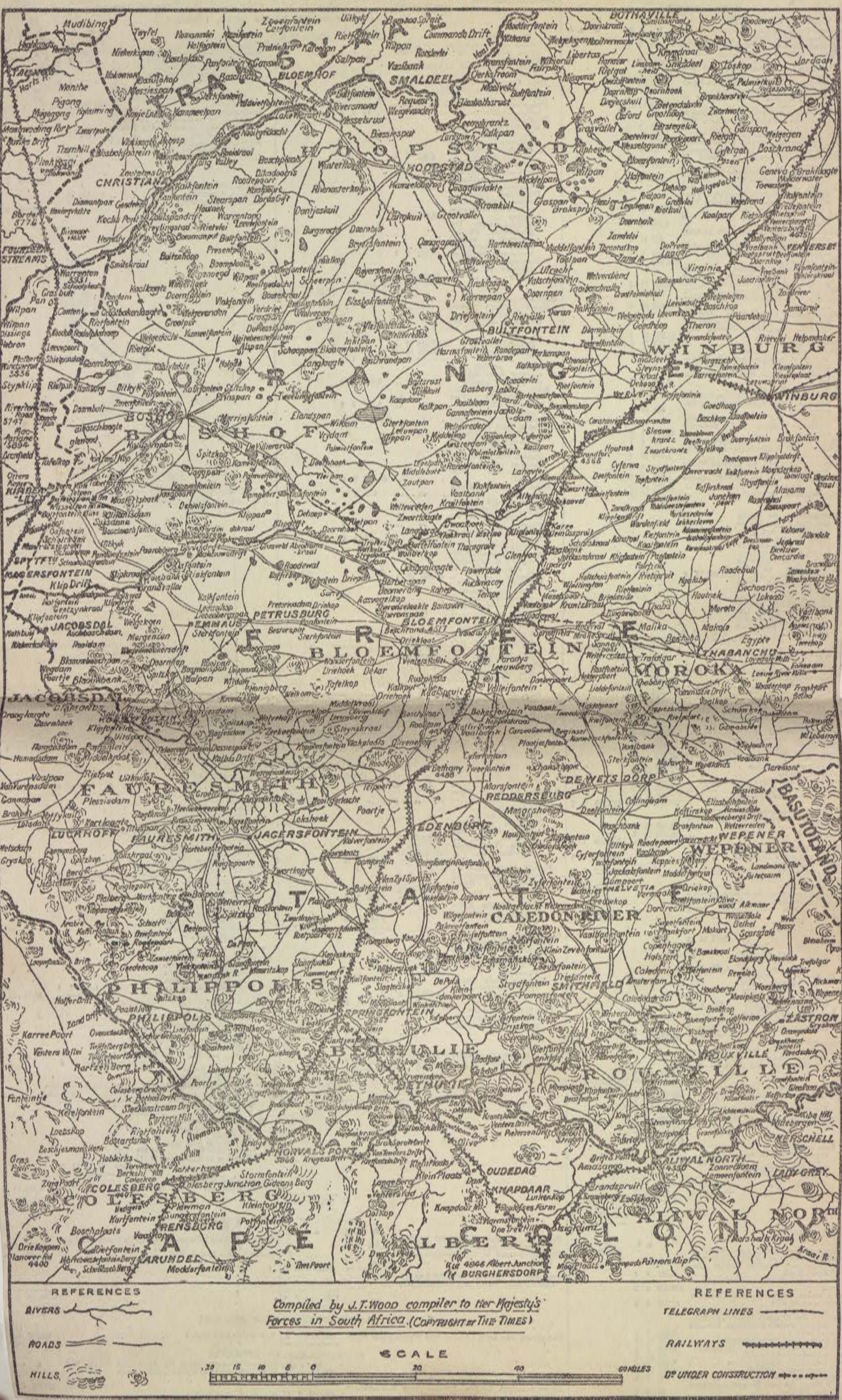
Band II.

19th March 1900.

THE ORANGE FREE STATE.



11th April 1900.

OUR WARS AND OUR WOUNDED.

II.*

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, MARCH.

The relation of the existing strength of the Army Medical Department to the probable needs of a great war as estimated by all former experience was illustrated in the first letter. It is obvious that for many years the department of healing has not advanced *pari passu* with the department of maiming. The vast improvements that have taken place in quick-firing weapons, their longer range and greater penetration, represent a large increase in the number of wounded in actions pushed to a definite result, while brave Army surgeons and bearer companies who move in the fire-swept zones of modern warfare are subjected to greater risk than before. The theories of Reger and other German authorities as to the small-bore bullet with its great penetration being a humane invention have been amply vindicated in this war; but the very fact that more wounded men are capable of cure demonstrates the need of increased means of curing. Three methods of improvement present themselves. With regard to the first two little need be said here; another time and place will be more convenient and effective for their discussion.

1. Whether the existing system is preserved or not, an increased vote for the Army Medical Service can hardly be avoided. On the last addition to the forces before this war it was urged that the medical service should have a proportionate place in the Estimates; it was refused then, but it will be difficult for the most obstinate Chancellor of the Exchequer to persevere in such an attitude. Numerically this service has gone back instead of forward; but, apart from that, the removal of certain disabilities and burdens which a discreditable parcimony imposes on Army medical officers is urgently called for.

2. The outcome of this war will be a great development and extension of the Reserve and Auxiliary forces rather than a big standing army. Such a method of Imperial protection and strength is not only consistent with the genius of the Anglo-Saxon race, but this war has proved its practicability; for the civilian element has sprung to arms as never before in our history and has been mobilized without difficulty. How far this movement can be accompanied by a proportionate increase of the present slender Army Medical Reserve should be a matter for careful consideration. Nor does an auxiliary medical force seem out of the question. If medical men will not risk established practices by making themselves liable to serve in time of war, certainly a large proportion of the staff of a medical war establishment could be supplied by men trained in connexion with the Auxiliary forces. In an ordinary base hospital of 520 beds there is a staff of 146 men who are not medical officers.

3. There remains a third method, of certainly not less importance than the other two—an improved elasticity in the existing organization to enable it in time of war to take in a far larger supply of civil aid than is sanctioned by its present rules or agreeable to its traditions and prejudices. For a change in this direction there are the strongest reasons both economic and practical. To maintain a standing Army Medical Department fully up to the strain of a great war would be a wasteful expenditure of public money. For the alternative suggested the supply, by a happy coincidence, is always equal to the demand. Medical and surgical science, nursing (if more female nursing is accepted), and a *personnel* capable of performing many of the remaining duties now allotted to Regulars in a war establishment are readily to be found in civil life. The military framework may, and probably should, remain; but the active forces within it can at any time be largely drawn from a civil sphere in just such proportion and for such a period as necessity dictates. No other department of the Army is so fortunately situated in this respect, and a satisfactory solution of the difficulty depends largely on the extent to which this principle of reform is accepted and the manner in which it is applied. Surgeon-General Wilson has not lacked initiative in this direction, but his operations, though 6,000 miles from home, have been carried on amongst an English population possessing all the resources of civilized life. In any other circumstances the initiative would have to come from Pall-mall, and the civil auxiliaries must be drawn from England.

The distinction between this war and others we might have to wage, in respect to local aid, cannot be too clearly drawn. For the present it may ease the minds of people at home to know that, once the policy of utilizing all available means has been adopted and a free hand given to the principal medical officer out here, the natural resources of a civilized, and in a large part friendly, population would probably be equal to any sudden strain. If the *matériel* gave out it could be supplemented on the spot; tents and marquees could give place to houses, schools, public rooms, and even churches; one of the latter was filled with wounded at Jacobsdal; food—of sorts—could be readily obtained; medical and other stores could be supplied in sufficient quantities, it is hoped, from the base

depôts. Where the skilled staff could come from is another matter altogether. A coach-and-four would have to be driven through all the Medical Service regulations; in fact it started some time ago. But even then the supply of local surgeons is neither unlimited nor of the highest quality; the same may be said of local nurses, while, if male nursing was adhered to, the trained orderly of course does not exist outside of the Army Medical Corps; the "administrative" duties to which so much attention is now given by the staff of Regulars would have to go to the wall. Still, the sick and wounded would be cared for in one way or another. Once more the good old English policy of "muddling through" would be vindicated, and the best of all Army Medical Departments would only have followed in the footsteps of the best of all War Offices.

The subject of local aid must not be left without paying a tribute to the loyal inhabitants of this country for their very remarkable and generous efforts on behalf of the sick and wounded. Not only at the bases but all along the lines of communication of the four columns, and especially in Cape Town and its suburbs and in Pietermaritzburg on the Natal side, the pro-British population, rich and poor alike, white and coloured, have maintained a constant stream of comforts and luxuries to the military hospitals. Books, papers, periodicals, easy chairs, framed pictures, bales of clothing and linen, pillows, socks, handkerchiefs, meats fresh and potted, fowls, fish, flowers, fruit, vegetables of all kinds, milk, eggs, butter, home-made bread, buns, cakes, pastry, tins of biscuits, jams, jellies, custards, wine, beef tea, lemon and other syrups, lime-juice, cocoa, tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, pipes, and all other things which the ingenuity of a domestic and warm-hearted people could suggest are carried by the donors in person every day to the hospitals, or passed through the collecting depôts of the Red Cross Society, or handed in to the hospital trains along the railway. Within the hospital much discretion has to be exercised in their distribution, which is left in some cases to the nursing sisters and in others to the chief medical officer. Visitors are only rarely permitted to carry eatables direct to the patients; and with good reason. "Look at that," said the P.M.O. of a base hospital to me one day. "Mrs. —— must die." *That* was a large plum pudding found in an enteric tent; and the enthusiastic donor's name was forthwith struck off the visitors' list. The help comes not only in kind but in hard cash, and many societies and funds have been started, whose contributions amount in the aggregate to many thousands of pounds made up of very small as well as large donations. In one case a poor village painter was engaged to paint the huts of a general hospital. The bill amounted to £27, a small fortune for him. No persuasion could induce him to take a shilling; he left it for "comforts for Tommy," and walked away the proudest man in Cape Colony. To all this help to the sick and wounded must be added the widespread and liberal local efforts made for the refugees, in money contributions, voluntary housing, and personal attention, by which the Mansion-house Fund has been supplemented. The whole affords a really noble spectacle of recognition, generosity, and active personal work on the part of the loyal population of these colonies, which needs only to be known to our people at home to awaken a new chord of sympathy between them and their fellow-subjects in South Africa. It remains only to add that in many respects, and to a large extent, it has been woman's work, and the women of Cape Colony and Natal have certainly not lagged behind the women of England in the path of mercy.

In the first letter it was stated that the then available hospital accommodation for sick and wounded did not exceed 5,000 beds. It may be interesting to those who have followed the campaign to know how these were distributed at that date (February 20). The following table is fairly complete; naturally, in the midst of great pressure on the various administrative staffs, which in all cases are now undermanned, a few details are wanting. No general survey of the subject can be made till the war is over. It would be wanton cruelty as well as a material injury to the interests of our sick and wounded to ask for statistical returns at this moment, when the headquarter staff and all under them are fighting day and night to meet the emergencies arising in every direction. The third column of the table is not added up; the total would not be a safe guide as to the aggregate of sick and wounded, partly because similar details are not to hand for Natal, and also because many of the inmates of stationary hospitals have passed down into general hospitals and would be counted twice over. On the other hand, field hospitals, which generally have to be evacuated at once, have treated many slightly wounded and temporarily sick till they were fit for duty.

P. M. O. for table stating the Hospital accomodation at the various Depots in South Africa (early in March).

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.

Location.	Beds.	Date of opening.	No. of patients treated.
At Cape Town :—			
" General " Hospitals :—			
No. 1. Wynberg	631	Nov. 1	2,040
No. 2. Wynberg	520	Nov. 27	1,020
No. 3. Rondebosch ...	415	Dec. 15	1,212
" Portland " (1)	105	Jan. 7	—
Woodstock (2)	200	Oct. 20	1,489
Green Point Camp (Privates convalescent) (3)	100	Nov. 14	—
Claremont (Officers convalescent)	46	—	—
In Cape Colony ;—			
" Stationary " Hospitals (4) :—			
De Aar	200	Jan. 12	1,512
Orange River	200	Feb. 9	463
Modder River	100	—	—
Port Elizabeth	50	Dec. 1	205
Naauwpoort	100	Feb. 9	215
East London	200	Dec. 22	385
" Trojan " (5)	120	Oct. 31	—
Sterkstrom	100	Dec. 15	338
Queenstown...	50	Nov. 3	314
	3,137		

(1) Attached to No. 3 as an extra section.
(2) An old hospital used for sick soldiers arriving from England. The number of sick coming off transports is noticeable.
(3) A " non-dieted " tent hospital, practically a convalescent home for privates.
(4) A stationary hospital consists of 100 beds ; it is divisible into two sections, each of 50 beds. Those showing more than 100 have been enlarged.
(5) Hospital ship used for some time as a stationary hospital at East London ; it perhaps should hardly be included in a list of permanent beds.

As to Natal the figures are less complete. From the first there have been two or three stationary hospitals at work, with 100 beds each. No. 4 general hospital, with the normal strength of 520 beds, was established two months ago at Mooi River. The town hospital at Pietermaritzburg, which started with 250 beds, has been gradually enlarged. Making a liberal allowance for the latter and for some accommodation at Durban, it will be seen that the estimate of 5,000 beds as the total available hospital accommodation was, at the time it was made, say four months after the war began, over rather than under the mark.

As this letter closes the process of enlargement foreshadowed has already begun, in fact, is going on rapidly. Local aid is being utilized to the utmost. The local professional resources, and necessarily not the highest or most proficient portion of them, are being drawn into temporary service ; 75 local nurses, some of whom are inferior to highly-trained English nursing sisters, have been engaged. The *personnel* of existing units is being decimated to form the nucleus of new ones. For this purpose No. 5 general hospital, complete with its 520 beds, was broken up as soon as it arrived, some time ago. Bearer companies are being emptied of their orderlies to supply male nursing in hospitals, fresh contingents of bearers being drawn from the regimental ranks, or made up of volunteers from the base who cheerfully face this arduous and often perilous work. King Muddle Through is holding carnival ; and only the unremitting energy, quick judgment, and organizing powers of the Army Medical Staff here will succeed in evolving order out of chaos.

13th April 1900.

OUR WARS AND OUR WOUNDED.

III.*

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, MARCH.

The question of the adaptability of the Army Medical Department to admit civil aid into its own organization in war time must not be confused with the efforts of public or private philanthropy to send self-contained hospitals, ships, ambulances and the like out to the British forces. The latter only affect the argument in so far as the manner in which they were at first met by the department indicates the normal spirit that pervades it, of which some illustrations will be given. They are in the nature of adventitious supports, too precarious to be relied on for meeting the needs and risks of a great war, and they should not be looked to as a permanent solution of the problem before us. They depend on many elements which it is hoped would always be present in the nation in time of stress—popular enthusiasm, liberality collective and individual, personal energy and perseverance in raising funds and organizing each particular enterprise. But in the latter department they have one fatal defect ; they take far too long a time to complete and send out and get into working order. Ever since the war began the papers at home have been filled with reports of the daily progress of these philanthropic movements. But here on the spot, four months after the first battle, only one civil hospital is at work—the collective enterprise known as the Portland Hospital, which started from England on December 9 and began to receive patients the first week in January.

The attitude of the War Office, or the Army Medical Department, or the Red Cross Society, which for these purposes becomes an ante-chamber

of the department, or of all three together towards these generous efforts has been both curious and instructive to the discussion of civil aid. It presents a departmental photograph of the course adopted towards offers of military aid from local forces in South Africa, and from colonial forces in other parts of the Empire. We know the history of that, and it is not pertinent to the matter in hand to blame or justify it. But it is fair to ask whether a philanthropic spirit, which lays no burden on public resources, should in any case whatever be cribbed, cabined, and confined within lines applicable to solely military or political exigencies. At first no rule was too rigorous, no blue paper "manual" too exclusive, to be applied to these offers. Granted that all must be under some sort of military control and their movements here subject to military direction, was it necessary to set up a cast-iron framework into every stiff joint of which each detail of the enterprise must fit? "War establishments" were as the law of the Medes and Persians; red tape must be respected, if it throttled its victims. But not for long; as with the offers of military assistance, a change came over the scene. At first one wanted to be a hospital up the country, where in fine air and healthy climate the wounded could recover without being sent down 500 miles to the base. No, it must be absolutely a "section of a base hospital," nothing more and nothing less could be accepted; the "committee" had said it and the law allowed it. But now, the latest of these hospitals is going straight up the country to render exactly the service which the earliest offered, and was refused. Another wanted female nursing instead of male. No; the manual said, "nine nurses to every 520 patients"; no more than that proportion could be allowed. Eventually, by a terrible effort, this was stretched to four nurses for 105 patients. Now, one of these voluntary hospitals is permitted 40 nurses. In a third case, a generous American gentleman who had read some accounts of our wounded soldiers lying out on the field offered to supply, at a cost of £10,000, a flying ambulance of 30 beds, *more Americano*, to accompany troops. "Impossible!" said the department, "besides, we don't know what an 'ambulance' is, we never use the word in our books." The "flying" part of the proposition was too fearsome to discuss. The persistent donor cogitated. "Well, then, I'll make it a 'section of a field hospital,' as you call it." "But look at rule 523," said the Red Cross Society, "rule 523 says that every section of a field hospital must contain 25 beds. You have 30; the thing is obviously impossible." "It is illegal," echoed the manual, prinking itself into a statute of the realm. Seeing the case was settled against him, our friend piled on the agony. "I want to go with it." "Indeed," said authority, raising its eyebrows, "and what position would you be pleased to occupy?" "I don't care about position; I'll call myself cook if you like. I never have cooked any; but I shan't be the first cook who's been called a cook who can't cook, shall I?" Whereat he was told he was frivolous, and went out. With dozens of civilians following every camp in this position and that and in none at all, the proposition that there should be one more with £10,000 in his hand and a perfect equipment to save men's lives was appalling enough without adding a joke to it. And now for the sequel. On December 23, six weeks after his rejection, this gentleman received a letter stating that his offer was gratefully accepted; and he himself is about to start with his staff and equipment for the front. The black week of the 10th-16th had come—Stormberg, Magersfontein, Colenso. But, again, it may be asked whether the spirit which animated the authorities with regard to these first offers is a wise and wholesome one, or—what is more to the point—whether it augurs well for a larger admission of civil aid into the Department in time of need. One might as well discuss road-making with a quicksand as try to apportion responsibility within the War Office; but it is only fair to add that in the recital of these interesting details ample evidence cropped up to show that the attitude complained of had no sympathy from the Commander-in-Chief at home. Nor has a single complaint yet been heard of their reception by the Army Medical Corps out here. They are passing smoothly into their appointed places, without cavil or friction.

In order to discover where and how civil aid can best be utilized it is necessary briefly to recapitulate, for purposes of classification, the course of a wounded soldier from the spot where he falls on the field to his comfortable bed in a base hospital. He is picked up by the bearer company, passed through the "collecting station" in some sheltered place, often within range of the enemy's fire, and the "dressing station," which is generally outside the latter, into the field hospital, which is pitched further back still, generally in camp. Thence he is taken to the stationary hospital, of which there is usually one at the rail-head with others lower down on the lines of communication. The hospital train, for which the line is cleared if military exigencies permit, takes him to the end of his journey, the base hospital. The system is no cast-iron one; its successive stages can be varied or consolidated

as circumstances render advisable. The long contest between life and death, or hurt and healing, never ceases from the moment a man is struck down till the day when he walks out of the hospital or lies on a gun-carriage under the Union Jack. The forces of science and nursing fight for him in their field as bravely and persistently as he fought in his, and not only their personal efficiency, but the tactics of their campaign make for defeat or victory. So, as a matter of practice, the "collecting station" is often omitted; more likely than not the Army surgeon has skilfully applied his antiseptic dressing under fire, and the "dressing station" can be passed over; the field hospital if, as at Modder River, there is no advance can be converted into a stationary hospital; the stationary hospital, if the railway line is blocked or the climate favours and strategic considerations permit, can undertake his permanent treatment; or the stationary hospital can be passed over altogether and the wounded put into the hospital train and taken straight down to the base. There are other modifications possible, but these are sufficient to show what a great responsibility rests on the Army medical officers from the lowest to the highest rank. This responsibility, representing the strategy as well as the tactics of the system, no civilian element could well share. It remains to see what place there is for the latter as a fighting force in the campaign of cure.

For this purpose the system may be divided into three parts—the base hospital, the stationary hospital, the bearer company and field hospital. The two latter, although technically separate units, may be considered one, as comprising the whole "field" service to the wounded man. This part of the subject must be deferred for the present. The stationary hospital also, together with the hospital train and hospital ship, all three of which permit a large measure of civilian aid, we may hold over because it is obvious that this element will always find its best opportunity in the base or "general" hospital. The latter name is the correct one, for such hospitals may be moved forward from the actual military base to positions which the advance of our troops render strategically secure. This condition of security is the differentia of the general hospital from all others, not only admitting of permanent treatment, but at times when convoys of fresh wounded are slack converting the hospital into something of a convalescent home.

This would be all very well if there were any adequate system of convalescent homes into which patients no longer requiring the treatment of a hospital could pass when a pressure of sick and wounded came on the latter. It is an obvious waste to devote an elaborate hospital system, fully equipped for the treatment of serious cases, to those who only require good food, pure air, and light medical treatment and nursing. It is not quite so clear why ship-loads of wounded should be taken out of a country where they can be all day in the warm sun and fresh air and a climate possessing special properties to heal wounds with marvellous rapidity, conveyed in a stuffy transport over 6,000 miles of sea with the Bay of Biscay at the other end, and set down in the cold damp winter of England.

The convalescent accommodation here is limited to the Officers' Home at Claremont containing 46 beds, and the Green Point "Non-dieted Hospital," with room for 100 privates—together a drop in the ocean of requirements. The former is an admirable small institution carried on voluntarily by Mrs. Pilcher, the wife of the well-known commander of the expedition to Douglas; the latter is in a healthy situation, but subject to terrible sand storms, which in five minutes choke up mouth, eyes, ears, and nose, rendering those organs worse than useless, and making a face quite unrecognizable. With beautiful sites in the suburbs of Cape Town, and even healthier districts a little way up the railway, there seemed to be a special opening for an extensive system of convalescent homes. It is ungracious to criticize philanthropy, and as difficult to conduct it into the most useful channels as it is to turn the course of trade; but the observation can hardly be avoided that, if some of the many private efforts referred to above had been devoted to this purpose instead of to enterprises more attractive and heroic, the incidence of relief would have been more justly apportioned and the aggregate of benefit largely increased. Indeed, the advantages, both economic and military, are so obvious that it would almost appear to have been the duty of the Army Medical Department to take an initiative in this direction. But the sacred pages of the manual contain no mention of convalescent homes; so there the matter ended. At present at least one-third of the beds in a general hospital are occupied by convalescents who require no nursing and hardly any medical treatment, who sit about all day chatting, reading, and smoking, make their own beds, and generally "do themselves." And they have to stay there until they are fit to return to one of four classes of duty:—(*a*) Duty at the front; (*b*) garrison duty—*i.e.*, at the base or on lines of communication; (*c*) duty at home; (*d*) duty at stationary camps. The theory is that patients, unless sent home incapacitated, must remain in the general hospital "until fit for duty." But, between the condition requiring hospital treatment and any kind of military duty, there is a period during which a man whose strength has been depleted by wounds or enteric need make little or no demand on the one and requires better food and more rest and comfortable housing than is afforded by the other.

Cases of serious injury and men who, though their wounds are healed, have received the nervous shock of a bullet through the body are

properly sent home. Thirteen days after the battle of Spion Kop I saw five men, wounded in that disastrous engagement, lying side by side in their beds at Wynberg. One was shot through the upper back—there was a cross fire from three sides—the bullet going out in front close to the heart; in another case the bullet had entered the thigh and come out through the middle of the stomach. They had been transported all the way from the Tugela, by road and rail and sea, and again by rail and road, to where they lay. Both wounds were perfectly healed, and only showed small round scars; but the shock to the nervous system remained. Such men can take no more part in this war. Of many others the fighting days are finished. Their right place is at home amongst their families and friends.

With the vast majority of the wounded the case is different. Whether it is the climate, or the skill with which the antiseptic dressing has been applied at the front making "sepsis" almost an unknown condition in the base hospitals, or the cleanness of the wound made by the long thin bullet with its swift penetration, or all three causes together, the general rate of recovery is quite bewildering. There are barbarous exceptions. A neat little row of sentinels stand on the table before me—half a dozen Mauser cartridges taken from the pockets of Cronje's men. Their heads are cut off flat, exposing the lead at the end, and in each nickel jacket there are four long almost invisible slits, to allow the soft metal to bulge and flatten against whatever it strikes. They smash up a human body like a charge of dynamite. And Mr. Cronje is living like a prince in the flag-captain's quarters in Simons Bay, and the humanitarians of the House of Commons will raise a sympathetic cheer when they hear of the fact. "What cheer" for Tommy with his body mashed into a marmalade, or the big joint of his thigh scattered into air?

The practice with regard to sending the wounded home is significant of the course of the war. At first it was more or less accepted that if a man was not likely to be fit for service in two months he should be sent home. Later on the term was "able to serve again in the war." No definite time was fixed, and by some of the authorities this was interpreted to mean a year. "Garrison duty," to which most of the wounded are now returning, affords a convenient means of testing their fitness to go to the front again, and such is the spirit of our troops, both officers and men, that they wait impatiently for the day when they can rejoin the firing line. An officer with six bullet holes in him has just gone up "to see the rest of the fun."

There are three general hospitals now at Cape Town, one or two of which it is hoped shortly to move up to Bloemfontein. All three are located amidst delightful surroundings and in fine pure air a few miles from the city, two being at Wynberg and one at Rondebosch. Whatever may have been said about them in earlier days, they are now in admirable working order and, so far as the regulations permit, models of what military hospitals should be. They have an aggregate capacity of 1,671 beds, No. 1 (Wynberg) providing accommodation for 102 officers, who are housed in comfortable and airy barracks which are sufficiently extensive to contain nearly the whole of this large hospital. No 2, composed entirely of marquees, lies just below it on a wide expanse of sandy soil. The whole site, approached by avenues of pines and eucalyptus and nestling under the lofty sides of Table Mountain, commands an extensive landscape bounded by the distant outline of the Drachensteins traced against the blue sky. It will be well to examine somewhat closely the working of one of these general hospitals, a process which will naturally raise the vexed question of female nursing in military hospitals in time of war.

14th April 1900.

OUR WARS AND OUR WOUNDED

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

IV.*

CAPE TOWN, MARCH.

No. 3 General Hospital affords some special features which bear on the extended use of civil aid, and as there is attached to it a peculiar example of that element it will be an instructive hospital to examine. Leaving Cape Town by the well-managed local line, which runs through a succession of delightful suburbs out to Simons Town, pouring thousands of workers into the city daily from 5 a.m. and rescuing them from its heat and dust at evening, a quarter of an hour brings us to Rondebosch Station. Here we can take a Cape cart, the pride of the country and the most irritating apology for comfort ever made, or a rickshaw drawn by a Kaffir, with bare legs of polished ebony, a bunch of feathers on his head, dazzling white teeth, emitting strange, short cries, and with a strong suspicion of a Drury-lane pantomime about him; or we can stroll up the hill through a cool grove of tall fir trees, down to an old railed bridge in a wooded hollow, and thence by a gentle ascent to the plateau of open ground beyond. On the right numberless little white peaks and ridges of canvas, contrasting with the dark tops of stunted pines, display the hospital camp, and a distant bugle announces that the day's work has begun.

The site is admirably chosen for its purpose, a wide expanse of level land, fringed on all sides by pine-trees and sheltered from the North-West by Table Mountain. The road bisects the plateau, the part to the left being covered with low trees and rich green undergrowth, which form a refreshing outlook from the camp; on the right the ground is cleared of everything save the stunted pines, whose dense foliage affords limited but grateful shelter to convalescent patients. Air peculiarly light and pure, a sandy soil which drains itself, and good water laid on from adjoining mains complete the adaptability of the situation to its present use.

At the entrance an orderly conducts us to the "office" of No. 3, where we are met by the two chief officers of the hospital, a colonel and a major. Neither the sound of these titles, nor the erect bearing of the orderlies, nor the prevailing khaki mingled with the blue flannel jackets and forage-caps of the patients, nor the large white flag with a red cross in the centre facing the Union Jack, are needed to suggest the military character of the hospital. A glance at the perfect precision with which the lines of tents and marquees are pitched, an art in which "non-coms." and orderlies take much pride—those of No. 3 can pitch a dozen large marquees, all trim and taut and ready for use, in an hour and a half—shows that no civilian hand has been at work here. The ground plan is rectangular, six long rows with 16 marquees in each, the length of marquees lying at right angles to the length of the plan, so that the cross-rows of six marquees each have a considerable length. The marquees have a floor space of 18ft. by 36ft., with rounded corners; a number is affixed to each marquee. Two cross-rows make a "section," an important division in apportioning attendance and nursing. Ample space is left between the rows both ways, a wide passage clear of guy ropes and tent pegs being allowed for—in the interests of nice language. A broad avenue runs down the centre through the whole length, terminating in a low iron building, which lies back clear of the rectangle. This is the kitchen, the last but not the least important structure in view. Many other essential portions of the establishment are outlying, and even within the rectangle not all of the marquees are used for patients. The sixth long row, for instance, which is left uncompleted to allow for enlargement of the hospital, begins with a surgery and dispensary, and the three marquees in a line behind it are used for provisions, stores, &c., constituting the quarter-master's establishment.

In t e centre of the block its uniformity is relieved by an operating tent of sufficient size, surrounded by eight bell tents, one being used for chloroforming and the rest for individual patients after operation, so as to ensure quiet and special attention. This latter is a wise and humane provision, peculiar to this hospital. Outside the rectangle, a little way from its front left-hand corner and forming the threshold to the hospital, are the officers' quarters, a group of bell tents, one for each officer, with mess tent and kitchen to themselves. At the right-hand corner is the camp of the non-commissioned officers and orderlies, consisting of similar tents, six or eight men in each, with a sergeants' mess on one side and a canteen on the other. At the far corner of the rectangle, and some distance from it, stands the camp of the nursing sisters, where they live in convenient seclusion with their women servants. These three camps constitute the dwelling accommodation of the whole staff. On one side of the rectangle and well away from it is a long line of washhouses and latrines, lightly constructed in wood and iron. On the other side, at the end of every alternate cross-row (two of these forming a section) are bell tents, seven in all, for the use of the sisters by day and night while attending the patients. Some distance from the original hospital are three large marquees ("ordnance store tents," 45ft. by 18ft.), which have just been pitched for the more complete isolation of the enteric cases—an admirable innovation; in front of them is a fourth marquee for the sisters who superintend the cases, and a bell tent for the orderlies who under the present system do most of the actual nursing of these patients. At the near left-hand corner, and close to the officers' quarters, are the pack stores in iron-roofed huts; a church—in which No. 3 is again peculiar—formed out of another ordnance store tent, appropriately fitted up inside, bright, and cheerful; and lastly the office, from which we started. Such is the topography of No. 3 General Hospital, admirably planned for health and convenience, laid out with mathematical precision, and a picture of order and symmetry. The minute description of it may be excused as it will enable the reader to *orienter* himself to some extent with regard to the functions performed by its various parts, while the plan, which is a matter left entirely to the discretion of the authorities of each hospital and must of course be adjusted to the shape of the ground, may well serve as a model for future use at any time and in any country.

In somewhat marked contrast to the uniformity and precise disposition of this plan stands the Portland Hospital, adjacent to No. 3 and annexed to it as an extra section, having 104 beds in addition to the full complement of 520 in No. 3 and not, as stated in a preceding table, included in them. So far as appearances go, and that is a long way

in the military eye, the Portland Hospital, lying between the public road and No. 3, somewhat mars the effect of the latter. This is chiefly owing to its canteen, washing tents, and outhouses being placed next to the road, so that the first impression a visitor gets is that of entering a well-arranged garden through the toolshed. But there unfavourable criticism must end; for this small and otherwise well-planned hospital is not only in all respects an admirable institution, but it affords an incontestable proof of the adaptability and scope of civil aid in time of war. Being the only voluntary effort as yet materialized and at work as a hospital (although others are now starting) five months after the beginning of the war, it is the only trustworthy guide we have to the practicability of that theory. It was also the first of those philanthropic movements put forward in England; and, as it may play an important part by way of example in the future, its history should be briefly recorded. Its inception is due to the foresight and energy of Mrs. Bagot (wife of Major Bagot, M.P. for Westmorland) who interested her friends in the project and collected a large sum of money privately in a few days, Lord and Lady Henry Bentinck giving early and very material assistance. A small but influential committee was formed and an appeal was about to be made to the public when the Duke of Portland added a generous donation of £5,000, and his name, to the enterprise. No time was lost in organizing the hospital, to which General the Hon. H. Eaton gave valuable aid as honorary secretary at home; and its *personnel* sailed on December 9. By January 7 it was ready to receive patients, and has been doing full work ever since, Major Bagot acting as secretary and Lord Henry Bentinck as treasurer. The hospital has been often described, and it is only necessary to refer to some of its more distinctive features. It is one of those to which, owing to its early start, the rules of the department were rigorously applied, and amongst other restrictions it was only permitted to have four nurses, and these had to be drawn from the Army Nursing Staff. With the exception of one Army medical officer—Major Kilkelly, of the Grenadier Guards, who is its nominal head and its practical link with the military authorities—the hospital is a purely civil institution. It has only civil surgeons and doctors, civil orderlies (from the St. John Ambulance Society) and the rest of its staff is entirely civilian. It is dependent on the military staff of No. 3 for some of the functions peculiar to the military *status* of its inmates, and its necessary supplies are drawn from there daily; the connexion works quite smoothly, and it is otherwise a self-contained and self-managed haspital.

Apart from its civil character, which does not necessarily imply superiority but affords the key to the problem of extra pressure in time of war, wherein does this hospital differ from its military neighbour? It sterilizes its milk; it uses the "Pasteur" filter; and it has "tortoise" tents. If you visit the two hospitals you find these are burning matters. The relative merits of the "Pasteur" and "Berkefeld" filters are still hotly disputed; the latter has the almost biblical authority of the Manual. No. 3, ostensibly scornful, has been found furtively sterilizing its own milk. But the tortoise tents reign triumphant! They are half the weight of marquees, contain greater floor measurement, and their sides lift up all round to admit the air. A skilful dialectician might urge that mobility is not important to a base hospital, that the high ridge-piece of the marquee gives a greater air space above, and that in some climates warmth combined with air space would be necessary. But here on the spot the marquee retires brow-beaten, and the authorities of No. 3 cast longing eyes on the tortoise. Nor can the larger hospital, even with the assistance of many gifts from the ladies of the neighbourhood, compete with the smaller one in the supply of extra clothing, comforts, and luxuries, which are sent out to the latter by friends in England, or added here from private funds. The clothing store of the Portland is a veritable Aladdin's cave of comforts.

There are, however, two other important points of advantage, the first of which, of course, is never mentioned *in situ*, while the second is freely acknowledged by No. 3. It is obvious that an institution which can pay its chief medical officers at the rate of £2,500 a year and the rest in proportion, can secure a higher class of professional service than can be found in military hospitals. To state this implies no discredit to the Army medical officers, and amongst them notable exceptions are to be found to such a rule; nevertheless, it must always remain the logical deduction from the facts of the case. When we consider that on these occasions we are dealing with the lives and injuries of brave men who have fought for their country, and on whose spirit in the future its safety and power depend, no effort can be too costly to convince them and the people from whom they spring that the highest skill and the largest comfort will always be applied to the relief of their sufferings in time of war. If the line between sickness and health is clearly drawn, it is foolish to talk about any amount of care for the former condition making a man "soft." Let the lot of the common soldier in health and on duty be ever so hard, when struck down by wounds or sickness humanity, gratitude, and policy all demand that his treatment should be of the best. So far as their comfort in this hospital is concerned, that is secured to the full by the constant presence and personal superintendence of the two ladies, Mrs. Bagot and Lady Henry Bentinck, who have lived in the camp from the first and hardly ever leave it. The duties they perform are manifold; but the moral result is possibly of

greater value than the material. Visiting the tents, talking or reading to "Tommy," writing his letters home, sometimes receiving his last messages, distributing comforts, watching for the many little wants which only a woman's eye can detect, and applying improvements with a woman's hand, are none of them so important as the general elevation of the tone of the establishment and the grateful impression produced on its inmates by the supervision and solicitude of its chatelaines. "It's just like home," a Tommy said one day. I thought it was a little better than the homes of some of them; but the phrase sums up what this personal work means to Tommy, suffering for his country in a distant land. The task cannot be all pleasure. Living in tents even in this climate sometimes involves exposure to soaking rains and blinding sandstorms; constantly moving about in a torrid sun is an exhausting occupation; shattered limbs, drawn faces, pain and disease, are not cheerful companions. Therefore, lest some should be misled, it should be pointed out that the life requires special aptitudes and should not be lightly undertaken. The mission of these ladies, however, has been such a success that the Army Medical officers of No. 3 treat them with even greater respect than they do the Tortoise tents, and would gladly have them extend their ministrations to the despised marquees. Mrs. Bagot has already undertaken the duties of visitor to the large isolated enteric department of that hospital.

We must now return to No. 3 and endeavour to thread our way through the somewhat intricate network of red tape which spreads itself over the constitution and work of a large military hospital, but from which, it is only fair to add, No. 3 emerges with as admirable results as one of those institutions could well present.

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TACTICS AND THE WAR.

(FROM A MILITARY CORRESPONDENT AT BLOEMFONTEIN.)

That the experiences gained during the present campaign have brought about an entire revolution in tactics is undeniable. But it is nevertheless equally true that no lessons have been learned which ought not to have been already familiar to every thinking soldier. Things which some foresaw have actually occurred, and the fact that wisdom has become more wide-spread, after the event, is too generally mistaken for the proper appreciation of veritable novelties. A little consideration of the circumstances in which any of our defeats or checks were sustained will suffice to show that, had the Boers been armed with Sniders, the results would probably, in very many cases, have been the same, even though we ourselves had been employing Lee-Metfords. It is theoretically impossible for soldiers who are human beings to storm reasonably well-selected positions held by unshaken troops, armed with even the most inferior breechloaders, and in actual practice the impossibility has proved almost equally absolute. The lamentable losses that we have sustained, as well as the want of success that for so long prevailed, in spite of regimental heroism, are both due to the fact that practical efficiency in actual command of troops in the field has seldom proved equal to the theoretical qualifications demanded and exhibited in examinations for promotion. Handling troops at Aldershot as some of our commanders have handled them in South Africa, the major aspiring to a certificate of "Tactical Fitness," would assuredly and justly be ploughed by the examiners. That the theoretically impossible has frequently been achieved in actual war is perfectly true; but military history teaches us that in these cases accident rather than the skill of the commander has been responsible for such fortunate results. At all events, a habit of ignoring military axioms has not as yet been numbered amongst the characteristics of any great captain.

During the present war our generals have, time after time, attempted what even so commonplace a mentor as the drill-book declares to be impossible. The finest battalions in the world have been launched to the attack of positions held by troops armed with modern rifles, whose ability to use their weapons had been unimpaired by previous losses or present danger. The consequence to the attackers has invariably been disastrous. In some cases the assault has been pushed home and the position has been carried in spite of a tale of casualties quite out of proportion to the value of the immediate success achieved, but in too many others the result has been an absolute and complete failure.

