridge behind, which runs at an oblique angle towards the river below the town. A few reinforcements having arrived, Major Henderson sent a squadron and a half, under Major Thomas and Captain Goddard, to stop the turning movement. This led to the Boer rifle fire showing for over a mile along the spur, so that with our small force we had a firing line over three miles long. The Boers extended still further to the right close on to the river, and Major Merritt and a few men were sent to engage them. At 11 15 General Brabant arrived, accompanied by Colonel Dalgetty, several hundreds of the C.M.R., and two 7-pounders. Had the 15-pounders arrived at this stage, probably a continuous forward movement might have been successful if attempted, but General Brabant chiefly confined his efforts to withdrawing the men from the already perhaps too extended positions. Suddenly two Krupp guns opened fire from the centre of the spurred hill on the left, and they were very well served indeed. The horses of the C.M.R. and others which were rather exposed were immediately withdrawn below the ridge and orders sent to the forward firing lines for the men gradually to withdraw. Some C.M.R. were sent out on the left to cover the withdrawal. About 1 p.m. the two 15-pounders arrived and got into action, resulting in the entire silence of the Boer guns for nearly two hours after Lukin had sent in some two dozen good shots. Major Cuming with five squadrons Kaffrarians, and Major Crewe with about two squadrons Border Horse, arrived, and after some little delay were sent forward to mask the continued retirement while the Sappers and a relief of 50 men were engaged in digging trenches on the heights to cover the bridge on all sides.

The Boer guns meanwhile were busy shelling the bridge, but at first their firing was somewhat erratic. After a dozen shots, however, they nearly got the range, and the retreating troops and the poor townspeople had a very uncomfortable time. Many shells dropped just short of the bridge into the water, while at least a dozen came into the town close to the top of the bridge on an open space and in gardens near. Two of the 7-pounders opened later beside the bridge, and the Boer firing, save for mere sniping, died away about 5 30. The heights above the bridge on the Free State side were occupied by about 500 men fairly well intrenched, and the Colonial Division had accomplished the first portion of the work entrusted to it by Lord Roberts.

The casualties, which are not yet positively ascertained (March 12), were not under 25, and the Boer loss must have been nearly, if not quite, as heavy. It is undoubted that but for Major Henderson's rapid advance, which took the Boers by surprise, we should not have found the bridge intact, and his subsequent advance beyond the heights overlooking and commanding the bridge was from all appearances quite justified. An enemy shedding wagons at every stiff incline and with an enormous number visibly trekking away were too tempting objects of attack. The pity was that reinforcements of men and the two 15-pounders were not at once sent forward.

The ambulance work was done in really wonderful fashion by Surgeon-Colonel Hartley, V.C., with Captains Veitch and Carter assisting, all of whom had several very narrow escapes. In at least a couple of instances absolutely no respect was paid to the ambulance wagons ; indeed, their appearance was greeted with volleys from quarters previously silent.

The men must be said to have behaved admirably. The withdrawal from exposed positions tries the most perfectly-disciplined troops, and the irregulars took their time over the retreat. The orders were received at the advanced firing lines before 1 p.m., but, as has been seen, it was over two hours before the retreat was clearly observed by the Boers. The guns under Captain Lukin and Lieutenant Roy did invaluable service, and a cooler, more resourceful couple it would be impossible to find. The Boer guns were almost but not quite perfectly served. Prisoners say an Italian gunner named Ricardo was in command. Had he used shrapnel more extensively our losses must have been very severe. Probably, however, now that they are cut off from the railway the supply of the Boers may be running low. At the present moment a battery of artillery in our hands would make Commandant Olivier's position a very unenviable one.

10th April 1900.

THE REBELS IN CAPE COLONY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, MARCH 21.

As far as Cape Colony is concerned the war is

now practically over. Such operations of importance as may yet take place will be in the northern Free State and in the Transvaal, and not in the colony. There is little likelihood of a fresh movement of rebellion anywhere, and the only active disturbance—that in the north-west—seems now to have been effectively checked by Lord Kitchener's reoccupation of Prieska. Everywhere in the recently-invaded districts the rebels are surrendering their arms and returning to their farms with passes in accordance with Sir Alfred Milner's proclamation, by which, though secure from being made prisoners by the military authorities, they still remain liable to be called to account for their actions during the period of rebellion. The case of these men requires speedy consideration, and it is essential that the Imperial Government should decide without delay what is to be done with them. It is necessary that they should all undergo some punishment of a more or less degree of severity. At the present moment they are mostly in a state of abject terror and penitence, and would be quite satisfied with any penalty short of being shot or having all their property confiscated. It would be both cruel and impolitic to let them wait on their farms for months till they have almost forgotten that they have rebelled and are liable to be brought to trial, and then suddenly come down on them to punish them. Nothing could be productive of greater bitterness than a long series of trials dragging on for months and months after the war was over. It would simply prolong the unrest and ferment which the colony has been passing through ever since the war began. The trial and punishment of the rebels ought to be got over quickly, so that the country may start with a clean slate as soon as possible after the state of war has ceased.