The difficulty, now as heretofore, is that of correctly perceiving the opportune moment. It is manifestly unsafe to rely upon the desired result having been produced merely because the enemy has been shelled with a certain severity during a certain period of time, and the problem involved has become more than ever complicated owing to increased range hindering the accurate observation of fire-effect. For this reason an attack which was perfectly feasible forty years ago became perilous twenty years later and has

become impossible now. It is clear that in order to eject a defender from his positions the only alternative to starving him out by a prolonged siege or turning his flanks is to deliver an assault. Across open ground, in daylight, an assaulting column cannot pass unless the previous success of the preparatory attack has been so complete that the mere moral effect of the final advance is sufficient to ensure the precipitate retreat of the surviving defenders. Assaulting columns have by no means been rendered obsolete by modern weapons, but their *raison d'être* has been altered in the majority of cases. The time-honoured idea of charging a position and carrying it by sheer weight of numbers in face of determined resistance must in future be abandoned except in cases where the attackers have been enabled, by sap or otherwise, to gain a firm footing within a couple of hundred yards of the line of defence. Or, upon the other hand, if the defenders have been so utterly demoralized that they are afraid to quit cover even to run away, then indeed an assault upon their position will be justified in order to compel them to do so. The fact that, for example at Elandslaagte, Aldershot assaults have succeeded during the present war does not in any way disprove the present assertion that such are now theoretically impracticable. At Elandslaagte the defenders were weak in numbers, and their line of defence was brought under a tremendous cross-fire from the frontal and flank attacks. Moreover, the superlative courage of the Devons and other troops engaged was quite abnormal. Success was consequently achieved, but at such prohibitive cost that few should be encouraged to undertake similar enterprises.

The lessons that the British Army has paid so high a price for having brought home to it during this war seem to be the following; and it is curious to note that none of them are such as might not have been foreseen, whilst many of them were actually provided for, in anticipation, in our text-books :—

1. The number of men required to cover a given frontage whether in attack or defence is very much smaller than formerly. This is to be attributed more to the use of smokeless powder having the effect of deceiving the adversary than to the increased range or accuracy of the weapons employed.

2. It is more than ever difficult to determine whether the defenders have actually been demoralized by fire or are merely lying quiet awaiting the onset of the attacker's infantry. Hence the importance of "counter-positions" is more than ever apparent. The drill book advocates the disposition of the "Third Line" on a "defensive position" to cover a possible retirement, but its precepts under this head are seldom respected. In future the counter-position will be utilized as a sort of battering-ram, in addition to remaining, as before, a rallying point. Thus the counter-position will at first represent merely a *pied à terre* at a distance, but will gradually be pushed forward until it becomes a series of intrenched lines having offensive as well as defensive value.

3. The object of the defender in the future will be so to disguise his real position by false flanks and advanced positions that the attacker shall if possible be actually prevented from ever coming to close grips with the real defence.

The attacker will in future seldom commit himself to an attack, as we have hitherto understood the term, but will devote himself rather to rendering the defender's position untenable. When the latter is compelled to quit his position, then the attacker should find his opportunity to destroy him. In short, the first step towards carrying a position is to take up a counter-position and proceed gradually to improve it to the detriment of the adversary. This latter operation will generally include night assaults upon various localities. The attacker will close upon his opponent partly by sap and partly by seizing opportunities for gaining ground by day as well as by night, and his objects will be to obtain positions from which to bring cross-fire upon those held by the enemy and to threaten or assail his communications.

4. The effects of artillery, more especially against troops under cover, seem to have been greatly over-estimated. Even the influence of high explosives has been distinctly disappointing. The exclusive use of shrapnel by field artillery has not been justified by results. Common shell would probably have been much more effective against troops hidden amongst boulders on the hill sides.

5. Long-range infantry fire, more especially by volleys, has proved its value beyond doubt, not only during the fight, but at all times. A few men on a kopje, firing individually at cavalry scouts from a distance of 2,000 yards or even more, can do a great deal towards preventing accurate reconnaissance—it is impossible without reasonably close observation to discover whether an enemy using smokeless powder has 50 men firing as fast as they can or 500 firing deliberately. Long-range fire can usually prevent this close observation, and hence false information is often reported or time is wasted before an insignificant enemy.

6. For field guns great range is quite as important as mobility, and something of the latter must, if necessary, be sacrificed in order to ensure the former. An army suffers under very serious disadvantages if its artillery be even slightly inferior in range to that of the adversary. It is demoralizing to receive fire without power to return it. On March 8 a Boer 9-pounder on the Leeuw Kop, near Poplar Grove, was pitching shells quite easily amongst our three naval 12-pounder q.-f. guns, whilst the latter were unable to reply effectually owing to the enemy's being beyond their range.

7. The value of mobile infantry has been finally established, and Great Britain, in taking the lead in this direction amongst European Powers, has been wrong only in her failure to adopt the system more extensively. The question whether infantry should ride or should be carried in conveyances is an open one. Probably in a country where roads are bad or non-existent the certainty and comparative rapidity of locomotion conferred by mounting the men on horses or ponies will compensate for the reduction in fighting strength occasioned by the necessity to have horse-holders. Mobility is the key to successful manœuvring, and obviously the rifleman who relies only upon his own legs is at a disadvantage when opposed by an adversary who is otherwise conveyed and at a faster pace.

8. Dissemination of forces is incompatible with the always difficult task of wresting the initiative from a hitherto successful adversary. The proper course is to ignore all secondary issues and concentrate great strength upon some special and unmistakable objective which the enemy will be compelled to contest with all his might. Beleaguered garrisons and over-matched containing columns will surely be relieved from pressure by the mere fact that a formidable force has adopted an aggressive attitude against some interest that is vital to the adversary. For example, an earlier move against Bloemfontein would have effected the relief of Kimberley and Ladysmith without the need for wasting a single man in direct attempts in either direction. The best way of defending yourself generally and locally is to transfer the causes for anxiety from yourself to your adversary by means of a strong and judiciously selected counter-blow. Lord Roberts has been successful not so much upon account of the superior numbers at his disposal as because the capital of one of the hostile States at once became his avowed objective. In a word, he set himself forthwith to wrest the initiative from the adversary by the only possible means—*i.e.*, concentration against a vital interest of the latter.

Finally, amongst the lessons taught or made conspicuous by the Boer war there is one that is especially important. It has been made clear that the British soldier has not deteriorated as a fighting man, and that the British regimental officer is still a peerless fighter having the full confidence of the soldiers whom he has led with such gallantry and devotion. The conduct of our officers and soldiers has been truly magnificent. Again and again battalions and other units that have been previously subjected to losses such as would have demoralized any other troops in the world except Anglo-Saxons have faced the most terrible fire with unflinching courage which no bad fortune has been able to subdue. We have had during this war many very unpleasant subjects for reflection, but as regards the conduct of our troops in battle and on the march we have no cause for any other feeling than intense satisfaction. Our very defeats and disasters have done much to show that our race retains to-day the tenacity and courage which enabled our forefathers to build this great Empire. The chief lesson read to the world by the struggle between Briton and Boer is that the former, although preferring peace, is still able and ready to fight to a finish, in spite of any unfavourable circumstances, be they ever so depressing.

14th April 1900.

MOUNTED INFANTRY.

I.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT WITH THE MODDER RIVER FORCE.)

A lecture given by Colonel Hutton on this subject before the Aldershot Military Society, towards the end of 1889, attracted considerable attention both at the time and afterwards. From this date the serious recognition of what has been called the "Fifth Arm" is often dated, though as a matter of fact as long ago as during the 1878-79 campaign in Zululand General Buller made use of irregular horsemen whose duties were essentially the same as those of the modern mounted infantry. Sir Redvers adopted from the Boers the tactical methods which are now being used against them, and the aim of these articles is to illustrate the uses and limitations of mounted infantry from the experience we have now gained in a country which, of all parts of the world, is that best suited to their evolutions. How far this experience can be assumed to hold true of other countries is not the least of the issues raised, and it may be explained that South Africa presents in more than one way features that directly affect the value of this arm. There are few roads, uncertain supplies of water, and almost no cover except that afforded by kopjes, which as a defence against both rifle and artillery fire is probably unsurpassed.

Grass is at this period of the year either non-existent or so young as to produce diarrhœa, and the question of transport is thus of the first importance. For the rest, the open nature of the great mass of the country, scattered though it is with boulders that render hazardous the manœuvres of cavalry acting in a body, is well adapted for the rapid movement of light horsemen.

The present organization of the mounted infantry is briefly as follows :—Those companies who were serving in the colony at the outbreak of war or have, like Rimington's, Brabant's, or Kitchener's Horse, been enlisted later, consist of 120 men under the command of

four section leaders and one company commander. Those mounted infantry regiments which have come out from England and have been since attached to the cavalry are formed of four companies of four sections each, the companies or sections being drawn from different line battalions. Each company possesses its own transport, consisting of two buck-wagons and one Scotch cart, the former, drawn by ten mules, carrying forage and rations, the latter, with the ammunition and tools, by six. Two natives are attached to each vehicle and the present time limit of action is five days, which might be increased to six or even seven by the omission of the field forge and a few other heavy tools not actually necessary when out on duty. The outfit of the man includes, besides the rifle and bandolier, saddle, bridle, a forage net, heel ropes and picketing pegs, and a pair of wire cutters.

The men are taught the hunting seat, and "passaging" is not expected of them. Infantry words of command and the bugle are employed, and drill is carried out on the general lines of infantry regulations, with necessary modifications caused by the fact that all manœuvring will be in single rank; to ensure greater mobility, the "front" of a company is always in that direction in which the horses happen to be facing at the time.

The ranks of the company of mounted infantry are filled from the battalion, and, as casualties are suffered, men are replaced from the same source.

When actually engaged one man in every four remains in rear, under cover, if possible, and takes charge of the three horses of his comrades.

This brief statement of the equipment, organization, and drill of the mounted infantry will be sufficient foundation upon which to point out the experience gained during the present campaign. Especial importance has been attached to the movements of the horsemen attached to Lord Methuen's advance, who have, from the very fact of an advance having been made, had greater opportunity of testing their soundness or deficiency.

It may be said at once that they have proved themselves of the greatest value, and even in their present experimental formation are a source of strength that can be refused by no future commander. Particularly valuable has been their work, so precisely in the centre of its proper scope, in seizing and holding, as infantry, farms, kopjes, and other positions from which they could prevent an outflanking attempt on the part of the Boers, or secure the advance of our own infantry, whether their horses remained under cover behind them, or were, as was occasionally necessary, retired some two or three miles.

The first principle—one that has been always asserting itself whatever the form of attack—is that the mounted infantry theoretically are, and must eventually become, actually an infantry command. To attach them to the cavalry is to mistake the *raison d'être* of the force. It was well said by the late Major Ray, one of the soundest and most thoroughly experienced officers of the mounted infantry in South Africa, that so far from the horse being a considerable part of the combination, it would, in countries well provided with roads, be sometimes equally satisfactory to forward the man of the mounted infantry to his destination in a cart. Something of this nature was actually carried out in the Franco-Prussian War and will undoubtedly be used again in any country so perfectly provided with roads as France.

The horse, which the trooper is taught to regard almost as part of himself, is a mere means of locomotion in the case of the mounted infantry, and any tendency to regard it as influencing the conception of the force is to mistake its usefulness altogether, and would probably result in turning a good foot soldier into a bad trooper.

When attached to cavalry there is a danger that mounted infantry will be used for scouting purposes, reconnaissances, and vedette work, all of which lie properly within the duties of the cavalry, and it is notorious that the chief objectors to the growing importance of mounted infantry have come from the ranks of the cavalry, a fact that suggests the possibility of the mounted infantry being used according to the prejudice rather than the wisdom of their commanding officer.

It may be urged most strongly that the mounted infantry when in action should form a compact body independent of any brigade, holding themselves in readiness to be thrown at the critical moment against the key of the position by the general in command. In this way only will the true value of the force be utilized. Whether it be the capture early in the day of some doubtful drift or kopje on the flank, the sudden reinforcement of a hard-pressed regiment, or the occupation of a position from which the enemy's flank or line of retreat can be commanded, the value of a well-disciplined body of infantry that can be projected with a speed from twice to three times that of any moving battalion must be apparent. But this value must chiefly depend upon the general's perception of the psychological moment; it should not be entrusted to a cavalry officer, whose grasp of the entire action must necessarily be limited. Mounted infantry should be strictly divisional troops.

A point that is of the greatest importance to those in command of Line regiments is that, as at present constituted, the mounted infantry section or company of their battalion is, almost of necessity, composed of the flower of their officers and men, and that there is a constant drain upon their best material in time of war when all casualties are replaced by men of the second class. It seems impossible to avoid this, unless the regimental

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system is abandoned entirely. The strongest, steadiest, and wiriest men of the battalion, valuable anywhere, are an absolute necessity for the mounted infantry, and the total severance in time of war between the regiment and its mounted company will probably dispose some commanding officers, proud of their regimental unity, to think that more harm is done by the weakening of the former than good can be achieved by the latter. But the question is a wider one than has been yet perceived, and the need of the seizure of the right moment in war must override any feeling of prestige. The enlistment of specially qualified men for this purpose is an obvious remedy, but the question of expense is instantly raised, and with that the present article does not deal.

The transport and outfit, if left in their present state, admit of little improvement, the most obvious deficiency being that of some rapid means of linking horses together. Perhaps some form of spring swivel might be devised to enable a larger number of horses to be held by the men in rear, but it cannot be hoped that a much greater proportion than 75 per cent. of the force can ever be actually engaged at one time if a rapid advance or retreat is at all likely.

A criticism sometimes made is that a sharp canter towards a position may for some time cause an unsteadiness of hand that would destroy the effectiveness of rifle fire. Two things, however, are to be remembered, that infantry after a double of much less distance, say 200 yards, or a climb of 50 yards, are far less likely to take steady aim, and that the mere fact of continued firing from an unsuspected kopje, even if the percentage of hits to rounds fired be less than usual, will generally achieve the desired end.

A more practical objection to the present system is that the training of horses for these specialized duties takes some time—perhaps two months as a rule, though horses only trained for three or four weeks did excellent work at the Belmont reconnaissance of November 10—and that the present establishment at home only permits of the annual training of five or six companies on the same horses each year. Here in South Africa the country-bred pony, tractable, used to fire, and taught to remain where he is left if the reins be dropped from the bit, is already a half-trained animal for these purposes, and the work has been slight in consequence, but in Afghanistan and other places where the mounted infantry man has been tried in a lesser degree, the chief cause of trouble has been found in his mount.

A further difficulty in the fact that a mounted infantry man whose horse is killed becomes a source of danger to his entire company merely emphasizes the need for more mounts. Two spare horses per section is the least that should be taken for ordinary occasions, especially dangerous work demanding the presence of four or five, even at the risk of weakening the main body of the force.

MOUNTED INFANTRY.

II.*

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT WITH THE MODDER RIVER FORCE.)

"Mounted infantry can do nothing that cavalry are unable to do." These words have been quoted as an axiom by many, among them General Luck himself, but the point is somewhat missed by this partial summing up. Cavalry armed with rifles, properly trained to act on foot and with infantry, would, of course, do the work of the mounted infantry equally well. But two questions present themselves—first, can a well-trained cavalryman so divest himself of his carefully nourished idea of identity with himself and his "arme blanche" as to do the work on foot for which the junior arm has been as well trained as any man in a line battalion, and, if he could do so, would he not have lost much of the *élan* that is vitally necessary in a good trooper? And, secondly, could we spare any from our scanty supply of cavalry without seriously weakening our power of acting with vigour at the close of a long and tiring day? Cavalry must be held in reserve for their overruling purpose in turning a defeat into a rout. To have their horses two or three miles in rear at the critical moment, as we have seen may often be necessary, would destroy the ultimate purpose of cavalry, whose opportunities in action, always rare, are more fleeting now than ever.

At Magersfontein, for a special purpose and to meet a special emergency, Lord Airlie dismounted two squadrons of the 12th Lancers and moved them forward as infantry. After this short experience one officer expressed the general opinion in the words, "Please God we may never have to fight again as infantrymen." The truth is that there is room for both arms, and any comparison between them should be held not only invidious but foolish.

In 1881 the Boers showed, in a small way, what good shots in small numbers could do as mounted infantry. In 1900 the Boers have shown us, on a larger scale, what indifferent shots in greater numbers can effect by rapid concentration in favourable localities.

The advantage appears to lean to the side of the defender in this as in other changes now first tested in this war. To mark your enemy's advance and retreat till some position is found where victory may mean the disorganization of the invader and defeat cannot mean more than merely a further retirement to a similar spot, is a feature that will probably mark the wars of the future

as of the past; and the Boers have taught the world a new lesson on the science of victorious retreat. But this they have done by means of their mounts, on which they have collected and dispersed with consummate skill after having inflicted the *maximum* of damage and delay upon the enemy with the *minimum* risk to themselves. The value of time must not be forgotton. Probably every scheme of invasion pigeon-holed by possible enemies of England postulates victory in three weeks from the date of landing as a prime condition. Boer tactics, employed by mounted infantry greatly inferior in number to the foot soldiers otherwise needed, could concentrate and reconcentrate at small loss to themselves and could more certainly bar the way to the invading force than the bloodiest of battles where the issue of the day inevitably demoralizes the vanquished. To us, then, mobility is of more importance than to other nations; and it is not creditable that in a great horse-breeding country the cost and difficulty of obtaining horses should stand in the way of the development of an arm of the service of proved efficiency.

Another advantage on the side of the defence is that cover for the horses can always be secured. Time after time the mounted infantry in Lord Methuen's force have been obliged to dismount in the open and retire their horses some 3,000 yards out of range of the Boer guns. That this may be necessary does not, however, at all impair the value of the quick concentration of the men. During the action at Modder River on November 28 the mounted infantry were detached very early in the morning to take and hold a farmhouse three miles from the right of our infantry attack. After a hard gallop one company came, while still mounted, under a heavy rifle fire from Boers posted 1,600 yards away among the trees fringing the banks of the Riet River. It was here that Captain Earle was killed and several horses wounded in the space of a few seconds, when a slight fold in the ground gave the company commander an opportunity to dismount his men, who then moved forward to attack the farmhouse well supported by artillery fire. The led horses were ordered to remain as near as possible. After the capture of the house, which was occupied by the mounted infantry for the remainder of the day, the Boers brought up artillery and shelled the led horses so persistently that they were compelled to retire two and a-half miles, leaving the men isolated. This occupation proved, later in the day, of the utmost importance and played the chief part in stalling off a threatened outflanking movement on the part of the Boers. By no forced march could foot soldiers have reached this point, some seven miles from the last night's camping ground, without giving the Boers time to concentrate; in which case an attack would have been futile and the Boers would have remained a constant menace to our right flank.

It is often said that cavalry will be the general enemy of mounted infantry, and that cavalry will be needed to protect them. Almost the reverse has proved to be the case as to the latter statement. (The Boers possessing no cavalry, the former remains a likely conjecture.) Once the Yorkshire Light Infantry came to the assistance of some mounted infantry on the extreme right of our position at Magersfontein, near Border Fence Drift; but in this advance the cavalry have rather owed to the mounted infantry their protection from severe loss.

During the retirement of the Boers from Enslin a small party of mounted infantry, acting with a squadron of the 9th Lancers on the right rear of the retreating Boers, observed a large force of Boers riding down upon the cavalry and compelling them by a hot fusillade to retire. A small party of the mounted infantry with some 20 of the New South Wales Lancers dismounted and installed themselves under cover on a kopje, from which they covered the retirement of the cavalry. The oncoming Boers lost several horses and men, and were forced to retire upon their main body.

There are, of course, many cases in which mounted infantry are practically useless, as presenting a larger target and being as unable as foot soldiers to advance, though even in this case it is of no small importance to be able to retreat rapidly, even at some loss, instead of being compelled to spend hours prone upon the open veldt under the full heat of the African sun. Roughly speaking, the worse for cavalry the ground is the better it is for mounted infantry. Like the American cavalry near the reserved territories, they are rarely stronger than in gaining and occupying a wood—a fact in itself which illustrates the distinctions always to be remembered between themselves and cavalry.

Individual judgment, foresight, and readiness are the qualities which the mounted infantry require in their men. Often widely separated, often under charge of a sergeant to whom the work must of necessity be experimental and unfamiliar, the capabilities of the individual are very highly tried; and the experience of this campaign will have been invaluable in reducing to some form of discipline the effectiveness of self-protection which are now being learnt by us at no small cost. Of the 13 officers who took part in the Belmont reconnaissance on November 10 only two remained alive and unwounded after the battle of Magersfontein on December 11. By that time the non-commissioned officers had gained a certain amount of self-reliance; but this cannot be always ensured, as in few campaigns would the same men be engaged in four engagements and several smaller encounters within that space of time. It is especially the case in this training that no amount of peace

discipline will make up for the loss of actual experience in war.

Much remains to be noticed, but the foregoing sketch of the progress and efficiency achieved by the mounted infantry will indicate the real value of the mobile foot soldier; and it will be of interest to notice the part played by the mounted infantry and the use made of them by different commanders during the remainder of the campaign. No department of our Army, if the Staff be excepted, affords the opportunity given by this branch of service for displaying quickness, readiness of resource, recognition of individual capacity, and that self-reliance which most of all characterizes our reputed character as a nation. Already, to the outsider, the confidence in self that must come when a man is responsible for the well-doing of the work entrusted to him and the lives of his men besides his own safety has made in the bearing of this small brigade a distinction that escapes definition, but is none the less real.

19th April 1900.

WITH GENERAL BRABANT'S DIVISION.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

ALIWAL NORTH, MARCH 17.

Aliwal, during the period of Boer occupation, was not an ideal place of residence for English men or women. Commandant Olivier is reported to have behaved like a hectoring bully on his visits, and his manners were faithfully copied and improved on by the admiring satellites appointed by him to official positions. The mayor, N. E. Smuts, is said to have acted as burghermaster and also as secretary to the commandant. Many statements are made as to his harsh treatment of English people, and, on his arrest on Sunday morning, he was followed by a jeering crowd of women and children, shouting and dancing, and rejoicing in the downfall of their tyrant. The Landdrost Potgeiter also attracts a great deal of criticism. A nurse who asked two Dutch girls if it were true that Commandant Olivier had been wounded was haled before Potgeiter and fined 20s. An assistant in a draper's shop, asked by a customer for news, told her she had heard that Lord Kitchener and a large force were at Stormberg. For this dreadful crime she was marched between two armed burghers to the Court-house, where Potgeiter fined her 50s. and warned her to be more careful for the future. From the larger business houses goods to the value of £100 each were commandeered against promises of cash payment, while from the smaller shops various amounts were taken, from £20 to £50. The promise to pay was in no case fulfilled, while in one or two cases goods were commandeered for a second and third time. The actual commandeering was, however, the least of the poor shopkeepers' troubles. Troops of armed Boers would enter a store, a few of them occupying the attention of the assistants while the others stole whatever they pleased, the assistants vainly protesting. Appeals to the magistrate met with no redress. The landdrosts at Dordrecht (Mr. de Villiers) and at Jamestown (the rebel Wagenaar) acted very differently, and all such behaviour was repressed with a firm hand. In these towns the English only complained of the necessary restrictions of martial law, otherwise praising the conduct of the two magistrates named; but at Aliwal every one has a tale of bullying and ill-treatment from the officials, as to the truth of which there can be little doubt.

At daybreak on Monday morning, the 12th inst., the Union Jack was hoisted by Captains Vincent and Hawtrey, of Brabant's Horse, on the main intrenchment in Free State ground, and its appearance was greeted with ringing cheers, while it was saluted by a shower of bullets from the Boers on the nearest hills, which did no harm. Two incidents may be worth telling here. On Sunday, during the progress and development of the Boer left flanking movement, a few of Brabant's Horse were sent out on the left to stop this, and found themselves near a house, two and a half miles down the river on the Free State side, where several women and children were to be seen. As they turned away from the house without doing any harm one of the women fired on our men, killing one of them. The men, to their credit be it said, retired without replying. On the same day a heavy fire was opened on our men stationed on the south side of the river from Wessel's house on the north or Free State side. That night a Chilian scout named Cordova, in Brabant's 1st Regiment, whose horse had been shot during the fight, went out sniping on his own account. He made his way close to the house, fired a shot through the window and another through the door, which brought out a dozen armed Boers, who mounted their horses and rode off. The Chilian shot one of them and fired on the others, who bolted at once, leaving their comrade, his rifle, and horse in the hands of the scout, who brought them into camp in triumph.

On the 12th Lieutenant MacDonald with a party of Engineers proceeded towards Burghersdorp, repairing the telegraph line and examining the railway. The former was in working order by the 15th and an armoured train arrived late on the day following. The damage, however, done to the railway was very great, and, though

Majors Maxwell and Thomson, R.E., managed by temporary repairs to allow of light trains running, the permanent restoration of the line will be both long and costly. The Stormberg Spruit bridge is particularly damaged, three of the five piers being completely destroyed. As their height is from 36ft. to 50ft. it may be readily understood that the task of building up supports for the rails was severe, and 1,500 sleepers were required for the purpose.

On the 12th General Brabant, with his usual kindheartedness, permitted two wives of rebels to drive over the bridge to proceed to their husbands with Commandant Olivier's force, with the object of persuading them to come in and surrender. They returned the following day reporting very bad treatment from Olivier's representative, but they stated that the majority of the rebels were heartily sick of fighting and would desert at the first opportunity. On the 14th about 30 came in, mostly armed, who stated that they had deserted in the darkness,and during the past couple of days about 400 all told arrived. They had been obliged to leave their arms at the Boer camps, but were allowed to bring their stock and horses with them, though Olivier at first proposed to take the latter from them. They brought with them a large number of boy children, and, when asked the reason for having taken with them children of such tender years into places of danger, they stated that Commandant Olivier had informed them all Dutch boys were either shot or deported by the English Government in order to stop the propagation of an Afrikander nation. The character and class of the bulk of the rebels may be judged by the credulity with which they swallowed such preposterous lies. Among them were a few landowners, but the majority were " bijwoners " and men of the poorest class, dirty and unsavoury to an extraordinary degree. Physically many of them were very fine men, but there was a considerable proportion of stunted, miserable looking young men,while there were at least 20 idiots among them whose companions had to answer all questions for them. The officers among the rebels, when asked how such men could be sent on commando, stolidly replied that a man did not require his full understanding to be able to use a rifle. One and all they declaimed against Olivier and their own leaders for misleading them. The names of all the men were duly taken down and passes issued to them to proceed to their homes. It was, however, clearly explained to them that their present dismissal to their farms in no sense exonerated them from future proceedings being taken for their punishment. After addresses from General Brabant, or, in his absence, from Lord Wolverton, the different batches of men were dismissed, each party, through a spokesman, expressing gratitude for the lenient treatment meted out to them. Meanwhile, as affidavits were filed against former English officials and several arrests were made, Mr. P. J. de Wet, M.L.A. for Wodehouse,and his brother, Frans de Wet, who had acted as rebel magistrate of Lady Grey, were arrested by Major Crewe some 15 miles off on charges of high treason. The former is being despatched to Dordrecht for preliminary examination, while his brother Frans was lodged in the local prison. That such men could persuade themselves of the ultimate success of the Dutch arms is one of the mysteries of the situation. One view of the matter is that had little or nothing to lose (their properties being mortgaged up to the hilt), and co-operation with the Republics would in the event of success be handsomely rewarded. The rank and file were to get nothing, but the leaders had planned a cutting up of the stakes among themselves after the famous Pretorian fashion.

The subsequent treatment of the common men is everywhere discussed and the scheme which most approves itself to the loyal colonials is that all rebels should be technically convicted of high treason, disfranchised for a term of years, and fined according to their means to defray damage done in their districts. With regard to the leaders, however, much more stringent measures are recommended. Without their co-operation the rebellion could not have assumed such proportions, if, indeed, it could ever have happened. For officials under the colonial Government who broke their oaths of office and served with the enemy severe punishment is generally demanded. Throughout a great portion of the Cape Colony her Majesty's loyal subjects have been harried, driven from their homes, and reduced to a state of misery, many of them to abject poverty, thriving families being forced to subsist on charity for months owing to the crime of a few scoundrels occupying high positions. That such men should be allowed to escape unscathed (and there is a very grave fear felt that this may be the case) is already exciting intense anxiety among English people. While few reasonable men who have made South Africa their home ask for a policy of revenge, all demand as a matter of right and justice that the leaders should be adequately dealt with and the rank and file shown that rebellion is not so light a matter as to be passed over without some punishment.

ROUXVILLE, MARCH 20.

After the experience of the past few weeks it is very difficult to preserve respect for the up-country colonial Dutch. In the districts of Wodehouse, Barkly East, Aliwal North, &c., with but few exceptions every Dutchman took more or less an active part with the enemy. Yet during the advance of the Colonial Division hundreds of Dutchmen were met who protested their loyalty ; who denied having assisted the enemy in any shape or form ; who came to greet General Brabant's force with cheers, and be-

decked with red, white, and blue favours, most of whom a few hours or days later were proved on incontestable evidence to have been fighting against her Majesty's troops or holding office in the Cape Colony for the Republican Government. Mr. du Toit, the Aliwal North secretary of the Bond, is a typical instance. He eagerly assailed all who would listen to him with stories of his loyalty during the period of the Boer occupation. Two days afterwards, when documentary evidence of the most conclusive character involving him was discovered, his first remark to the writer, who visited the gaol, was that he had been playing a double game and that he was eager to furnish the Government with all the evidence against prominent residents that it was in his power to give, provided he was given a guarantee of personal safety. The despicable creature appeared unable to understand why his proferred hand was not accepted.

Messrs. P. J. De Wet, M.L.A., and his brother Frans do not come quite in this category, but their expressions of joy at the news of the continued successes of British arms and the consequently rapid termination of the war did not in their position appear very genuine. Of several hundreds of surrendering rebels who were examined, 90 per cent. denied having been in any fights, alleging they had been engaged in some practically non-combatant capacity. Most of the rebels were of the poorest and most ignorant class, so that their desire to sacrifice truth in an endeavour to exculpate themselves was to be expected ; but from the educated men a more dignified attitude might have been looked for. In quite a small percentage of cases was there a frank admission of guilt, though a large number of men professed extreme sorrow and regret for having been misled so grossly. Their credulity and ignorance were lamentable to witness. An inspection of several old family Bibles found in captured laagers afforded a curious commentary on the supposed advance in education among the Dutch. The entries of births, deaths, and marriages up till about 60 years ago were fluently and grammatically expressed in good handwriting, but the later entries were invariably misspelt and in scarcely legible writing.

Visits to the deserted Boer laagers near Aliwal and to the enemy's positions were full of interest. An enormous amount of work had been done by way of rifle-pits, intrenchments, schansjes, and gun-pits. Had an assault been attempted the loss of life must have been terrible. Rifle-pits and schansjes, cunningly concealed with bushes, were found at every turn. An enemy attacking would have been enfiladed and under cross-fire at all points apparently lending themselves to easiest assault. At the various sleeping places near these defences and at the laagers were found every sign of a precipitate retreat. Innumerable cooking-pots, mess-tins, bags and boxes of clothing, picks, shovels, and crowbars littered the ground, while a few tents were found still standing and the framework of hundreds of shelters. A broken wagon, the result of Captain Lukin's shelling, was found, while small stacks of grain of various kinds were seen here and there. Altogether the evidence was overwhelming that a very demoralized enemy had fled.

The colonial loyalists have expressed very freely dissatisfaction with the terms of the earlier proclamations of Lord Roberts and General Gatacre, under which practically no punishment was indicated even for leaders and for officials who have illtreated English men and women during the war, but a stiffening in the terms of later proclamations has been welcomed with great satisfaction. Several of the Free State and rebel officials who abused their positions and grossly oppressed English people may now be dealt with adequately and receive well-earned punishment.

An advance to the Free State from Aliwal North was made yesterday with a small force, under Major Cuming, composed of under 400 Kaffrarians and two naval 12-pounder q.f.'s, drawn by six mules each, manned by garrison artillery, mounted on horses, commanded by Lieutenant Seton, R.A., a probably unique mixture, but forming a serviceable whole, which did the march in good style. A short halt was made about ten miles from Aliwal at Beesten Kraal, the farm of Rauch, where were found two wagons, laden with sundries, among which were some cartridges, the property of Commandant Olivier, while in a shed Mr. Rauch pointed out about 50 bags of flour, meal, and grain left behind owing to scarcity of transport oxen. A few rebels with their families, wagons, flocks, and herds were met *en route* for Aliwal to surrender. Their arms were promptly taken and passes granted. With Mr. Rauch a little difficulty arose which was not the first, as it also will not be the last, of the kind to cause trouble. To disarm a Dutchman or a native is a difficult matter, as his arms are his dearest treasures, without which he scarcely reckons himself a man. Any means of evasion he thinks perfectly justifiable. Mr. Rauch had at least two rifles, one of which he at once delivered up, but his favourite Mauser and cartridges were buried in his orchard. The pains and penalties to which he might be subject in the event of subsequent discovery of arms having been duly pointed out to him, Mr. Rauch after several hours brought his Mauser to the light of day.

The march to Rouxville was continued, and the rather depressing little town reached early in the afternoon. Only a few moments were required to turn a Dutch county town with Landdrost and all officials into an English seat of magistracy. The Landdrost was asked if he were willing to continue in office, taking the oath of allegiance to her Majesty, and, gladly consenting, was promptly installed as acting resident magistrate. Within 15 minutes he had called the inhabitants together,

whereupon the Union Jack was about to be hoisted, when a rather uncommon obstacle arose. The flagstaff rope had probably been tampered with and broke when the flag was about to be hoisted. One of Lieutenant McDonald's sappers, however, made but light of the matter, and, shinning up the unsteady pole, speedily fixed the flag permanently with wire. A salute was given, the National Anthem sung, and three rousing cheers from the troops assembled greeted the annexation. The newly-appointed acting magistrate, her Majesty's latest "loyal" subject, then read a notice to the residents calling for the delivery within 24 hours of all arms and ammunition. Lord Wolverton and Captain Percy Farrar assisted Major Cuming with all the necessary detail, and from a state of chaos order was very speedily evolved. The newly-appointed acting R.M., as his first act of office, conducted an officer to the gaol, where a store of arms and ammunition had been placed. The crowd of onlooking natives, imagining that the Landdrost was a prisoner, at once began looting his house with joy. Oom Paul's great dream of an Afrikander nation from the Zambesi to Cape Town to be made out of such material as the representatives of Republicanism at Rouxville is easily seen after the event to have been a fantasy. The callous transfer of allegiance, no doubt due to financial considerations in the main, is, however, very typical of the Republican official classes; as was evidenced after Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed the Transvaal when not one resignation (except that of the unfortunate President, for whom no position could naturally be found, and that of General Joubert) followed the change of flag. Patriotism or loyalty in the official classes seems entirely subordinated to the necessity of gaining a livelihood.

Lieutenant McDonald had followed the telegraph line from Aliwal hither and quickly repaired the damage done, so that with the aid of a couple of Major Cuming's telegraphists communication with Aliwal was established within a couple of hours of our arrival. A more useful regiment than the Kaffrarians it would be difficult to find anywhere. Artificers of every kind are to be found in their ranks, while there are Maxim sections, 25 cyclists, signalling sections, five mounted squadrons, and two infantry companies, all with transport complete—a truly composite and serviceable body.

16th April 1900.

IN THE STEPS OF THE INVADERS.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT LATELY IN LADYSMITH.)

BETHULIE-BRIDGE, MARCH 20.

This letter is written in peculiar circumstances. I sit writing, a guest in the house of a late rebel farmer. Fifty yards away is the Bethulie road bridge, which ten days ago was mined and loaded, and only escaped the destruction which befel the railway bridge a mile higher up the river by the expeditious advance of General Gatacre's force and the intrepid action of Lieutenant Popham, Derbyshire Regiment. This officer dashed across the bridge and cut the wires which connected the mines with the batteries. The situation is strange. The house is a large one, typical of the dwellings of the wealthier Dutch farmers. It is well appointed and almost luxuriously furnished, and there is even a touch of educated taste in the surroundings—polished oak floor, lace curtains, hanging lamps, gold and scarlet dado, a fancy wall paper. A new sewing machine on a mahogany stand fills one corner, a piano is in another, while an elegant cabinet sideboard occupies the interval between the windows. A daughter of the house is playing in another room to an audience of officers responsible for the reconstruction of the railway. The bridge guard is sleeping on the verandah, and ever and anon the rhythm of the piano is broken by the harsh challenge of the sentries posted on the road. Our hosts are civil and obliging; yet a fortnight ago two of the sons, who are now lounging in the sitting-room, were "on commando" with the Stormberg invaders. They have surrendered their arms, and given their parole to take no further part in the campaign.

The railway journey from Naauwpoort to Bethulie was of interest. Stormberg Junction lies at the foot of Rooi Kop, and you wind past the position of General Gatacre's unfortunate action in December last. In comparison with the country in which our men were called upon to operate in Natal, the Rooi Kop position does not appear beset with difficulties. But it is impossible to judge a battle theatre from the door-stage of a railway car. Our host's two sons were present at the action, and according to their testimony the enemy were taken completely by surprise. They were awakened from sleep to find the enemy deploying on the plain beneath them. They state that the invading force on the Stormberg range consisted of the Bethulie, Rouxville, and Smithfield commandos, under Olivier and Du Plooy. The total strength of this force was 2,500, with two Krupp field guns and one machine gun. Latterly they used the two captured 15-pounders and another Krupp with which they were reinforced. Of this force, 500 Free State burghers and two guns were detached to Dordrecht. In view of the sequence of events on this border, the force seems small; but it was, of course, considerably augmented by the rebel con-

tingents from the Colony. We arrived at Burghersdorp with the first rush of returning loyalists. The railway station was a pandemonium. Ladies returning to see what remained of their household goods ; the staff of the Standard Bank, which had advertised to reopen on the morrow ; commercial adventurers, struggling to be first in the field. But the enemy had dealt leniently with Burghersdorp. The sympathies of the residents had guaranteed this. One stepped into the hotel as naturally as if it had been Cape Town. A few days previously the hotel had been the base hospital of the Free State commandos, and, but for the slight smell of iodiform, there remained no evidence of the change. A week past and Burghersdorp had been Dutch ; now it was English. The " red, white, and blue " was evident on every side. The little boys and girls of Dutch descent and extraction even stood stiff by the roadside and essayed a military salute. Burghersdorp was the limit allowed to passenger traffic, and to proceed we had to scramble into the guard's van of the daily ration train, and make ourselves as comfortable as was possible upon our baggage and the mail bags.

The train ran as far as Bethulie, where the Royal Engineers were at work diverting the railway over the wagon bridge. The retiring enemy had completely demolished the railway bridge. Out of the eight spans they had destroyed five. This is the first bridge that they have really efficiently gutted. In Natal and upon the other Orange River crossings they have in each instance mined the piers, so that the girders were simply displaced by the explosion. But at Bethulie they fixed the charges to the centre of the girders, and each of the five is destroyed. They were careful to confine the destruction to the colony half of the bridge. The three spans remaining intact are towards the Free State bank. The bridge was originally constructed, I believe, by the Cape authorities at a cost of £45,000. When the Free State took over the railway they paid the equivalent of half the bridging expenditure. The piers stand undamaged by the explosion. They consist of cast-iron tubing, filled with concrete, upon concrete foundations. The extent of the damage is roughly estimated at £15,000. The following history of the destruction of the bridge was given me by a resident of Bethulie. Three Hollander experts came down from the Transvaal and prepared both the railway bridge and wagon bridge for demolition. The mines were actually loaded on Thursday, March 8. It was on this day that the main body of the Boers crossed from the colony back into the Free State. They recrossed with three guns by the wagon bridge and went into laager behind Bethulie. Forty pounds of dynamite were placed on each girder of the iron bridge, while the mines were connected by wire to a convenient point on the Free State banks. General Gatacre's advance guard was seen on Thursday morning, and the mines of the railway bridge were fired at 4 45 p.m. At Burghersdorp the invading force had divided, the Bethulie commando retiring upon its own centre, the commando under Olivier falling back on Aliwal. On Saturday, March 10, the Cape Mounted Police were in touch with the enemy still in possession of the bridge, while on the following day the fighting force was reinforced in Bethulie by 250 Transvaalers. But General Gatacre appears to have brought his guns into position to command both bridges. There was desultory fighting ; but there is no doubt that on Monday and Tuesday Gatacre's guns so commanded the passage that it was impossible for the enemy to demolish the road bridge. Two assaults were organized by the Dutch to reoccupy the bridge for the purpose of effecting its destruction. But these were frustrated. Wednesday was quiet. But on that day the news of the occupation of Bloemfontein reached the Bethulie laager. On the following morning at 2 o'clock the commando was ordered to " stand to " and " saddle up." At 4 they marched in a north-easterly direction, without the objective of the move being communicated to the burghers. For the rest, the passage of the Orange River and the occupation of Bethulie were unopposed.

It is difficult to describe my feelings when I crossed over the Orange River by the Wagon-bridge. Having been invested for four months within British territory, the sensation of crossing into the enemy's country and becoming in turn an invader was gratifying and exhilarating in the extreme. Away in front stretched the rolling veldt. There was a background of low kopjes, and in the middle distance Bethulie village, nestling among the only trees within the range of vision, a true oasis. We hired a cart, and drove into Bethulie. They tell me that it is a typical Dutch village. These Dutch villages are pretty. The green of Bethulie, after the boundless waste which stretches round it, was very restful to the eye. The hamlet consists of, perhaps, a couple of hundred square red-brick buildings, clustering round a white stone church. The church, with its towering spire, in size and architecture is out of all keeping with its surroundings. The parallelograms of straight streets, common to Dutch settlements, partition the village. The main roadway boasts bungalows of some dimensions, but for the most part the dwellings are cottages—dashes of Indian red from between the heavy foliage of poplar, black wattle, and weeping willow. There was little evidence in the lazy hamlet of the stirring changes of the last ten days. Dutch girls with snowy *cappies* crowded timidly to the open doors as we passed. Kaffirs raised their hats and mumbled " Kos," much as they would

do in any wayside village in the colony. The sun was bright and hot, and sleepy Boers dawdled along the highway. All was rustic and peaceful until the landdrost's office was reached. Over this the British colour fluttered, while a khaki-clad sentry paced backwards and forwards with a briskness which was not Dutch. A few yards lower down stood the hotel. The landlord rejoiced in a thoroughly English name and a white ensign which would have done credit to a battleship. Every one was loyal. The children came up, wreathed in smiles, to show you the colours which they had donned. The women produced eggs and butter. There was plenty in the land. Nothing was too good for the Englishman. The storekeepers, seeing in invasion profits which had long been denied them under the federal system of martial law, were exuberant in their loyalty.

Certain dejected individuals, carrying slung arms, were continually edging towards the landdrost's office. They were the pioneers of the surrender movement which followed Lord Roberts's proclamation of March 15. They arrived in batches of five and six, surrendered rifles and ammunition, and swore the oath required from them. They formed a strange assortment—old men, whose shaking limbs must have precluded useful service with the rifle; beardless youths, who had realized quickly enough what war and battle really meant. Many of these latter were "substitutes"—that is, they were sons of colonial Dutch who had been payed £30 a head to fight in the place of certain Free State burghers. They, not unnaturally, were among the first to tender submission. There was also a sprinkling of the heavy-featured, shifty Boer of middle age. It was noticeable that these men in nearly every instance surrendered Martini-Henry rifles or German weapons of less excellence than the Mauser rifle. As I looked at the stack of surrendered arms, I could not help recalling the last general surrender of hostile arms that I had seen. There seemed a parallel in the scene which now presented itself to the surrender of arms by the Afridi Pathans. There the enemy tendered inferior weapons. I entertain the suspicion that the Free State Dutch are doing what the Afridis did. The stack of surrendered arms contained but a small percentage of Mauser rifles. Martinis abounded; Mannlichers, Remingtons, and black-powder sporting weapons of various patterns existed. But only a third were Mausers. Now, we are aware that nearly 200,000 stand of Mauser rifles were imported into the Transvaal. Further, we have every reason to know that very little black powder was burnt by the riflemen who opposed our advance. Therefore is it not strange and suspicious that the majority of the surrendered weapons should be weapons of other pattern than the Mauser? Does it not point to subterfuge on the part of those surrendering the same? Is it ungenerous to our enemy to suggest that, as was the case with the Afridis at Jamrud, the burghers are surrendering inferior weapons and retaining the arm with which they have opposed us? In spite of all assurances, it is impossible not to view the return of these farmers to their homesteads without the suspicion that they are returning armed. Steyn and Leyds have promised us guerilla warfare. Our railway communication is too long for us to view the dispersal of men who may still be armed into the districts without some little apprehension. Men may be wearied of the camp and field, but it is wonderful how soon such men can recoup and forget all hardships under restful influences, when blood ties and racial hatred are in the balance.

16th April 1900.

THE POSITION IN NATAL.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, MARCH 22.

Unmolested in their retreat, the Boers retired after the battle of Pieters, taking with them all their guns and most of their baggage. A number of the Free State Boers had already left Natal when they heard of Lord Roberts's invasion, and the remainder now went westward by road and railway to the Drakensberg passes. The main body, however, retreated northward to the Biggarsberg, about 30 miles north of Ladysmith. It was estimated that during February 28 and March 1 2,000 wagons passed up the Newcastle and Dundee roads. The heavy guns were taken by train, the last train leaving on the afternoon of March 1, and behind it the bridges and culverts were blown up. Certainly the majority, and it is believed all, of the big guns were taken northward, and some of them are now in position on the Biggarsberg. Between Ladysmith and these mountains lies open country, but the mountains themselves are high and steep. The Boers have at present occupied and intrenched two positions, commanding the Newcastle and Dundee roads respectively. The position on the Newcastle road is considerably the stronger; it is semicircular in shape, and has a considerable extent of trenches already dug, besides about five guns in position. The Newcastle road position is also being intrenched and has guns mounted. The strength of the Boers on the Biggarsberg is estimated variously between 4,000 and 9,000. The position, however, if they wait for us to attack them on it, is not by any means so

formidable as those we have been attacking. It is far more easy to make a turning movement in the Biggarsberg than in the country through which we have passed. In fact, with the force now at his disposal, General Buller could outflank the whole chain by sending a division round by Helpmakaar.

Several days elapsed before a containing force could be sent to watch the Biggarsberg, owing to the difficulty of transport. Colenso, where the railway ended, is 17 miles away along an extremely hilly road, and the difficulty was increased by the extra amount of food required. However, on March 5 General Lyttelton's division, consisting of the 2nd and 4th Brigades, marched out to Elandslaagte. They and Colonel Burn Murdoch's cavalry brigade arrived there the following day, and camped close to Sunday's River about two miles beyond Elandslaagte Station, where they have remained ever since. The force consists of the division of infantry, three field batteries, Colonel Burn Murdoch's brigade of the 13th Hussars and Royal Dragoons and " A " Battery, R.H.A. The camp is about ten miles from the Boer positions, with comparatively flat country between, which is regularly patrolled by the cavalry. To the eastward they patrol as far as Driefontein on the Klip River, where they come in touch with Lord Dundonald's brigade, who patrol the country between Ladysmith and the western passes.

The mounted infantry have reconnoitred all the country from Mont Aux Sources, the northernmost point of Basutoland, to De Beers Pass, ten miles north of Van Reenen's, and report it clear of Boers, who have retired to the passes. Traces of their flight were to be seen all along the roads in broken wagons, stores, and ammunition abandoned. Of the latter it is estimated that over 1,000,000 rounds of Mauser cartridges have been found in large and small quantities in the laagers and along the roads west of Ladysmith. It was all buried. The Boers took very few guns with them, but they are reported to have three of our own 15-pounders on Van Reenen's Pass. All the passes are held, but it is impossible to say how strongly. In the case of Van Reenen's only a few Boers are ever on the pass itself, but a native who a few days ago guided an Englishman through from Harrismith gave information of a large laager at the back of the pass. The Drakensberg from this side has the appearance of a magnificent great wall. From the top of it the Boers can watch our approach for many miles and have ample time to bring up their men to any point threatened. It is hardly probable, however, that we shall attack them, though they are a standing menace to us when the time comes for an advance northward. It needs most of the force now at Lord Dundonald's disposal (for he has been considerably weakened by the loss of Bethune's M.I., who have been at Greytown for the last month) to patrol the country by means of posts established at Acton Homes, Blaauwbank, Besters, and Driefontein lying at distances varying from 15 to 25 miles west and north-west of Ladysmith.

Meanwhile, strenuous efforts have been made to repair the railway, and considering how long it took the Natal Government Railway to make a start they have finished it fairly quickly. On March 9 General White left by the first train that ran from Ladysmith to the north bank of the Tugela, and on March 19 the trestle bridge across the river at Colenso, built about 20 yards above the destroyed bridge, was finished. At the same time, the railway between Ladysmith and Elandslaagte was also finished. This part of the railway had suffered heavy damage. Between Modder Spruit and Elandslaagte alone, a distance of about ten miles, are three three-span bridges, besides several smaller ones, and they had all been destroyed. If our advance northward is compelled to keep pace with the repairing of the line, and the latter is in the same state beyond Sunday's River as it is this side, our progress will indeed be slow, unless a little fire can be infused into the present repairing gangs.

The naval contingent of the Powerful left Ladysmith for England on the 7th, and that of the Terrible left to rejoin their ship on the 11th. The 4·7 guns remain in the hands of the naval gunners of the Forte, Philomel, and Tartar, under Captain Jones of the Forte, but most of the 12-pounders have now been handed over to the 4th Mountain Battery. It seems a great pity that the naval gunners of the Terrible could not have been spared to finish the campaign. Three months' practice ashore has made them nearly perfect in the management of their guns, and they themselves would be the first to admit that, at any rate in that part of the gunnery that was not learnt on board ship, such as rapidity of fire under their present altered conditions and mobility, they have improved twofold since they first landed. Their rapidity of fire was wonderful when it is remembered that their carriages are fitted with none of the automatic appliances for returning the gun to the firing position, but have to be dragged back every time by hand and then carefully adjusted with the wheels at exactly the same level. As regards mobility, they have on at least one occasion—namely, Zwart's Kop—taken their guns up a place condemned by the Royal Artillery as impossible. All this experience is now to be made no further use of, and the guns pass into the hands of men who will have to learn it afresh. A great advantage the naval gunners had over the Royal Artillery was their use of the glass. Besides the telescopic sights used with the big guns, they were provided with a large telescope on a tripod, at which an officer was always seated watching the effect of the shells, and, in the case of an advance, the movements of our infantry as

well, and they were never guilty, as the Royal Artillery have been more than once, of firing on our own men. On January 24, whilst the fighting on the top of Spion Kop was taking place, the naval guns on Mount Alice were able at a distance of rather over four miles clearly to distinguish our men from the Boers and shell the latter. Compare this with one instance that came under my personal observation on February 27. An officer in command of a battery was totally unable to distinguish, with a pair of the field glasses supplied by Government, at a distance of a little over one mile, between our infantry charging and the Boers running away. I see that your Cape Town Correspondent has already said that in this campaign, where we are perpetually fighting against an invisible foe, good glasses are of paramount importance to the rifle. They are even more essential to the gunners than to the other branches of the service, and they are in this respect most inadequately supplied.

The Ladysmith garrison, with the exception of the colonial troops, who have gone further down the line, is encamped at Colenso, whither General Lyttelton has now gone. He was given, on the return of General Clery, the command of a division of troops composed of the garrison, his brigadiers being Colonel Howard and Colonel Knox. General Hunter's division is composed of the 5th and 6th Brigades. General Clery takes command of the division now at Sunday's River that was General Lyttelton's. There is a good deal of sickness amongst both the garrison and the relief column, but it is not of a serious order, and is probably due, in the case of the former, to too much good food after their previous short commons, and, in the case of the latter, to extra rations and no work.

14th April 1900.

OUR WARS AND OUR WOUNDED.

V.*

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, MARCH.

One small item was left out of the ground plan of No. 3 General Hospital. Far down on the right, where the ground slopes to the wooded hollow, there stands a little bell-tent all by itself in a group of stunted pines. It is only a dot as the eye leaves the big marquees, but greater than all of them by what it holds. Through the drawn curtain no bed or furniture is to be seen, nor anything save two narrow wooden boxes lying side by side. One of them is just going to burial—a Roman Catholic—and, their cemetery being two miles off the priest meets him there, not here. There should have been a gun-carriage to take him, but some one has blundered and the transport has only sent an ordinary hooded wagon, from which a firing party of six Militiamen in khaki tumble out and form into line. Four orderlies lift the little box—only a feather-weight—covered by the Union Jack on to their shoulders and march up the slope. We stand uncovered, the two hospital officers at the salute; the Militiamen try hard to get the "reverse arms" together, but one rustic boy, whose eyes are blinking, has to twist his rifle four times round before he can stop it butt uppermost. The coffin slides under the hood, the six soldiers form up, change step, and march before and behind the wagon, which a pair of thin, worn-out horses strain through the sand. And so the little *cortége* moves off, insignificant, unnoticed, with its unsung hero, who, to some one, somewhere, was, perhaps, the one man in all the world.

Never morning wore
To evening but some heart did break.

On the dark body of the wagon one word is painted in staring white block letters, VICTORIA —"the Great White Queen," for whom they all fight; and many die, and win, like this.

The staff of a general hospital, containing 520 beds, 20 being for officers, is composed as follows:—The principal medical officer in charge, who fortunately may be called without disrespect the "P.M.O.," is a colonel by rank. Next to him in importance, although not in Army rank, is the secretary and registrar, who is a major. These two officers together "run" the hospital, supervising the whole in all respects, but individually performing administrative and managerial, rather than medical, functions. With the reservation of final authority over medical affairs possessed by the P.M.O., they stand in something of the same relation to a general hospital that a management committee bears to a civil hospital at home. From the point of view of promotion the two offices are the prizes of the profession. The P.M.O. of a general hospital may be compared to a general of division, and the registrar to his chief of staff. Above them are only the "P.M.O. of the lines of communications," who, if we continue the comparison, represents the general officer commanding the lines of communications, and the "P.M.O. of the field force," who is the commander-in-chief. But here the comparison ends; for, while in military promotion the functions are continuous in kind while advancing in degree, in Army medical promotion the highest officers are to a large extent divested

of what would appear to be the *raison d'être* of their existence—viz., the practice of surgery and medicine. Theoretically the P.M.O. is responsible for the medical as well as the administrative work of the hospital, the cases are nominally his cases, he is consulted before operations and so on ; but as a matter of fact all this is left to the heads of the surgical and medical divisions. Practically, therefore, the P.M.O. of a general hospital ceases to be a surgeon or physician, and becomes a housekeeper. Nor have the functions of the secretary and registrar, diverse and responsible as they are, any connexion whatever with the medical department. Like a chief of staff, he is the mouthpiece of his commanding officer, and where the latter interfered with the medical work he would convey the order. But individually his duties are non-medical, and have nothing to do with the treatment of patients. He is secretary to the P.M.O. in all administrative work. He is registrar of all statistics and returns, and prepares all reports. Lastly, he is in sole charge of " company " work ; he is the commanding officer of the corps for all purely military purposes —their discipline, clothing, feeding, and pay. The official designations of the two officers indicate the curious separation of these latter functions from the head of the hospital. The latter is " P.M.O., No. 3 General Hospital," while his junior is " Officer commanding Detachment R.A.M.C., Rondebosch," which " detachment " is in effect the whole hospital staff.

The practice of divesting the two chief officers of a military hospital of all medical duties, although we shall find two exceptions to it forcibly illustrated in No. 3, is significant and worthy of note for two reasons. First, it would seem to pave the way for the admission of a complete civil medical staff in time of pressure. Secondly, to exclude medical functions from high positions, which are his constant objects of ambition cannot fail to act as a barrier and discouragement to the scientific pursuit of his profession by the Army medical officer. It is not the only feature that seems to have been carefully designed to that end and to make the conditions of his service diametrically opposed to those under which the civil profession has attained to its high degree of efficiency and skill.

The complete staff of the hospital may be divided, arbitrarily but for our purpose conveniently, into two parts, which we will call for brevity's sake administrative and medical ; the first dealing with the management, maintenance, supplies, and provisioning of the hospital as a military institution, and the second with the care and treatment of the patients.

1. Administrative.—The " P.M.O." (a colonel) and the " secretary and registrar " (a major) have each three " clerks," these six forming the " office " staff. The " quartermaster " (a commissioned officer raised from the ranks) has under him nine " store stewards," six " cooks," and a " sanitary staff," composed of three " bâtmen." There are 21 of these " bâtmen " altogether, they rank lowest in the staff, and are used for miscellaneous purposes.

2. Medical.—For purely professional purposes a general hospital is divided into two divisions—the medical and surgical. Each division has a head, so there are two " officers in charge of divisions " (lieutenant-colonels). Under them are 16 " officers for general duty " (two lieutenant-colonels, four majors, ten captains and lieutenants). These are the military surgeons and physicians ; 14 of them can be replaced by civilians. There are two " compounders." The ward staff consists of the " chief wardmaster " and ten " wardmasters and assistant wardmasters," eight " supernumeraries " to fill up vacant places, and 78 ward orderlies, who are the male nurses, 40 of these may be civilians. There are nine " nursing sisters " including a " superintendent," and these have two " female servants."

Practically the whole staff might be included in a third or " military " division, commanded by the registrar, who has in addition for purely military purposes one " sergeant-major," one " company pay-clerk," and two " buglers." His company officer (a major or captain) also does medical duty, and has therefore been included in the medical division, while the quartermaster mentioned above is also his quartermaster for company purposes.

It will be seen that the staff of a general hospital numbers 166 men and 11 women—177 all told. Enumerating the former by rank there are one colonel, four lieutenant-colonels, five majors, 10 captains and lieutenants ; one quartermaster ; while the " non-com. " ranks, distributed according to the importance of the duties they have to perform, consist of two warrant officers, 14 staff sergeants and sergeants, two buglers, 12 corporals, and 115 privates.

There are three horses allowed for or provided —one for the P.M.O., and one apiece for the heads of the medical and surgical divisions. A horse may be essential to the dignity of a P.M.O. The other two officers are, or ought to be, always in the hospital. This is apparently the only reason why they have horses ; it cannot be on account of their rank, because there are two other lieutenant-colonels who do not have horses. The only man who really requires a horse, the secretary, registrar, and military commander all in one, whose varied duties often take him outside the hospital, has none. The constructive genius of the department is only equalled by its practical insight.

It is interesting to observe how promotion is obtained through these various grades, and how, in the commissioned ranks at least, the progress upwards depends on conditions widely differing

from those to which members of the civil medical profession owe their advancement. Practically promotion in the Royal Army Medical Corps is by seniority and not by merit. As an eminent civil surgeon put it the other day, if in February of a certain year a dull and backward student in a hospital school, only just able to pass his examination, enters the corps, and in October a brilliant and industrious one follows him into the same vocation, for all their respective lives the dull one will be in front of the clever one. Imagine the great physicians and surgeons of the day, or even the ordinary medical practitioner, obtaining eminence or success on those principles! In three years a lieutenant becomes a captain, and in nine years more the captain becomes a major. It is quite true there are examinations for these two promotions; but they are qualifying examinations for the purpose of excluding rank incompetence rather than tests of merit. Moreover, a confidential report on every officer is sent in to headquarters once a year by his superior officer. It is easy to imagine that these deal rather with his conduct and discipline than with his professional merit; the critic himself might often be little qualified to comment on the latter. After 20 years' service the major is entitled to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. From these lieutenant-colonels a selection is made, by a special board, of lieutenant-colonels for the "fixed establishment," who are entitled to extra pay and who must not be more than 54 in number. From these 54, the colonels are selected in the same way, 24 in number; they must not be over 55 years old. From these 24 colonels are selected ten surgeon-generals, who must be under 57 years of age.

To these commissioned ranks the prefix "surgeon" is no longer added, except in the the case of generals; the "senior" jibbed when it came to a surgeon-general being called a major-general. As to the wisdom and results of the change which gave the R.A.M.C. Army rank in place of "relative" or "substantive" rank, there is great diversity of opinion both in the Army and outside of it; and even Army medical officers themselves are not absolutely unanimous. They say that their position before was intolerable, for which there is some justification. Military men reply that Army rank acts as an incentive to encroach on purely military functions. Much jealousy exists between the two, which it must be admitted is evinced in a greater degree by the military than by the medical officer. On the whole it would appear that, if the latter is to be an officer in the Army at all, he should have Army rank. Anything less stamps him with a social and official inferiority which is inconsistent with his sense of self-respect and the importance of the duties he has to perform. The R.A.M.C. claim that they should be treated with not less consideration than their correlatives the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery, all three being scientific services. Certainly saving your own soldiers is as important as killing other people's. But it must always be remembered that any real elevation of this branch of the service, however well deserved, cannot be expected from titular distinction; and here and there an enlightened younger member joins a grizzled veteran in wishing for "a little less sword, and a little more stethoscope."

The promotion of non-commissioned ranks is much more dependent on merit. The orderlies are divided into three classes. A third-class orderly has to satisfy the medical officer under whom he works before he rises to the second class; a second-class orderly attends a regular lecture once a week besides demonstrations every day in the wards, and rises to the first class only after having had charge of a certain number of cases. First-class orderly to lance-corporal, corporal, sergeant, staff-sergeant are steps only gained by examination. These examinations are held by the medical board of the hospital, and all papers and proceedings are sent up to the headquarters, promotion being confirmed and officially given from there. The examination for staff-sergeants is a very stiff one, and candidates must pass in "compounding." This is a most responsible function requiring special aptitudes; there is, therefore, a special examination for compounding open to any candidate who likes to enter, no matter what his rank. Staff-sergeants are divided into two classes, and are promoted from the second to the first class by selection. The next step—that of Sergeant-major—is also gained by selection; it is the highest non-commissioned rank. The sergeant-major is on his way to a commission; he holds himself aloof from the ranks beneath him, who address him as "Sir," but do not salute him. The final step, the goal of the non-com.'s ambition, is a commission to quartermaster. He is not an Army medical officer proper; promotion from the ranks to that dignity is never given, as the non-com. has had no medical training. The same restriction applies in the Engineers and Artillery (except Coast Defence), the ranker being assumed not to possess the requisite technical knowledge. The quartermasters of the R.A.M.C., however, are very able, intelligent, and practical men, and of great importance in the management of a large hospital.

It will be observed that the principle of selection plays a larger part in the commissioned than in the non-commissioned ranks. It is more important to note the unavoidable difference of its operation in the two. In the commissioned ranks the board that makes the selection is partly composed of lay officers, and cannot be said to be supremely qualified to judge on scientific merit; the selection is founded on the confidential annual reports, the nature of which has already been indicated; the medical members of the board are, so to speak, selecting from amongst themselves, from

the friends and companions of a few years ago; the board is naturally imbued with the spirit of promotion by seniority; it would always be difficult for them to refuse promotion to men whose length of service, obedience to discipline, and general good conduct justified it in the normal course. Whether these influences are calculated to secure a high order of medical efficiency or not is a question on which the general reader may form his own opinion.

In the non-commissioned ranks the principle of selection, much more limited in its application, works differently. The Army medical officer is well qualified to judge the merit of his privates and non-coms., whose duties are special but not scientific. There are no influences to deflect his judgment. His sole object is to get an efficient set of men under him who will assist him in his work and reflect credit on his hospital. Consequently the whole scheme of advancement in the non-commissioned ranks is thorough, well carried out by the officers, and calculated to secure, especially in the higher positions, an efficient and highly-qualified working staff.

The problem, however, remains that in time of war the supply is totally inadequate to the demand. The engagement of five eminent consulting surgeons for this war, though a step in the right direction, does not relieve the situation either as to the medical or the management department. The staff is constructed with a view to performing the complete work of a hospital in all its parts, and not to supplying a framework for the admission of civil aid wherever necessary. The ward master does not know the duties of the quartermaster, or the company pay clerk those of the pack-store keeper, or the ward orderly those of the clerk to the P.M.O. Consequently, as soon as a pressure arises, the staff becomes disorganized; numbers taken away from it to form new hospitals have to perform duties in which they have had no previous training; and the system is deprived of that kind of elasticity which, while allotting functions peculiar to the military character of such hospitals to men trained therein, whether they come from Regular, Reserve, or Auxiliary Army Medical sources, would receive and adjust the largest possible influx of the purely civil element. It must also be borne in mind that, in time of war, pressure does not fall only or mainly on general hospitals at the base; it is much more acute at the front in bearer companies and field hospitals, and in stationary hospitals up country. These, especially the first two, which form the field division of the work, demand military training and military staffs. The more therefore we can release these latter from the base hospitals for their proper place at the front, the more we shall extend the aggregate of relief. It has been shown in a former letter that base hospitals afford the best field for civil aid on account of their strategic security. There is another reason of an exactly opposite character. Under the Geneva Convention (Article IV.) curiously enough they are not, like movable hospitals, protected, at least as to their equipment, which remains subject to capture as prize of war.

There should be no difficulty about the medical staff. With the exception of the P. M. O. and the registrar there would seem no reason why the whole medical staff of a general hospital should not be civilians. Possibly that would be even better than the present mixed system, in which friction is only avoided by a good deal of tact on both sides. On the one hand, the civil mind does not grasp the idea of authority, or easily submit to rules and habits which are more essential to a military department than to the cure of sick and wounded men. On the other hand, instances have occurred of jealousy with regard to even the eminent consulting surgeons aforesaid performing operations, some of the junior members of the "Ram Corps" (Staff officer *loquitur*) holding themselves quite equal to an "abdominal section" or anything else. The heads of the medical and surgical divisions respectively should be men of high professional standing, possibly of consulting rank. They would have to be amply paid, but the country would not object to this for the sake of those who fight its battles, and considering the comparatively limited duration and infrequent occurrence of war. Indeed, the whole scale of pay of the civil doctors should be raised in order to secure a higher class than is at present engaged. The excitement of war, patriotic sentiment, change of climate, novel life, and other reasons, have drawn some able and distinguished men into the temporary service; but a really high average of the profession can never be obtained at £1 a day. The question of the pay of the R.A.M.C. cannot be discussed here; suffice it to say that it involves another great obstacle to raising the professional standard of the corps.

Apart from the nursing question, the case of the rest of the staff is different, so far as supplementary civil aid is concerned. Inmates of a military hospital have to be treated not only as patients but as soldiers. Their connexion with the Army must be recognized, registered, and handed on through their various stages from the front, described in a preceding letter, into the general hospital, and to some extent maintained while they are in it; no link must be missing when they are discharged from it. In all this process a vast amount of red tape is involved, much of which appears arbitrary and superfluous. But we shall be better able to form an opinion if we step into the office of No. 3 and see what is going on there.

25th April 1900.

THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, FEB. 14.

In the history of the siege of Mafeking there should stand forth an event as remarkable to posterity, if, perhaps, not quite so historical, as the famous ball which was given by the Duchess of Richmond on the eve of Waterloo. It may be, indeed, a trite comparison, since its only relationship is contained in the fact that the officers were called away to the field of battle; but, with so much uncertainty in European circles upon the conditions of the garrison, this fact and its issues tend to show the spirit with which the town is sustaining its precarious existence. Although we have some 3,000 Boers around us, with 12 different varieties of artillery, and despite the steady increase in fatalities from shot and shell which marks each day, we can yet stimulate our flagging spirits to a pitch in which a ball is accepted and welcomed as an essential to the conditions of the siege. A mere detail, yet one of sufficiently striking importance and showing how very sombre and how serious is the daily situation, will perhaps be found in the postponement of this ball from Saturday night until the succeeding evening—a proceeding which was rendered necessary by the death of a popular townsman from a 100-pound shell in the course of the previous morning. Recent Sundays have revealed a tendency upon the part of the enemy to ignore that generous and courteous concession to a beleaguered garrison which General Cronje granted by professing his willingness to observe the Sabbath, in so much that the Boers have maintained rifle fire until 5 in the morning, commencing again at any moment after 9 o'clock at night. This Sunday was no exception, and we had the usual matutinal volleys in the morning.

Towards 8 o'clock in the evening the streets near the Masonic-hall presented an animated, even a gay, picture. Officers in uniform and ladies in charming toilettes were making their way to the scene of the festivity, each with a careless happiness which made it impossible to believe that within a thousand yards of the town were the enemy's lines. Immense cheering greeted the strains of "Rule Britannia," played by the band of the Bechuanaland Rifles, and then the dance commenced. The town danced upon the edge of a volcano, as it were; and while it danced the outposts watched with strained eye for any sign of movement in the enemy's lines. As dusk closed in the outposts had reported to the Colonel commanding that the advanced trenches of the enemy had been reinforced with some 300 Boers; and that their galloping Maxim had been drawn by four men to a point adjacent to our outlying posts in the brickfields, while what appeared to be the 9-pounder Krupp had been put into an emplacement upon the south-eastern front. This news Colonel Baden-Powell did not permit to become known, since he very properly wished to allow the garrison to enjoy its dance if occasion offered; and accordingly the dance began. It was early when the enemy sent their preliminary volley whistling over the town; in an instant the animation of the streets which had preceded the dance was apparent once more, as around the doors of the Masonic-hall a number of people collected from out of the ball-room. Officers raced to their posts as orderlies galloped through the streets sounding a general alarm. We were to be attacked, and a man can serve his guns, can ply his rifle, can stand to his post in evening pumps and dress trousers as efficiently and as thoroughly as he can were he clothed in the coarser habiliments of the trenches. For a few minutes no one quite knew what would happen, and greater mystification prevailed as the noise of firing came from every quarter of our front. Urgent orders were issued, to be obeyed as rapidly; Maxims were brought up at a gallop, the reserve squadron was held in readiness, coming up to headquarters at the double. The guns were loaded and trained, and within a few minutes of the general alarm the ball-room was deserted and every man was at his post.

It was a fine night and the moon was full. Here and there, silhouetted against the sky-line, those who were watching could see the reinforcements marching to the advanced trenches. There had been little time to think of anything, to collect anything, the men who were sent forward simply snatching their rifles and ammunition reserves. For a brief moment there was exceeding confusion in the forts that had been ordered to furnish reinforcements for any particular trench; but this duty was performed so quickly, and the town was in such readiness to repel attack, that our mobilization would have reflected credit upon the smartest Imperial force. Presently there came a lull in the firing, and the

ambulance wagon made its way to a sheltered point, prepared to move forward should it become necessary. I watched for a few minutes the scene in the market square, paying particular attention to Colonel Baden-Powell and his staff officers, who had congregated beyond the stoep of the headquarters office. Now and again Lord Edward Cecil, the Chief Staff Officer, would detach himself from the group to send an instruction by one of the many orderlies who, with their horses, were in waiting. It was a cheering spectacle, the prompt and methodical manner in which our final arrangements were perfected. Then the staff group broke up, and the C.S.O. explained the possibilities of the situation. The enemy contemplated an attack upon our south-eastern front, concentrating their advance upon our positions in the brickfields. If such, indeed, were the case, we could promise ourselves a smart little fight and one, moreover, at point blank range. We had so fortified our trenches in this particular quarter that, happily, there was no prospect of any disaster similar to that which befell our arms at Game Tree. Towards midnight heavy firing broke out upon the western outposts, caused, as was afterwards proved, by the success of our native cattle raiders, who, managing to elude the vigilance of the Boer scouts, had driven some few head of cattle through their lines into our own camp. The sound of this firing drew the Chief Staff Officer to the telephone in the headquarter bombproof, whereupon I made my way to the point against which we had assumed that the attack would be directed.

Some few weeks ago I had accompanied another correspondent upon a scramble up the river bed to what was then our most advanced position. Sergeant Currie, with a detachment of Cape Boys was holding it permanently, receiving support from Captain Fitzclarence and D Squadron at dusk. But those were early days, and since then we have worked extraordinary changes in the relative positions in the brickfields of the Boers and ourselves. At that time the attentions of Sergeant Currie, Cape Police, were turned upon an adjacent brick-kiln, 180 yards distant, into which the enemy had thrown a strong force of sharpshooters. In time we overcame these and occupied the place ourselves, repeating the manœuvre until the chief points of the brickfields had been wrested from the enemy. As we moved to a new post we sapped until we were able to control a strong, intrenched position, and, as surely as we advanced, the Boers fell back so that Sergeant Currie's original post is now some 700 yards from the nearest trench of the enemy. He has, however, under the direction of Inspector Marsh, Cape Police, who commands the south-eastern outposts, moved forward until his old position is some 500 yards to his rear, and is now held by Inspector Brown and a troop of the Cape Police from Division II. Other points in this quarter are 300 and 500 yards respectively from the Boers, while each one is defended by other detachments of Cape Police. This, therefore, is the composition of our forces in the brickfields, although in the area covered by the south-eastern outposts must be included the Nordenfeldt and 7-pounder emplacement across the river, since, should the firing become too heavy, the services of these two pieces are requisitioned by Inspector Marsh, and very useful have they been upon many occasions.

It was to an old post in a somewhat new shape, then, that I made my way, a journey which amply compensated for any lack of excitement in the events of the last few days. Fitful volleys from the Boers made it impossible to walk across the section of the veldt intervening between the rear of these advanced posts and the town, while at present these posts form a little colony, connected as they are now among themselves, but cut off altogether from communication with the town until the pall of night comes to shield the movements of those compelled to make their way between the town and the brickfields. Soon, those who are posted there hope to see a trench constructed, affording passage at any moment with the base ; but until this happens it is a pleasant scramble, a little dangerous, and somewhat trying. The ground is rough and stony, sloping slightly in open spaces to within a few yards of the Boer lines. It is commanded in many points, and upon this particular night it seemed to suit the purpose of the enemy to play upon it with their rifles at irregular intervals. To reach the river bed was easy, to scramble up the river bed with one's figure thrown out against the skyline is better appreciated in imagination ; to put it into practice is to walk without looking where one is going, since one is continually sweeping the enemy's positions to catch the flash of the enemy's rifles. When the flash is caught, if the bullet has not hit one first, it is wiser to throw dignity to the wind and oneself upon the ground. In this position, prone and very muddy, even a little bruised, I found myself, until the fierce but whispered challenge of a sentry told me that my temporary destination had been reached. At this fort there was little to betray the excitement which consumed its gallant defenders, beyond the fact that the entire post was standing to arms. With a laugh and a jest we parted, and cut across what would have been the line of fire had a fight been raging at that moment. There was a low, elongated wedge a few yards distant upon the left, against which the moon threw black shadows. It was the Boer position, and as they had been firing frequently warning to proceed cautiously was not altogether disobeyed. Inspector Marsh's post was then very shortly gained, and with this officer I passed the night.

It was 2 a.m. when Inspector Marsh turned out

to make his last round before the men in his command stood to arms at daybreak. Whatever else was not evident, it was now certain that there would be no attack until the break of day, and so, upon returning to our post, we lay upon the stony ground and slept. It seemed that Time had scarcely scored an hour when we woke up, and, taking our rifles with us, buckling on our revolvers, stood to the loopholes. Day broke solemnly and with much beauty, night fading into grey purple and soft, eerie shadows. Trees looked as sentinels, and there was no sound about us. Indeed, the spectacle of a large number of men expecting each minute the opening volley of an attack, was thrilling, and in that cold air their martial effect was a sufficient and satisfying tonic against the river mists. We had been standing some few minutes when from up the stream came the croaking of the bullfrog, so loud and emphatic that the older veldtsmen knew it at once to be a signal. This had scarcely been passed round when from that black line upon the sky there broke a withering sheet of flame ; it was a magnificent volley, and swept across our intrenchments. We held our fire, crouching still lower and peering still more anxiously through the sandbags. Dawn was rapidly advancing, and as the light became clearer the enemy heralded its advance with a merry flight of 3-pounder Maxims. They burst among us, hitting nobody, and falling principally upon the trench occupied by Sergeant Currie and his Cape boys. Then we fired, or rather our most advanced trench opened, and in that moment the engagement began. However, beginning brilliantly as it did, under the snapping of the Mausers, the droning hiss of Martinis, and a roaring deluge of shells, it was shortlived. Sergeant Currie and his men bore the brunt of the rifle fire, replying shot to shot, undaunted and unchecked. The reverberating echoes of the firearms, of the exploding shells, and of the insulting taunts of the Cape boys were somewhat deafening, encompassed as they were within two points separated from one another by scarcely 600 yards. When the advanced trenches of the enemy started, volleys came also from the ridge of the acclivity leading from the river bed to the emplacement of the 9-pounder Krupp. Between them again there were smaller trenches joining in the rifle practice, which, while it lasted, was so hot that it was not possible to creep through the connecting trenches, or, indeed, to move in any manner whatever. Within three hours the enemy threw some 30 9-pounder Krupp, some 25 5-pound incendiary shells, an overwhelming mass of 3-pound Maxims, and a few rounds from the cavalry Maxim. Bullets innumerable had whizzed across us, to be answered by rifle fire as brisk again, and so rapidly returned that few of the defenders had even time to think.

But we wondered, as the day grew brighter and two hours' firing had passed, what would be the end, considering ourselves fortunate that the enemy made no attempt to rush any one of the brickfields in his command. Occasionally, as we fired, Inspector Brown, in charge of the river-bed work, exchanged signals with Inspector Marsh, the post commander, through a megaphone, much to the discomfiture of the Boers, who, as the stentorian commands rang out in any lull of firing, were sadly perplexed. These signals had, of course, been arranged beforehand, the men knowing that they were the merest pretext and one by which it was hoped to confuse the Boers. Upon the part of the enemy it must have been rather alarming to hear between some temporary stoppage in the firing a voice in thunderous tones crying out, " Men of the advanced trench, fix bayonets," an order which would be invariably followed by hearty cheering from the Cape Police and insults of an exceedingly personal character from the Cape boys. However, everything draws to an end, and the Boers, abandoning their intention of turning us out of the brickfields, ceased fire, giving to ourselves an opportunity to prepare breakfast. We ate it where we had previously been firing, the men passing the tins of bully and the bread rations from one to another. Then just where we had been fighting, with the scent of the burst shells and the smoke of the rifles hanging in the air, thin spiral columns of smoke arose in the rear of the few brick-kilns, and coffee was presently brought to us. Until mid-morning we maintained our posts, but with the luncheon hour we took it easy, although preserving a watchful attitude towards the Boers. Thus passed the day with little further firing, and some sleeping, terminating in a merry dinner—under siege conditions—with Inspector Marsh and Inspector Brown, in the dug-out of their town post.