The whole question of dealing with the rebels is extremely complicated and difficult. It is obvious that it is impossible to treat them with excessive severity. From the strictly legal point of view they are no doubt guilty of high treason and deserving of the utmost penalty. But such an attitude must give way to considerations of good sense and expediency. For one thing, there are too many rebels. It would be monstrous to shoot, hang, or turn into beggars the whole population of large districts. Regard must be paid, too, to the special position in which these men have found themselves. Blood is, after all, thicker than the ink of the law, and the temptation to rebel has been very great. The fault lies mainly with ourselves for permitting independent Dutch States to grow up on the borders of our colony. The disloyalty of the colonial Dutch was a necessary consequence of our shirking our responsibilities of government in the past. Allowance, too, must be made for the pressure put upon a considerable portion of the rebels before they took up arms. Whatever disclaimers the Republican Governments or their friends may now make as to their intention to annex territory, it remains a fact that the Transvaal and Free State officials everywhere declared occupied territory to have become an integral portion of the Republics, and called upon the inhabitants as burghers of the Free State or Transvaal to take up arms and join a commando under threat of heavy fines, imprisonment, or expulsion. The hardships undergone by those inhabitants of occupied districts, especially if of Dutch birth, who have remained loyal give an indication of the pressure put upon hundreds of others who had not the same courage to resist. But, if it is necessary to make allowances, it is no less necessary to punish. By far the greater portion of those who rebelled joined the enemy of their own free will, and many hundreds of them were busy organizing rebellion for weeks and months before the war broke out, and when it did begin they were the men who formed reception committees and went in deputations—usually with the professed object of asking the Republican commando to stay away and leave them in their neutrality—to invite the enemy and assure him of liberal support. It would be a serious danger to the peace of South Africa if we encouraged the idea that the Imperial Government looks upon rebellion against the authority of the Queen and the shooting of her soldiers as a slight and venial trespass. Moreover, we owe a duty to those who have remained loyal, to the Dutch loyalists above all. Unless we are ready to sacrifice our reputation for justice and gratitude, we must make sure that as a result of this war those who have remained loyal shall find themselves in a better position than those who have taken any share, however slight, in rebellion. Loyalists have everywhere suffered insult and ill-treatment, not to speak of serious material loss. Merely to compensate these men for such material losses as they can produce vouchers for, and to leave the rebels as they were, in the full enjoyment of their own property and very probably of a good deal of looted property as well, would be to make it clear to all South Africa that it is just as profitable, and very much more agreeable, to be a rebel than to remain a loyalist. Justice and policy both demand that the rebel shall be punished according to his deserts and the loyalist not only compensated, but rewarded. And both the punishment and the reward ought to be plain and visible to all the world.

As regards the actual penalties to be inflicted, it must be remembered that the Roman Dutch law of the colony, unlike the English law, recognizes other punishments for high treason besides death. It does not, however, recognize the direct confiscation of landed property as a form of penalty. In the case of men of position, members of Parliament, justices of the peace, or field cornets who have joined the enemy, and in the case of others who have acted as ringleaders, the punishment should be exemplary. They should be sentenced to death and their sentences commuted for a considerable term of penal servitude and a heavy fine. The rank and file should be sentenced to pay a fine, varying according to the Judge's discretion with the guilt of the offender, but sufficiently heavy as a rule to oblige the convicted rebel to sell a portion of his property. The proceeds of these fines might be specially earmarked for the compensation of loyalists. In many cases the loyalists might then be able out of their compensation to buy the land of their rebel neighbours, which the latter would have to sell in order to meet the fines imposed on them. In such circumstances the reward and punishment would be both clear and tangible—a warning to the disloyal and an indication to the loyal that their services have received due recognition.

It is in dealing with the Court that is to conduct the trial of alleged rebels that the greatest difficulty lies. The ordinary Courts are quite inadequate for the purpose. Their procedure is so slow that it would take years for them even to get through the thousands of cases that would come before them. At the present moment the trial of the 41 rebels captured at Sunnyside by Colonel Pilcher on January 1 is still proceeding, though it has been continuing on and off for two whole months. Again, the jury system depends entirely on the existence in a country of an unprejudiced element who can be relied upon to give a verdict in accordance with the evidence before them. But when a country is divided into two bitterly hostile camps as South Africa is today, the system becomes a farce. As things are, no country jury composed of Dutchmen would ever condemn a rebel, and no English jury would ever acquit any man with a Dutch name brought before it for trial against whom there was any colourable evidence. But, failing the ordinary Courts, it is essential to have some tribunal that has legal validity. The whole apparatus of martial law and military Courts is, of course, a mere makeshift and pretence to meet the exigencies of a situation for which the ordinary law is inadequate. The decisions of a military Court are invalid in law, and would be upset the moment the civil law resumes its sway. Even if they were ratified by Act of Parliament afterwards, there would always be a suspicion that in some cases injustice might have been done. Every Englishman has a natural and justifiable suspicion of the judgments of a military Court on civil matters.