30th April 1900.

A VISIT TO SPION KOP.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, MARCH 28.

I rode over to Spion Kop last week to examine the Boer positions we had watched so long from the other side. Between Ladysmith and Spion Kop lies an almost unbroken plain for 16 miles with only one position on it the Boers could have held, and that was capable of being turned. Spion Kop rises in a series of bluffs, and its north-eastern extremity merges into the plain about a mile to the west of where the Brakfontein position (the frontal position facing Potgeiter's Drift) begins. These two are connected, as regards Boer

fortifications, by a trench half a mile long lying across the Ladysmith-Potgeiter's Drift road with its ends resting upon two dongas, which serve the purpose both of rifle-pits and of traverses.

The Boers evidently feared a frontal attack up the line of the Ladysmith road, for this is the part most carefully intrenched. A small rise commanding the road from the flank has three lines of trenches, and for the first mile from this end Spion Kop itself had been fortified with two tiers of trenches—the first on the crest of the hill, the second a third of the way down—and three gun emplacements. It was these fortifications that we examined first. The trenches were better even than those we had stormed on February 18. There were in the first place more of them, and in the second they were better placed. They were between four and five feet deep, considerably wider at the bottom than at the top (this was probably done to allow the occupants of the trenches to crouch down in safety whilst they were under heavy shell fire), with usually one and often a double layer of sandbags in front. The first row was usually laid with intervals between the bags, and if a second row was used it covered these intervals and formed most perfect loopholes. In no place along the top of the hill was there four feet of soil, and in most places less than two, so that all these trenches were dug more or less out of the bedrock. How this had been done it is impossible to say. It did not look as if an explosive had been used, nor had we ever heard the sound of blasting. It is more probable that the rock, being apparently an extremely friable one, had been chipped and levered out with crowbars ; but the labour entailed must have been enormous. The trenches on the crest of the hill all had traverses, and the trenches a little way down the face had covered ways leading down to them. All these trenches were a great deal better than anything in our own defences round Ladysmith.

The gun emplacements were perhaps even better than the trenches. Of the three on the northern spurs of Spion Kop two had been used for the big guns that had fired right across the valley at Vaal Krantz and Zwart's Kop, the third one, much smaller than the other two, had held a Maxim automatic, the dreaded " Pom Pom " that, together with the big guns, had shelled our batteries on February 5 so heavily. These three emplacements were all built on the northern slopes of their respective bluffs and were drawn back sufficiently far to be sheltered by them from our naval guns on Mount Alice and Spearman's Hill, but could yet command the ground between Lyttelton's kopjes and Brakfontein. They were built entirely of sandbags, and were at least six feet thick. The floor was sunk so that the muzzle of the gun was very little above the level of the ground outside and was most accurately level. I could not see that our shells had done them any harm whatever.

Spion Kop is about four miles long, lying roughly north-east and south-west. The northern half is a ridge, very steep on the eastern side facing Potgeiter's Drift, considerably less steep on the western side. The highest parts of this half of the hill are the two peaks climbed by the 60th Rifles during the afternoon of January 24. Then comes on the eastern side a deep re-entrant with precipitous sides and on the top a rather deep neck before reaching the highest part of the whole hill, the part held by us all that day. On the west side there is a corresponding re-entrant, south of which the hill loses the character of a ridge, the southern half being roughly triangular in shape with the apex at the south-western end,up which the attack was made. The highest part is at the north-eastern end, and this is where the fiercest fighting took place.

It was curious to observe, after seeing how skilfully and elaborately the northern half of Spion Kop had been intrenched,that the southern half had not been fortified at all. Wherever the Boers had thought intrenchments of use to them, there they or their Kaffirs had most laboriously dug them. But on the top of Spion Kop, a most important and commanding position, from which, had they held it and worked their guns from it, they would have rendered Lyttelton's kopjes untenable and Warren's crossing impossible,there was not a trace of anything more than the slightest of temporary breastworks thrown up by the outpost that Colonel Thorneycroft and his men found on the hill. Having regard for the very high military skill the Boers have hitherto always shown in their selection of defensive positions, there can be but one reason for this apparent neglect—namely, that they recognized that part of the hill to be untenable for either attacker or defender. Spion Kop was, in fact, to use an old-fashioned word, " debateable land." It lay in the very centre of both positions,cutting them both in two. From it one saw to the northward the Boer position stretching far away on either side, and to the southward our own, both abounding in gun positions from which the hill could be raked from end to end. This the Boers, who had the advantage over us of having been on the hill before the attack took place, may have realized, and, if so, the event showed them to have been correct. After examining the kind of trenches the Boers consider necessary as a protection against our shell fire, it was most painful to see the wretched trenches which were all our men had been able to dig before the fire began. Compared to the former they were the merest rabbits' scratchings. The trench which bore the heaviest fighting all day was about 100 yards long, slightly curved, and from the top of the breastwork in front not more than at the most 2ft. 6in. deep, and in places where the ground was more stony than usual con-

siderably less than this. This gave practically no protection against shrapnel, which during part of the day was fired on to the hill at the rate of something under ten shells a minute ; nor was there anything in the nature of loopholes to protect the men's heads whilst firing—a defence of the utmost importance when it is remembered that most of that day there was a heavy fire at a range of under 100 yards. This was the trench in which took place the most stubborn fighting of the day. Engaged at a range of about 80 yards, at times enfiladed at a range of a little over 100, subjected to an incessant and terribly heavy shell fire, against which this scanty breastwork was next to no protection, the trench became at last so choked with the dead and the wounded that the reinforcements, who still came valiantly forward whenever the firing slackened, could find no place in it and lay down to be shot in the open. Where that trench stood on the day of the battle is now a grave 60 yards long. There was only one adequate defence built that morning before the battle, and that was on the highest point of the whole hill. Here is an outcrop of large rocks forming a tolerable natural defence, and a very good schansje was formed by filling the gaps between them with smaller rocks. Behind this the men were comparatively safe, but the intensity of the fire may be judged by the fact that there is hardly a space three inches square that is not covered with bullet splashes, and all over the ground lie fragments of stones shattered by shells. The helplessness of our position on the top of the hill was largely due to the fact that with the exception of a few small breastworks on the western side none of the trenches we had dug commanded the approaches to the summit of the hill. The part of the summit occupied by us presented a front to the northward of only about 300 yards. Immediately in front of this the ground sloped gently to the crest and then descended sharply to the nek below. This steeper slope the Boers could ascend with perfect immunity, which they did, and, hiding among the rocks along the edge of the slope, poured in a most deadly and destructive fire at very short range, retiring if we showed signs of charging them, allowing their supports in front and on our right flank to continue the fire meanwhile, but always returning when we no longer looked like attacking.

To the north-east lay Taba Myama, and behind its sangar-lined crest ran a long level natural platform, where had evidently been the gun positions it had so puzzled Warren's gunners to locate, and whence, at a range of little over 2,000 yards, came most of the shells that day. The other guns with which they had shelled the hill were on the northern part of Spion Kop itself, and were perhaps the guns from the epaulements we had already examined.

After Spion Kop we went to Brakfontein. The trenches and epaulements here were even better and more massive than those on Spion Kop. There was one epaulement in particular, standing on the highest point of Brakfontein, that had always been very conspicuous from the other side of the river, and had been assiduously shelled by us for the whole of one day. As a matter of fact, no gun was ever fired from it, and it is doubtful whether there had ever been a gun there, but it was evident that it was quite ready to receive one the moment it was needed. This emplacement having no protection and affording a beautiful mark to our guns had nothing but its own strength to rely on, and this was prodigious. It was over 6ft. thick, built entirely of sandbags, and had, like the others, a sunk floor. But the chief feature of it was a double embrasure. Our only guns that the Boers seem really to mind are the big naval guns, and, if possible, they always choose their gun positions where the latter cannot reach them. This was in this case out of the question, so instead they built the double embrasure. The part of the work between the two embrasures was particularly strong and high, and facing directly towards Mount Alice would prevent any shell from the naval guns falling on the gun or in the emplacement. This part of Brakfontein was covered with shell holes. Round this particular epaulement there was one every few yards, but the damage done to Boer fortifications appeared extremely small. The mortality amongst the Boers too was probably extremely small, as they always crouch down in their trenches when they hear a shell coming, and unless the shell happened to fall in the trench itself, which did not often happen at a range of over 7,000 yards, the fragments would fly harmlessly over their heads. I looked carefully for any examples of the havoc wrought by lyddite, and am bound to confess I found none. Though most of the holes in the ground had been caused by lyddite shells, for the yellow stain was still visible, they did not seem any larger than those made by common shell ; nor did they seem to have had much effect upon the fortifications when they struck them.

The eastern end of Brakfontein joins Vaal Krantz. To the north-east of the latter lies open country with only one big donga, from which the Boers sniped the hill so heavily, and it is hard to see what would have checked a general advance between Doorn Kloof and Vaal Krantz. From here a bare hour's riding across open and well-watered country took us back to Ladysmith.

30th April. 1900.

THE ENGAGEMENT AT KAREE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BLOEMFONTEIN, MARCH 3.

Bloemfontein, we are told in the guide-books, is "a quiet and pleasant rural centre." That may have been the Bloemfontein of the past. The Bloemfontein of the present is very different. It teems with the *personnel* of an army of occupation, the numbers of which are almost equal to the white population of the State of which it is capital. The town itself lies without ostentation at the foot of a low raking kopje. At the best it is a collection of dirty-white Dutch architecture, picked out with bright flashes of red-brick villas of modern planning, leavened with the magnificence of the mason's efforts to combine massive stonework with corrugated iron. For the rest the suburbs of the capital of the Free State are found in the rolling veldt. At the present moment these suburbs are black with cattle. The transport of the invader grazes peacefully upon them, and strings of his carts stretch out in every direction. But the town itself is so English that if it were not for the black population, the bullock teams, and the prevalence of Union Jacks it could easily be taken for an English country town, lying in the track of the autumn manœuvres. The wreck of an army lies scattered in and about Bloemfontein. I say the wreck of an army, for what is an army without horses and draught animals? And that is practically what we are at present. The dash for Kimberley, the thunder after Cronje, the corral at Paardekraal, and the magnificent burst which brought General French to the gates of the capital, absolutely exhausted the cavalry while the other portions of Roberts's march were little less trying to the mounted infantry and transport. It must be remembered that these operations took place in a country in which water stands at a premium, and which has little in the way of natural resources upon which an invading army can rely for support.

I arrived at Bloemfontein under the impression that the near future would produce little of interest beyond the tedious re-equipment of a weary army. Never was I more mistaken. On the day of my arrival the enemy were reported to have pushed their observation post south from Brandfort, and to have occupied a range of low hills four miles to the north of Glen. On the following day General Gordon's cavalry brigade were in touch with the enemy, and the movement of troops from Bloemfontein proved that the matter had more significance than "an affair of outposts."

Glen at this time was the northern limit of British supremacy in the Free State. The valley, which is happily named, is a spot where the Modder River winds among a cluster of kopjes, and forms one of the prettiest spots in South Africa. The Modder is bridged at Glen by the railway, but the enemy as they fell back from Bloemfontein destroyed two of the spans. Thus, when the Dutch patrols first came down from Brandfort, Glen Station was the limit of our railway communication. The bridge, under repair, was held by two battalions of the Guards Brigade. Four miles to the north of Glen is Karee Siding. It is a small flag station lying in a valley which is formed by three parallel ridges of small hills. This cluster of kopjes is known as Karee. The enemy on March 26 were reported to have occupied these hills in considerable force. They had been induced to come down with other motives than that of simply maintaining Karee as an observation post. Amongst the commando was a percentage of Johannesburg police, whose special duty was to scour the country in search of such Free State burghers as had complied with Lord Roberts's proclamation and surrendered their arms. Such as they found upon their farms they arrested and carried away to Kroonstadt. It is reported in the case of farmers of known British extraction that several were shot in cold blood. There is one proven instance of a Englishman, married to a Dutch wife, being shot in the presence of his family. As we had induced these farmers to return to their peaceful vocations, it was our duty to protect them from this treatment; and, as the country in the neighbourhood of Karee presented a favourable theatre for attack, a plan of operations was arranged which, if successful, gave promise of considerable results. The Karee range of hills stand isolated in a vast plain of veldt, covering a front, east and west, of about five miles. It was anticipated that if mounted troops worked round both flanks of the position the enemy, dislodged by an infantry attack from the south, would fall an easy prey to the cavalry.

Accordingly, General Tucker's division was despatched to Glen. It consisted of General Chermside's brigade (Lincolnshire Regiment, Norfolk Regiment, Hampshire Regiment, and K.O.S.B.s.) and General Wavell's brigade (Cheshire, East Lancashire, and North Staffordshire Regiments, and South Wales Borderers), with Colonel Hall's Brigade Division of Field Artillery (75th, 62nd, and 18th Batteries R.F.A.). The 7th Division Mounted Infantry was already out at Glen, and on the evening of March 28 General French joined the 3rd Cavalry Brigade with the 2nd and 3rd Brigades. The plan of operation was as follows:—General French, with the Cavalry Division, was to make a detour to the rear of the Karee hills from the west. Colonel Le Gallais, with the Mounted Infantry, was to attempt similarly to turn the position from the east, taking three of the new 37mm. guns as his artillery. When General Tucker was satisfied that the flanking movements were sufficiently advanced he would launch his infantry attack from the direction of Glen. The

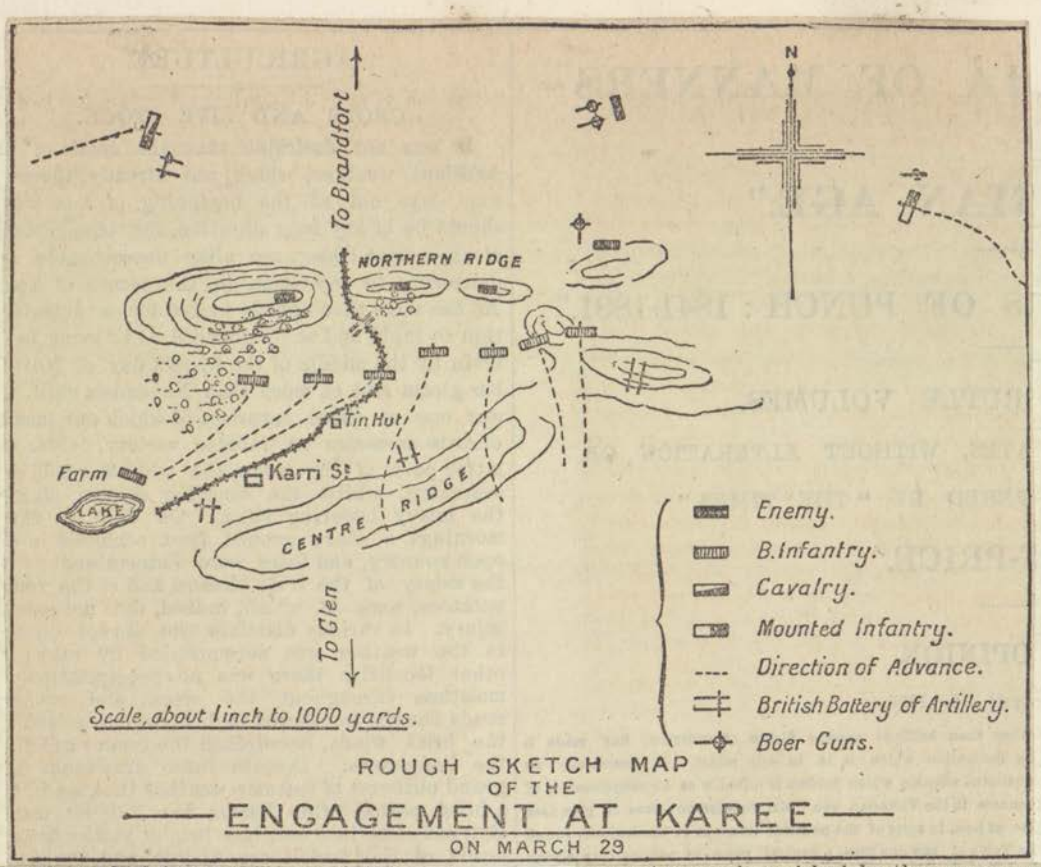
mounted troops were somewhat late in moving off, but it should be remembered that it was but partially reconnoitred ground on the left and wholly unknown on the right which had to be traversed. Shortly before 10 o'clock a heliographic message came in from the cavalry that they were in position to cover the plain in the rear of the hills. The infantry division therefore advanced at 10 o'clock.

Roughly speaking, the Karee cluster of hills form three parallel ridges with flat valleys between them. The railway winds through two of the valleys. Karee Station is in the broadest valley, which is the most northern, and which is about 2,000 yards across from range to range. The east end of this valley is stopped by a conical hill, which partially commands the final ridge. Between Glen and the first parallel is about four miles of rolling veldt gently sloping upwards.

General Tucker advanced his infantry across this open in echelon of battalions from the right, with General Chermside's brigade leading. The Lincolnshire Regiment, in extended order, formed a screen, the flanks being protected by patrols of the C.I.V. Mounted Infantry. The order of battalions from the right was—Norfolk Regiment, K.O.S.B's. (King's Own Scottish Borderers), Hampshire Regiment, Cheshire Regiment, East Lancashire Regiment, South Wales Borderers, and the North Staffordshire Regiment.

The advance to the foot of the first parallel was without incident. The mounted infantry scouts pushed up the slopes and reported the position unoccupied. The infantry were able to extend and to advance steadily on to the position. The opinion prevailed that the enemy had discovered the intention of the cavalry and had evacuated the position. Holding the same opinion, I rode to a little red brick farm which stood in the valley between the first parallels. The kindly Dutch proprietress and her daughters were dispensing milk and bread to such of the men in the leading battalion who were able to evade their company officers. She had a story that the Boers had kidnapped her daughter on the preceding day to try and find out the hiding place of her husband, who had surrendered his arms, and had been given the necessary pass. Just as she was expatiating upon the crimes of the Johannesburg police three shots were fired in the vicinity, followed by a rattle of rapid magazine fire. Bullets pattered against the walls of the farmhouse. Our hostess became hysterical and bundled us out of her door, assuring us that the enemy would shoot her if they discovered her giving cover to Englishmen. The firing was not continued. It was but a burst from some picket holding the second parallel. They emptied their magazines into the leading files of the Lincolnshire Regiment and then fell back. But some movement had been observed on the left of our advance, and the brigade division came into action against the enemy's right. There was no response, and at 1 30 p.m. the line of advance had passed over the centre of the three parallel ridges and had reached the plain in which Karee Station stands (sketch map). The C.I.V. mounted infantry crossed the open, and the battalions of the Lincolnshire Regiment, Norfolk Regiment, and five companies of the K.O.S.B's scaled the conical hill which commands the left front of the final ridge of kopjes, while the remainder of General Chermside's Brigade advanced steadily across the open. Still there was no sign of the enemy. The mounted infantry pushed right up to brush cover at the foot of the final ridge, and reported no enemy. Two companies of the K.O.S.B.'s arrived within 200 yards of the kopjes before the enemy declared themselves. Suddenly, at 2 20 p.m., a heavy fire was opened from the bush-clothed slopes of the two hills which cover the railway cutting. The enemy, spread out under cover of the scrub, had held their fire beautifully. How many there were it was impossible to say, as the cover was perfect. But the fire was sufficient to check the advance, and send the two leading companies of the K.O.S.B's back. Luckily, they found a spruit about 400 yards from the foot of the position. At 2 25 one of our batteries came into action on the left and a battalion supported from the left. At this period the enemy began to show on the sky-line. We found that they had practically held four kopjes. Their right was the big tableland kopje which forms the highest hill in this particular clump. The summit of this they had intrenched, while the slopes down to the railway cutting presented much natural cover, as the hill was clothed in brushwood. The other kopjes forming the enemy's position were small continuations of this big hill, less brush grown, stretching east. Behind was a plain which appeared boundless ; but which, I am told, is very full of spruits. The enemy were not prepared for attack when we arrived. The majority of them had been out on our far right in the morning, where they had engaged and delayed Le Gallais's mounted infantry. We could see the majority of them reinforce after the attack had opened. From the unusual manner in which this reinforcing force showed itself, I am inclined to believe that a considerable portion of the defenders were " Zarps."

But even though the enemy were not in position in strength, the infantry advance was too premature. The leading brigade, after it had occupied the kopje on its right, should have halted and left the C.I.V. to discover if the final range was held. There was no necessity to expedite the advance. It was a sheer waste of life to expose infantry across 2,000 yards of open when you knew that the mounted troops would shortly come into action in the rear of the enemy's position. At 2 30 the enemy brought a field gun into action from the rear of their left. It burst shrapnel over the hill held by the Lincolnshire



ROUGH SKETCH MAP
OF THE
ENGAGEMENT AT KAREE
ON MARCH 29

Regiment and K.O.S.B.'s from about 2,500 yards. The ranging and timing of this fire were good and were responsible for many of the casualties. One burst killed five men in the K.O.S.B.'s and wounded several others. A field battery was detached to the right to check the fire of this gun; but the officer commanding attempted to take his guns up the side of a steep slope, and it was more than teams and drag ropes could do. Thus he put his battery out of action for the day. The other two batteries moved up to the centre of the line and burst shrapnel over the bush-cover above the railway cutting. But their practice was not good. They never seemed to find the spot where the enemy's riflemen lay ensconced. Only once did I see a movement on the enemy's position as a direct result of a shrapnel-burst. At 2 50, although there was still no sign of the cavalry, the right of General Wavell's Brigade advanced to support the left of the leading brigade, every battalion of which had now become merged in the firing line. The supports advanced 100 yards, then halted, and lay down. The whole plain seemed alive with dust-puffs. But, though men dropped here and there, the rifle practice of the enemy was execrable. There was a considerable deadlock until 3 10, when two more battalions reinforced from the left. These battalions were marched across the front of the enemy's main position at a range of about 1,800 yards—a mad proceeding, but one which was not so much punished by the enemy as might have been expected. The East Lancashires tried to press forward to the assault of the table kopje, but the short-range fire from the scrub was too heavy. Thus the deadlock continued. An infantry division extended, lying down in the open to receive an aimed fire from a commanding position, supported by an artillery which seemed disinclined to expend ammunition. To our great relief shortly before 4 we heard the sound of guns in the rear of the enemy's position. A few minutes later puffs of white smoke burst above the enemy's position. General French had turned their right, and his horse batteries were shelling them from their rear. The enemy's rifle fire stopped as if by magic, and they at once vacated their positions. Such is their fear of being taken in the rear that they did not even wait to cover their withdrawal from the kopjes. In the plain they unlimbered their three guns and fired a few rounds at the cavalry. But for the rest they retired in haste.

The day can hardly be called a success. The infantry attack was prematurely delivered, the cavalry were worn out and slow, and the mounted infantry never came up in time. The casualties in the infantry were out of all proportion to what they should have been. There were about 160, the K. O. S. Borderers losing the most heavily.

30th April 1900.

THE AFFAIR OF KOORN SPRUIT.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

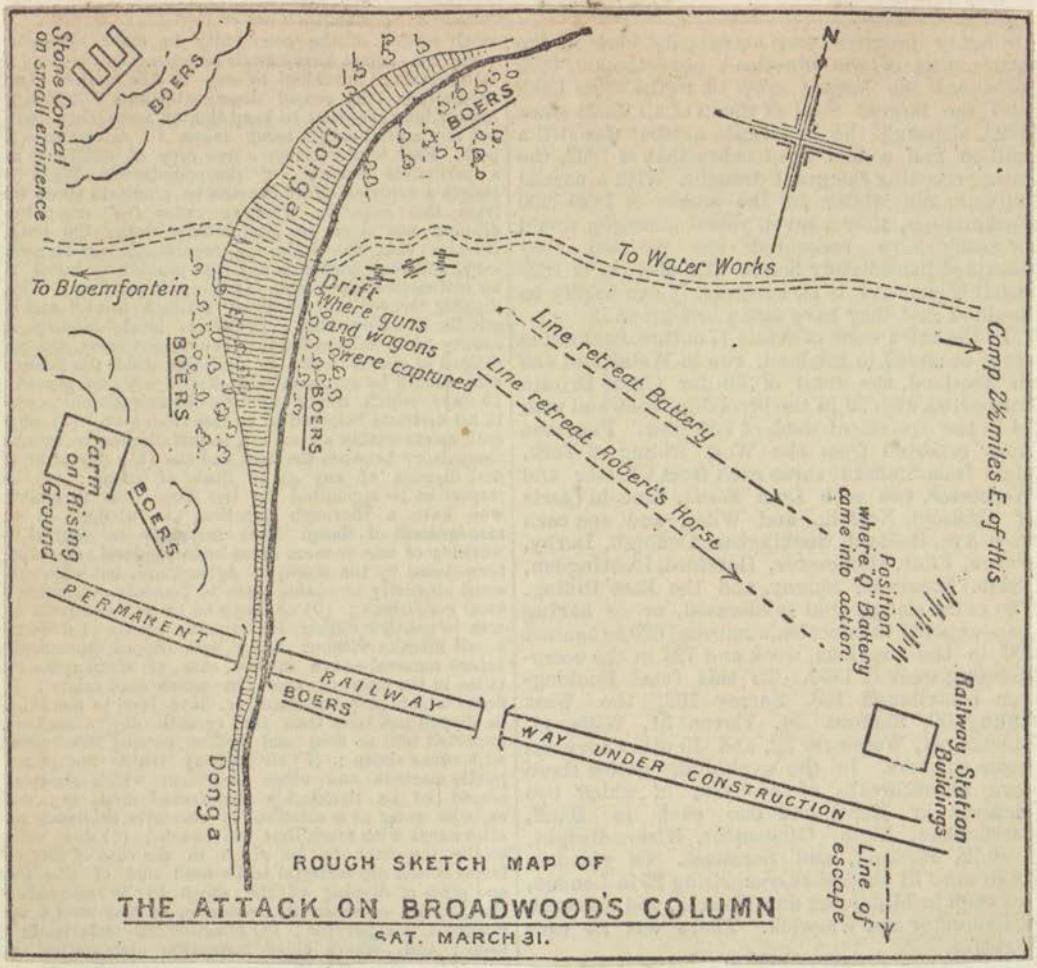
BLOEMFONTEIN, APRIL 4.

The end of the week in which Karee was occupied saw in the vicinity of Bloemfontein an action of a very different stamp. It will be remembered that General French, with Colonel Broadwood's Cavalry Brigade, had visited Thaba Nchu with the object of paving the way for the acceptance of Lord Roberts's proclamation to the burghers of the Free State. The country seemed settled, and the attitude of the farmers was pacific. Heliographic communication was secured with Maseru, and from the Basuto border it was learned that considerable bodies of armed Boers, with wagons, had moved north. These were believed to have been the broken commandos of De Wet and Olivier, and little account was taken of their action. General French and his staff returned to Bloemfontein, leaving Colonel Broadwood in command at Thaba Nchu. But the pacific atmosphere was soon to change. Colonel Pilcher pushed into Ladybrand and practically pulled a hornets' nest about the ears of the force. A Boer commando was at hand, Boer emissaries had been at work in the town, and as Colonel Pilcher vacated he was actually fired at from the compounds of houses of men who had a few hours previously tendered submission. Realizing that the district was up in arms, Colonel Broadwood sent information to headquarters and drew in his outlying force from the Flour Mills, preparatory to falling back upon Bloemfontein. The road between Thaba Nchu and the capital is important on account of the Waterworks, which are situated on the Modder and form part of the water supply of Bloemfontein. These works are a matter of 22 miles from the latter town. The Boers continued to mass in the vicinity of Thaba Nchu in such numbers that Broadwood did not consider it expedient to wait for reinforcements, but fell back from Thaba Nchu on March 30, determined to do the 35 miles into Bloemfontein in two marches. The same night Colonel Martyr's Mounted Infantry marched out of Bloemfontein to hold the Waterworks, General Colvile's Infantry Division following the next morning.

Colonel Broadwood, realizing the gravity of the situation in which his column was placed, made a forced march and encamped this side of the Waterworks. His baggage arrived about 9 p.m. on Friday night, he himself with his rearguard at 2 on Saturday morning. His force consisted of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade (10th Hussars and the composite regiment of Household Cavalry), " Q," " T," and " U " Batteries R.H.A. (formed into two six-gun batteries, " Q " and " U "), Rimington's Scouts, Roberts's Horse, Queensland and Burma Mounted Infantry. The enemy had been reported upon their flanks all through the day, and, anticipating that time was everything, Broadwood determined upon an early start on the Saturday morning. The camp was peculiarly situated. The force had crossed the Modder and lay in the open between two spruits adjacent to the half-formed embankment of the Ladybrand railway, under construction.

It will be interesting now to digress, for on this memorable Saturday the Boers accomplished one of the finest pieces of strategy which has marked the history of this war. If the scale of the operations had been greater and the affair had been more than a side issue in the campaign, Olivier and his advisers would have earned immortal fame. As soon as the Boer commandants realized that Broadwood was in earnest retreat and had " outspanned " his advance guard across the Modder, they conceived a scheme of cutting him off and surrounding him. The scheme was delicate in the extreme, as only a few hours remained for them to make their dispositions. But a perfect knowledge of the country and the only route which was open to the column, and an energy which was amazing in an enemy usually so apathetic, rendered the plan feasible. The Boers knew that three miles west of their camp Broadwood's transport must cross Koorn Drift. They knew the topography of the country, and felt certain that if they were in position to shell the camp at daybreak the baggage would be pushed on, while the bulk of the force remained to guard the rear. Consequently the 400 best mounted men were selected and ordered to strain every nerve to reach Koorn Drift before daybreak. The four guns with the commando were double horsed and despatched with 1,000 mounted men to follow the column and to be in position as soon as day should break. The remainder were to follow, at the best pace they could get out of their horses, in order to reinforce as the morning advanced. The dispositions were admirable in design and perfect in execution. The 400 men were in Koorn Spruit before daylight, lining 1,000 yards of nullah and railway earthwork. The four guns were in position on the rear and flanks of Broadwood's camp, and skirmishers were within rifle range at daybreak.

At 6 a.m. the enemy opened with rifle fire on the encampment and the force was ordered to " saddle up." Fifteen minutes later, just as the first of the Boer guns opened on the mass, the baggage train led out of camp. They passed out, taking the only road open to them—namely, the one which led to Koorn Drift, the two horse batteries followed the baggage with the object of taking up a position on the high ground on the far side of the drift, to cover the rearguard as it fell back. The camp was about three miles from the drift, which, as was previously pointed out, lay in the point of a rough angle made by the embankment under construction and the bush-



grown sluit which converged towards it. Thus when the Boers were in position, lining the sluit and the embankment, the position became like the base of a horse's foot. The Boers were the metal shoe, our own troops the frog. At the point where the drift cuts the sluit the nullah is broad and extensive. The Boers stationed at this spot realized that the baggage was moving without an advanced guard. They were equal to the situation. As each wagon dropped below the sky-line into the drift the teamsters were directed to take their teams to right or left as the case might be, and the guards were disarmed under threat of violence. No shot was fired. Each wagon in turn was captured and placed along the sluit, so that those in rear had no knowledge of what was taking place to their front until it became their turn to surrender. To all intents and purposes the convoy was proceeding forward. The scrub and high ground beyond the drift was sufficient to mask the clever contrivance of the enemy. Thus all the wagons except nine passed into the hands of the enemy. Then came the artillery, in battery column, "U" Battery leading, with Roberts's Horse moving parallel to their left. Just as the leading battery was arriving the first shot was fired and the presence of the enemy disclosed. Report has it that Sergeant Green, of the Army Service Corps, was the first man to fire. Called upon to surrender, he threw his revolver loose as if to tender it to the Boer at his horse's head, and then shot him dead. He was himself shot a moment later. This incident, if true, must have taken place just as "U" Battery came level with the drift, for the gunners' first knowledge of the real state of affairs was when armed Boers stood up all round them shouting, "You are prisoners—you must surrender!" The drivers were ordered to dismount and leave their teams. The men had no alternative but to obey. Major Taylor, commanding "U" Battery, with great presence of mind, was able to slip away, seize a

loose horse, and inform the officer commanding "Q" Battery of what had occurred. At that moment Roberts's Horse rode up to the drift. An old Dutchman stood up and waved them to move off down into the drift and there to surrender their arms. Major Dawson grasped the situation in a moment. Standing up in his stirrups he shouted, "Fours about! Gallop!" The files swung round. The drivers of "Q" Battery whipped round their teams. There was a temporary pause and then the storm burst. The enemy saw that nothing further was to be gained by silence. Every bush on the donga bed, every foot of the railway embankment, every yard of the kopjes above the drift spouted Mauser-fire. The drift became a pandemonium. The captured gun teams stampeded hopelessly, mingling with loose mule spans and dismounted Boers, while four guns of "Q" and one of "U" thundered back 1,000 yards to the tin buildings, destined some day to be Koorn Drift Station. Roberts's Horse went with them, a wild broken mass taking magazine fire in the back. The tin walls were no cover from the fire which now swept the flat, but they marked a term to the stampede. "Action rear!" came the clear, calm order. The mad pace checked, the guns seemed to divide automatically from the limbers. The teams and wagons disappeared behind the station buildings, and "with shrapnel at 1,100 yards" the epoch of our defence began.

Roberts's Horse and the mounted infantry rallied. The "Number threes" hurried led horses into a fold in the veldt, and as the guns opened a scattered line of brown skirmishers were answering the continued crackle fed by Mauser magazines. But the punishment had been severe. It had taken one minute to cross that 1,100 yards. That minute had sown the veldt with little mounds, which, if some had not still been moving, might have been ant-heaps. Riderless horses and dismounted men were still loose upon the open. But the battery—what was left of it—was in action. Roberts's Horse was supporting. The supreme moment had come, the force had rallied, and Broadwood was equal to the occasion. One misjudged order, one mistaken gesture, and all would probably have been lost. But no mistake was made. The Household Cavalry and the 10th were sent to clear the nullah from the flank. Rimington's Scouts and the mounted infantry were each directed to positions. The force was to break out from its left rear in retirement, to rising ground, which, if reached, would be defensible.

The discipline of British gunners under fire has often claimed the admiration of the world. The fighting of "Q" Battery is another instance of how devotedly guns can be served to save the situation for all arms. Surrounded by a semi-circle of marksmen, the gunners stood to their guns. Man after man, horse after horse, dropped, until each unit was surrounded by a little mound of slain. Three men were loading, laying, and firing a gun—then two, and then a single man—in one case an officer alone. But the end was gained. When the order came for the guns to retire ten men and one officer alone remained upon their feet, and they were not all unwounded. The teams were as shattered as the gun groups. Solitary drivers brought up teams of four—in one case a solitary pair of wheelers was all that could be found to take a piece away. The last gun was dragged away by hand until a team could be patched up from the horses that remained. As the mutilated remnant of two batteries of Horse Artillery tottered through the line of prone mounted infantry covering its withdrawal the men could not restrain their admiration. Though it was to court death to show a hand, men leaped to their feet and cheered the gunners as they passed. Seven guns and a baggage train were lost, but the prestige and honour of the country was saved. Five guns had been extricated. The mounted infantry had found a line of retreat and total disaster was avoided. But the fighting was not over. The extrication of a rearguard in the front of a victorious and exultant enemy has been a difficult and delicate task in the history of all war. In the face of modern weapons it is fraught with increased difficulties. For two hours Rimington's Scouts, the New Zealand Mounted Infantry, Roberts's Horse, and the 3rd Regiment of Mounted Infantry covered each other in retreat, while the enemy galloped forward and, dismounting, engaged them, often at ranges up to 300 yards.

Having extricated the main portion of his force Broadwood set himself to attempt the recapture of his lost guns and baggage. He brought his skeleton of two batteries again into action and faced his little force about. Though he was not aware of the fact at the time when his guns were finally in action, the regiment of mounted infantry, the division of infantry which had come out to reinforce him, was behind Bushman's Kop not four miles away. If the brigade division of artillery belonging to General Colvile's Division and the mounted infantry had been pushed forward between 10 and 11 o'clock that Saturday they could have prevented the enemy from removing the captured guns and wagons. But no forward move was attempted until 2 in the afternoon. By that time the enemy had utilized the time to remove all the wheeled prizes from the scene of the attack. That night they destroyed the Waterworks.

1st May 1900.

WITH GENERAL BRABANT'S FORCE.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

WEPENER, APRIL 1.

After about a fortnight's experience of the defeated and surrendering colonial rebels and of interpreting their pitiful, evasive, and lying statements, the excursion of the Kaffrarians under Major Cuming to occupy portions of the adjoining Free State came as a distinct relief. Instead of cringing, almost abjectly servile men, endeavouring by all means in their power to evade the consequences of their misdeeds, who only under severe cross-examination admitted that they had ever even possessed, still less used, weapons against her Majesty's troops, men were met who frankly confessed themselves sick and tired of fighting against us; men who looked us straight in the face and admitted they were beaten, and who only asked fair treatment and expressed their willingness to accept even the formerly hated English "yoke," of the weight of which even the colonial rebels were fain to confess their entire ignorance. I have in my last letter described the occupation of Rouxville. The great majority of the farmers in the district deserted their Commandant Olivier in his retreat from near Aliwal North and only required notice to begin surrendering their arms and ammunition. Commandant Olivier appears to have had very hard work to maintain a presentable force in the field even at Stormberg, if, as is reasonable, the enormous sheaf of telegrams sent by him to the Landdrost of Rouxville with reference only to deserters be taken as evidence. His task must have been heroic but quite unavailing, to judge from the same source, when the tide began to turn and the not too enthusiastic rebels began to desert his standards. Frank-looking and sturdy and independent in manner as most of the men giving in their arms and ammunition undoubtedly were, truthfulness again did not appear a shining point of their character. They delivered in enormous numbers of Dum-Dum bullets, soft-nosed bullets, many carefully split, and explosive bullets to be used with express rifles. When asked how they dared use such bullets, they calmly and unblushingly asserted that all of these bullets had been captured at Stormberg from our troops. The fact that the explosive bullets were much too large for the English military weapon was no difficulty to these inventive, imaginative people, and they continued to asseverate the truth of their statements.

Rouxville having been successfully swallowed and digested in two days, Major Cuming despatched 200 Kaffrarians under Captain Price, with a Maxim, on March 21 to occupy Zastron, a most beautifully situated village about 20 miles distant towards the Basutoland border. The village was reached the same afternoon, the Union Jack hoisted with a Royal salute, "God save the Queen" sung, and notices at once posted calling on all inhabitants to deliver up arms and ammunition the same evening. The justice of the peace, Mr. Steyn, is unable to speak or understand English, and, as English must, under English rule, be at least allowed equality with Dutch, his continuance in office was impossible. He freely recognized this difficulty and gave very cordial assistance to his successor. It is an undoubted fact that few Dutchmen have the instinct of loyalty to each other, and no sooner had we arrived at Zastron than several farmers proffered information as to the whereabouts of arms, stores, and cattle left behind by Olivier's commando. Small parties of men were promptly despatched with the informers to various farms to gather up the derelict goods, which the following day resulted in the arrival of considerable loot at Zastron. The farmers surrendering their arms appeared on the whole a very superior class of men, and one or two exceptionally fine old men, "Voortrekkers," came in. They were very cordial, but regretted the necessity for surrendering the elephant guns and matchlocks of their boyhood. Some curious old specimens, over 100 years old, were delivered up. The old men were treated with marked courtesy, which they reciprocated with the manners of a bygone day, that formed a marked contrast with those of their sons and grandsons. It is one of the most remarkable points about English government in this country that Dutchmen, as a whole, with whom individual Englishmen get on with the greatest ease, have never been really got hold of by the rulers. The problem of future government is very complex, undoubtedly; but sympathetic, wise rulers should not find it insuperable after a little time has allowed blood to cool. The union of the races has already made great strides, so far, it must be said, with the result of absorbing the English and turning them, even in the first generation, into Dutchmen, who frequently cannot speak or understand a word of English. The tide may, however, in present altered circumstances, be expected to turn, now that all hope of a Dutch South Africa has been shattered.

A dinner-party at Zastron on the evening of our occupation may be mentioned as illustrating the extent to which the races are already blended in some parts of the Free State. The party comprised

Captains Price, Percy Farrar, your Correspondent, and our host, an Englishman (the son of an English officer killed at Waterkloof in 1850) ; his son, who had been fighting against us at Aliwal, and was engaged to a Dutch girl ; a good-looking young Dutchman who had deserted from Olivier, engaged to an English girl ; one Dutch lady, married to an officer in the Cape Police ; another, the wife of an officer in the Diamond Fields Horse ; a third, married to a man still with Olivier's force ; a fourth (English), engaged to a Dutchman still fighting against us ; while a fifth, with a very Dutch name, claimed English nationality with extraordinary fervour. The Queen's health and success to British arms were given by the host and drunk with acclamation, notwithstanding the composite character of the party. A very unpleasant feature of the war is that so many Englishmen of full blood have been fighting against us. True, most of them are, either by birth in the Free State or by subsequent acceptance, burghers of the State, and so might be compelled to take up arms. Considerations of property, situations, &c., seemed to have weighed with many Englishmen, who, living so close to the border, might have escaped such a painful alternative. It is to be hoped that most Englishmen would have preferred, like those in the Transvaal, to sacrifice everything rather than be guilty of such conduct. Already it is a matter of common talk among English officials who threw up their posts in the Free State and left the country that the Englishmen who retained their positions are being re-engaged by Lord Roberts in the service. An engineer, formerly a high official in the Cape Government Railway, was engaged by the Free State Government, when the State took over the working of the railway, as general manager. He elected to retain his position on the outbreak of war, is said to have designed the Boer intrenchments at Magersfontein, and certainly lent the Republic all the aid possible against his own countrymen. The locomotive superintendent is another instance. Their sacrifice of their country to their immediate pecuniary interests can only rouse the scorn of every rightminded man, and it is to be hoped that the rumour of Lord Roberts's engagement of such men is incorrect. Rewarding disloyalty and neglecting the loyalists are not the methods which commend themselves to Englishmen, and the mere rumour has caused very lively indignation.

The pacification of Zastron proceeding satisfactorily, I returned to Aliwal North in time to see Sir Alfred Milner review about 1,500 men of the Colonial Division. The High Commissioner expressed himself as delighted with the appearance of the men, who marched and subsequently rode past in splendid style. The condition of the horses after very severe work also came in for favourable notice, and Sir Alfred congratulated General Brabant and his officers on the very valuable services so far performed by the Colonial Division. With the High Commissioner's visit to the lately disturbed districts the suppression of the rebellion in the north-eastern districts of the Cape Colony may be regarded as accomplished. So far as can be learned, the invasion of the Cape Colony from the Free State had formed part of the plan of campaign formulated at Pretoria and Bloemfontein, chiefly for the purpose of gaining recruits. The initial British successes at Talana Hill and Elandslaagte, however, made the Republican leaders cautious. Only after repeated efforts made by prominent colonial Dutch, some of whom are fortunately in prison, was Commandant Olivier induced to cross the Orange River into the Cape Colony. Then began an incident which for some time threatened British supremacy in South Africa. Practically every man of Dutch blood, willingly or unwillingly, took up arms in the districts occupied against a Government which had sinned only in being too liberal to them. Partly through good luck, partly owing to the entreaties of members of the Cape Ministry, awake too late to the danger they had scoffed at, the tide of rebellion did not spread. The visit of a Boer commando, however small, was at all times sufficient to cause a rising, but the courage of the Boer leaders failed them. The enormous reinforcements arriving and advised as coming from England and the colonies effectually gave them pause. They found to their surprise that 40,000 soldiers were something more than a breakfast for a few Dutch heroes. Meanwhile the rebels had a gay time in the country districts where their actions could not come under the notice of their magistrates, some of whom behaved very well. They ravaged and devastated the farms and houses of Englishmen, stole their stock, and in many cases behaved more like brutal Cossacks than Olive Schreiner's bucolic angels. In Aliwal, Burghersdorp, Barkly, and, at first, during De Wet's reign as Landdrost, in Dordrecht, the lives of English men and women were made a misery to them by the tyrannical hectoring bullies in office and power, whose manners were only too faithfully copied by many of the common men. At length Cronje's capture and the advance of the Colonial Division disheartened Olivier, and a general retreat was ordered. Then the cry of "Huis toe" was raised, and the rebels scattered like sheep for their homes. Those of them met by our troops were in a very humble and contrite frame of mind and raised their hats in greeting to every passing trooper, so that by proxy the ill-used English colonials did get a small revenge. Received with ill-deserved clemency, the rebels were given their liberty and sent to their farms to await the day of reckoning.

The occupation of Wepener having been determined upon, a small force of 1st Brabant's Horse,

consisting of two squadrons under Captain Goddard, was despatched from Aliwal on March 26 for that purpose. Bushman's Kop was reached on the morning of the 29th with the wagons, when news was received that the Boers were falling back from Ladybrand in the direction of Wepener. After consultation it was decided to leave the wagons with a small guard, to send back for reinforcements from Rouxville, and to advance on the town, 24 miles distant, with stripped saddles. Wepener was reached at 5 30 p.m., and a very different reception was met with from what had been encountered elsewhere. Sullen, bitter, and insulting in their demeanour and remarks, the male inhabitants gathered round to see the Union Jack hoisted. One brave young gentleman, who had, however, the good fortune to be the brother of a doctor and had evaded commando service with a medical certificate, remarked, in very audible voice, "How they would run if 50 Boers were to come," and was put under arrest. Feeling became even more pronounced when "God save the Queen" followed the hoisting of the flag, and a row was with some difficulty avoided. The doctor apologized for his brother, however, who also developed humility and was released after a severe warning. The Landdrost, Mr. Colin Fraser, who was very polite and dignified, but absolutely uncommunicative, declined to accept office or to disclose where the Government books had been hidden. His assistant, Mr. Gregorowski, a nephew of the Judge of the Rand raid prisoners, also refused office. All documents of interest had been most carefully removed from the Government offices, and Mr. Colin Fraser had successfully performed an evident labour of love in throwing every possible difficulty in the way of the occupying officer. A very bitter partisan, Mr. Fraser had taken a prominent part in commandeering, and in circulating President Steyn's counterblasts to Lord Roberts's proclamations he had addressed most stimulating speeches to the burghers who were leaving to join Olivier. It was therefore decided that so able and dangerous a man was better absent from a town held by so small a force, a town and district in which he evidently had enormous influence, and Mr. Fraser was accordingly sent down on parole to report himself to General Brabant at Aliwal North. Meanwhile the usual proclamations and notices had been issued, and guns and ammunition began to come in. Fully half of the inhabitants, however, were with the enemy, and most inferior and damaged rifles were handed in. The following day Captain Goddard had telegraphic communication restored with Mafeteng, and a very welcome reinforcement of a company of Royal Scots M.I., under Captain Steele, arrived. Advices of warning were received all day from Basutoland as to movements of the enemy in our direction, and urgent representations were made to Aliwal North as to the necessity for a strong force to hold the town and Jammersberg Drift Bridge, three miles distant, over the Caledon. The country on the Wepener side of the bridge does not lend itself to defence, and the only strong defensible positions, requiring a large number of men, lie from three to four miles beyond the bridge. During the 30th a considerable number of Boers came in, but they all took their cue from the Landdrost, Mr. Fraser, and were difficult to deal with. Argumentative, disinclined to take the required oath, wanting in many cases payment for rifles surrendered, they required delicate handling.

On the 31st a welcome and most important arrest was made—that of H. D. Viljoen, of Aliwal North, who had accepted office as Field Cornet from the Orange Free State Government. He was examined, and, after being warned, made the usual exculpatory statement, alleging *force majeure* as the only reason for his actions. He was a most active commandeering officer in Aliwal and a bitter persecutor of English men and women. On his committal to prison the miserable fellow cried like a child. This morning the Dutch parson requested to be allowed to see Viljoen, and I was requested to supervise the interview. After a short address, the reading of a portion of the Bible and a prayer, the minister took his departure, but was requested to come again by the emotional rebel, who said he was much concerned about the question of his salvation. If but a fractional portion of the statements made against him at Aliwal be true, Mr. Viljoen has indeed reason for his uneasiness. His arrest, peculiarly enough, was brought about by two English troopers in Brabant's here, whom he had commandeered in Aliwal. They had fled in the night and made their way safely to Queenstown, where they joined.

The occupation of Wepener with so small a force was quite a dashing feat. To bring a force 85 miles in two-and-a-half days with only one horse knocked up was very creditable to Captain Goddard and his officers and men. The importance of the position, to aid in bottling up Olivier's force, is very great, and, held by 2,000 mounted men with guns, should lead to a very considerable dwindling away of the Boer forces. Lord Roberts's clement proclamations have undoubtedly eased the military task considerably, but in a district like Wepener, where the majority of the people are either combatants or combative, it seems somewhat too lenient and easy that our enemy should leave his wife, family, and stock to be policed and guarded by our forces while he continues fighting till he has had his fill of it. Surely some date should be given before which all owners of property, &c., should return to their farms, failing which forfeiture of both should ensue. The penalty would never have to be inflicted. Every man would be on his farm attending to his business before the stipulated

date. The difference in the treatment of the Boers by Lord Roberts and their treatment of our English farmers in the Cape Colony excites great indignation among officers and men in the Colonial Division. Summary methods would be more to their taste, and every farm passed unlooted, the owner of which is still fighting, causes bitter remark.

3rd May 1900.

THE TREATMENT OF REBELS.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MIDDELBURG, APRIL 4.

In common with many other centres of population in the Colony and Natal, Middelburg held a vigilance committee meeting yesterday at noon. To do so where three-quarters of the population is actively antagonistic to the objects of such meetings requires a little management. An out-of-doors mass meeting is out of the question; equally so is a public meeting under municipal management—first, because three-fifths of the municipality would oppose the calling of such a meeting; and, secondly, because the result would probably be the rejection of the resolutions supporting the home Government and the High Commissioner, and possibly the carrying of very different resolutions. A meeting of loyalists was arranged by private invitation, the loyal farmers being advised by post. Every known loyal man in the village was informed, and the result was that 80 attended. Had the meeting been arranged for the evening possibly 120 might have been gathered together. The meeting was most enthusiastically loyal, and certainly the most satisfactory meeting, politically speaking, that has been held in Middelburg for 20 years at least.

The moderate Dutch Afrikander in this district is still sitting on the fence. Firmness in dealing with rebels would have a wonderful effect with them, making them turn loyal. As it is they look upon leniency as weakness and a mistake. They argue that they might just as well talk disloyal and keep in with the more forward of their own people if they are not to be punished for it as to speak up for the Queen's Government and for the British people, whom in their secret hearts they have a sneaking affection for and admire, and suffer social ostracism amongst their own people. There is no social stigma attaching to rebellion amongst the Dutch Afrikanders of this district, and if there is anything like a general amnesty indulged in rebellion may become to be looked upon as a virtue. Our fellow-townsman, Mr. N. F. de Waal, M.L.A. for Colesberg, is making political capital out of this. He is posing as the rebels' friend, and attended all the preliminary inquiries at Naauwpoort. He tells the people here that he was instrumental in setting free 17 out of 20 who were arrested, and he has this morning left for Burghersdorp, where he says he has 100 rebels to defend. He is looked upon as the defender of the rebel, therefore a great and good man.

The argument used in favour of leniency to rebels by the conciliators is generally that, if they are otherwise dealt with, there will be trouble again in a few years' time. If this argument succeeds, and if great leniency is practised, there is no doubt that in districts such as this the reason will be given that the fear of trouble in the future was the true cause. "The threats of the Bond," they will say, "have succeeded; England is afraid of what the colonial Afrikander can do." It may be argued that every intelligent man knows better, but we are not dealing with intelligent men, but with ignorant men, who are kept in a state of ignorance and misled by their natural leaders. Every intelligent man might have been supposed to know that magnanimity after Majuba was magnanimity; but this did not prevent the great bulk of Dutch Afrikanders saying it was fear of the Boer. It is very essential, if Britain's power is to be brought home to the colonial Dutch, that all proved rebels should be punished in some way, and that the leaders in each rebel district should have exemplary punishment.

4th May 1900.

THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, JAN. 31.

The last few days have given to the townspeople of Mafeking such an array of minor incidents as have not fallen to our lot for some weeks. In itself the situation has not developed over much, and in relation to it there is absolutely nothing new to chronicle. The Boers are still investing us, in more or less the same numbers, and with but little difference in the strength of their artillery. Sometimes we miss an individual piece, judging from its absence that it has been sent north to reinforce the Dutch who are endeavouring to circumvent the movements of Colonel Plumer's column. However, these periodical journeys of the five-pounder Krupp, the one-pounder Maxim, or the nine-pounder quick-firing Creuzot do not last for any great time, and, as a matter of fact, Commandant Snyman has not permitted himself to be deprived of any one piece of artillery for much longer than a week.

The garrison here, jumping at conclusions in the absence of any definite news, finds in these disappearances some slight consolation, since we at once affirm that Colonel Plumer must have arrived at some point in which the presence of the enemy's artillery is urgent and necessary.

The gun which we would very gladly spare is the 100-pounder Creuzot, whose occasional removal from one emplacement to another is a source of much anxiety to everyone in the garrison. In the beginning of the siege—a date which is now very remote—Big Ben hurled its shells into this unfortunate town from an emplacement at Jackall Tree. In those days it was almost four miles distant, and we took but little notice of a gun which flung its projectiles from such a distant range. Those were the days in which we dug holes by night, and speculated rather feebly during the day upon the resisting power of the protection which we had thus thrown up. But the gun moved then to the south-eastern heights, a matter of barely 4,000 yards from the town, and of sufficient eminence to dominate every little corner. Those were the days in which we dug a little deeper and went round trying to borrow—from people who would not lend—any spare sacks, iron sleepers, or deals, so that our bombproofs might be still further strengthened. However, as time passed we even got accustomed to the gun in its new position, and, much as ever, there were many who felt inclined to promenade during lapses in the enemy's shell fire. Now, however, this wretched gun has again been moved, and, according to those who know the country, is within two miles of the town—a little matter under 3,000 yards.

Some few weeks ago Colonel Baden-Powell remonstrated with Commandant Snyman upon the barbarous practice of shelling those quarters of the town which rightly should be permitted to enjoy the protection of the Red Cross flag. The Boer leader promised to amend his evil doings, and did so by instigating a direct attack upon the women's laager. This has happened before, the enemy's fire upon those occasions causing no little loss of life, but the more recent outrage was aggravated through the Boers' deliberately proving that the attack was directed solely against the women's laager. Nine one-hundred pound shells burst within the precints of that place in the space of an hour, and in palliation of this there is nothing whatever which can be said, since the enemy had posted a heliograph station upon a kopje a few thousand yards distant from the point of attack. As the big shells sped across the town to drop within the laager beyond, the enemy's signallers heliographed their direction to the emplacement of Big Ben. Our own signalling corps intercepted the messages from the enemy, reading out from time to time the purport of the flashes. The first shell was short, and the enemy's signallers worked vigorously. The second was too wide. The third fell within the laager itself, the pieces piercing, when it burst, a number of tents. To this shot the heliograph flashed a cordial expression of approval.

In accordance with the fresh position of the Creuzot gun we have been compelled to extend our eastern defences in order that we may at least direct an artillery fire upon their advanced trenches. To the north-east and south-east we have put forward our guns and to the south-east have increased a detachment of sharpshooters, who from a very early date in the siege have occupied a position in the river bed. These men are only 200 yards from the sniping posts of the Boers, and, through the cessation of hostilities upon Sundays, they have grown to recognize one another. Sunday has thus also brought to the snipers an opportunity of discovering what result their mutual fire has achieved during the week, and, when from time to time a figure is missing, either side recognize that to their marksmanship at least that much credit is due. Among the Boers who occupied the posts in the brickfields were many old men, one of whom, from his venerable mien, his bent and tottering figure, his long white beard, and his grey hair, was called grandfather. He had become so identified with these posts in the brickfields that upon Sundays our men would shout out to him, some calling him Uncle Paul, others grandfather, and when the old fellow heard these remarks he would turn and gaze at our trench in the river bed, wondering possibly, as he stroked his beard, brushed his clusters of hair from his forehead, or wiped his brow, what manner of men those snipers were. He has been known to wave his hat when in a mood more than usually benign ; then we would wave our hats and cheer, while he, once again perplexed, would, taking his pipe from his pocket, slowly retrace his steps to his trench. The old man was a remarkably good shot, and from his post has sent many bullets through the loopholes in our sandbags. He would go in the early morning to his fort and he would return at dusk, but in the going and coming he, alone of the men who were opposing us, was given a safe passage. One day, however, as the Red Cross flag came out from the fort, we, looking through our glasses, saw them lift the body of grandfather into the ambulance. That night there was a funeral, and upon the following day we learnt that he had been their best marksman. For ourselves, we were genuinely sorry.

FEBRUARY 24.

The direct consequences of the present situation here in Mafeking are now, and for the first time in the siege, beginning to make themselves felt. When, after the inception of war, the townspeople here realized that they would be besieged and that the period of their beleaguerment was indefinite, the majority of the inhabitants

proposed to indulge in an experience which would be interesting and which would involve but little danger for themselves. Ignorant as we all were in those days of the conditions which might be expected to arise from a siege of a protracted character, few, indeed, were the thoughts which dwelt upon the advent of an hour when, to the unforeseen exigencies of the predicament of the town, would be added such trials and difficulties as would emanate from the economical use of the food supplies.

The least optimistic of us gave no consideration whatever to the possibilities of starvation. But the siege has run on ; it slipped from a fortnight into a month, from one month into three months, until, in a few days' time, we shall be entering the sixth month of the siege ; while now the garrison is reflecting upon a communication which Field-Marshal Lord Roberts forwarded to Colonel Baden-Powell, and by which we were instructed that Lord Roberts expected that we should hold out until the middle of May, a date which gives a further two months of siege.

If we were only just ourselves, merely the defenders of a town against an enemy, we could endure our privations, our short rations, and our condemned water with even greater fortitude. The men live hard lives in Africa, and their constitutions are strong, their nerves firm. But they hate, as all men hate, in all parts of the world, that their womenfolk should suffer, and here is the misery of our situation. A hard life is always hardest upon women, and, unlike the women of the Australasian colonies, and Canada, or the Western States of America, and all those places where women who lead a colonial life have no black labour to rely upon, and thus spoil their independence, the women in Africa are curiously incapable, delegating a multitudinous variety of domestic duties to the natives that they employ. Their sphere of daily activity, so far as it is in relation to their household, is reduced to a *minimum*. Without the feminine element in Mafeking the civil and military authorities would be in complete accord, but, with a pack of women and children in an insanitary laager, caring nothing for the exigencies of the situation, firmly believing that they are oppressed by design, if not deliberately maltreated,and rising up in their wrath to smite the colonel, the chief staff officer, indeed, the entire headquarters staff, or any military or official unit, the worry and annoyance caused to the garrison at large by their presence here is worse than anything else. Of course, one sympathizes in all sincerity with these unfortunate non-combatants, for they live amid conditions which produce and promote typhoid, malaria, and other diseases. Indeed, apart from the fatalities from shell and rifle fire, there is the list of those who have died from the hardships which they have had to experience. Strong men have dropped off from typhoid, women and children, contracting the same disease, or one which is similarly malignant, have been unable to bear up. It is peculiarly disheartening to the townsmen, as they stand to their posts in their trenches, to be compelled to ponder and to reflect sadly upon the fate which has befallen the wives and children of so many of their comrades, and which might at any moment strike down those members of their own family who are confined in the laager.

MARCH 8.

Less than three weeks has elapsed since I attempted to describe the position of affairs in the Mafeking brickfields ; but this short period has been fraught with events of no mean importance, in so much that the moment has come in which both sides must contest the supremacy of this position. It is we, in a sense, that are the interlopers, since from the beginning of the siege the south-eastern face of the town, where the brickfields are situated, has borne testimony to the presence of the Boer trenches. It was our misfortune to be unable to occupy such an important, but exceedingly exposed, line, since Colonel Baden-Powell had not the men at his command, much less the artillery, to enable him to include in the perimeter of our defences such sniping posts as these brick-kilns have from time to time afforded. By a very slow and cautious advance movement we have gradually introduced our own men into posts which were originally in the possession of the enemy ; very slowly we crept down the river bed, making our first stand at what is locally known as the Bathing Hole. We then proceeded, until, moving up the stream, we had seized a bend in the bank, which is now known as Currie's post. This may rightly be considered the embryo of our advanced earthworks, since from this spot we have thrown out trenches which have gradually entangled all the important brick-kilns within the net of our outlying defences. By a natural process, therefore, about three weeks ago, we had made ourselves secure up to a point which was barely 200 yards from the main work of the Boers. It was a warm corner, since the Boer trenches and forts were so situated that they could turn upon us a simultaneous fire from three quarters. We had some hope that our occupation of this position would induce the Boers to abandon their advanced trench, since we maintained a desultory sniping fire whenever the opportunity served. But they made no move, although they organized a determined attack upon our forts and trenches in this quarter on St. Valentine's Day.

In the light of recent events it would seem that the attack which they then made was the beginning of a scheme by which they had hoped to expel us from their immediate vicinity. From that day they have been abnormally active in their operations ; at various intervals they would shift their 9-pounder Krupp or their 3-pound

Maxim to a point from which they could conveniently shell and effectually hinder our fatigue parties in their labours. In the meantime, they had conceived their plan and, unbeknown to us altogether, were pushing it rapidly to its conclusion. From the manner in which we discovered the nature of their operations it might be said that chance is a much greater arbiter in our daily lives than we realize, for it was the veriest piece of good luck which gave us an inkling into what they were doing. For a few days we had been perplexed at hearing the sound of digging and picking just in front of our trench, and, while we were certain that the enemy had thrown out no new trenches, it seemed improbable that they could be strengthening those which they were already manning. It is often the unexpected which happens, and the solution of the noises which we had heard was simple. Sergeant-Major Taylor, in charge of the three pits which form our most advanced post, and which are known as Taylor's post, was looking out, when to his dismay he saw the figure of a man in a German uniform arise out of the ground at a point which seemed some 50 yards beyond what we had considered the end of the Boer trenches.

The discovery of the true character of the work upon which our enemy was engaged left little room to doubt that they were intending to sap our position. The intelligence was at once conveyed by telephone to headquarters, and until dusk the men in the advanced trenches were in a somewhat excusable condition of excitement. That night we ourselves threw out a counter-sap, extending it 100 yards, and at an angle which, when it was deepened sufficiently, would enable us to fire into their new work. The situation was rapidly becoming as interesting as any which has developed from the siege. Sap and counter-sap were separated perhaps by 80 yards, and so gallantly and vigorously did the enemy work that we could see them approaching yard by yard. It was impossible for us in the time at our disposal to do very much to stop them ; we could simply keep a look-out and drench their trenches with volleys upon the slightest provocation. It was useless to fire upon the natives working in the sap, since it was only possible to see the points of their picks as they were swung aloft, catching for a moment the radiance of the sun. Still they came on, and one night we knew that before dawn they should be into us. That night no one slept in the advanced trenches, and Inspector Marsh, who has very generously permitted me to stop with him for the past month in his quarters in the brickfields, visited the posts hourly. Between 2 and 3 we slept, and for a short space there was a perfect calm in our lines. At half-past 4 we stood to arms, to hear that the enemy had made contact with our trench. As we found this out, news was brought that the big Creuzot gun had taken up its position upon the south-eastern heights, and so commanded our entire area. The inevitable had arrived, and perhaps for a brief moment we were all a little subdued. As the sun rose Inspector Marsh, commanding the south-eastern outposts, under directions from headquarters, warned every man to take such cover as was obtainable while they moved into the advanced trenches. The Boers' shelling was magnificent. In the three holes which formed the advanced post there are half a dozen shelters made from corrugated iron. They are neither shell proof nor splinter proof, but they had been relied upon to protect the men from the sun. After the first shell, which fell between the Boer lines and our own, the enemy's artillery wrecked shelter after shelter. Within four hours 38 100-pound shells had been thrown into the circle of the south-eastern outpost defences, and there had been five casualties. Sergeant-Major Taylor had been struck by the second shell, and has since died, while another of the wounded has also succumbed. While the firing lasted the position was untenable, and we fell back from the sap into the most advanced of the holes. Here the situation rapidly became impossible, for the character of the outwork prevented any one from taking cover.

Despite the galling fire, the Cape Boys behaved with admirable courage and endurance, and it was only at the last, when three men in the advanced hole had been seriously wounded, that they fell back behind the bank of the second pit. It was there we waited, expecting every moment to see the Boers advancing down the sap. That they did not do so is one of those things which it is impossible to understand. In a little, when the gun had effectually driven us from the advanced hole, the enemy began to shell the forts in the rear, and as they did so the opportunity was seized to construct a traverse across the mouth of the sap. It was a work of infinite difficulty, but one which was accomplished successfully, despite the heavy fire which the enemy directed at this point. This accomplished, we stopped, and in a little while the Boer fire slackened. For a day and a night we were compelled to recognize that the enemy were in possession—although they did not use them—of the advanced hole and the sap which we had carried from it, but that was the limit of their tenure, for now we have recaptured it, and, at a moment when the Boers were not in occupation of the works, put a stop to any repetition of such a sortie from the Boer trenches by blowing up the connexion which we had made with theirs with dynamite. This effected, we rest content, and the situation in itself is little changed.

5th May 1900.

THE SECOND THREE MONTHS OF WAR.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, APRIL 11.

The Transvaal war is by no means over yet, but it is in a very different stage to what it was three months ago. The first three months of the war were months of failure and reverse. Ladysmith and Kimberley were invested, the Cape Colony invaded, our attempts to relieve Sir G. White and Colonel Kekewich and to check the spread of rebellion were all within the space of a single week repulsed with considerable loss both in lives and prestige. In Cape Colony the war had, since General Buller's departure, degenerated into a series of local conflicts, devoid of any unity of purpose, and after our reverses had become almost entirely defensive. The arrival of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener and the landing of a second army larger than the whole force originally thought sufficient to conquer the Republics mark the beginning of what may almost be reckoned a distinct and separate campaign. The new commander-in-chief at once proceeded to the task of organizing an effective field force and of concentrating it at a point where it could strike an overwhelming blow. The point selected was the open country between Orange River and Modder River stations along the line to Kimberley. From this point it was comparatively easy to march round Cronje's position at Magersfontein, relieve Kimberley, and, after destroying or dispersing Cronje's army, advance on Bloemfontein. The only alternative route for invading the Free State, that by Norval's Pont, was in every way inferior. It involved the crossing of a wide and rapid river bordered by steep banks, with practically no opportunity of outflanking the enemy; it did not necessarily secure the immediate relief of Kimberley, or offer the same opportunity of catching the enemy in a trap; finally, it was in virtue of the railway nearer to Bloemfontein from the enemy's point of view, and offered him every advantage of abundant supplies and rapid concentration, while from our point of view it was much further from the capital we intended to strike at. The first essential for the large force concentrated south of Modder River was that it should not be altogether immobile. A whole cavalry division was concentrated under General French, whose force was skilfully withdrawn from round Colesberg and substituted by the infantry of General Clement's brigade. Another division of nearly 3,000 mounted infantry was created by mounting companies taken out of the various infantry battalions. It is impossible to create good mounted infantry in three weeks, but in South Africa even moderate mounted infantry are to be preferred to unmounted. Such as they are the mounted infantry have rendered good service and have improved rapidly, and the division, which is now under General Ian Hamilton, is sure to give a good account of itself. Still more important than mounted men was transport. Both Lord Methuen and General Gatacre had a large wagon transport available, which they had not made much use of. All this and whatever else could be raised from every end of Cape Colony was swept together by Lord Kitchener. All the distinctions of transport—regimental, ammunition, ambulance transport—were done away with and swamped in a single general transport. For this Lord Kitchener has received full measure of abuse from regimental officers, from artillery officers, and from the doctors. But he effected a great economy in the number of wagons employed, without which the march to Bloemfontein might never have succeeded.

Lord Roberts's plan was to turn Cronje's position, relieve Kimberley, and then, if possible, surround Cronje in the Spytfontein kopjes. It all but succeeded. Cronje, unwilling to believe that British troops could ever march far away from the railway, and presumably uninformed as to the enormous ox and mule transport gathered between him and Orange River, remained practically inactive, contenting himself with detaching a small force in the direction of Prieska with the object of provoking a rising and threatening Lord Roberts's communications. But at the last moment, on January 15, when General French had given him the slip and entered Kimberley, he made a desperate effort to get away. But for Lord Kitchener's promptitude in changing the whole elaborate plan of campaign on the spur of the moment, and but for the splendid marching of the Sixth and Ninth Divisions, he would have made good his escape. As it was he was caught at Paardeberg on the 18th, and though Lord Kitchener failed to destroy his whole force on that day and lost heavily he left Lord Roberts a relatively easy task. From Paardeberg onwards Lord Roberts's army swept on to Bloemfontein. The width of front, the splendid marching of the infantry, the mobility of the cavalry and mounted infantry on the wings gave the Boers no opportunity to prepare for a stubborn resistance. Their most determined attempt, at Driefontein, very nearly led to the capture of Presidents Kruger and Steyn and their whole force. The Boers were thoroughly frightened. It was well that it should have been so, for if they had been bold enough to detach a commando, to let the army pass, and attack the defenceless transport which trailed a score of miles or more behind the column, the result might well have been disastrous. As it was, the feeding of the

army on the march was a tremendous task, and no small part of the credit of Lord Roberts's great march should fall to the share of Colonel Richardson, the supply officer. On March 13 Lord Roberts occupied Bloemfontein, from which President Steyn and his executive had fled so hastily that they had not even had the presence of mind to take away the cash and books at the banks.

Lord Roberts's successes paralysed Boer resistance everywhere else. General Clements, who had been temporarily driven back to Arundel after being forced to abandon the whole of the positions so laboriously created by General French all December and January, recovered ground the moment Cronje was invested, occupied Colesberg, and from there advanced slowly to the Orange River, unable to prevent either Norval's Pont or Colesberg wagon bridge from being blown up. On the east General Brabant's Colonial Division moved forward skilfully through the rebel districts, and after defeating the Free Staters and rebels at Labuschagne's Nek successively occupied Dordrecht, Jamestown, and Aliwal North. The Colonial Division has proved a distinct success, but its movements have been rather hampered by the fact that it has not hitherto been allowed full independence but been put under General Gatacre's orders. General Gatacre himself moved up to Bethulie Bridge, and, though unable to save the railway bridge, succeeded in saving the road bridge over which the Engineers have since diverted the railway line. The rebellion in the eastern provinces collapsed entirely with the withdrawal of the Free State commandos across the river. The rebellion in the west, which began by spreading with amazing rapidity and at one moment threatened to assume quite a serious aspect, was very promptly taken in hand by Lord Kitchener and General Settle, and a considerable force marched into the rebel districts from Hopetown, from De Aar, and from Victoria West. On March 19 the advance guard of Lord Kitchener's force occupied Prieska after some splendid marching, but very little fighting, and by the end of March Kenhardt had been occupied by Sir C. Parsons and Upington by General Settle. After the occupation of Bloemfontein the collapse of the Southern Free State was instantaneous—for the time being. Two days later General Pole-Carew took the Guards' Brigade down to Springfontein, where they met the advanced scouts of General Gatacre's force. Communication across Norval's Pont and Bethulie Bridge was rapidly restored by the Royal Engineers and the Railway Pioneer Corps by various temporary devices. General Clements marched his force through Philippolis and Fauresmith across an almost deserted country, arriving in Bloemfontein on April 5. General Brabant's force occupied Rouxville, Smithfield, and Wepener, while General Gatacre moved up to Springfontein and Edenburg. Everywhere the Free Staters professed their readiness to surrender in accordance with the terms of Lord Roberts's proclamation and brought in all the old and valueless rifles they could find. A general belief prevailed at Bloemfontein that the war was over as far as the Free State was concerned, and that though there might be some attempt at resistance at Kroonstad there would be no serious fighting this side of the Vaal. Detachments were sent out to distribute Lord Roberts's proclamation and receive surrenders, and all arrangements were made for 2,000 Basuto labourers to come across to Bloemfontein to assist repairing the railway. A halt was necessary in order to accumulate supplies, to get up remounts and winter clothing for the soldiers, and the Army thought that the halt might just as well be a rest. But the Boer is not an enemy one can afford to take rests with. The moment the Boers discovered that we were going to make a rest, that we had not even attempted to save the bridge over the Modder north of Bloemfontein, or sent an adequate force to guard the Waterworks to the east, they recovered from their panic. The commandos which had been hurrying northwards from Norval's Pont and Bethulie, anxious lest they should be cut off before escaping to the north of Bloemfontein, took breath, and, meeting other commandos coming down from the north, began to look round to see what damage they could inflict. On March 29 they engaged the Seventh Division and General French's Division at Karee. They had already dislodged Colonel Pilcher's small force from Ladybrand, and on the same day as the engagement at Karee a commando nearly 1,000 strong drove Colonel Broadwood out of Thaba Nchu, and on the following morning caught his convoy, a battery of horse artillery and a number of men of Roberts's Horse, in a trap at Sanna's Post. Our men behaved bravely, but the whole incident was very illustrative of the extreme cleverness of the Boer and of the extreme stupidity and want of alertness of the British soldier, whom no series of mishaps seems ever to teach the necessity of being wide-awake and thinking where the enemy are likely to be. On April 4, near Reddersburg, the Boers captured three companies of Irish Rifles and two mounted companies Northumberland Fusiliers, who were marching across country unaccompanied by any artillery. At the present moment the Boers, now perhaps 4,000 to 6,000 strong, have reoccupied practically the whole country east of the railway from Bethulie to Bloemfontein, have hemmed in a large detachment of General Brabant's Division at Wepener, and produced quite a panic about the safety of our communications.

The war in Natal has meanwhile been carried on entirely separate from the operations in Cape Colony and the Free State. General Buller, after his repulse at Colenso, instead of making good his initial mistake and occupying Mount

Hlangwane, which is on the south bank of the Tugela and commanded Colenso and the Boer positions immediately behind it, decided to make an attempt to force his way through to the west. After nearly a month's delay, necessary to rest his troops, now strengthened by the addition of Warren's Division, and organize transport, he marched across to Spearman's Farm and crossed the Tugela at Potgeiter's Drift with part of his force, while Sir C. Warren crossed a few miles higher up. But the movement was so slowly carried out that the Boers had time to dig trenches and to bring round most of their artillery. Nevertheless General Buller was all but successful ; Warren's Division had drawn out the Boer position westwards, and the capture of Spion Kop for a moment seemed to have decided the issue. The Boers themselves began trekking away. But, as at Majuba, they made one determined attempt to oust us from our position before retreating, and the attempt proved successful.

Ten days later, on February 3, General Buller made another attempt to force his way through a little to the east, but though he succeeded in occupying Vaal Krantz, he found that the position thus gained afforded no good opening for a further advance, and decided to recross the Tugela once more. But though thrice foiled General Buller was not to be beaten. He now returned to Chieveley and carried out the operation he ought to have carried out from the very first, and occupied Hlangwane by advancing on it from Monte Cristo on the east. In December that position was unoccupied and Hlangwane itself half-heartedly held, but in February it could only be gained by hard fighting. But in the meantime Lord Roberts's advance was doing its work in Natal. It was absolutely necessary for the Boers to withdraw a great part of their forces into the Free State. It would be unfair to General Buller and the troops who fought so stubbornly for a whole fortnight on end before making their way into Ladysmith to argue that the Boers were only fighting a rearguard action. There is no doubt that the 5,000 men or thereabouts who were left by General Joubert to dispute the advance to Ladysmith were meant to hold their positions if possible. At the same time it must be admitted that, but for the weakening of the Boer force to meet Lord Roberts's advance, the fate of Ladysmith would in all probability have been sealed. Since the relief of Ladysmith General Buller's force has been resting after three months of almost incessant fighting. The rest was a necessity both for Buller's own troops and still more for the Ladysmith garrison, in whose ranks famine, sickness, and fatigue had worked terrible havoc. What General Buller's next move will be is uncertain. The Boers still hold Natal north and east of the Biggarsberg, and it is possible that an attempt will be made to drive them out altogether. But it seems more probable that General Buller will direct his attention to co-operating more directly with Lord Roberts, either by trying to force his way through Van Reenen's or one of the other passes of the Drakensberg, or possibly even by sending a force through Basutoland into the eastern part of the Free State, thus avoiding the task of storming the Free State passes.

1st May 1900.

WITH DALGETY AT WEPENER.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

WEPENER, APRIL 7.

The position here, which in my covering note to last despatch I described as rather difficult, has become more and more acute within the last 48 hours. The rapid advance of the Boer commandos, leading to the retirements of General Gatacre's garrisons at Dewetsdorp and Smithfield, the former on Reddersburg and the latter towards Aliwal, account for the present hazardous position of the garrison here. Fortunately large reinforcements under Colonel Dalgety arrived three days ago, and the force here, though small for the size of the positions to be occupied, may confidently be depended on to give a good account of themselves. The troops here total about 2,000, all mounted men, composed as follows :—1st Brabant's Horse, under Major Henderson, 350 men ; 2nd Brabant's Horse, under Colonel Grenfell, 600 men ; Cape Mounted Rifles, under Colonel Dalgety, 400 men ; Kaffrarians, under Capt. Price, 400 men ; Driscoll's Scouts, under Captain Driscoll, 60 men ; Royal Scots Mounted Infantry, under Captain Steele, 80 men; Royal Engineers, under Major Maxwell, 20 men ; total, 1,910 ; with two seven-pounders, two naval 12-pounders, two 15-pounders, and one Hotchkiss quick-firer, throwing 12½lb. shell, and four Maxims, all under Captain Lukin, C.M.R. ; making, with gunners, in round numbers, about 2,000 men ; deducting butchers, bakers, cooks, &c., probably about 1,750 effectives, the whole force under Colonel Dalgety. The absence of General Brabant, who is cut off at Aliwal with his staff, is much regretted by all, the men having come to regard him as very lucky in all his operations.