The step that ought to be taken, and taken immediately, is the appointment of a special commission of Judges of high standing to go on circuit through the recently rebellious districts and try all the cases brought before them. It might be possible to have this commission composed of colonial Judges appointed by the colonial Parliament. But there are serious objections to such a proposal. In the first place, it is doubtful whether the majority in the Cape House of Assembly would ever lend its hand to any measures against the rebels. The Bond Ministry has a majority of seven, five of whom have themselves taken part in rebellion, while, of the others, a dozen or more have been returned by constituents who are rebels. Moreover, so keen is the division in the political life of the colony, that, respected as are her Majesty's colonial Judges, there is not one of them against whom an outcry of partisanship would not be raised by one side or the other. By far the most satisfactory solution would be the appointment by special Act of the Imperial Parliament of a commission composed of the most eminent Judges of the English Bench. There is no reason, too, why members of the Canadian or Australian Bench should not form part of it, now that the colonies have vindicated their right to have a voice in all the affairs of the Empire. The essential thing is that the commission be appointed at once and begin its labours with the least possible delay.

What is to happen to the administration of the rebel districts afterwards is another question of no small complexity. Not that there is any real danger of further revolt, but the political relation of these districts to the rest of the colony will be of a very peculiar character. A great deal depends on the trial of the rebel population. A condemned rebel, however light the penalty actually inflicted, is *ipso facto* disfranchised for five years, like any other person convicted of a capital offence. If, therefore, the trial of rebels is conducted very thoroughly and it is found possible to bring to trial and sentence the large majority of those who have taken an open part in rebellion, there is no reason why these districts, purged in many cases of more than half their voters, should not send members to Parliament as before. But, failing that, if only a small proportion of the many thousands who have rebelled are actually convicted, it would be monstrous to let districts which have been in open rebellion elect members of Parliament within a few months of laying down their arms. In that case it would probably be necessary for the Imperial Parliament to pass a special Act separating certain districts temporarily from Cape Colony and putting them under a special administration, or under the same administration as the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. After some years these districts could be gradually reincorporated with the colony, as the excitement and bitterness caused by the war begins to subside. That

scheme would have the further advantage of avoiding all friction with the colonial Government. After the excision of the actively rebellious districts, there remains a loyal majority which would eagerly co-operate with the Imperial authorities in every measure necessary for the maintenance of order.

9th April 1900.

THE BIRTH OF THE BOND.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, MARCH 21.

A pamphlet has been published here, under the above title, of no little interest to those who maintain that such disaffection as has ever shown itself among the Dutch of Cape Colony is purely a result of the Jameson raid and of Mr. Chamberlain's subsequent policy, and that the hostility of the Bond party has always been directed, not against the British Empire or the British race as such, but against the machinations of unscrupulous capitalists. The pamphlet in question is a translation of a series of leading articles published in the first half of the year 1882, shortly after the surrender of the Transvaal to the Boers, in *De Patriot*, then the most vigorous Dutch organ in Cape Colony. The object of those articles was to advocate the formation of a Bond or league to unite the efforts of those who wished to create an Afrikander nationality, and to expound the policy that Bond ought in the future to pursue. The Bond came into being and the policy flourished. Its outcome has been the present war.

The first article of the series deals with the question what the Afrikander nation gained by the first Transvaal war :—

The Transvaal war is now happily over. And while we now sing praises to God for his deliverance and the victory of our brethren, and the restoration of pure and righteous Government, . . . can we better employ our thoughts than by considering what we have already gained by the war, and what we may yet further gain by it ?

God's hand has been visible in the history of our people so as it never has been since the days of Israel. It has been visible—(*a*) In the unity, courage, and perseverance of our Transvaal brethren ; (*b*) in the sympathy and the tokens of help from the whole world ; (*c*) in the unanimous and faithful prayers of all the children of God over the whole earth ; (*d*) in the marvellous victory and almost utter absence of losses on the part of the Boers ; (*e*) in the fear from God which made the English soldiers powerless ; (*f*) and especially that proud England was compelled to give the Boers back their land after her soldiers had been repeatedly beaten by a handful of Boers.

If the Transvaalers had indeed stayed quiet, as nearly all advised them to do, then England's injustice would have been successful, she would have been confirmed in her robbery, and would also easily have absorbed the Free State. Now all her thieving is over, and probably she will never repeat it. Might has run its race against right, and lost, and will never be able to renew the conflict on such favourable terms. And our faith in the righteous government of God is all the stronger that England will be yet more severely punished if she dares to begin again with her policy of robbery and murder.

Yes, now have we seen that England is not almighty ; God alone is almighty. This is the third advantage that we Afrikanders have gained by the war. Our children have learnt it in the English books at school, the newspapers have assured us it is so, and at last the majority had begun to believe that England always must and will conquer. We ourselves have always maintained against all the worshippers of the Beast (Revelation, 13th chapter), who have commanded our Transvaal brethren to bow down before England's might—" No, brethren, persevere ; God will hear, and give you deliverance."

And now here is the deliverance, more glorious than we ourselves could have expected. England's power has been repeatedly beaten and humbled. The little respect which an Afrikander still had for British troops and cannon is utterly done away. And England has learned so much respect for us Afrikanders that she will take care not to be so ready to make war with us again. Think of it ; no English soldier had the honour to set his foot on Transvaal ground. Those that were in the Transvaal already had to sit still in the forts like mice in a trap, and those that were to go and relieve them got their sound beating in the Natal territory.