General Gatacre's withdrawal and our virtual investment have again subjected the unfortunate farmers who surrendered their arms to commandeering. The treatment by the Boers of their compatriots is described as brutally severe,

shooting and flogging having been freely indulged in towards those who would not consent to do further service. The English are being, if possible, even worse treated. Several were shot, others tied to wagons, all of them assaulted, kicked, or whipped. One instance was cabled you of an Englishman who refused commandeering. Tied on his horse, he was taken off towards the Boer laager. One of the brutes in charge struck the helpless man on the back of the head with the butt of his rifle, knocking him insensible, and the Boers rode off, leaving their victim for dead on the ground. Recovering after some time, the poor fellow made his way home, and, accompanied by his wife and family, proceeded to Basutoland. A party of Boers noticing them crossing the Caledon River opened fire without success on the man, but, a number of armed Basutos approaching in threatening style, the Boers bolted. Our responsibility to the disarmed burghers is undoubted, and their case is really pitiable. Between two fires, pledged by their oaths to take no further share in the war, while they are forced to do so by their commandants, it will be small wonder if thousands of broken oaths have to be recorded later. The presence, however, of such men in great numbers with the enemy should be rather a source of weakness than of strength, as the majority would probably desert at the first chance. It is to be hoped that Lord Roberts will take immediate and effective steps to protect those unfortunates. The advance to places without sufficient men to hold them against any possible force and proceeding to disarm the people are clearly inadvisable and inhuman. The mere disarming is probably necessary from a military point of view, but the subsequent swearing-in of the burghers to abstain from further fighting, unless we mean to protect them from their own people, is distinctly cruel.

On the 4th inst. a rather amusing incident occurred. A German officer with German orderly advanced to one of our pickets with a white flag. Their message was for the officer commanding at that time, Major Maxwell, R.E., who was absent. Both messengers were carefully blindfolded and had to wait four hours in that condition as they refused to disclose their business to any one but the commanding officer. On Major Maxwell's arrival he apologized for his delay, but, as there was no house near to which he could conduct them, said that possibly the business could be finished quickly. The officer produced a letter in English to the following effect :—" I am here with a few thousand burghers, and in the cause of humanity to prevent such terrible slaughter as occurred in our last battle at Thaba Nchu I ask your immediate surrender. Banks, General." The major laughed and said there was no reply, and the messengers were led away. Before they had gone far Major Maxwell ran after them and said to the officer that he thought it possible that it was General Banks who desired to surrender, in which case he was willing to accept an unconditional surrender. This did not seem to the taste of the Germans, and they were taken away after a very unpleasant experience.

Acting on information supplied by Lieutenant Moorcroft, gathered from natives, Major Owen Thomas searched several farms for a hidden store of arms and ammunition, and at the third attempt found some four hundred new Martinis and a large quantity of ammunition. Owing to the difficulty of getting them away the entire lot and also those surrendered in town were destroyed, much to the grief of the native spectators.

The position to be held is very strong indeed against an attack from the north, north-east, or north-west, but from the south-west is more vulnerable. Major Maxwell, however, who is supervising the defences, has done all that is possible in that direction, and it will be a very strong force that drives the Colonial Division out. The importance of holding Wepener is fully recognized. The influence on the Basutos of an evacuation would be most disastrous. Meantime, as the Boers have not respected their line very rigidly and an attack on our position through Basutoland is not improbable, the Basutos have been demonstrating along the frontier in great numbers, which should have the desired effect of preventing any inroad. The Basuto police, who are frequently to be seen here, appear a most admirable body of men, while the scouting service given us by the natives along the border is very good and apparently quite trustworthy. Taking their lives in their hands, these Basutos travel about the country occupied by the Boers, carefully noting all particulars of numbers and positions of the enemy, and after dark repair here to inform us. If captured, as happened yesterday to one of my informants, they lie themselves free with an appearance of childlike innocence, or appeal to their Basuto nationality as a shield. The Boers are distinctly afraid of involving themselves with the Basutos, and this consideration usually causes the release of a captured spy. There has been some skirmishing daily, but so far the enemy has in every instance retired. An ambulance cart, with which Dr. Grey was, is this morning reported captured about 12 miles down the river, but details are still lacking.

9th May 1900.

OPERATIONS ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BOSHOF, APRIL 9.

The first blow against the small commandos of marauders round Boshof was struck on the afternoon of April 5 with signal success. About

10 30 a.m. a Yeomanry patrol reported the presence of the enemy on a kopje about nine miles east by south of Boshof ; and at 11 15 the Yeomanry under Lord Chesham, with the Kimberley Mounted Corps under Colonel Peakman and the 4th Field Battery, started in pursuit. There was, however, but little expectation of catching the Boers, who might certainly have escaped had their commander been more wary and expeditious. The " turn-out " of our men was quite a remarkable feat in itself. Their horses were all out at grass, and yet within 35 minutes after the receipt of their orders the troops were ready to start. Lord Methuen commanded in person, and shortly after 1 p.m. the enemy was found to be still in position on the kopje, from which he opened fire upon our scouts. Naturally the general was particularly anxious to ensure the capture or destruction of the entire party as an example to others, and in this case there was everything in his favour. It became almost immediately evident that the enemy had not more than perhaps 100 men, and measures for effectually cutting off his retreat could, therefore, be taken without any risk of danger from a counter-stroke. Lord Scarbrough, with Captain (Lieutenant-Colonel, Notts Yeomanry) Rolleston's squadron of Imperial Yeomanry was sent round by the left, whilst Peakman's Kimberley Mounted Corps proceeded by the right, with the result that the enemy's retreat was effectually prevented. Meanwhile the main body of the Yeomanry took up positions in front, and when everything had been reported ready the attack was commenced in earnest by the dismounted men.

Of this attack, inconsiderable as the operation may appear in comparison with many others, it is scarcely possible to speak in too complimentary terms. The Kimberley Mounted Corps had already a reputation, and might naturally have been expected to acquit themselves in a manner worthy of them. But the Yeomanry, upon the contrary, represented a corps that was practically untried, and some people, both out here and at home, had ventured to declare that they would prove to be of very little use, for a variety of reasons which it is now quite needless to recapitulate. The event, however, has proved these critics to have been false prophets. Not only did the Yeomanry show fine courage under fire, but they did their work throughout in exactly the fashion that should be followed in all operations similar to that in which they found themselves engaged. Full of dash and enterprise, yet taking advantage of every bit of cover and utilizing the general features of the ground to the utmost, they prosecuted a perfectly methodical advance, gaining ground steadily, and never yielding an inch that had been gained. In a word, the Imperial Yeoman has shown that he possesses, to almost the same extent, that eye for ground which renders our colonial troops as well as our enemies the Boers so formidable in both attack and defence. Even to those who already believed in the Yeomanry the fight brought a positive revelation, since the reality so entirely surpassed the most sanguine expectations. It must, of course, be admitted that a great share of the credit is due to Lord Chesham himself, whose personality represents a very strong factor. He has succeeded in earning the confidence of his men, and day by day has proved the justice of the good opinions gained. The Yeomanry believed in Lord Chesham up to the last few days, but now they swear by him, and Lord Methuen appears to entertain very similar sentiments. This war will not have been waged in vain if it results, as many believe will be the case, in the resuscitation of the Yeomanry and Militia forces. The latter have not yet had their opportunity for distinction in action, but if they show the same spirit under fire that they have exhibited under the hardships of long, trying marches, fearful weather, and bivouacs deep in mud we shall have good reason to be proud of them.

After about 3½ hours of steady progress the Yeomanry fixed bayonets and charged up the kopje, when the enemy promptly hoisted the white flag and surrendered. Then, in the same dastardly fashion that has already been so frequently followed, some cowardly scoundrel fired on our men with fatal result. The man was instantly shot down, but this furnishes only a sorry retribution for the murder of a gallant British officer thus treacherously done to death. It seems high time that strong measures should be taken to put down such iniquitous proceedings by denying quarter in the next case when a shot is fired by the enemy after capitulation. Our loss was slight in comparison with the success achieved, being only 12 killed and wounded, including two officers. Of the enemy, upon the contrary, not one man escaped, 14 being killed and wounded, and the remainder, numbering 54 officers and men, taken prisoners. Another party of Boers, or possibly a detachment of that captured, was observed to retire hastily upon the approach of our troops ; but Lord Methuen very wisely determined to devote his entire attention to such of the enemy as were actually within his grasp, and the runaways consequently made good their escape unmolested. Colonel Villebois, a French officer who is said to have been a valued adviser of the Boer leaders, was amongst the killed, and it is noteworthy that those under his command appear to have been chiefly Frenchmen and Hollanders. Probably the men whom we saw running away represented the genuine Boer element in the commando. The Boer is less easily entrapped than the European, for the simple reason that he will never submit the security of his line of retreat to the chances of

combat, unless the odds are at least ten to one in his favour.

The little action which has just been described, although insignificant in itself, has nevertheless considerable importance—first, on account of the complete success attending its results directly and indirectly, and, secondly, because it was the occasion when the Imperial Yeomanry were for the first time under fire.

At daylight on April 7, Lord Methuen, with the bulk of his force, marched to Zwartkopjesfontein Farm, about ten miles on the Hoopstad road north-east of Boshof. There was no opposition, the Boer commando which had been laagered in the neighbourhood having discreetly sought a fresh camping ground. It is very unlikely that the actual direction of our march could have been discovered by any of the numerous spies whom our system of making war encourages to throng the towns that we occupy ; but the fact that a move somewhere was about to take place no doubt transpired, and this was enough. Probably other commandos have also moved, although with less reason.

On the following day, at 6 30 a.m., the column was on the march towards Makemsfontein, which was reached in a couple of hours. It had been intended to proceed another six miles in the evening, but a telegram from Lord Roberts ordering our further advance to be postponed for a few days resulted in a retrograde movement to Zwartkopjes. This was, of course, regrettable for obvious reasons, but was absolutely inevitable in the circumstances. The grass at Makemsfontein could not have lasted two days, being at all times evidently poor, and at the present moment exceptionally bad ; whilst, even if the trees surrounding the homestead had been utilized, which would have been a pity, the supply of fuel would have proved equally inadequate for our wants. Thus, sorely against his will, Lord Methuen was compelled to retrace his steps to a more favourable camping ground, where, moreover, the tactical advantages were very superior to those afforded by any position about Makemsfontein. From what I can gather, it is actually intended to proceed to Hoopstad, but as to what will then be done I am hopelessly in the dark. Possibly we shall cross the Vaal River about Bloemhof, with a view to holding some strategic position blocking the road against the enemy retiring from Fourteen Streams ; but, as it appears that the Eighth Division has been diverted from Kimberley and Warrenton to some other destination, probably Bloemfontein, it is difficult to find any particular reason why the Boers at Fourteen Streams should retire at all until the resources of the entire district in which they are quartered have been consumed. This consideration leads me to think that, after all, my original prediction may be fulfilled and that we may strike northwards towards Christiana, crossing the Vaal at Zoutspan's Drift or some other point within easy distance of Fourteen Streams. Against this theory is the obvious fact that we have taken the eastern road to Hoopstad, *via* Makemsfontein, in place of the western, *via* Basberg, whence a good road runs directly to Christiana. But, upon the other hand, the road by which we are apparently about to proceed may have been selected with the special purpose of concealing the real intention. At all events, the actual plan of operations has been successfully kept dark so far as regards the troops themselves, and we can only hope that the enemy has been equally unable to comprehend it.

This morning the mounted troops under Lord Chesham made a reconnaissance in two bodies to the eastward—that under Lord Chesham in person taking the most northerly direction. I was informed that the latter had the better chance of meeting the enemy, and therefore I naturally elected to accompany it. My information proved to be correct, but nothing of any importance occurred. A small party of marauders was sighted, about four miles distant, when our scouts had advanced about ten miles from camp, but the enemy made off so rapidly that it was quite impossible to come up with them. The whole force returned to camp about 2 p.m., after having effectually searched or cleared a wide area on our front and right flank. The Boer farms as a rule are tenanted by the women and children, who freely sell chickens, eggs, and milk to the troops at remunerative prices, but the men are almost invariably absent. Whether the latter are serving with the commandos or merely keeping out of sight is not easy to say, but it is fairly clear that in either case it is fear of their friends rather than of their enemies that prevents the majority of them from resuming their ordinary avocations. Whatever Dr. Leyds or others may say, the average Free State Boer is anxious for peace—unless the statements made by prisoners are to be discredited wholesale.

Major Streatfeild, the Press censor, has just been round to tell me that two flying columns are starting at daybreak to-morrow ; the one, under General Douglas, taking a circuit of the country to the south-east and east of this camp, and the other, under Lieutenant-Colonel Mahon, commanding Kimberley Mounted Corps, proceeding from Boshof south and east of that town. The object of these expeditions is to disperse any roving commandos which may be prowling about with the intention of giving trouble upon the lines of communication. That such commandos exist is certain, but whether we shall have the good fortune to repeat the success achieved last week against that under Villebois is somewhat doubtful. The other commandos, warned by the fate of Villebois and his men, will certainly be very shy and hard to get near. Be all this as it may, the attempt is well worth making and good results are by no means impossible. General

Douglas will have with him the bulk of the Yeomanry attached to Lord Methuen's force, and these, under Lord Chesham himself, will assuredly do good work. I have decided to throw in my lot with General Douglas, although it is difficult to say upon what special grounds. The chances of both columns seem fairly even as to finding the enemy, but General Douglas, having a battalion of infantry in addition to his mounted troops, seems to have the better opportunities for striking hard in case any considerable body of the enemy should be encountered. Reinforcements from here could, moreover, reach Douglas within reasonable time, if required, from this camp, whereas, if Mahon meets a force too strong for him to deal with, he would, during the greater part of his proposed march, be compelled to retire before it, instead of holding it, pending the arrival of sufficient force to warrant the assumption of an active offensive.

9th May 1900.

THE REDDERSBURG AFFAIR.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

BETHANY, APRIL 10.

Having completed the march with General Clement's force from Norval's Pont to Bloemfontein, *via* Philippolis, Fauresmith, Koffyfontein, and Petrusburg, already described in a former letter, I proceeded on the 6th instant to Bethany, having heard that part of General Gatacre's force was engaged with the enemy near Reddersburg.

I was too late, however, to see anything of the action, as it had occurred on the 3rd instant; I was, however, able to obtain the most trustworthy information, which was as follows:—

A force of 400 men, comprising three companies of the Royal Irish Fusiliers and two companies of the mounted infantry, was despatched from the main body of General Gatacre's force at Springfontein with the object of occupying Smithfield, Dewetsdorp, and Reddersburg, and rejoining the main column at Bethany.

The small force had successfully and without opposition entered and occupied the two first towns, and was within four miles of Reddersburg, when it was engaged by about 2,000 of the enemy, with three guns. Absurd and foolish as it may appear, the British force was unaccompanied by artillery, and possessed but a very small reserve of ammunition.

The engagement took place at a point about four miles to the north-east of Reddersburg, the hill on which our infantry took up a position bearing the name of "Mostert's Kop."

The engagement commenced early on Tuesday, the 3rd of April, and fighting was continued until Wednesday morning, when, owing to the facts that the enemy had three guns and the British none and that the stock of ammunition had run out, the small force was compelled to surrender.

In the meantime General Gatacre with his main body and an advance guard of mounted infantry under Colonel Sitwell were marching from Springfontein to Bethany.

Arriving at the latter place early on the morning of the 4th, Colonel Sitwell heard firing in the direction of Reddersburg and, concluding that the small column was engaged, marched off at once to its assistance. Finding it useless to make a frontal attack, he made the attempt to get round the enemy's right flank, but was so heavily fired upon from some kopjes to the north-west of Reddersburg that he was compelled to retire and await the arrival of the main column, which arrived a few hours later. The small column at Mostert's Kop having in the meantime surrendered, General Gatacre entered and occupied the town of Reddersburg. Two Boers, part of a gang of about 15 who had come into the town after the engagement, were captured in the act of attempting to take an Englishman prisoner.

Towards the evening of the 4th inst., General Gatacre, with the whole force, finding that the enemy were in strong force in the hills to the north and north-east of the town, returned to Bethany station, where he is now encamped and holding the hills with infantry all round the plain on which the camp is situated.

From a trustworthy gentleman, a doctor practising in Reddersburg, who was very near at the time of the fight, I gather that the kopje on which the British took up position stands somewhat isolated on a plain of undulating ground. Dry watercourses or "dongas" cut up the ground near the kopje, and in these the Boers were able to advance under cover to within short range of the kopje and pour in a heavy rifle fire on the small force of men, who, being practically surrounded, could secure but very small protection from either rifle or shell fire.

This is another instance of how dearly our soldiers pay for experience. Here is a force of 400 men only, principally infantry, marching about in the enemy's country, occupying towns, as if they were simply changing garrison in time of peace, unsupported by artillery and with little more ammunition than that carried by the men themselves; as usual, giving the Boer no credit for smart intelligence, forgetting entirely that every man who has been allowed to retire to his farm, after giving in a rifle (not necessarily a "Mauser") is a part of the enemy's intelligence department; marching through the heart of the Free State where the bulk of the Boer army must at present be located, as if there were not one armed man in the country. On the lines of

communication, where artillery and cavalry can be moved quickly, but where no Boers are to be seen, there are numerous batteries; but, where the Boers are most likely to be met with, a small force of infantry is marched over 100 miles without artillery, and with only two companies of mounted infantry to support them.

11th May 1900.

THE SCENE OF THE KOORN SPRUIT AMBUSH.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BLOEMFONTEIN, APRIL 10.

On the evening of the disaster to Colonel Broadwood's transport at Koorn Spruit the Cavalry Division under General French moved out to Bushman's Kop (Bosman's Kop) and bivouacked for the night. General Colvile's Infantry Division had already established itself upon the Modder and was in possession of Watervall Drift, where it lay for the night. On the following morning the cavalry pushed on the three miles which had separated the bivouacs of the two commands, and, having found touch with Colvile's rear guard, threw out a screen to the south, with the indefinite object of reoccupying the waterworks. I say indefinite, because at the time the movements of the enemy were a mystery. They were believed still to be in possession of the Koorn drift and the ridges covering the waterworks. Riding on with the advanced scouts of Colonel Porter's brigade, we descended the slope where Colvile's Brigade Division had, three hours too late, so vainly come into action on the preceding day against the battery with which the enemy had covered the removal of their capture. The whole scene of the disaster lay in the hollow beneath us. The plain was alive with mounted Boers. The bush-grown donga was held. But, as the line of extended Carbineers advanced, the enemy rapidly fell back to the crest of the single rise which separates the waterworks from the tin-built station on the drift. The cavalry halted; they had found out all the information required for the moment. But I and my companion rode on to the farmhouse above the drift. An ambulance stood at the door and the Geneva flag waved ostentatiously from the thatch. The ambulance was our own, and was waiting to remove Captain Nix, of the Dutch East Indian army, who had been grievously wounded by a shrapnel. The ambulance corporal told us that the Boers had not been gone ten minutes, and that until our arrival they had all believed that they were prisoners. None of our own wounded were in the farmhouse; they were in the station buildings, close to where they had fallen in the valley, with Major North's field hospital. We then turned our ponies' heads towards the actual scene of the ill-fated encounter.

The farmhouse stood upon one of the two small kopjes which completely command the drift at 30 paces. On the other is a substantial sheep corral—a ready-made sangar. This, with the walls of the farmhouse, had been manned by the Boers on the night of March 30, and it was against this position that Q Battery finally directed its shrapnel fire. The drift itself is simply a natural widening of a nullah tributary to the Modder River. Both banks of this nullah are heavily overgrown with brush and willow. It is probably to this natural feature that the enemy, in the main, owed their success. The whole length of the depression afforded perfect concealment to riflemen lining the banks. As soon as we were upon the far side of the drift the whole history of the engagement lay depicted before us. The foreground was one mass of wagon *débris*. Spokes of shattered wheels, splintered tressel-booms, and shrapnel-riven frames lay in pitiful confusion. The wounded had been removed, but the bodies of the dead remained as they had fallen. A pitiful spectacle—Kaffir teemsters, whose devotion had been their death-warrant; a voorlooper still clinging to the leadrope of his span, which had shared the same fate as himself; artillery drivers, pilfered of their boots and buttons; dare-devil, irregular troopers, struck down in the first mad gallop from the death-trap. In that sad track could be traced each issue of that luckless morning. The splintered wagons and the bodies were pathetic evidence of the opening phase. The torn veldt and displaced earth showed clearly the pivot tracks of hastily turned artillery. The brown spots which broke the grass-grown rise to the station marked the trail of the retreat. The pile of horse carcases, still in their trappings, and the group of stiffened dead, gathered close by the tin buildings, too clearly disclosed the spot where in true devotion the gunners stood that the surprised troops might rally.

Silently we rode to the station to forget the scene. But the change was but one from passive to active pathos. The half-built verandahs could scarce give shade to the wounded, whom the surgeons were still busy dressing. Ninety odd mangled men lay within, and they were but some of the victims. The surgeon in charge received us with open arms, for we followed close upon the heels of the enemy. Half an hour before the Boers had been with them, dilating upon a prospect of Pretoria. So confident were the enemy that a veldt cornet had driven out two gaily-dressed ladies, who had insisted upon taking stock of the maimed. And it appears they

evinced more curiosity in, than compassion for, the nature of the wounds. Amongst the casualties was one burgher. He had received a full charge in the thigh, and he turned to me and said :— " You must stop this war ; think of the agony we have all suffered this night in here ! "

From the medical officers we learned many further details of the fighting. The enemy, it appeared, had suffered considerably from the shrapnel fire of Q Battery. They had not been prepared for the stout resistance which the column made. As one of them remarked, while in conversation with a wounded man, " We never dreamed that you would do otherwise than surrender. If you had cornered us in such a hole we should have laid down our arms ! " Thus the earlier shrapnel found them in the nullah. They themselves admitted to six killed and nine wounded. The captured Attaché suggested a heavier list.

Although one is lost in admiration for the splendid way in which the force rallied, shook itself clear of the entanglement, and then essayed to return to the offensive, yet one cannot but deplore the criminal neglect of the most primitive precautions in war which allowed a transport column and two batteries to blunder into such a *cul de sac*. In Tirah, where an enemy was never expected in front, the baggage of a brigade never moved without a battalion in front of it. An advanced guard of a single troop would have warned Broadwood of the danger imminent to his column.

Several important changes have been made in the composition of the force. Probably the most significant is the reorganization of the mounted infantry. A mounted infantry division has been formed which will comprise all mounted infantry sections of the Regular service and the majority of the colonial and mounted Volunteer corps. The total strength of the division, on paper, when it leaves Bloemfontein, will be about 11,000 men. The division is divided into two brigades, commanded by Major-General Hutton and Brigadier-General Ridley respectively, each brigade consisting of four corps. Batteries of Horse Artillery and 37mm. guns are to be attached. The whole will be under the command of Major-General Ian Hamilton. This command, adequately handled, should be destined to play a very important part in the coming operations. A division of 11,000 mounted infantry ! It is an army in itself. It is to be hoped that, in view of past experiences, it will now be used as mounted infantry. Just imagine the possibilities which will lie within the reach of the general who can transport in three hours 5,000 or more fresh infantry to any given point within a radius of 15 miles, or who, having beaten his enemy in an orthodox attack, can follow him up with an infantry brigade in condition to renew the attack ten miles in rear of the original position. But to gain these ends it must be handled solely as a force of infantry mounted. It must not be frittered away in patrols, observation posts, scouts, and advanced guards. These are the duties of cavalry. Hitherto we have spoiled good infantry as such by placing them upon ponies and using them as cavalry. Cavalry have their own special functions. If we try to adapt mounted infantry to similar functions, the whole *raison d'être* of mobile riflemen is missed. They cease to be infantry and become irregular cavalry, and bad at that. And this is why we hitherto have failed in our mounted infantry. The camel corps of the Nile campaign, which were mounted infantry, failed for a similar reason. They essayed to do the work of cavalry. The recent campaign gives a splendid instance. At the battle of Omdurman the temporary loss of the Horse Artillery guns was due to the fact that the camel corps was falsely placed. The rest of the infantry was in the zariba. The infantry mounted on camels should have been there too.

Until the mounted infantry and all connected with it realize that this branch of the service is mounted on ponies simply because the latter are a better and more mobile substitute for wheeled transport, they will fail in all operations in the field—will fail as they have failed hitherto. Not that they should not be good horsemen. They should, in this respect, be as carefully trained as the cavalry. They should be able to operate over any country in which cavalry can work. This is the sole reason for giving them ponies in preference to carts. The cavalry still remain the eyes and ears of the moving army. The infantry will still deliver the attack, be it feint or real ; but the mounted infantry will be the force—the fresh infantry—which, when matters balance, will decide the issue of the day, and, when it is decided, will render the condition of the enemy such that the cavalry may complete the ruin and yet be within reach of infantry support.

14th May 1900.

THE HALT AT BLOEMFONTEIN.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BLOEMFONTEIN, APRIL 20.

It is hard to believe that we are in military occupation of an enemy's capital. If it were not for the occasional sight of rough unkempt prisoners, marched under armed escort to the gaol, and the coloured populace, it would be easy to imagine that Bloemfontein was an English provincial town, the centre of an army manœuvre area. Business proceeds without interruption. Women and children, fashionably attired, many

on bicycles, parade the streets. Professional practitioners in morning dress make their visits. Newsboys with the evening papers jostle each other at the corners. There is no air of depression; no sullen bearing in the side streets. Outwardly the Dutch inhabitants of Bloemfontein seem to have accepted the occupation with equanimity. The large proportion of mourning frocks and the prevalence of khaki alone tell the story of the cloud of war. It is remarkable—more, it is wonderful—that so great issues should work so little change in a town. No other nation in the world could have occupied a foreign capital with so little ostentation, such order, or could have thus adapted itself, as it were, to the colour and the nature of the place.

But, in spite of external appearances, there is another side to the feeling in the town; an undercurrent which probably lay strong in the hearts of such men as were not English, when they buried their rifles in their gardens, to lean over their compound gates and raise their hats in salute of the passing battalions marshalling in the first flush of occupation; a feeling which doubtless grew, as, with hands in their pockets, they loafed in the market square to listen to drums and fifes of massed bands emphasizing the existing state, or watched pipers swinging out the rhythm of a military "retreat." As time wore on and the occupation brought no terrors, this feeling found opportunity to expand. The affairs at the Waterworks and Mostert's Hoek matured it. Then the authorities discovered that the original bearing of the burghers, when they were crushed by the rapidity of our movements, was deceptive. The forced delay and the small side-issues began to stimulate the feeling of unrest. Colonel Pilcher's little escapade at Ladybrand possibly did most to open the eyes of the authorities to the true state of affairs. It was subsequently to this that discoveries were made in Bloemfontein itself that a very considerable conspiracy existed which, though for the time being confined to supplying the enemy with information, had within it, under favourable conditions, both means and intention of active hostility. It is strange, but this conspiracy—you can hardly term it otherwise—seemed to centre round the German section of the community. German interests are considerable in the State. Throughout the war the Germans appear to have been our bitterest enemies. After the occupation of Bloemfontein the German residents availed themselves, under the cloak of neutrality, of the opportunity of furthering the disloyal movement of the burghers. The Consul was allowed to collect in his house the arms of such German residents as had not taken up the rifle in the cause of the Republics. There is strong reason to believe that the concession has been made use of to cover the concealment of many more rifles than would fall within this category. Undoubtedly a large number of arms have been concealed, by some estimated as high as 3,000. The constant discovery of hidden weapons tends to prove that this information is in the main correct. As long as cohesion remained amongst the partisans of the Republic, this state of affairs would have been a source of danger if the line of communications of the Army had been prolonged and the garrison of the town reduced to feed the waste in men occurring at the front. But to be forewarned is to be forearmed, and the recent discoveries have resulted in a wholesome deportation of undesirable residents from the town.

But, although the delay in the general advance has allowed Major-General Pretyman the time to gain a full grasp of the true situation, without having it forced upon him before the grip of his government was secure, yet one cannot but feel that the delay at Bloemfontein, unavoidable as it was, has enhanced the difficulties of the campaign. The breathing space which meant renewed vigour to the British Army was life to the enemy, and has given new impetus to the broken commandos which dispersed upon the entry into Bloemfontein. The extreme vitality of irregular soldiery who meet disaster with temporary dispersion has again been proved by the movement which has menaced our right flank during the last three weeks. With just an initial success, and a free hand in already surrendered districts, Olivier swelled the small command with which he had again turned south, after his first flight, to a considerable force, with ten pieces of artillery. The Boer is not a bold enemy. Repeatedly in the present campaign has he erred on the side of caution. After the successes at Waterfall Drift and Mosterts Hoek, it is obvious what Olivier's, or his lieutenants', action should have been. Instead of showing the enterprise which the situation warranted, they preferred to delay while they "counted their scalps." Then, their greed being whetted, they looked for more. Wepener doubtless appeared an easy prey. At any rate, it was far removed from the railway and possessed an alternative line of retreat to Ladybrand diverging considerably from the permanent way. The reduction of an isolated post was fraught with less risks than a campaign on communications which at any moment might pour a division upon them from three directions. The Boers therefore marched south-west and relieved us from a serious anxiety. By removing to the Basutoland border they surrendered the advantages which their success in the side issues had undoubtedly left in their hands.

The news of Olivier's movement seems to have caused considerable alarm in England. Here it was impossible not to admire the equanimity with which the incidents were viewed. They were unfortunate, and for a period there was considerable menace to the railway communication. Preparations were made to meet and to

prevent an attack upon the line. Supply traffic was temporarily suspended, and troops rapidly, but quietly, entrained to strategic points. There was nothing of undue haste or disorganization. Brigades and divisions were not uselessly marched and counter-marched without definite object. Once the railway communication was provided for, Lord Roberts waited for the enemy to disclose their objective. They declared for Wepener and its small garrison of colonial troops. They could not have made a move which played more conveniently into the general scheme for the advance. By withdrawing to the Basuto border they effectually closed one of their fields for movement, while they laid themselves open to possible imprisonment from the north by a force concentrating at Reddersburg in accordance with the original scheme of operations.

This brings us to the present moment. Wepener is still manfully holding out, and to effect its release only one brigade has been diverted from its original direction. The disposition of the British forces now operating against the enemy in the south-eastern district of the Free State is as follows :—General Brabant and General Hart are moving up from Aliwal North on the south ; General Rundle with the 3rd and 8th Divisions and a force of mounted infantry and Imperial Yeomanry under General Brabazon, in the vicinity of Dewetsdorp, is in touch with the enemy's commandos covering the Brandfort-Wepener communication. General Pole-Carew with the 11th Division, a brigade from General Kelly-Kenny's command, the 4th Cavalry Brigade, and the 4th Mounted Infantry Corps, is mobilized for rapid movement at Springfield on the Thaba Nchu-Ladybrand road. Thus we hold the Brandfort communication. If the enemy elect to await the arrival of the southern column, now beyond Rouxville, and General Rundle with his 13,000 men pushes through his present opposition, we should in three days be in position to command the only northern line of retreat open to the enemy for wheeled transport. If the Boers, perceiving the gravity of the situation, choose—as I am inclined to think that they will—to raise the investment of Wepener and fall back upon Ladybrand, they will most probably succeed in getting all or most of their force away before we can intercept them. But the main object of the present series of operations, which is to get rid of the presence of the enemy in our rear, will have been attained without seriously diverting any considerable force from its general line of advance towards Harrismith and the Vaal. From the point of view of the main advance it is far better that Olivier's and De Wet's commandos should get away than that we should head them off and occupy several brigades for a fortnight or more in chasing a mobile enemy in a large tract of country adjoining our own communications, even if there should be a certainty of eventually running him to earth. In front of our main army a few thousand Boers more or less make no difference, whereas our line of communications must perforce be vulnerable,and time is precious.

As to what the final plan of operations will be it may be at present unwise to make special reference. But we have two lines of railway communication to maintain, and the opening up of Free State-Natal communication ; and a force is already disembarking at Beira.

14th May 1900.

OUR WARS AND OUR WOUNDED

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

VI.*

CAPE TOWN, APRIL.

In the preceding letter it was mentioned that No. 3 would supply two exceptions to the usual practice which divests the two principal officers of a general hospital of medical functions. Colonel Wood, the P.M.O. of this hospital, performs operations, for which he is well qualified by professional ability and experience, and his regular inspections of the surgical division on Mondays and the medical division on Fridays, added to the general daily visit of the whole hospital, are no perfunctory exercises from either a medical or a sanitary point of view. For the latter purpose he is accompanied by the sanitary officer and the medical officer of the day. Major Keogh, the secretary, registrar, and military commander of the hospital, has also a high reputation for both medical and surgical skill, and, combining these qualifications with marked administrative ability, he adds to the arduous functions of his three-fold position those of head of the surgical division, which are usually performed by a special officer. When we come to examine the multifarious work involved in the former class of duties, it will be easy to see that nothing but a keen love of his profession and a desire to vindicate the much assailed medical reputation of his corps could give one man the strength and will to face so heavy a task.

One glance into the marquee that constitutes the " office " of No. 3 dissipates all thoughts of a hospital, and carries us back to the dingy building in Pall-mall. It is the realm of officialdom ; crowded with all its bewildering paraphernalia, and presided over by the demon of red-tape. The whole front of the tent is let down to cool the fevered heads of the two chief officers and their " clerks," six red-faced brawny orderlies, who struggle from morning to

night with the demon—like gladiators in the meshes of the retiarius. Thick books and thin books, square books and narrow books, blue-paper forms ruled in columns up and down and across, sheets of all sizes and shapes, with rows of printed headings along the top and down the side, some blank, some half filled, and some completely covered with heavy handwriting—which no one will ever trouble to read—curling up and down to keep within the narrow spaces, files, clips, portfolios, and all the apparatus of official exactitude, lie scattered about on tables and chairs, or stored in shelves improvised out of packing-cases placed on end with the lids knocked off.

Anathema is ineffective; only some detailed description will bring home to the reader what it all means, how much of it is necessary, and how much more superfluous. Worthy P.M.O.'s, and registrars, and orderlies by the hundred are perspiring all day under the strain out here; we must not grudge them a few moments' sympathetic attention. We will only take a few specimens. The admission and discharge book, which is kept in the hospital, is the basis of all; it is a very necessary register, giving the patient's regiment, company, and regimental number, rank, name, age, religion, disease or wounds, dates of admission and discharge, number of his case and ward, number of days in the hospital, with a wide column for "observations," and 12 mysterious narrow ones for "hospital stoppages of pay." When a patient is sent from this hospital to another these details have to be repeated, in great part on a separate form (nominal roll or convoy report) to which a medical certificate of each case is attached containing many of the details over again, and pinned to it a medical history of the case. *Per contra*, when a patient is admitted here from another hospital he is accompanied by similar forms. If on making up the admission book discrepancies are found they are submitted to the P.M.O. But the red-tape demon begins his work early in the columns of the important book under notice. In the space "discharged" it must be stated whether the patient goes out to duty or as an invalid, or how, and to where. This is all very well, but the demon's finger appears in a weird phrase, "discharged otherwise." This means that a patient is transferred from one disease to another, and some of the forms and returns of discharge and re-admission must be filled up, although the patient has never left the hospital. Gaining confidence, the demon then inserts two columns of the patient's completed years of (1) service, (2) service in his regiment, both of which must be quite unnecessary to his *status* as a patient, and could easily be obtained from his regimental roll. By the time our demon gets to the maze of 12 columns of "stoppages" he is dancing in uncontrollable joy.

A daily return of all the patients in the hospital has to be made to the "Base P.M.O." under their respective diseases, according to the recognized nomenclature of the Royal College of Physicians. It is a characteristic of the demon to justify his presence by frequent appeals to constituted authority; and he moves, like his victims, in columns and squares. There are 54 horizontal columns of diseases and nine perpendicular ones of other details, which make 486 squares, duplicated for officers and men, 972 in all—a nice little daily task for the staff of a hospital, who would be better employed in the wards attending to the patients.

Every day there is a nominal roll of officers and men "dangerously" and "seriously" ill, with transfers from one condition to the other as the case may be, sent in to be cabled home. One does not grudge this, remembering out here the crowd of white anxious faces pressing up to the side-door of the War Office in Pall-mall. There is also a weekly roll of non-coms. and men proposed to be sent home as invalids, which is necessary for sea-transport purposes; and another of men who will not be fit for duty for two months and yet are well enough to return home at once. With officers, it is not enough for the doctor to say they ought to go home. Here is one with five wounds in his body, to which the head of the surgical division certifies. "Quite sufficient," a humble layman would have said. Not at all. A "board" must sit on him. Every officer, before he is allowed to go home, has to be sat on by a board of the hospital. Most things of any importance have to be sat on by boards; they are as necessary to officialism as dinners are to charity, and when they are not sitting they are drawing up reports of their proceedings, for which there are more blue-paper forms.

At the end of every week the elaborate daily return described above has to be repeated on a similar form in a "weekly return," this time to another official, the "P.M.O. of the Field Force." To this must be added a "general report" of the hospital. There is a "casualty" report on every death, with full details and a medical history of the case, and a *post mortem* report; every death in a military hospital, no matter how obvious the cause, being followed by a *post mortem*. There is an exhaustive report on the enteric cases, chiefly directed to the conditions under which the patient took the disease. This might be very valuable were it not that in 99 cases out of 100 the man has been taken ill up the country and no one at the base can have the required information. Of course it should be obtained from the field or stationary hospital, to which he was first admitted. To require it from here is only to impose extra labour and to obtain information mostly incomplete and wholly second-hand.

Lastly, although this list of medical returns and reports is far from exhaustive, there is a terrible thing called the "medical history" of every patient, which eventually goes home to

the War Office. It contains some 60 or 70 blank spaces which have to be filled up with every conceivable detail, not only of his diseases and treatment all over the globe, but of his physique, even down to the size of his feet. It takes its place in a continuous medical history, which is kept at home, of every officer, non-com. and private in her Majesty's forces, of any and every kind, from the time he enlists to the time of his final discharge. The practical use of such a record would be as a guide to the doctor on the spot in the treatment of a sick man. Consequently—we might have been sure of it—the whole of these records have been left at home reposing in the pigeon-holes of the department. "It's a way we have in the Army"—and in a few other branches of the public service.

No fault can be found with the records kept within the hospital—the case book, operation book, diary, &c., except that in the first-named not only important cases must be entered, but every case in which an "extra" is ordered, even if it be only an egg. As the latter class outnumber the former five times, the case book is filled with superfluous matter, and this regulation was so glaringly absurd that it has just been modified by circular.

The correspondence falling to the share of the P.M.O. and Registrar is enormous, and greatly increased by the dependence of the hospital system on other departments of the Army. When patients are discharged the military commanding officer at Wynberg must be informed by letter and telegram, and he sends a non-com. to take them over, and provides transport if they are too weak to walk. When a patient is dangerously ill the same officer is wired to, and he sends a man to make his will in the presence of a doctor. All inquiries about officers and men, unless they can be answered at once, have to go to the base commandant of his regiment. That is one plan; another is the "round robin." A telegram is received as to a particular officer; if the officer is not to be found it is marked "Not here," and signed by the P.M.O. It is then posted to the next hospital, and so on through all of them, till the officer is found. The same plan is adopted with regard to circulars from headquarters. Both these documents, therefore, take several days to get round.

Just now a fierce epistolary contest has been raging about her Majesty's chocolate. By a wise and kindly forethought the patients in these hospitals were supplied with their boxes prior to going home. The weaker ones, it is said, cried with delight at the sight of them. But thereupon the men of the R.A.M.C. thought they had been left out. There has been some delay in correcting the misapprehension, and the orderlies sprang into the breach ready to do battle for the honour of the corps and the cause of loyalty and appetite combined. The matter has just been settled, and joy has returned to the camp.

Identification is a terrible affair, but, of course, necessary. There is a man named Jones who was so bad when he arrived that he could not state his Christian name, and he has since died. They have only his surname and his regiment; his regimental number is missing. They wire to the officer commanding the regimental base depôt, who knows nothing; the regiment has passed on up country. A man in this hospital knows a man in another who ought to know the sick man, but who on inquiry does not know his Christian name. Meanwhile, at home, the relations of all the Joneses in the regiment go into mourning; four widows perhaps marry, three of whom will be subsequently indicted for bigamy.

When a man dies in hospital the clerk to the local authority must be notified, and all the process of the civil law complied with; the clergyman of his denomination is communicated with, and the military officer commanding at Wynberg advised, so that he may arrange for a gun-carriage and firing party. Roman Catholics are in every case buried in their own cemeteries, of which there are two here, one at Wynberg and one at Maitland. Protestants of other denominations than the Church of England are buried in the cemeteries of the latter, having none of their own; but the Church of England service is insisted on. The theological generosity of this ordinance will not tempt us into a discussion of it.

We will pass on to firmer ground—the question of "kits." These terrible kits! One kit will worry the life out of the whole staff and bring healthy sergeants to an early grave. A letter comes saying that the kit of a gunner is missing; he lost it at the front, or left it in the field hospital at Modder or the stationary hospital at De Aar, or left it here when he returned to the front. Is it here; if not, where? The inquiry goes to the commanding officer of the base depôt of his corps, who sends letters in every direction to try and trace the errant kit, which consists probably of an old khaki tunic with a couple of bullet holes through it surrounded by dark stains, a pair of worn-out boots, some hopeless underclothing, and perhaps a rusty rifle. The pursuit of that kit will go on through the campaign, occupying a dozen departments; and the registration of its loss, valuation of its contents, and apportionment of blame and loss will support half-a-dozen War Office clerks for some years to come.

But there is another vast field of work that has to be covered by the Registrar, as commanding officer of the military "detachment" into which the whole staff of the hospital is constituted. All the ordinary regimental returns must be made, just as if it were a fighting force. "Pay and Mess-books," "Nominal Rolls by Stations," "Lists of Offences," "Pay Lists," "Specifications of Vouchers," "Family Remittances," "Statements of Accounts, "Returns of Rations," "Extra Duty Pay," "Messing Allowances," and

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plenty more, each on a separate sheet with endless columns and spaces, have to be filled up and sent in somewhere. It is maddening to think of —for a hospital.

We have not yet done with the rampant militarism imposed on these institutions. In addition to the daily return to the P.M.O. described above, which deals with the patient's condition as a sick or wounded man, his connexion with his regiment has to be maintained every day—for what earthly reason passes understanding, for he is dead to his regiment while in the hospital. But the demon grins, with his regimental supports behind him. The doctors are not going to have it all their own way, with their columns of diseases, R. C. P. nomenclature, and so forth. The regiment must have its say. So all that elaborate return has to be re-cast in regiments, and this "Details of Corps" must be sent every day to the "Base Commandant," a military personage who has absolutely nothing to do with the hospitals. This daily regimental return involves an incredible amount of extra, and apparently quite superfluous, labour. A conscientious examination and survey of the processes considered necessary to a military hospital enable us to arrive at the solemn verdict that nine-tenths of the paper material used for the returns ought to be crammed down the throat of the man who invented them.

We must go out into the air. We must leave the "office" staff—the six sturdy, broad-shouldered orderlies, three behind the P.M.O. and three behind the Registrar—perspiring in the grasp of the demon who, like an octopus, reaches out his arms and feelers, penetrating, insistent, prehensile, over all. We are told these strong men, who try to keep their military bearing as they bend over the bewildering mass of books and documents, are able, industrious, and efficient clerks. We can quite believe it. But we cannot help thinking of wasted force and fine material thrown away, and that such men's place is charging over the crest of a kopje with fixed bayonets instead of attacking columns of blue paper with a fine-nibbed pen. At least, they might be tramping the veldt, stretcher in hand, picking up wounded men who lie dying of thirst in the sun and of cold at night for want of such as these. They would do the work better than the flotsam and jetsam of Cape Town, who, untrained, uninured, and probably rejected for the fighting colonial forces, drift into the "volunteer" bearer companies. For Heaven's sake let these hale, sound, trained men, and a hundred like them on this staff, go to their proper work at the front. They should be fighting the enemy or saving their comrades in the field, instead of registering all the minutiæ of wounds and diseases in the office of a base hospital, or doing women's work in its wards. Now we will go into the air.

WITH COLONEL PLUMER'S COLUMN IN BECHUANALAND.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

CROCODILE POOLS, MARCH 18.

During the past month Colonel Plumer's force, numbering some 700 men of all ranks, have passed through a trying and anxious time, and the men are not unnaturally looking forward to that rest which must necessarily follow the relief of Mafeking, now confidently believed to be not far off. Whether Colonel Plumer intends to try and force his way into the beleaguered town is probably only known to himself; but the fact that for some time past the authorities have been quietly accumulating large quantities of provisions and other stores at Kanya, about 60 miles to the westward of here, lends some colour to the suggestion that some move of the kind is contemplated.

Before proceeding to deal with what may, perhaps, be justly described as the most important, and certainly the most exciting, event in the history of the present Rhodesian field forces, it may be observed that the country lying between Mochudi and Gaberones, where the forces have now been stationed for many weeks, is for the most part flat and uninteresting, though at Gaberones ridges of high ground rise out of the plain and cross it in parallel lines running from west to east. For fully six weeks the main body of our troops occupied one ridge—a line of kopjes to the north of the Metsimasuana bridge; while another ridge has been held by the enemy. Both ridges command the railway and the rivers Metsimasuana and Notwani for a distance of nearly three miles. On the ridge occupied by the Boers a strongly-fortified laager has been constructed, as well as a clever system of schansjes which were brought up to within 700 yards of our outlying pickets; but on February 26 the Dutchmen somewhat suddenly evacuated this coign of vantage, and, as they had always held their own and repulsed our attacks, it was assumed that their sudden withdrawal was due to important movements in the south. Our scouts completely lost sight of them, and as our Intelligence Department assured Colonel Plumer that there was not a Boer between him and Mafeking, an advance on Lobatsi—about 45 miles from the besieged town—was ordered, the armoured train being first despatched to Pitsani-Pothlugo (the memorable spot where the Jameson raiders mobilized in 1895) to repair the railway and telegraph lines. Ultimately our base and hospital, with rations for 30 days, were transferred to Lobatsi railway station. At the same time

a column of 300 men, with three guns, were sent to the west in the direction of Kanya, with the object, it may be presumed, of conveying to Mafeking the accumulated stores already referred to ; while Colonel Bodle, of the British South African Police, with 150 men and a Maxim, was ordered to occupy Pitsani. The western column started simultaneously with Colonel Bodle's party at 6 o'clock on the morning of March 13. By nightfall the former reached a place about 20 miles from the Lobatsi camp, when they were overtaken by messengers from Colonel Plumer with orders that the three guns and a squadron of men under Captain McLaren were to hurry back to Lobatsi. The reason of this *volte face*, it appeared, was that Colonel Bodle's advanced scouts had suddenly and unexpectedly found themselves in the midst of the enemy to the north of Pitsani, which had necessitated the retirement of the whole of Colonel Bodle's force. On receipt of Colonel Plumer's orders, Captain McLaren, although his men were very tired after their long march, at once made preparations to carry them out, and after marching all night he reached his destination early in the morning of March 15. Shortly after his arrival heavy firing was heard to the south,and presently Colonel Bodle was noticed to be hurriedly retreating on Lobatsi. Here,it may be observed, the country changes considerably. From the plain intersected by ridges, such as those between Mochudi and Gaberones,the kopjes rise in numerous and lofty masses, and for a considerable distance the district is distinctly mountainous with the railway running through ravines. Indeed, a more picturesque spot is not to be found between Bulawayo and the Hex River pass in Cape Colony.

The conditions under which Colonel Plumer now found himself were by no means pleasant. He had, in fact, been drawn into a trap, and, thanks to the unfortunate mistake of his intelligence officers, he and his whole force were in imminent danger of being cut off. But owing to the nerve and excellent judgment displayed by the Colonel in the movement of his troops, the impending catastrophe was happily averted. In the first place Colonel Bodle effected a well-executed retreat. Immediately the Boers began their attack he ordered all his wagons and ambulance to retire at a trot to Lobatsi, and to cover them he formed his troops into a crescent with a stiffening at the horns. His right wing, however, under Lieutenant Chapman, unfortunately met with a somewhat serious mishap. His men were so placed that they had to pass through the enemy's scouts, and a few of the latter, concealing themselves behind bushes, literally jumped on to some three or four of our men and made them prisoners. The Boers quickly followed up the retreating column and destroyed the railway as they advanced, though our men managed to put a few shells into the middle of their horses and cattle at a range of about three miles. By 5 o'clock in the afternoon the enemy had got within 2,500 yards of our camp, and poured a hot fire into our horse and cattle lines. For some time it was impossible to locate their guns owing to smokeless powder being used, but after a while their flash was seen, when we at once returned their fire. During the shelling, Lieutenant Tyler, of the West Riding Regiment, was hit in the neck by a shell as he was sitting in a tent, and was killed instantaneously. This was our only casualty. At last darkness came on, and the enemy, who by that time had probably had enough of it as well as ourselves, ceased firing. But the work of our troops was by no means over ; we were still very far from being "out of the wood." All that night and throughout the following day the men were engaged in removing stores by rail back to Crocodile Pools, though ultimately everything was got back in safety. In the early morning of the 16th the enemy again began their harassing tactics by shelling our horses on their way to water, but our men promptly replied with a 75 millimetre gun, and an animated duel continued for some time. The range was, fortunately, very soon found, though our gunners had neither a range-finder nor a range-table. They began by throwing shrapnel at a distance of 2,320 yards, but did not appear to do much damage to the enemy. The practice of the latter, however, was very effective. Twice the wall in front of our gun was struck, and once the shelter in front of our ammunition was blown up. But at length we succeeded in getting a shell right on to the Boer guns, and as an enormous quantity of smoke and dust arose we probably did a considerable amount of injury. At any rate it caused the enemy to cease firing, and for the remainder of the day we were not molested.

At sunset the men were ordered to retire under cover of darkness. Colonel Plumer with the mounted men moved off towards Kanya, while the remainder of the force entrained at Lobatsi and fell back on Crocodile Pools, the men having had scarcely anything to eat for 48 hours. But our difficulties were now over, and the success of the retrograde movement which had been suddenly forced upon us was complete. On the following morning (March 17) the armoured train again patrolled steadily in the direction of Lobatsi and got a short distance beyond Ootsi siding, where it was shelled by the Boers, who had evidently taken very little time in occupying the position we had been obliged to abandon. Indeed, as our rearguard marched out they must have marched in. We are now occupying the old Boer laager where, for the time being, we are in a position of practically absolute safety. What will be the next move remains to be seen.

21st May 1900.

THE OPERATIONS IN NATAL.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LADYSMITH, APRIL 19.

The presence of the enemy on our front and flank has made our work as a containing force extremely difficult. To watch them we have been compelled to hold an extremely long line of front stretching from Sunday River to Spion Kop, a distance of between 30 and 40 miles. To hold this line there have been infantry camps at Sunday River, Elandslaagte, Modder Spruit, Ladysmith, and Dewdrop. And in front of this line the Second (Colonel Burn Murdoch's) and Third (Lord Dundonald's) Cavalry Brigades are perpetually patrolling. General Clery's Division was encamped at Sunday River with General Hunter's close behind him at Elandslaagte. On April 4, General Hunter having received orders to proceed with his division to Cape Colony, the 5th Division (General Warren), which had hitherto been encamped outside Ladysmith, took his place. The same day Colonel Howard's Brigade, which had been at Colenso, marched into Ladysmith. General Hunter's departure was probably the cause of the Boer attack of April 10 on Sunday River Camp. Hearing of it from spies, they made what was probably a reconnaissance in force with the object of discovering in what strength we were.

Sunday River comes down from amongst the hills to the north-west, flows roughly east and west in front of the camp at a distance from it of about two miles, and then turns sharply southward. On the comparatively flat ground inside this bend the camp stood. Across the river at a distance of 5,000 yards from the camp lies a long, low ridge of hills, broken only by the valley of the Steinkop Spruit, up which runs the Dundee road. To the east of Elandslaagte Station lies Jononos Kop, a high, steep hill from which a long ridge runs north-eastward to the river. Sunday River Camp was thus surrounded by an almost complete semicircle of hills. North of the river the ground rises in line after line of hills to Hlatikulu, the highest point of the Biggarsberg. This rough country was more or less in the possession of the Boers. Their actual positions lie somewhere about ten miles north of the river, but they were always to be found in large or small numbers by our cavalry, who patrolled the north bank of the river and sometimes penetrated as far as Waschbank or Meran.

On Monday, March 9, information was brought in by Kaffir scouts that the Boers were advancing southwards in considerable force with artillery. It was probably never contemplated that the Boers would actually attack the camp, for beyond warning the pickets no further steps were taken that night. Consequently, when at 7 30 the following morning the Boers brought up a 12½-pounder Maxim-Nordenfelt on to the hill to the east of the Dundee road and commenced shelling the camp they found us absolutely unprepared. The first few shells fell amongst the Second Brigade, and one man in the East Surrey Regiment had his leg taken off by a shell which hit him before reaching the ground. Then they concentrated their fire upon the camp of the Naval Brigade. The latter had two 4·7 guns and six 12-pounders, but they were all lashed behind wagons—the ordinary method of transporting them—and covered with tarpaulins. To get them free from the wagons and then yoke in the oxen took a considerable time, and in doing it they lost two men killed and three wounded. These two men were killed by a shell which passed right through a case of cordite charges without either bursting itself or exploding the cordite. Two 12-pounders came into action almost where they stood, the rest were dragged to emplacements that had previously been built along the front of the camp. The 4·7's were on the extreme right and the 12-pounders in the centre and on the left. By this time the enemy had four Maxim-Nordenfelts in action, one to the west of the Dundee road, the others to the east of it, and were hotly engaging a patrol of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, who were on a little kopje above the river to the left of the Dundee road. Orders were given to strike tents immediately and for the infantry to be withdrawn under the slope of the hill behind the camp. This was done, everything except the actual tents being left on the ground and picked up later in the day. At the same time four companies of the West Yorkshire Regiment were sent forward to relieve Thorneycroft's patrol. Notwithstanding the fact that the 4·7 guns had only ten rounds apiece until more was brought out by special train from Ladysmith, the fire of the naval battery had nearly silenced the Boer guns by 9 o'clock, and from that time the shelling of the camp practically ceased, though an occasional shell was fired at the guns or at the transport wagons, which were busy loading up. Meanwhile the West Yorks were heavily engaged on the kopje in front. The Boers had brought up two Maxim-Vickers, which the naval guns were unable to locate. Fortunately there was excellent cover on the kopje, and the officer in command had very wisely not sent into the firing line more men than were absolutely necessary and kept the rest well under cover below, very few casualties resulting.

At about 11 o'clock the enemy were found to be enveloping our flanks. Patrols of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, who were guarding our right flank, had crossed the river and came in touch with the enemy about a mile beyond it. There was desultory firing, but the enemy did not press the attack and the patrols held their ground till the evening. On the left, however, the Boers were in greater force. The South African Light Horse, which had been sent out to the lower

slopes of Jononos Kop, saw them advancing in long skirmishing lines behind the ridge running from Jononos Kop to the river. The mounted infantry held their position all day, and the Boers did not come in touch with them. General Warren, who had struck his camp at Elandslaagte soon after General Clery's was struck, and was in readiness for an attack, shelled the advancing Boers with 5in. garrison guns and they turned off to the westward.

The situation remained unchanged all the afternoon. There was nowhere any sign of the attack being pushed with vigour. The Boer field guns shelled the camp and the kopje held by the West Yorks at intervals, but were never allowed by the naval guns to continue for long. The firing on the kopje remained brisk till 5 o'clock, when it slackened. General Buller had come out by special train from Ladysmith during the morning, and shortly after his arrival a consultation was held, and it was decided to withdraw the camp to a safer position. Orders were given to have everything ready for a move that night.

In the evening General Talbot Coke moved out to relieve the South African Light Horse and bivouacked on the lower slopes of Jononos Kop that night, for though the Boers had not attacked on this flank they had been seen in considerable numbers, and the possibility of attack was apprehended. By 6 o'clock all firing had ceased and the men had time to have tea before their night march.

At 6 o'clock the transport began to move, and at 9 the infantry followed. They crossed the railway, climbed Elandslaagte Hill, and halted in a valley beyond it. Though it was a march of not more than three miles it took from 9 p.m. till 8 a.m. next morning. The transport was responsible for most of the delay. The mounted infantry moved about six miles to the rear and bivouacked in a strong position on a hill commanding the railway and the valley of the Modder Spruit right up to the southern base of Jononos Kop. Lord Dundonald thereby secured the lines of communication, which the Boers might otherwise have easily cut had they moved round by the south of Jononos Kop.

The next day the rest of General Warren's division moved over to Jononos Kop, where they camped. Some mounted infantry patrols who climbed the hill saw a large force of Boers, estimated at 5,000, with seven guns at the western base of the hill moving westward. Native scouts who have since come in report that a considerable number of Boers have moved from the Biggarsberg to the western passes. Their reconnaissance also served to cover this flank march across our front.

The position at Elandslaagte is now perfectly secure. We hold both Jononos Kop and Tintanyoni, which effectually prevents the Boers from commanding our camps. They have, however, appeared in greater force on our left, and General Lyttelton's division has been withdrawn from Arcadia, where they were camped, to Ladysmith, though the cavalry are still patrolling the country. The force at Elandslaagte was considered more than sufficiently strong, and on April 18 General Hildyard's brigade was brought back to Ladysmith.

The difficulty of maintaining so large a front has proved too great. The infantry line is now contracted to Ladysmith on the left and Elandslaagte on the right, but the cavalry patrol far beyond that. The Boers, though they are moving about the country in fairly large bodies, do not seem to be prepared to take the offensive again.

22nd May 1900.

THE INVESTMENT OF WEPENER CAMP.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

CAMP NEAR JAMMERSBERG BRIDGE,
SUNDAY, APRIL 15.

Well-accredited information as to the Boers' advance on Wepener decided me to take up my abode at the camp on Saturday, the 7th inst., to avoid a possibly hurried and needlessly dangerous ride from the town on their approach. Those who did not take this precaution had to make a very hasty exit from Wepener on Monday morning following, and some very narrow escapes were recorded, while the troops occupying the town under Captain Goddard had to leave all their kit behind them. The telegraphists waited till the last, cutting the connexion, making the instruments unserviceable, and actually endeavoured to convoy a wagon of grain, the driver and leader of which had deserted, to the camp four miles distant. The plucky young fellows stuck for some time to their self-appointed task till the Boers opened a hot fire on them from 1,000 yards off, when, seeing the impossibility of getting through with the load of grain, they rode off under a perfect fusillade from about 50 Boers.

For the previous few days every effort had been made by Captain Farrar and Mr. Williams, supply officer, to stock the camp with foodstuffs, fuel, and slaughter cattle and sheep. Not a tin of fish, meat, or preserves escaped their hands, while every pound of sugar, tea, coffee, and rice in shops in Wepener was requisitioned by them.

The chief medical officer, Surgeon-Major Faskally, was instructed to take similar steps as

regards medicines and medical comforts. Unfortunately, the serious nature of the position at Wepener did not appear to have been recognized at Aliwal by General Brabant, and but two ambulance wagons and two carts, with next to no medical supplies, had been sent forward with Colonel Dalgety. Major Faskally and his officers, Surgeon-Captains Hudson, Pierce, Grey, Perkins,and Carter,worked like Trojans, obtained all available medical stores, requisitioned a large house of Mr. J. Robertson, and speedily fitted it up as a hospital.

The arrangements for the defence of the position were carried out under the direction of Major Cedric Maxwell, R.E., while the various gun pits were constructed by the small body of Royal Engineers who accompanied him. The defence of a position roughly eight miles in circumference with a fighting force of about 1,750 men is a problem which would have appalled most European soldiers, but it was obvious that, extended as the position undoubtedly was, it could not be curtailed if any attempt to defend the bridge were to be made. It must be added that the nature of the ground lends itself admirably to defence, except in the rear, though the whole of the front is commanded by the lofty Jammersberg Mountain on the eastern side of the river Caledon. The ability of the Boers to get their guns to the summit of the mountain was doubted, but in any case the risk had to be taken, as it was quite impossible to keep even a small body of men supplied at so great a distance with either food or water.

On the morning of Monday, the 9th inst., the presence of large bodies of the enemy on the west and south was speedily made known, and by 6 30 a.m. a hot engagement was in progress. The Kaffrarians on the west had the first turn, but the centre of interest was soon after discovered to be with the C.M.R. in the rear, and Boer gun after gun and the hated pom-pom Vickers-Maxim were directed on the extreme left of their position, while thousands of Boers from the heights beyond the Caledon and along the banks on both sides concentrated their fire on the same spot. Though their defences (schansjes and trenches) were but slight at that time, the gallant C.M.R. held their ground like bulldogs, and all efforts to dislodge them were fruitless. Reinforcements were rushed to their assistance, Driscoll's Scouts, about 80 M.I. Royal Scots under Captain Seale, and a squadron of Brabant's under Captain Garner being sent forward in rapid succession to strengthen the hard-pressed Cape Rifles. Later on they were again strengthened by a further couple of troops of 2nd Brabant's, under the gallant old veteran Major Jesser Coope.

Captain Lukin, meanwhile, as the Boer attack developed, had to change the positions of several of his guns, and generally succeeded after some time in at least temporarily silencing the Boer guns, only, however, to find later shell-fire coming from some fresh quarter, the locating of which in some cases was found very difficult. He diligently visited his various guns during the day, each time coming in for a warm reception as he galloped across the plain. Colonel Dalgety devoted his attention chiefly to the attack on his regiment in the rear, and he and his staff had a very arduous and dangerous task.

Several times parties of Boers made for the bridge, but in each case were driven back by rifle and Maxim fire. As the day progressed the enemy worked round several guns to the right rear, and with them a "pom-pom" which poured in fire between the two hills held by the Kaffrarians under Captain Price, killing and wounding many horses, the guns meanwhile devoting themselves to the congenial task of destroying wagons packed in the same neighbourhood. The transport was shifted from time to time, but never for long escaped gun attention, with, in most cases, the result of men killed and wounded.

By midday the Boer attack had exhausted itself for a time, and the C.M.R. had a welcome period of rest, a "pom-pom" and Maxim being meanwhile employed by the Boers on all individuals who crossed the plain between the various positions. Again the efforts of several parties of the enemy to cross the river between the two mills were frustrated by the Maxims on the C.M.R. and Kaffrarian positions. As the afternoon wore on gun fire became weaker, and by 5 30 had died away, one Boer gun being visibly out of action. Rifle fire continued till after dark and intermittently during the entire night. Hairbreadth escapes were numerous. Major Maxwell had his favourite pony shot under him late in the evening; Lieutenant Lister, of the Kaffrarians, was knocked off his horse with a bullet through the thigh. Numerous men with grazes on head and legs never even reported themselves as wounded. Lieutenant Hill, of the Berkshire Regiment, but attached to the Royal Scots, receiving a bullet through the leg, had his wound dressed and proceeded to his camp, where he supervised the treatment of wounded horses.

The casualties for the day, excluding all slight cases where men did not stay in hospital, were 11 killed and 41 wounded, while Basuto spies stated the Boer loss to have been much greater. Advantage was taken of the comparative darkness to strengthen the defences and deepen the trenches at all points.

The stretcher-bearers during the day had necessarily a very bad time bringing the wounded to the ambulance wagon, which was stationed at

the back of the Kaffrarian hill on the right rear. One of the instances is well worthy of recording, and as it occurred under my own view I can vouch for its absolute truth. A wounded C.M.R. officer—Captain Goldsworthy—was being brought over the plain by four men with a stretcher when a perfect storm of bullets was fired on them. One of the bearers staggered and fell, but recovering his feet ran a few yards to some slight shelter, followed by two others. One very brave young fellow—Trumpeter Washington, of the C.M.R.—stayed by his wounded officer, gave him water, the while shouting to the other bearers to return, bullets spitting round him all the time. Courage, like cowardice, is infectious, and after some five minutes the three returned to their task, greeted by a further hail of bullets. They staggered on manfully, however, the bullets striking over and under them, between their legs and in front of them, but most marvellously not touching one of them, and their task was at last brought to a successful issue. Lieutenant Lister was carried over from the left by two men of his squadron—Troopers Holmes and Aspinall—under a very hot fire indeed, but his men never faltered for a moment. Two troopers of the C.M.R., Bunbury and Hennabenger, brought to the ambulance wagon one of the wounded Royal Scots under a hail of bullets, also escaping without a scratch.

Before daybreak on Tuesday, the 10th, I made my way to Colonel Grenfell's eyrie, whence a splendid view of the whole position is obtainable, and received a most hospitable welcome from Colonel Grenfell and his second-in-command, Captain Cookson. Firing began at dim daylight on the Kaffrarians in right rear and on Captain Cholmondeley's squadron of 2nd Brabant's near the Caledon, facing the Jammersberg Mountains. It was evident that during the darkness parties of Boers had made their way through the river and taken up sniping positions much closer to our men. Then a Boer gun from the Wepener side opened on the supply park, sending several shells very close to the stacks of stores there. The unfortunate C.M.R. next received the attentions of two Boer guns on the left and of a third low down on the river, under cover of which fire large parties of Boers took up advantageous positions on both sides of the river, keeping up a hail of fire on our rear. Then ensued a long artillery duel for several hours, during which the positions of several of the guns on both sides were changed. Several of the Boer guns were moved round to the Wepener side, hugging the slopes of the Jammersberg. During the afternoon long trains of wagons and horsemen were seen reinforcing the enemy, coming from the Rouxville direction. "Let 'em all come" was the only comment of the men on this development, and this was, in fact, the only greeting accorded as each successive accession to the enemy arrived during the investment. A great body of the enemy was seen making down the river towards dusk, and a strong attack on our left rear was confidently predicted for the following morning. During the afternoon Colonel Dalgety had the misfortune to lose one of his best officers in the person of Major Sprenger, who exposed himself freely to stimulate and encourage his men. In attending to the conveyance of ammunition to his men he fell riddled with bullets. During the day a very large number of horses and cattle were killed and wounded, while careless cattle guards allowed several troops of oxen to stray beyond the positions, and they fell a prey to the enemy.

There was a very bright moonlight, and firing on the rear never ceased for a moment. By 8 p.m. it was evident that a night attack on the extreme left of the C.M.R. was in progress. Major Waring, who was in charge there, states that he saw a force of about 150 Boers advance to within 50 yards of his trenches, covered and sheltered by the firing from large parties of the enemy on both flanks. He shouted to his men to fix bayonets and give a cheer, and the hearts of the storming party of Boers failed them and they turned and ran. Meanwhile the rifle fire from the flanking parties grew warmer, and Driscoll's Scouts, the Royal Scots, Brabant's men, and the rest of the C.M.R. had three hours of hot fighting. As one watched the scene from the Kaffrarian hills, the Boer use of explosive bullets was again most noticeable. Little sparks of blue flame in the air were very frequently seen, which Major Waring, his officers, and men declare with emphasis betokened the bursting of these bullets. Desultory firing continued all night, but shortly after midnight the Boer attack had exhausted itself. For our wearied men, however, there was no rest. The improvement of our defences was urgent, and the poor fellows were mostly hard at work till daylight. Owing to the working of the Boer guns towards Jammersberg during the afternoon an attack on our right was anticipated during the following day, and to enable me to view the operations I took up my residence with Captains Price and Farrar, of the Kaffrarians, in their trenches.

On Wednesday, the 11th, the question of the Boer ability to get big guns on the summit of Jammersberg was solved, and two guns and a pom-pom opened fire from the top of the mountain. The naval gun near Oosthuizen's Farm now came into action, but the Boer gunners never could locate it, so admirably was its position concealed. Apparently, with one accord, the rifle fire ceased save for the inevitable snipers, while an artillery duel of great interest was carried on, any gun that made itself particularly obnoxious on either side receiving the attention of several others.

Living in the trenches was a new experience to most of the colonial division, but they speedily adapted themselves to the new conditions. The 7-pounder in our neighbourhood had attracted the

adverse attention of the guns of Jammersberg by shelling a Boer laager under the hill near Wepener, and many ill-directed shots caused us all some heart tremors at first. By-and-by, however, the men grew accustomed to the experience, and many of them slept stolidly through the afternoon. About midday there was a lull, and for an hour probably not a shot was fired ; but about 2 p.m. four Boer guns concentrated their fire on the C.M.R. again, and they kept it up without pause for two hours, despite Lukin's efforts to silence them. Again a lull, followed by a fresh outburst of activity which lasted till dark, when matters quieted down, even the snipers ceasing from troubling. Very heavy rain fell during the night, making the trenches anything but happy places of residence, and the poor men were kept standing to arms the whole night long, as another night attack was thought probable. Towards morning the clouds in the west broke, allowing the moon to be seen, and a magnificent lunar rainbow became visible. The bow was bright and distinct from horizon to horizon—a very rare sight indeed.

On Thursday, the 12th, the snipers became very busy all round shortly after dawn, particularly so near Henderson's Hill and our Kaffrarian Hill on the right, and at 6 a.m. the Boer guns opened fire on the Hotchkiss. A most obstinate old gentleman, wearing a white hat, evidently commanded the men in several schansjes on our right, and he kept his men persistently firing at us for hours. Though our chief, indeed only, anxiety was the short supply of ammunition, and orders had been issued to fire only at a visible enemy, such heavy firing could not be borne without reply. Accordingly Captain Price, watching with a very powerful telescope, gave the signal for volley firing, which gave our friends pause very speedily. Sniping the sniper then became the favourite amusement, and all sorts of dodges were tried to induce our antagonists to show themselves. Our volleying, however, drew on us several shrapnel shell from the mountain which came uncomfortably close. Most of the Boer guns paid their chief attention to the Supply Park, and to our wagons at various points, but luckily did little damage. Towards the evening the Boer guns in the neighbourhood again directed their fire on the C.M.R. for about an hour, but with very little result.

At 1 30 a.m. on Friday, the 13th, a strong attack was made by the enemy on Henderson's and Grenfell's Hills, and heavy rifle firing continued till 4 a.m. The Boers, warned by their experience on Tuesday night, did not come too near and never were closer, according to Major Henderson, than 400 yards, while Colonel Grenfell says the Boers attacking his side were never nearer than 700 yards. The Kaffrarians on his left, under Captain Williams, were also engaged for some time, but the chief attack was on Brabant's, who replied so vigorously that the enemy abandoned the attempt. After daylight several Boer guns, chiefly from new positions, opened fire, and rifle fire gradually died away for a time. Then our white-hatted friend set to work on us, and he and his friends sent in a series of remarkably fine shots for a couple of hours, almost invariably hitting the edge of our parapet and covering us with dust and small fragments of stone. The feature of the day's work was the unmerciful shelling of the extreme left of the C.M.R. position. The men there state they counted 180 shells fired at them during the afternoon, not one of which did any harm beyond damaging their schansjes, while their only casualty was from rifle fire, a young man shot through the heart while jumping from one trench into another. The guns on Jammersberg, as usual, said good night with a salute all round, their very last shot killing three horses of 2nd Brabant's and wounding Quartermaster Williams and one of the men.

Saturday the 14th and Sunday the 15th were relatively quiet, and on Monday the 16th it became gradually evident that a Boer retirement from the Jammersberg position was in operation. The last of the guns there was lost sight of during the afternoon. Towards evening a few tempting shots offered to our gunners upon masses of the enemy retiring on Wepener were taken advantage of, probably with effect, as the Boers were seen scattering on all sides.

Save for a few snipers, the enemy on the right and right rear had disappeared on the 19th, but during the afternoon they made a new laager on the left of the Kaffrarians and Henderson's 1st Brabant's. A native prisoner taken by the C.M.R. during the day gave a very probable explanation, to the effect that the enemy, hearing of the near approach of a relief force, were massing to our left front to oppose the attempt.

The casualties up to date have been—killed and died of wounds 19, and wounded 115. Commensurate to the work done the losses are comparatively light, but in proportion to the numbers engaged on our side are rather heavy. Colonel Dalgety had a very difficult task, which he most ably performed. To Major Maxwell also the greatest credit must be given for his scheme of defence, which has worked well up to date. The regimental commanders and officers commanding units, Colonel Grenfell, Major Henderson, Captains Price, Seale, and Driscoll, have of necessity been left very much to their own devices to plan out from time to time their own schemes of salvation, and on the lines of no one of them has the enemy been able to make any impression whatever. The Boer attacks on Monday and Tuesday the 9th and 10th were extremely obstinate, but just lacked that bravery and dash which might possibly have ensured their success.

To judge from experience gained here and in other fights of the Colonial Division, it would seem that the destructive power of shrapnel has been much overrated by military men. In the

fighting here, four, if not five, of the eight guns used against us were our own 12-pounder Horse Artillery guns captured at Thaba Nchu, and the eight guns fired at least 2,000 shell on our position, of which fully half were shrapnel; yet the damage done, excepting to loose cattle, horses, and mules wandering about in droves, was quite trifling. The Vickers-Maxims, though specially terrifying, were equally ineffective in killing or wounding men, though used with great prodigality. The first two days' fighting, when our trenches and schansjes were incomplete, accounted for two-thirds of the casualties, and of these all but about a dozen were from the deadly rifle fire. It appears that the very smallest shelter affords almost complete protection against shrapnel. Of lyddite personally I know nothing, but I have had opportunity of conversing with numerous Boers at Rouxville, Zastron, and Wepener who had considerable experience of its effects. Of course, they were all under a wrong impression and deemed that the noxious fumes emitted were the desired object rather than the mere accident of the strong explosive. The poisonous stupefying gases were overcome by them by the use of handkerchiefs soaked in vinegar held to the nostrils, while the effects of the shell were almost as easily guarded against as those from shrapnel. Their statements may probably have to be taken *cum grano salis*, but they spoke with a strong air of conviction.

It would be impossible to do adequate justice to the work of the medical staff under Major Faskally. With few appliances, almost an entire lack of hospital equipment, a very small stock of all necessaries, even of medical comforts, a house as hospital in a most dangerous position, a house which, though large for a private dwelling, is all too small for the requirements, with wounded men, two on a mattress, on beds, on the floors, in the passages, on verandahs, and in tents close to the house, and with but a small staff of attendants and cooks, the wounded men, well over 100 in number, have been treated with skill, tenderness, and consideration, have been well fed and nursed, and some wonderful cases so far kept alive. One, though not quite unique in the history of this war, deserves notice, that of a man shot, with a Mauser bullet, plumb through the forehead and out at the middle behind the head; and yet after eight days the man is not only sensible but improving in strength daily and promises a speedy recovery. Fortunately, there have been few surgical cases, for there is almost no stock here of necessary appliances. Of the deaths in hospital, five in number all told, three have been caused by fresh wounds received in hospital from the enemy's rifle fire. Two of the chaplains, the Rev. —. Tudor, C.M.R., and Father FitzHenry, have been unremitting in their kindly attention to the wounded and have assisted Major Faskally splendidly.

In dealing with the defence of this position sufficient prominence has not been given to the arduous work of the officers and men. There was no question of being on or off duty. All of the men, except occasionally the cooks when preparing meals, were in the trenches night and day. When nature could no more endure, a few disturbed hours of sleep were snatched during the day when under fire. The early part of the nights was invariably devoted to repairing the damage done during the day by shell fire and to rendering the defences still more secure. For eight days this state of things continued—and be it remembered that during five of the days heavy rain fell, that the great majority of the trenches were without shelter—and the pluck and endurance of officers and men shine out with a brilliancy worthy of the best traditions of English history. Even the comparative rest of yesterday and today has been deprived of comfort for the poor fellows by constant heavy rain, and their condition in the trenches, ankle-deep in mud, still necessarily held by them, may be more easily imagined than described.

26th May 1900.

THE INVESTMENT OF THE CAMP NEAR WEPENER.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

JAMMERSBERG BRIDGE CAMP, APRIL 28.

After three days of mere desultory sniping and artillery fire and intense discomfort to our men in the soaked trenches from heavy rains, the Boers started heavy gun fire at 6 30 a.m. on the 21st from two new positions with five guns. The whole were for several hours directed on the prominent schansjes and the gun-pits on Henderson's Hill. Three of the Boer guns were posted on a kopje 2,000 yards due north of that point, and their fire at that range simply battered the schansjes to pieces, while the sandbag defences of the gun and Maxim pits were nearly destroyed after several hours' persistent shelling. The other two guns were also busy on the same point for a long time. The naval gun was hit slightly many times and very frequently by segments of shell. The wheels were dangerous to touch, the spokes and felloes being so torn and so covered with jagged points. The Kaffrarian trenches immediately to the south were enfiladed by the fire from the three guns to the north, every bad shot for the naval gun going to them, while several hundreds of shrapnel shell were distributed during the day without favour over the

two positions. The traverses in several of the Kaffrarian trenches alone saved the men from heavy loss, while the half-moon shape of other defences, most fortunately adopted by Captains Price and Williams, served the same purpose. Meanwhile, despite destruction of schansjes and gun-pits, Brabant's 1st Regiment and the Maxim kept up an intermittent fire on the Boer gunners, who for the first time were clearly seen to be Transvaal artillerists, but the Boer guns were so substantially protected that probably small execution was done. Also for the first time during the investment, Captain Lukin's efforts with his guns on the west were quite ineffective in silencing the Boer gun fire. The necessity, which was rapidly becoming paramount, for husbanding gun ammunition probably accounted for Captain Lukin's failure on this occasion. After such a rain of shrapnel and several hours' bombardment with plugged and segment shell, heavy loss of life on our side might reasonably have been looked for, but a couple of wounds, happily not serious, completed the roll of casualties. The Cape Mounted Rifles, Royal Scots, and Brabant's and Driscoll's scouts in the south had almost a day off, save for the attentions of the snipers, while the Kaffrarians and Brabant's squadron of 2nd Regiment on the east had their usual *quota* from their attentive friends. During the darkness Major Maxwell and his invaluable sappers diligently repaired all damages and strengthened the gun-pits considerably.

I had the opportunity of interviewing a prisoner in the evening, who stated that on the south we were faced by commandos from Kroonstad, Winburg, and Senekal, on the east by forces from Rouxville, Zastron, Smithfield, and a mixed body of all nations, chiefly Germans, under General Banks, with the Irishman Blake and his contingent, a Ficksburg commando on the west, and on the north several small bodies of Transvaalers, with a sprinkling of men from Ladybrand and the Basuto border. The commandants were stated to be Olivier, De Wet, Froneman, Pienaar, and Banks. Mr. Olivier, was said to be out of favour alike with his men and the authorities, while Mr. Pienaar, who was acting as commandant in the town of Wepener, was being accused of malversation of public funds, which led to his recall in disgrace to Pretoria. Mr. De Wet was—with Olivier under a cloud—deemed by the prisoner to be the general commanding. The forces opposed to us were, according to my informant, between 7,000 and 8,000. Our gun fire was said to have been most effective, three Boer guns and a pom-pom having been put out of action during the 9th and 10th, though all but one gun, which was hopelessly damaged, were subsequently repaired. The Boer losses on the 9th were reported as 18 killed and many wounded, while the night attack on the 10th was responsible for much larger totals. The persistence of the attack on our position was due to repeated orders from Kroonstad that Jammersberg Camp must be taken at whatever cost. Into the places of danger were driven the unfortunates disarmed by us at Rouxville, Zastron, Smithfield, and Wepener under distinct pledges of protection. So far my informant.