The Transvaalers have now got what they wanted, and what they for four years vainly solicited from England—namely, the revocation of the annexation, the giving back of their land, and the restoration of the South African Republic.

The Free State shall now also remain a free State, and England must now keep her claws off from the Transvaal long enough for us Afrikanders to recover strength a little and pull things to rights.

The Afrikanders have now a little time and opportunity to develop themselves as a people. We had all been fearing that the jingoes would simply overwhelm us.

The Transvaalers are now restored to credit, in their own eyes and in the eyes of all the world. Now all Europe and America are alive to the rights of our affairs, and it will be dangerous for England to go on with her accustomed blundering.

The English sovereignty over South Africa has now gone back at least half a century. Good ; heartily glad of it.

Next week, let us think about what further we must try to win through the war. The drops of Afrikander blood that have been shed were precious ; it was a heavy price for which our people must get back much in return.

There is no word of magnanimity here. It would be foolish to expect it. The veil which Mr. Gladstone endeavoured to cast over the ignominy of his surrender was only for home use, for the party politics of the hour. South Africa saw the naked truth. These 18 years the Dutch have known that they frightened and cajoled England into surrender, and the English have known that an English Ministry betrayed them for a handful of votes. And to-day England and South Africa are paying in their best blood for the weakness of those days.

The next article enters into the constitution and objects of the proposed Bond. It remarks that the Free State *Express* had already published the draft constitution of such a Bond, worked out in detail by "some friends at Bloemfontein." The expression "some friends" covers none other than Messrs. F. W. Reitz and E. Borckenhagen, editor of the Free State *Express*, who, together with the Rev. J. S. du Toit, the writer of these articles, were the original founders of the Afrikander Bond, which, it is always well to remember, chiefly originated in the Republics and originally embraced the Republics as well as the colony, though it was found more convenient afterwards to sever the official connexion. The founders of the Bond have passed through many vicissitudes since those days. Mr. Reitz became President of the Free State and is now State Secretary of the Transvaal, in which capacity he declared war upon the British Empire. Mr. du Toit, in the years that followed, thought better of that hatred of the English he so eloquently and frankly preached once, and became converted to Mr. Rhodes's creed of a united South Africa under the British flag. The *Patriot* still exists, and defends with vigour, if with no great success in winning over the colonial Dutch, the cause of the Imperial Government in the present war. But in *Ons Land* it has left a worthy successor in the campaign against all that is English. Mr. Borckenhagen continued all his life through to act as editor of the *Express* and high priest of the policy of aggressive and militant Afrikanderdom. It was from him that President Steyn learnt his political creed and under his direction that he studied for the *rôle* of President of the United Republics, or even of a united Republican South Africa. After laying down the outlines of the constitution of the proposed Bond, with its division into ward committees, district committees, and provincial and central Bestuurs, or governing committees, the article proceeds to expound the ideals of the proposed organization :—

This is now our time to establish the Bond, while a national consciousness has been awakened through the Transvaal war. And the Bond must be our preparation for the future confederation of all the States and colonies of South Africa. The English Government keeps talking of a confederation under the British flag. That will never happen (*daar kom niks van nie*). We can assure them of that. We have often said it ; there is just one hindrance to confederation, and that is the English flag. Let them take that away, and within a year the confederation under the free Afrikander flag would be established.

But so long as the English flag remains here the Afrikander Bond must be our confederation. And the British will after a while realize that Froude's advice is the best for them ; they must just have Simon's Bay as a naval and military station on the road to India, and give over all the rest of South Africa to the Afrikanders.

We have seen that our land and people have gained much by the Transvaal war. But if we now in self-complacency relax our efforts, or in dulness of heart sit idle, then the danger is that we shall lose more by the war than we have gained by it. The jingoes sleep not. They know what they have lost, and are busied day and night to win it back. And what is more, they will with unexpected violence oppress us Afrikanders once for all, and so set their foot on our neck that we shall never be able to lift up our heads again. Thus, let us calculate it is we on top or they on top ; they must be under or we under.

The next step is to carry those ideals into practice. The one thing essential is to combat the growth of English influence, the English army of invasion in its various shapes. These the *Patriot* proceeds to classify as follows :—

The army with which England conquers lands and peoples consists of three regiments, the soakers, the robbers, and the reds. The soakers are the drunkards, the robbers are the traders, and the reds are the soldiers.

(*a*) The soakers go first. We heard a Boer say :—When the Englishman lays out a village, the first thing he builds is a canteen and hotel in order to tipple and teach others to tipple, and then he builds a gaol to shut up the drunkards in. On the other hand, when the Boers start a village the first thing they build is a church, and the second is a school. It is an historic fact that when the English took over the Cape there were no hotels in the land. And now wherever they have penetrated the mark of their civilization is canteens and hotels and broken bottles. Luckily these soakers have power as yet only over Kaffirs, Hottentots, and English, and not over us Boers. Therefore the first regiment does not hope to enter into a pitched battle with us. The soakers do themselves more harm than us.

(*b*) But the next regiment is much more dangerous—namely, the robbers. Soon there stands by the side of the hotel and canteen a store. To the first our Boers will not go, but to the second they will. And there the Englishman is so friendly that he lets the farmer buy and buy till he is about half ruined. These robbers buy our produce cheap, and sell their English rubbish to us at the dearest rates. In this way the robbers soon put all our money in their bag, and go back to England. Go back ? Ah, if they would only do so it would not be so bad. But also they use our own money against us to oppress the Afrikanders by starting and supporting English newspapers, by establishing English schools, by bringing in English Parliament laws, so as before they depart they may establish their English successors firmly in their place. These, then, are the most dangerous sort.

(*c*) And when the soakers and the robbers have opened the way, afterwards the reds (the soldiers) follow. They hoist the red flag, build forts, introduce cannon, to subjugate us with iron and steel, if we do not willingly submit.

Our conflict must be directed specially against the robbers. We fear not the soakers, and we shall not need to establish the order of Good Templars. The soldiers have for the first time proved harmless. They have got a fright ; they have now seen how the Boers shoot. And they will

take precious good care not to come again to fight with the Boers. But they will circumvent us by means of the traders. And therefore we say plainly, it is now the duty of every true Afrikander to spend nothing with the English that he can avoid. It is our positive duty to help no Englishman and no supporters of the English. Buy nothing from any Englishman, nor from any Anglicized Afrikander, nor even from any one who advertises in an English newspaper.

But some one will say, "We are dependent on these robbers," and that is a sad fact. In more than one village there are only English stores. Or if there are Afrikander shops you can buy only one thing there, and must go to the robbers for the rest. Or perhaps the robbers sell cheaper, and by that means they entice many. But an end must be put to this evil. We must form trading associations with Europe and the United States of America. There is also now so much interest in South Africa awakened in Europe, and such sympathy felt for our Boer nationality, that it will be easy to establish the desired trade connexions. The Amsterdam *Handelsblad* (Journal of Trade) remarks :—"The future of England lies in India, and the future of Holland in South Africa. . . . When our capitalists vigorously develop this trade, and, for example, form a syndicate to buy Delagoa Bay from Portugal, then a railway from Cape Town to Bloemfontein, Potchefstroom, Pretoria, Delagoa Bay will be a lucrative investment. And when in course of time the Dutch language shall universally prevail in South Africa, this most extensive territory will become a North America for Holland, and enable us to balance the Anglo-Saxon race."

The Boer stores (*winkels*), which we must establish, must be Dutch or Afrikander through and through, not any English. No English signboard, no English advertisements in English newspapers, no English bookkeepers, no, all Dutch or Afrikanders. Just as English winkels help to uphold English newspapers, English schools, English social life in a town, so on the contrary our Boer winkels must work to prevent the English element from prevailing, and must uphold the Afrikander spirit in the place as against the English spirit.

The policy there sketched out has, it must be confessed, not been very successful. Attempts have been made from time to time to boycott English trade. The Transvaal Government practically only accepted tenders from non-English firms. At the present moment there is a strong agitation on foot in the Dutch districts of Cape Colony to boycott traders who have not been ashamed to profess their loyalty. But, as a whole, the campaign against British trade never came to much. If there has been a campaign against soaking, it has been on the English rather than on the Dutch side. In Cape Colony the Bond, largely supported by the prosperous Dutch distillers of "Cape Smoke," has always refused an Excise and stood out firmly for "dear bread and cheap brandy." In the Transvaal one of the chief complaints of the Uitlanders was the utter inability of the Government to cope with the illicit liquor trade, an inability generally believed to be due to the fact that the officials whose task it was to suppress the evil were very largely interested in the traffic themselves.

The next article deals with other details of the Afrikander national policy, which have had a very much larger measure of success. How large that measure of success has been is shown by the tremendous and costly efforts we have had to make in this war to preserve the whole of South Africa from conquest by the Boer Republics. The first suggestion is that national anti-English banks should be started; the second and far more important is that the Republics should arm themselves for the contest of the future.

Yes, England is, as Bilderdyk, the Dutch poet, has rightly called her, "a gang of robbers"; and those islanders live only by plunder; their ships plunder on every shore; their vultures fly over mountain and valley, and light upon every carcase; they gather and glean whatever they can; therefore it is that they have so many colonies, and therefore they raked in the Transvaal. And now we must endeavour, instead of their being able to plunder more in our land, to cut it off so that they shall have less, and, if possible, nothing to prey on in our land. And then we shall see whether we are not quickly rid of these vultures. Where there is no carcase (*aas*) there you see no vultures (*aasvogels*). But the English rob us not only with their stores, but particularly with their banks. And how are we to prevent such an evil? Why, in the same manner as with the winkels, by helping ourselves. Let us start a national bank with branches in all towns and villages of our land. The Free State has made a good beginning with its national bank, and it pays well. Let the Transvaal also start such a bank as soon as the country is free. And let the Colony do so too. And in this manner we shall displace the English banks, as well as the English stores.

To start manufactures of the munitions of war is another lesson which we must learn from the events of last year, particularly from the late wars in the Transvaal and Basutoland. And this, of course, specially concerns the two Republics. We have already said that the regiment of reds is not the most dangerous for us; they have got a fright (*skrik*), and will not care to fight the Afrikanders any more. But still, no one knows what may happen. If we are determined to be a nation we must learn to secure ourselves against foes within and without. For this Colony such preparations are not so especially necessary (*nie so hoog noodig nie*). We hope our Parliament will be wise enough to give Basutoland back to England. Sir Wodehouse has taken them over in the name of the Imperial Government; let them now remain as England's petted blacks, and let every Afrikander in this Colony for the sake of security take care that he has a good rifle and a box of cartridges, and that he knows how to use them. But the two Republics must study the matter further. As independent States they must think of self-preservation, and two things are wanted—(1) artillery for the Transvaal. For this two things are required—(1) to make their own ammunition, and (2) to be well supplied with cannon, and provide a regiment of artillery to work with them. We believe that the Free State is fairly well provided with cannon and with ammunition for cannon. And President Brand has also had for some time past young men drilled in the fort at Bloemfontein to work with the cannon. Unfortunately in the betrayal of the country the cannon that the Transvaal had also fell into the hands of the robbers, and were used against the Boers at Pretoria. But when once the Transvaal gets its independence back the Government of the Republic will have learned from the recent war a lesson as to what they must do for the future.

But the other point is of much more importance; the Free State and Transvaal must make their own ammunition for themselves. This is the matter by which the English have always harassed them. Think how Sir P. Wodehouse was ready to hand over the Boers to the ill-will of the Basutos, by stopping the supply of ammunition to the Free State! And, again, in the

Transvaal war the one hope of the soldiers was that the Transvaalers might run out of ammunition. And Sprigg lent himself as a tool to stop the supply of ammunition from the colony to the Free State, so that the latter might not supply the Transvaal. Now, however, they have had their eyes opened, and let them profit by the lesson. The Transvaalers are beginning to make all their own ammunition. At Heidelberg there are already 4,000 cartridges made daily. And a few skilful Afrikanders have begun to make shells too. That is right ; so must we become a nation. When oppressed we grow strong. Let us have just a little time, and we will develop our nationality.

The Dutch have had their " little time " and " developed " to right good purpose. The rebellion in Cape Colony has shown that the " upright Afrikander," as he loves to call himself, has not been short of the " good rifle and box of cartridges " when the favourable opportunity came. The armaments of the Republics and the insistence with which the Transvaal clung to the dynamite monopoly, though contrary to the Convention and ruinous to the finances of the State, prove how well President Kruger and his satellites took to heart the advice of their good friends in the colony.

The next point of importance, according to the *Patriot*, is that the Afrikanders should cling to their land, and not let it go to Englishmen. Of the English in the towns there is always a hope that they may pass away, but the English settler on the land can never be got rid of.

In any national conflict it is to the advantage of us Afrikanders that we are the landowners. The great majority of the English are only birds of passage (*trekvogels*) that go away as soon as they have eaten carrion enough, or there is no more carrion to be got. Our Boers are really the nobility of South Africa. In England they have a very perverted idea of our Boers. They think they are like the English farmers. Among the English the nobles are the landowners, and the " boers " are merely tenants, the slaves in fact of the nobility. Here it is just the reverse. The Boers are the landowners, and the proud little Englishmen are dependent on the Boers. They themselves are now beginning to see it ; and, therefore, will they try to get our ground into their possession. Watch against that, Free Staters, Transvaalers, sell no land to the jingoes, even though they offer to pay high prices. Think, if once they get a firm footing (or landed property), then you will never get rid of them again. We Afrikanders still possess the land of South Africa. This is our strength ; do not surrender it. The English " aasvogels " in the towns will be sure to depart if we give them nothing more to devour. But the English to whom you have once sold land you will never, never get rid of. We repeat, we mean by English the jingoes who will sacrifice us and our interests to England. Englishmen that will become Afrikanders, by accepting our land and nation and language, we are very willing to accept, and that in every way.

The objection is not to English blood, but to English loyalty, to English political ideas, above all, to the English language. The Englishman who abandons all these, who will turn renegade and take up the hatreds and prejudices so frankly expressed in these articles—he is to be tolerated or even welcomed. This last passage contains a lesson of the highest importance for the Imperial Government. Where the Englishman has settled on the land there he abides as a centre of loyalty and a defence of the Empire. The English farmers of South Africa have done not a little towards the defence of their country, and even in districts where the English farmers have been a minority, but still an appreciable minority, they have succeeded in organizing themselves and preventing the possibility of a rising of their Dutch neighbours. These men, the farmers of the eastern parts of Cape Colony, are the descendants of the men brought here by State aid in the beginning of the century to guard the frontiers of the colony against Kaffir invasions, and if the Imperial Government wishes to secure permanent peace in South Africa it must undertake a similar task to-day. It must bring out Englishmen to settle on the land of South Africa. There is no limit to the fertile land of South Africa wherever the storage of water and irrigation are undertaken on a reasonably large scale. To bring out 20,000 English settlers to the Republics and to make the irrigation works necessary for the lands they are to occupy would cost less than to feed and pay 20,000 soldiers for a single year, and be far more effective as a means of permanently controlling the country.

The deadliest enemy of Afrikanderdom, according to the *Patriot*, is to be found in the English language, against which an unceasing, relentless war must be waged in public and in private, in Parliament, in the law Courts, in the public offices, in the churches and schools, and above all in the family.

Now that the war against the English Government is over, the war against the English language must begin, wherever that language has been unlawfully intruded. For English rule was unlawfully forced upon the Transvaal ; the Boers have now driven it away with the rifle. But the English language has unjustly intruded itself into our whole country, and is pushing still further in. In our colonial Parliament and our Courts of justice the language of the " reds " (*rooitaal*) reigns unrestrained. This gibberish forces its way vigorously into our schools, churches, and houses in the two Republics as well as in this colony and Natal. We must declare war against it without weapons, and drive away the *rooitaal*. How then ? Simply by acknowledging and using our own language, and demanding its rights everywhere, as may be needful. Where is that ? In our Legislature, in our Courts of law, in all public offices, in our churches and schools, in our houses and intercourse.

At this point the writer recurs to his old analogy of the English army of conquest, and adds to it another regiment, the most dangerous of all, the regiment of those evil people who assist the spread of the English language. These he calls the bluffers.

Our friend, who divided the English army of conquest into three regiments, apparently was not well acquainted with the fourth, the most dangerous, the reserve force, which follows the others. Or else we would gladly have known what name he would give to this fourth regiment. We cannot find a suitable name for them, to our mind, but let us call them the bluffers or wind-makers. The succession then is—(1) soakers, (2) robbers, (3) reds,

(4) bluffers. But what do we mean, then, by the bluffers? We mean the English and the Anglified schoolmasters, and still more, schoolmistresses, who teach our children from early youth—(*a*) that the English language is the finest and best, whereas it is only a miscellaneous gibberish, without proper grammar or dictionary. (*b*) That English history is the most interesting and glorious, whereas it is nothing more than a concatenation of lies and misrepresentations. (*c*) That they must give the chief place to English geography, whereas all England is nothing more than an island in the North Sea. (*d*) That they are educated as soon as they can gabble English, whereas they simply make themselves ridiculous by it, in the eyes of every judicious person. (*e*) That English books and periodicals are the finest and best to read, though really they are the greatest mass of nonsense (with some exceptions) that you can find anywhere; and, finally, in one word (*f*) That it is an honour for every one to ape the English in everything, and, in fact, to become English, whereas it is the greatest shame and disgrace for any people to belie their own God-given nationality. This is what we mean by the bluffers. And why do we call this regiment the most dangerous? Because they work in so unobtrusively, and thus are hard to watch against; because they corrupt our youth, and thereby absolutely take away our whole future; because they flatter natural pride, and thus find the readier access; because they not only oppress our nationality, but totally eradicate it, by making our children English. This so-called English education has done more mischief to our country and nation than we can ever express. Look at our children that have had English education; they are (with few exceptions) Anglicized to a worse degree than the English themselves. Therefore it is now needful for us to arm ourselves against the bluffers, who poison our whole nationality.

The writer then goes on to the necessity for enforcing the use of the Dutch language in Parliament, remarking that now while the Gladstone Ministry is in office the opportunity is favourable. This is the only reference to Mr. Gladstone in the whole series of articles. There is no hypocritical pretence of admiration for Mr. Gladstone or his Ministry. He is mentioned merely as a natural fact, a temporary source of weakness to the enemy, a piece of good fortune which ought to be taken advantage of while it lasts. From Parliament the writer passes on to the Courts, the public offices, railways, telegraphs, &c., and the churches:—

> In our churches especially we must watch that English (*die rooitaal*) does not intrude. The Church has hitherto always been our Lang's Nek against the English language. But see how many Anglified preachers try now in every way to smuggle into our Church the English language. . . . Therefore, war against the English speech in our Church. It is the Dutch Reformed Church; what has English to do in it?

And last of all he passes to the school and the family.

> In our schools, too, we must insist on Dutch for our children. Demand it in Parliament, and if they do not comply, demand it at the elections. The silly saying must be stopped that has misled thousands, "Let your children only learn English, they will learn Dutch of themselves." Nonsense. A child must first learn his own language thoroughly, and then in his own language he can learn other languages and branches of knowledge. If we do not instruct the children in the national spirit and speech, but let this English education still proceed, it will be all up with the future of our people. We must work so as to break up the English schools as far as we can, particularly the girls' schools, which poison the country. This is in fact the most artful plan of the bluffers. By Anglifying the girls, they infect the whole family-life with the English speech. Therefore we must work with all our might against the girls' schools, and the mad, unscriptural, house-corrupting notion that women are to have education in their hands must be for ever banished out of our land.
>
> In our conversation we must still more oppose and expel the English. Let English words be dropped out of our speech. It must be considered a disgrace to speak English.
>
> In our family life, above all, a war without quarter must be carried on against English. We are not ill-tempered; but sometimes we have been in true Afrikander families, where the daughters that had been to the Huguenot school talked English, though their parents did not understand it; and then we felt angry, and said to ourselves, this is the politeness they teach at the famous school; this is the object of the founders of the school, to infect the family life with English. And it made us more angry still when we found in an Afrikander family an English governess who talked only English with the children. Dear friends! Afrikander parents! banish this pest from your houses! The disease is infectious! Keep your houses pure from it!
>
> This is our declaration of war against the English language. We call for volunteers. Who will join the war? All true Afrikanders, we hope.

So ends this remarkable series of articles, which is but one of many others which have followed during all the years that have passed since 1881. Some have been even more bitter in their hatred of England and all that is English, others have been written in a vein of professed loyalty, but the underlying doctrine of all has been the same—that South Africa must become independent and must belong exclusively to the Dutch; that Englishmen may come only if they divest themselves of their nationality. The special interest of these particular articles lies in the fact that they contributed so largely to the formation of the Afrikander Bond and that they sketch an outline of future policy for the Dutch in South Africa which has been in many ways most faithfully followed. As the translator well remarks, "with these articles as a key all the moves of the Bond and of the Republics fall into their place—the enmity practised towards English colonists, the diligent propagation of the Dutch language, the underground war against Imperial influence, the dogged refusal to make concessions to the Uitlanders, the accumulation of war material, the fostering of the manufacture of explosives, the consolidation of the two Republics, the assumption of absolute independence, and the declaration of war at the earliest moment it was thought safe."

It is curious to observe how the policy thus outlined in 1882 worked out in fact. The discovery of the gold fields brought about an enormous change in South Africa and led to a great influx of Englishmen, not only into the Transvaal, but into every part of South Africa, attracted by the general increase of

prosperity. Whereas in 1882 the English were a comparatively small element in the population of South Africa, they at the present day are almost half of the entire white population of the country, and will almost certainly in a few years be two-thirds. One might have assumed that this increase would have naturally damaged the whole nationalist movement. If the Transvaal had remained under British control it would have done so. It would have done so, too, if the Transvaal had given to the English Uitlanders a fair share in the control of its policy. But President Kruger and his friends in Cape Colony saw well enough that giving the franchise to the Uitlander meant abandoning the ideal so clearly sketched in the *Patriot*, and this they were resolved not to do. And if, on the one hand, the influx of Englishmen made the campaign against English trade and the English language almost hopeless in Cape Colony, on the other, the wealth of the gold mines gave the Transvaal Government what may well have appeared to it boundless resources with which to carry its policy through; and so President Kruger shut the gates of the Constitution on the Uitlander and bade him come and fight for the franchise if he dared. The situation grew acuter and acuter; many of the more sensible among the Dutch began to disapprove of the misgovernment of the military tyranny of Pretoria; the English, despairing of help from the Imperial Government, set all their hopes on revolt; when suddenly came the ridiculous fiasco of the Jameson raid and the Johannesburg revolution. The Jameson raid was a wrongful act of violence, and there was much that was discreditable connected with it. But it is a mistake to speak of it as the original cause of all the trouble in South Africa. The hostility of the Dutch to England and the English lay deeper than the raid; the raid only served to accentuate existing enmities, to frighten the Dutch out of their daydream by showing with startling suddenness that the Transvaal, the mainstay of all their ambitions, was itself in a precarious state and might at any moment become a centre of English influences. Sooner than let this come to pass the Transvaal and the Free State and no small number of British subjects in our colonies were ready to go to war with Great Britain. The leading men of the Afrikander party, when they saw war actually imminent, did all in their power to persuade Mr. Kruger to yield to Sir A. Milner's demands. They knew well enough that those demands could easily be complied with in such a manner as only to give a very nominal share in the government of the Transvaal to the Uitlanders. They also understood better than President Kruger the latent strength of the British Empire and the hopelessness of carrying an armed conflict against it to a successful issue. But Paul Kruger, and with him the bulk of the Dutch over all South Africa who acknowledge him as their leader, thought the danger of yielding the franchise greater than the danger of war.

Now that the tide of war has turned and the Republics are at their last gasp, the Afrikanders in Cape Colony are endeavouring by might and main to get up an agitation in South Africa for the preservation of the Republics. A petition appealing to the "magnanimity" and the "nobler sentiments" of the British nation has been drafted in the last few days and is being freely circulated. So it was in 1881 also, and in 1881 those appeals were listened to. The pamphlet of 1882 shows what was the moral effect of concession upon the men who had made the appeal for magnanimity. The only thing they remembered, six months after peace was made, was "that proud England was compelled to give back the Boers their land after her soldiers had been repeatedly beaten by a handful of Boers." If we listen and show "magnanimity" to-day, every Dutchman in South Africa will assert to-morrow that we were too exhausted to continue the struggle and only too glad to make peace before the Boers had driven us out of Bloemfontein and followed the war up into Cape Colony again.

— Continued. —

See Vol. 2.

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