Sniping again started early on the following (Sunday) morning. Very heavy gun fire was heard on the west from General Rundle's side, and on the south, where Generals Hart and Brabant were reported to be on. The next day (23rd) large parties of Boers were seen going to the south, evidently to reinforce the enemy engaged against Hart's and Brabant's Relief Column. On the 24th, again, about 7 a.m., guns from General Rundle's side were heard, but apparently further off than two days previously, which caused some anxiety.

At dawn, however, on the 25th, enormous trains of wagons, carts, and horsemen were seen in full retreat along the Ladybrand Road, and the investment was over. For hours the retirement proceeded within our view, and Brabant's mounted men with guns were eagerly looked for, but in vain. Their work of the previous day had tired men and horses, and pursuit was the last thing thought of. Colonel Dalgety had some 300 men prepared to assist in a cutting off operation should the opportunity offer ; but it never came, and our enemy retired in a most dignified and leisurely fashion, most irritating to watch. Undoubtedly the retreat had been going on for a long time before daybreak, as we could see no guns withdrawn, while the numbers of men seen by us did not much exceed 5,000. The great chance for Generals Rundle, Hart, and Brabant was missed, and the enemy that fought us and Generals Hart and Brabant has still to be reckoned with. If reports can be relied on, it was a very disheartened and despondent force, which the seizure of three wagon loads of Pom-Pom and big gun ammunition and one of our own ammunition wagons, captured from us at Thaba Nchu, in the ford below our position, goes to confirm. On the other hand, the leisurely retreat betokens a different state of things. However it may be, the escape of so large a body of the enemy is much to be deplored.

The nearest relief force was still 14 miles off when the enemy retired ; but, undoubtedly, the three successful engagements fought by Generals Hart and Brabant induced the general retirement of the beleaguering force. To Colonel Dalgety the greatest credit is due, and he was much strengthened and assisted by the advice of Major Max-

well, R.E., whose calm and measured judgment was simply invaluable to him. Colonel Grenfell was also continually with Colonel Dalgety, and never at a loss. Of Captain Lukin's services with the guns it would be impossible to speak too highly, while the Field Adjutant, Captain Grant, C.M.R., had continuous and very arduous work. The regimental officers had very hard work. The squadron commanders and the subalterns were night and day in the trenches with the men, while the senior officers had their hands full in looking after the comfort of the men and supervising generally. The behaviour of the men was really admirable. Under every conceivable adverse condition—wet, cold, and hunger—they never even faltered for a moment. They were, to a great extent, deprived of the comfort of firing at their enemy, owing to the fear of running short of ammunition. On the men in the south of the position the greatest amount of fighting, as also the greatest hardships, fell. They were composed of Cape Mounted Rifles, Captain Garner's squad of 2nd Brabants, Captain Seel's company of Royal Scots M.I., and Captain Driscoll's troop of scouts. Nearly three-fourths of the casualties were among these bodies, though numbering roughly only a fourth of the force. The hardships endured by these men on the extreme south-western side far exceeded those at other places. They could not cook at their trenches for fear of attracting Boer rifle fire, while by the time any food was brought from the nearest sheltered spots everything was cold. Many of the men there never had warm tea, coffee, or food for 17 days, and the great majority of officers and men never had the chance to wash during the same period. The conditions elsewhere were not quite so difficult, but at all points there was hard work, occasionally hard fighting, and a constant look out was necessary to avoid the attentions of very numerous and persistent snipers. The Kaffrarians, under Captain Price, in Major Cuming's unavoidable absence, defended four positions, two on the east and two on the west, while the 1st and 2nd Regiments of Brabant's Horse, under Major Henderson and Colonel Grenfell respectively, defended the lofty positions on the north, north-east, and north-west.

After 17 days of close investment the task of Colonel Dalgety's little force was handsomely brought to a close. The rot which seemed to have set in after Lord Roberts's brilliant performances culminating in the occupation of Bloemfontein was stopped by Colonel Dalgety. The defence was doubly important and far-reaching in its results. The loyalty of the Basutos was secured. Occurring, as the fighting did, under the eyes of thousands of watchful Basutos, who crowned every height for miles along the river from dawn till dark daily, failure at Jammersberg Bridge Camp must have resulted in disaffection among waverers. Sir Godfrey Lagden and his magistrates were in great anxiety. Boer emissaries were diligent in their attentions to Basuto chiefs. One important chief was known to be coquetting rather strongly with the Boers and was begged to take his magistrates prisoners and send them over to the Boers, who would look after them. The Boers, fortunately, were a trifle over-confident, inflated by their Sanna's Post and Reddersburg successes, and they assured the Basutos that the troops near Wepener were an easy prey for their overwhelming numbers. As the obstinate defence went on, the disappointment of the Boer leaders may be imagined, while the Basutos gained daily respect for the prowess of the English. I had later several conversations with Basuto chiefs and petty chiefs, and the gist of their remarks was in every case the bravery (the "big heart") of the Englishmen. In their eyes the shell fire was most deadly, and the stolidity of the defence impressed them tremendously.

As there was a block on the heliograph from our camp to Mafeteng, I judged it advisable to ride there even before the arrival of the relieving column, as that would certainly add to the pressure of work. The officer in charge at the bridge was good enough to destroy the barbed wire entanglements and undo the chains for me, and I rode over the bridge, the first horseman out of the camp. The English residents of Wepener had a very uncomfortable time on the arrival there of the Boer commandos. Mr. Pienaar, a Transvaaler, was appointed town commandant, and he at once consigned all Englishmen, including clergymen, to gaol. Mr. Van den Hoven, who had been appointed acting-assistant-magistrate, was captured on the slopes of Jammersberg while trying to get through to Basutoland, and his fate up to the present is wrapped in mystery. He was put in prison, is said to have been tried by Court-martial, sentenced to death, and taken out to camp for execution. Several natives assure me that he was duly shot at Commandant De Wet's laager, but it is just possible that Mr. Van den Hoven may have been sent to Pretoria as a prisoner. The Englishmen, after nine days' imprisonment, were liberated by De Wet on promise of quiet behaviour and residence in Wepener. The Free State gaoler, Mr. Van Straaten, who took the oath of allegiance to her Majesty's Government and was confirmed in his position by Captain Goddard, is evidently as versatile as the Vicar of Bray, and continued his functions on the rehoisting of the Free State flag, merely releasing all the rebel prisoners whose presence in the gaol had been overlooked in the hurry of our evacuation on the 9th inst. Mr. Van Straaten received the English prisoners arrested by Mr. Pienaar very calmly and turned the key on them—a happy man, again confirmed in his position. To his credit, however, be it told that the English prisoners spoke well of his treatment of them. On the morning of the 25th, when a Boer evacuation was in progress, Mr. Van Straaten

disappeared with the commando, evidently appreciating that his readiness to serve both sides might possibly lead him into difficulties with the English authorities. In his dwelling-house were found concealed considerable quantities of Mauser ammunition, so that Mr. Van Straaten had probably just reason to fear that his conduct might be misunderstood. Several persons who were accused of having fired on Captain Goddard and his men from houses in the town on the morning of the 9th were arrested and sent off with General Hart's infantry to Smithfield. All of them had sworn that they had delivered up all their arms and ammunition and promised to take no further part in the war.

21st May 1900.

THE OPERATIONS FOR THE RELIEF OF WEPENER.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BLOEMFONTEIN, APRIL 27.

"The British are mighty: but God is Almighty."
—A Boer watchword.

Much that was foreshadowed in my last letter has come to pass. The last few days have been full of interest. As was pointed out on April 20, the Boers were still investing Wepener in considerable force. A strong commando was in occupation of Dewetsdorp, with several detached groups watching the Brandfort-Dewetsdorp communication. We, on the other hand, had a column advancing upon Wepener from Aliwal North and Generals Rundle and Chermside had concentrated their divisions at Reddersburg. But it was from Bloemfontein that the counterstroke was to come. A considerable force of Boers, with artillery, under Lemmer, were known to be in possession of Leeuw Kop, a group of low hills, 18 miles south-east of Bloemfontein. On Saturday night (April 21) General Pole-Carew received orders to take his division (the 11th) and with the 4th Cavalry Brigade and 4th Mounted Infantry Corps to occupy Leeuw Kop. The range of hills which the enemy held included a detached kopje called Paardekraal. General Pole-Carew determined to attempt to surround the whole group of hills with his mounted force. The 4th Cavalry Brigade was therefore detached to turn the right of the Boer position, while Colonel Alderson's mounted infantry were to attempt a similar movement against the left. General Stevenson's Brigade, then at Springfield, was to advance against Paardekraal, the Guards Brigade, which had been on communications at Kaffir River bridge, was to march directly upon Leeuw Kop from Ferrera Siding. General Pole-Carew's plan of operations was excellent—his orders clear, simple, and concise. But a sequence of events prevented the issue which he had intended—that the mounted force should work to the rear of the enemy's position before the infantry attack developed. In the first place, the cavalry on the left were checked early in the day, mainly because the enemy held an extended front and had a 1-pounder automatic gun in position; consequently, when General Stevenson essayed his infantry attack it was late in the evening and the cavalry were merely protecting his left. He carried both the farm and hill of Paardekraal by infantry assault in the evening. His loss was small, as the enemy were in less force than their frontage warranted and evacuated as the infantry advanced. His shell fire did some execution, especially in a low-level trench which the enemy had constructed and which the batteries were able to enfilade.

On the right the situation was different. At midday the advanced scouts of Alderson's mounted infantry found that Leeuw Kop proper was occupied. The hill itself forms a rough square, which presents a precipitous front of about a mile towards Bloemfontein. Its approaches from north and west are a rolling plain, intersected by dongas. About a thousand yards from its western slopes lies an extensive farm surrounded with stone walls and sheep corrals. As the mounted infantry with two Vickers-Maxims advanced to sweep round the flank the enemy were seen to be bringing a gun, horsed with a team of six, from the direction of Paardekraal. Colonel Alderson, bringing his section of 1-pounder Maxims into position to cover the left of Leeuw Kop, detached the Canadian company of his mounted infantry to sweep round the western face of the position. While executing this manœuvre a party were sent to occupy the homestead already mentioned. A movement was noticed on the hill and the heavy Maxims fired about 15 rounds at 2,500 yards. Just as the Canadians were approaching the outer corral of the farm, which was ostentatiously flying a large white flag, a party of mounted Boers dropped down from the hill crest and dashed for the buildings. It was a race, and the Dutchmen won. Leaving their horses in a stone sheep pen, they lined the inside of a sunk fence, from which cover they opened a rifle fire on the Canadians. The latter had two horses hit and were forced to retire out of range.

At 2 30, while the main body of Alderson's force was waiting upon the movement of the Canadians, there was a flash from amongst the scrub on the ridge of Leeuw Kop and a shell buried itself just ten paces from a group of officers of Roberts's Horse. It was evidently the gun which we had seen arriving earlier in the day. The enemy had brought it into a wonderful position, 400ft. above the level of the plain. The main

body of Alderson's force was withdrawn 2,000 yards, under cover of a fold in the veldt. As the heavy Maxims fell back the enemy attempted shrapnel fire, but did no execution. It was at this period that another of those circumstances arose which ruined the success of the day. General Stevenson was already engaging the enemy's right position, but the brigade division of artillery, destined to prepare the way for an infantry attack on Leeuw Kop proper, either mistook their orders or lost themselves. They never arrived within supporting distance until 4 30 p.m., when there was not enough daylight left to attempt operations with infantry. General Pole-Carew therefore camped upon a spruit three miles north of Leeuw Kop. In the evening General French arrived from Bloemfontein with the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, and took command of the whole operations, which were destined to take a new complexion.

Lord Roberts had determined to force the enemy, which for the last three weeks had been operating in the south-east of the Free State, to fall back, by moving two columns from Bloemfontein astride of the Boer main communications. Of these communications they had two. The one the direct line from Wepener to Ladybrand, the other the Brandfort-Thaba Nchu route, which from the Leeuw River Mills had an alternative road to Ladybrand. With the object of closing these routes, General Rundle had orders to hold the enemy in front of him at Dewetsdorp as long as possible. General Tucker's Division, then at Karee Siding, was swung round to Krantz Kraal to cover the Brandfort road. General Ian Hamilton moved out of Springfield on Monday (April 23) morning with a brigade of mounted infantry and General Smith-Dorrien's Infantry Brigade to retake the waterworks and to push through to Thaba Nchu. General French with Pole-Carew's Division and the 3rd and 4th Cavalry Brigade, having driven in the Boers' containing force at Leeuw Kop, were to move forward with all expedition, and the cavalry at least were expected to arrive at the drifts over the Modder in the rear of the enemy's position before Dewetsdorp before the latter had evacuated or, at least, while their laagers were moving. This movement, though it left the Wepener-Ladybrand road clear, seemed to present every hope of cutting off the Dewetsdorp Boers, and it would automatically relieve the situation of the British force besieged in Wepener.

On Monday morning the Boers had evacuated Leeuw Kop, and the hill was occupied by two companies of mounted infantry shortly after daybreak. The reverse of the hill—in fact the inside slopes of the whole parallelogram forming the clump were such that they presented no difficulties for wheeled pieces to come into action. If strongly held it would have been an expensive hill to have assaulted. It was a position which practically presented an equal line of front from whichever direction it was approached. From the summit one was able to gain a magnificent view of the surrounding country, and as General French's advance developed the scene at one's feet reminded one of an Easter review at Brighton. The whole of the country in which we operated during the week, save for the occasional rocky excrescences, was very similar to the Sussex Downs on a large scale.

The advance on Monday was slow. General French completely changed the plans which had been in force on the preceding day and elected to move his whole force on the one front. Consequently there was delay while the 4th Cavalry Brigade and Stevenson's Brigade worked round from the position in which they had found themselves after their engagement on Sunday. The cavalry were ordered to be prepared to move independently of their transport, while Pole-Carew's Infantry Division, screened by the 4th Mounted Infantry Corps, moved in the rear of the cavalry with as much expedition as the ground and circumstances would allow. As the cavalry advance guard pushed on the enemy were found to be still clinging to the southern terminations of Leeuw Kop. French made no attempt to brush this obstacle aside, but, leaving a squadron of the 16th Lancers to watch the low kopjes and guard his flank until the mounted infantry should relieve them, pushed on.

General Pole-Carew was round the base of Leeuw Kop with his advance guard and about 2 p.m. occupied the farmstead with the many corrals. The column had started with definite orders from Lord Roberts "to render untenable" the farms of such men who, having surrendered, were proved to be still in league with the enemy or were but making use of British magnanimity as a means to save their property while they still actively favoured the enemy. The time had come when it was absolutely impossible to separate from the operations the iron hand of war. There was nothing vindictive in the episodes which marked the advance of the column, but our leniency had been so abused that it had become imperative, to ensure the safety of our communications, that all treachery should be punished to the full measure. Farmers had returned to their farms, signed the oath of submission, and then packed their sons and understrappers back to the Boer laagers. Homesteads, the owners of which had received passes, were used simply as cover for detached parties of the enemy skulking within our lines. White flags were generously displayed in several cases as decoys to lure on some unsuspecting patrol. This war has to come to a finish. Leniency but tends to prolong the struggle. The impression seems to have gained ground amongst the burghers that they can level a rifle until the hostile advance guard is upon their thresholds, that they can then surrender and wait until the rearguard is past, to slip back

again to the firing-line. The surrender has been used as a subterfuge to save property from confiscation or destruction. The Boer authorities have aided the burghers in the scheme ; have permitted them to return, with the understanding that, as soon as their property was secure, they would rejoin. The Presidents have been shrewd enough to see that to be assured against loss of this world's goods was the best inducement which could be brought upon the burghers to struggle on. Independence means little to them in comparison with the security of their farms. They have now to learn that their property is not secure. The farmer in question had bedecked his homestead with a white flag. The enemy failed to respect this, and the farm in consequence was given to the torch. In a neighbouring dwelling a small magazine of rifle ammunition was discovered. This was sufficient evidence to convict the owner, and his stock passed from his possession into that of the British Government.

The histories of war are not wanting in precedents which give warranty to the action which the Boers themselves have forced upon Lord Roberts. The Field-Marshal has been patient in his dealings with them. Reprisals, which have long been justified, have until now been deferred. Whether they will be continued or not rests with the Boers themselves.

The cavalry on Monday night advanced as far as Paardekraal (Eerst Geluk), a spruit, which must not be confused with the hill of the same name which General Stevenson's Brigade carried on the preceding evening. As the infantry division moved up, Roberts's Horse relieved the squadron of 16th Lancers on the left. As the relief took place the enemy's long-range fire became more brisk and a heavy Maxim opened on the Mounted Infantry. Roberts's Horse pushed forward and the enemy fell back from their original ground to a succeeding ridge. Major Brazier-Creagh took a company forward and succeeded in making the summit of one end of a long hog's-back kopje. The enemy maintained their hold on the far end and some stubborn fighting ensued, neither skirmishers being able to advance and neither caring to give way. Major Brazier-Creagh, unfortunately, received a wound to which he succumbed three days later. The colonel of the 14th Hussars, forming the cavalry rearguard, brought his regiment to support Roberts's Horse. A squadron occupied the kopje which the Boers had originally held, and another squadron galloped over a saddle into the plain intervening between the two positions, in the hope that it would be able to cut the enemy off. But the latter had again skilfully chosen the position for their automatic gun, and, as the infantry were by this time going into camp, the men were withdrawn, the 2nd Coldstreams being left to occupy the position from which the enemy had originally been dislodged. Roberts's Horse fell back under fire with about half-a-dozen casualties.

On Tuesday, April 24, the cavalry moved off across the huge plain, which lies between Paardekraal and Roode Kop. From Roode Kop General French anticipated that he would be able to obtain heliographic communication with General Rundle. The Dewetsdorp road, three miles to the north of Roode Kop, passes over a nek in a low ledge of hill which intersects the great plain. To the north of this ledge rises another of those clumps of stony hills which are peculiar to the Southern Free State. This one was occupied by the enemy, presumably the same observation force under Lemmer which had fallen back from Leeuw Kop. The latter was in no one's possession, but as a dismounted squadron of the 9th Lancers gained the crest of the principal height in the ledge they came under fire from a reinforcement of Boers, under Commandant Fourie, who had left Dewetsdorp that morning with instructions from Commandant Louis Botha to hold the cavalry in check while he withdrew the force from the lines in front of General Rundle. The 9th Lancers were first upon the hill, being speedily followed by a dismounted squadron of the 8th Hussars, who occupied a more southern knoll. The enemy had the advantage of an underfeature and concentrated a cruel fire upon Willoughby's squadron of the 9th. But though exposed the troopers maintained the crest. The 8th could not stand the cross-fire and came back from the hill-top in successive waves—back to the led horses. General French saw that if he did not reinforce at once the ridge might temporarily be lost. Two more regiments of cavalry and two 1-pounder Maxims were pushed up the ridge. This reinforcement took time, and in the meantime the Hon. C. H. C. Willoughby's squadron of the 9th was losing heavily, as the enemy were working round their left and enfilading them with a bitter fire. Lieutenant Stanley and Lieutenant V. Brooke and 75 per cent. of the men in the firing line were hit. The enemy had just made the crest of a knoll to the left, self-contained by the ridge, and commanding the boulders between which the dismounted Lancers found cover. The range of this knoll was taken by the 1-pounder Maxim section on Roode Kop—2,800 yards. A sighting-shot was fired ; the little projectile burst on the hill-side, short. Then another and another. The little white puffs crept up to where we could see the black forms of the Boers growing thick upon the skyline. The last sighting-shot fell among them. They paused. "Now let them have a belt!" came the phlegmatic voice of the gunner officer. Twenty-five shots guttered like five. A moment's pause, and the reverse of the hill top was a semi-circle of burst percussion projectiles. The effect was magical. The Boers disappeared at once, but the frontal attack was still continuing. By the merest chance our reinforcements made the crest line before the Boers. The latter were actually galloping up the reverse

incline as the dismounted troopers of the 14th Hussars and 7th Dragoon Guards threw themselves down on their stomachs upon the summit. It is not often that cavalry has such a chance. The Boers checked and tried to hold their own by dismounting. Then half a dozen remounted and ran the gauntlet of the fire ; then a dozen ; then the whole sixty to a hundred. Away across the open they streamed—across a plain as flat as the palm of a man's hand. The troopers stood upright and emptied their magazines on the flying horsemen. A Maxim sent all the dust dancing in their line of retreat, and a belt full of 1-pounders caused them to open out and change direction. Subsequent evidence gleaned in Dewetsdorp proved that the cavalry killed seven and wounded 24 of them. Our own casualties were about similar, the majority being in the one squadron of the 9th Lancers. Captain P. R. Denny, K.D.G.'s, was the only British officer killed. There was but little opposition after this. At 11 o'clock General French was in heliographic communication with General Rundle, from whom he learned that the enemy were already reducing their front and detaching various commandos. As this probably meant that they were evacuating with their laagers General French issued orders in which he intimated that it was his intention that the cavalry should reach the Modder drifts that night (Tuesday). But owing to the fact that small groups of the enemy hung upon our left flank and that there was a difficult saddle to cross, the cavalry never made the drifts, but encamped at a farm and spruit called Grootfontein, ten miles from Dewetsdorp. The infantry occupied Reitfontein, a farm situated in the vast plain, five miles in the rear.

On Wednesday morning the first sun brought us the intelligence that the Boers had completely withdrawn from Dewetsdorp and that General Chermside had occupied their position. We pushed down into the Modder Valley. A few horsemen fired upon our advance guard and then followed the wagons into the hills. We had been 24 hours too late. By noon we had joined General Rundle at Dewetsdorp. General French at once despatched one of his cavalry brigades and the Yeomanry under Brabazon to move south upon Wepener, but before nightfall we heard of the town's release. It appears that the Boers themselves, especially De Wet, had become alarmed at their position. They could not understand why Lord Roberts had taken their movement so quietly. Commandant Louis Botha was sent down to study the situation. He passed through the Waterworks on Monday, the day before General Ian Hamilton occupied them, and on arrival at Dewetsdorp had the news of the skirmishing at Leeuwkop. He realized the situation and ordered a strategic withdrawal upon Ladybrand at once from all quarters, Wepener included. The artistic manner in which the withdrawal was conducted and the various containing forces were sent out to watch and handicap both advances from Bloemfontein, prove Louis Botha to be a general of more than commonplace ability.

24th May 1900.

THE ORANGE FREE STATE AND PRESIDENT KRUGER'S POLICY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BLOEMFONTEIN, APRIL 25.

Few chapters in the history of the development of that anti-British movement which finally culminated in the present war in South Africa could be more interesting than that dealing with the political relations between the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

Both Republics had their origin in the Great Trek. But, though both sprang from that movement of discontent with British rule such as it was in the thirties, there was a great difference in the degree of the discontent. A large section of the emigrant farmers was composed of men of adventurous nomadic habits, impatient of all control, and bitterly hostile to all those elements of modern civilization which British influence represented. It was these who, when in 1848 direct sovereignty over the country between the Orange and Vaal rivers was resumed by Sir Harry Smith, decided to cross over into the then almost unknown regions beyond the latter river, and founded various turbulent little States carved out of territories conquered from the natives. These ultimately coalesced into a single republic, which assumed to itself the ambitious title of the South African Republic. Those, on the other hand, whose grievances had been largely temporary and local, and who realized the advantages of some form of stable government, remained in the fertile country south of the Vaal, and, being joined by many immigrants, Dutch, English, and German, became the fathers of the Free Staters of the present generation. Thus there was from the very first a great difference of character between the two Republics, and for many years after the retrocession of the Free State intercourse between it and Cape Colony was much closer than between it and the Transvaal. In 1854 the Orange River Sovereignty was, against the wishes of the whole population, ordered to be independent. The emigrant farmers took to their new independence regretfully, but sturdily determined withal to make the best of their new position. Their feeling towards the British Government, though not without a tinge of resentment, was, on the whole, friendly. Nor was that friendliness seriously lessened either by our interference to preserve the Basutos from annexation by the Free Staters in 1868 or by the award which gave to Cape Colony

the disputed diamond fields districts in exchange for a compensation of £90,000. At the same time, there grew up in South Africa during the sixties and seventies a Dutch nationalist aspiration, aiming at the ultimate creation of an united Dutch South Africa from which English rule should be eliminated. This aspiration was chiefly fostered by foreign immigrants, Hollanders and Germans, who came to seek their fortunes in the Republics, and by some of the more educated among the Cape Dutch who had studied in Europe and there imbibed the views about nationalism which were in fashion with the generation that followed the half-nationalist, half-liberal movement of 1848. Conspicuous among these were men like Carl Borckenhagen, a talented, ambitious, and unscrupulous German, who, through the medium of his journal, the *Bloemfontein Express*, and still more through the enormous secret influence he exercised over President Reitz and his successor Steyn, devoted all his powers to the propagation of the nationalist idea of hatred of England; F. W. Reitz, a rising advocate in Cape Colony, who afterwards rose to become Chief Justice and President of the Free State, and is now State Secretary of the Transvaal; the Rev. S. J. du Toit, editor of the *Patriot*—since converted to a sounder appreciation of what the future welfare of South Africa demands. It was these three men who in 1882 founded the Afrikander Bond. In President Burgers, too, with his magnificent plans for the future development of the South African Republic, these views found a typical representative. How vague and indefinite those aspirations were, and how little they availed when brought face to face with the hard realities of Kaffir warfare and an empty exchequer, was shown by the readiness with which Burgers and the leading men of the Transvaal submitted to annexation by Shepstone's handful of policemen in 1877.

It was the revolt of 1881, the series of defeats inflicted on British regulars by a handful of Afrikander farmers, and the short-sighted and unexpected surrender of Mr. Gladstone's Government that gave the nationalist aspiration a chapter in history, a new hope, and—in Paul Kruger—a leader.

During the war of 1881 large numbers of Free Staters and colonials flocked to the Transvaal to join their kinsfolk. In the Free State many petitions were signed and addressed to President Brand expressing sympathy with the Boers and asking the President's intervention. On February 7, 1881, Kruger sent from Heidelberg a long appeal for intervention or assistance to President Brand, ending with a passage which may well be quoted as summing up the object of Kruger's policy from that day to this:—"Freedom shall rise in South Africa, as the sun from the morning clouds, as freedom rose in the United States of America. Then shall it be, from the Zambesi to Simons Bay, Africa for the Afrikander." Brand offered his mediation, which the British Government, glad to get out of the scrape as best it could, eagerly accepted. At the Newcastle conference Brand practically dictated the terms to which both parties were to submit. But, though Brand's sympathies inclined towards the revolted burghers of the Transvaal, he still remained a friend to Great Britain. He was far too sagacious to be led astray by the nationalist delirium which the war awakened among the Dutch all over South Africa. He did all in his power to discountenance the Bond advocated by Borckenhagen and Reitz as only calculated to cause future mischief. His sane far-seeing policy was guided by a sincere patriotism which looked not only to the Orange Free State, but to the whole of South Africa. But he steadily refused to take part in any ambitious policy which could interfere with the natural social and material development of his own State, which under his rule became a very model of honest liberal and progressive administration, or of any other part of South Africa. He looked on the British power as a friendly factor—a factor essential to the development of those portions of South Africa which it had retained under its control. Brand's comparatively early death in 1888 was one of the greatest misfortunes that ever befell South Africa, as it left the field clear for Paul Kruger. From the very first Kruger was determined not to rest content with the settlement secured for the Transvaal by President Brand. Through the weakness of Lord Derby he secured its modification by peaceful means in 1884. But the reaction which followed in England and which led to the despatch of the Warren expedition in the following year convinced him that he had now got as much out of Great Britain as he was ever likely to get by peaceful request, and that henceforward he must look to political intrigue and physical force to help him in his further plans. For a time the poverty of the country, internal dissensions, and the task of maintaining himself in power—an object which in his eyes has always ranked above all else, above even the destruction of the British power in South Africa—kept him quiet. In 1886 came the discovery of the Witwatersrand with its promise of immeasurable wealth, to be used not only to keep the President in office, but also to carry out by the practical instruments of armed force and lavish intrigue the vague ambitions once cherished by President Burgers. The Delagoa Bay railway scheme initiated by Burgers was now taken in hand by Kruger with characteristic determination and unscrupulousness, and as an essential preliminary the Portuguese Government was driven into breaking its faith with the English company which had got the concession for the railway to the Transvaal border. The objects Kruger kept before his eyes in those years—before the Uitlander question had become acute and before the Transvaal had been completely hedged in on all sides;

years when ambition was still sanguine and looked forward to a future of gradual expansion and absorption at the cost of Great Britain rather than to a last desperate struggle for supremacy—were twofold. On the one hand, his aim was to connect the Transvaal with the sea, not only through Delagoa Bay, but by the actual extension of its territory to the coast through Zululand or Amatongaland, so that it should have its own harbour and become economically free both of Portugal and the British colonies, and be able to enter into more direct relations with European Powers which might support it against England; and, on the other hand, to arm his own burghers and render the Free State economically and politically so completely dependent on the Transvaal that, when the time should come either for throwing off the London Convention or for annexing some piece of disputed territory necessary for his schemes, he should have at his back a military Power with which no British Government, such as British Governments then were, would dare to try the issue of war.

In 1887 two secret conferences took place between the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, dealing with various economical and political questions. Nothing could give a clearer idea of Kruger's policy towards the Free State than some brief account of these meetings. The first conference took place in President Kruger's house at Pretoria on May 31 and the next two days. There were present on the one side President Kruger with his State Secretary and State Attorney, Messrs. Bok and Leyds, and a commission of the Transvaal Volksraad consisting of Messrs. F. Wolmarans, Klopper, Taljaard, Lombaard, and Spies, and on the other side a deputation from the Free State Volksraad composed of Messrs. Fraser, Klynveld, and Myburgh. The Transvaal representatives are very typical. Above them all stands out the President, who practically leads the whole conference; knowing exactly what he wants, indifferent to argument, returning again and again to the same point, however often refuted; incapable of conviction, though ready as a last resort to lower his demands step by step and claim that he has made a great concession—the same Kruger as 12 years later at Bloemfontein, only here not on the defensive against a superior intellect and a will as strong as his own, but active, persuasive, impassioned, speaking among men more capable of submitting to his influence. At his side is the smooth plausible young Hollander Leyds, taking no part in the debate, but making his influence discernible in almost every argument. The commission represents Kruger's stalwarts in the Volksraad, the men chosen for their unquestioning fidelity to the hand that has fed them and kept them in their places, for their narrow religious and political prejudices and for their genuine hatred of England. Just as the Transvaal representatives for most purposes mean President Kruger, so the Free Staters mean Mr. J. G. Fraser. Son of one of those Scotch Presbyterian clergymen who came out to South Africa in the middle of the century to supply the intellectual deficiencies of the Dutch Reformed Church, Mr. Fraser entered the Free State as a young man, and threw in his lot unreservedly with the country of his adoption, rapidly attracting President Brand's attention and becoming his right hand man, his political *alter ego*, in which capacity he came on this occasion to Pretoria. After Brand's death Mr. Fraser resolutely continued the tradition of Brand's policy, but unfortunately, as year by year the influence of the noisier and extremer party led by Reitz and Borckenhagen, and afterwards by Steyn, prevailed, his own hold grew weaker. In vain Mr. Fraser for years prophesied the inevitable result of following the mischievous policy of the Transvaal. The mass of the burghers, swayed by sentiment and deluded by their belief in England's weakness, refused to heed his warnings. And now Mr. Fraser has lived to see the little State with which he has so long been identified, and which owes so much to him, throw away its independence in defence of an unworthy and hopeless cause. Since the occupation of Bloemfontein he has thrown in his lot unreservedly with the Imperial Government, knowing that that Government has fought for the same principles for which he and President Brand laboured in the past, and knowing that he would be untrue to himself if he joined the men who have sold their country to President Kruger in a last desperate struggle on behalf of the policy which all his life he has opposed. Mr. Fraser is not yet, politically speaking, an old man, and one may hope that under another flag—a flag no less free than the orange-striped flag of the Free State—he may be able once more to resume the work that was left unfinished and neglected for less profitable things after the death of President Brand.

The object with which the Free State deputies had come was a single and straightforward one—to arrange for a general treaty of amity and commerce which should bring the two kindred States closer together, and more especially to come to some agreement with regard to the scheme of building a railway across the Free State from Cape Colony to join on to a proposed Transvaal railway from the Vaal to the Witwatersrand and Pretoria. By this railway the Free State hoped both to develop its natural resources and to make a profit from the large through traffic that was expected to spring up between the Cape ports and the gold mines. How justified that expectation was has been shown by the economic progress made by the Free State since the railway was built, and by the fact that at the present day, of a total revenue of about £650,000, £325,000, or exactly one-half, represents the earnings of the railway. Another suggestion the deputation had

come to urge upon the Transvaal was that of joining a general South African Customs Union. Both these suggestions met with Kruger's strongest disapproval. They meant bringing South Africa together, linking the Free State in closer commercial, social, and political relationship with the British possessions, instead of bringing it into completer dependence on the Transvaal. More than that, it meant English commerce and English immigration on the Rand, and threatened to swamp his carefully-fostered schemes for the Delagoa Railway and for German and Hollander immigration. Throughout the whole series of discussions at the conference the contrast between the attitude of Kruger and the Free State Deputies is very striking. The latter have come to discuss in a straightforward matter of fact way certain economical matters of vital interest to both Republics. For Kruger and his commissioners these are all questions of high politics, to be judged according as they fit in, or clash with, a certain mysterious secret policy to which allusions are constantly dropped. In fact, while the Free Staters talk like business politicians, the Transvaalers talk like stage conspirators. Reading the minutes of these conferences as I have had an opportunity of doing, one can almost picture Kruger storming and fuming at the assumed *naïveté* with which Mr. Fraser passes over all his allusions to the "enemy," to "eventualities" or to "independence," and argues just as if there were no reason for the Transvaal not being on the best of terms with the British Government. On the railway question Kruger insists that the Free State shall not construct, or even sanction, its railway, or, at any rate, the part connecting Bloemfontein with Cape Colony, before the Delagoa Railway is completed. Delagoa Bay must be the port for the Free State, and not an English port which would let in English trade and bring English influences into the land. For in Kruger's eyes English trade is the worst form of ruin. It must be kept out of the Republics at all costs. To quote his own metaphorical language :—"For the little sheep my door is open ; but the wolf I mean to keep out." Or, as another member of his commission puts it :—"What need have we of the Colony and its importation ? The trade they represent to us as life and prosperity is our death. We Republics are strong enough ; let us go together." Against such arguments it is useless for the Free Staters to plead that the line is an urgent necessity for them, and that there is no sign of the Delagoa Railway being completed for years to come, or to ask whether the Transvaal is quite indifferent to Free State interests, as long as it can get the Free State under its control. Kruger entreats them to wait, vows that railways are a delusion and a snare, that for the present the Free State is much better without one, that to join with Cape Colony now will ruin the Delagoa Railway or any railway he may wish to build to a harbour yet to be acquired. In time, he promises them, they shall have a great railway system radiating all over South Africa from Pretoria, but not before the Transvaal has made itself absolutely independent of English political influence and English trade.

Delagoa is a life and death question for us. Help us ! If you hook on to the colony you cut our throat. . . . How can our State exist without the Delagoa Railway ? . . . Keep free ! We shall help you, even with a contribution if necessary. I wish to share with you, but if you refuse, go ! We shall build, if it takes us ten years. The Lord rules ! If the Free State will not work with us, we shall make our own harbour on our own borders. . . . If you build your line I will not let it join mine.

As for the Customs Union.Kruger declares that the Transvaal could never enter it unless it had its own harbour and was free of its dependence on the convention. As things are the English will only use their position to swindle the Transvaal of its proper share in the receipts. He entreats the Free State to keep clear of such a union.

No Customs Union ! Customs unions are made between equal States with equal access to harbours, but where one is master and the other dependent there can be no union. We are striving to settle the question of our own harbour peacefully.

Mr. Fraser sceptically remarks that a harbour requires forts and ships and soldiers and sailors to man them, or else it would be at the mercy of the first passing gunboat. Kruger, somewhat nettled, replies that, once the Transvaal has a harbour, foreign Powers can intervene in its affairs. The Transvaal must get into touch with foreign Powers in view of eventualities.

The strength of our position lies in our making the British Government understand that the Republics hold together. Then we can be sure that we will be taken into account. . . . Let us speak frankly. We are not going to be dependent on England. Take no railway union—remain without a railway. That is better than to take of their money. The future will provide greater blessings if you work with us. Let them keep their money. Let them not bind you. The Lord reigns —none other—the deliverance is near at hand.

So, too, Mr. F. Wolmarans :—

We must look at the matter from the political standpoint of our independence. We have had much experience of her Majesty's Government, and we will and must shake ourselves free and become independent. We are still insufficiently prepared (*ongerust*). We wish to get to the sea, more especially with an eye to future complications. Let us first get to the sea and achieve our independence. Wait a few years. Why are we to-day worried at Delagoa ? English influence ! They wish to keep us in bonds and dependence ; that is what we struggle against. . . . You know our secret policy. We cannot treat the colony as we would treat you. The colony would destroy us. It is not the Dutch there that we are fighting against. Time shall show what we mean to do with them ; for the present we must keep them off.

These extracts give some idea of the hopes and fears that animated President Kruger and his followers in 1887. They hardly suggest the theory, so common among those whose knowledge

of South African affairs begins with New Year's Day, 1896, that Kruger bore no ill-will to England or the English, before the bitter disillusionment of the Jameson raid.

As a result of the conference, the Volksraad on June 3, in secret session, passed a resolution authorizing the Government to make a secret treaty with the Free State by which each State should bind itself not to build railways to its frontiers without the consent of the other—the eastern and northern frontiers of the Transvaal being excepted. The railway from Pretoria to Bloemfontein was, however, to be proceeded with. Neither party was to enter into a customs union without consent of the other ; the Transvaal was to pay the Free State £20,000 annually as compensation for loss incurred by not having the railway to Cape Colony. As consideration for all these remarkable favours the Free State was to bind itself in an offensive and defensive alliance with the Transvaal. Such a treaty, which would simply have enslaved the Free State to the Transvaal, was, of course, rejected by the Free State Volksraad. But Kruger was not to be defeated so easily. In October he came, accompanied by Leyds and another deputation, to meet President Brand at Bloemfontein, and a series of meetings took place between October 6 and October 22. At the very outset of the first meeting Kruger insists that all the negotiations must keep in view as their aim the independence of the South African Republic—it was no use discussing matters from any other standpoint. Kruger had come with the avowed intention not only of discussing railway and similar matters, but also of promoting a closer union between the Republics. Brand accordingly begins by suggesting a treaty of permanent friendship and free trade between the two Republics containing a number of practical and useful provisions. For Kruger, who was only thinking how he could get the rifles of the Free Staters at his disposal, Brand's sensible proposals were very insufficient, and on the next day—October 7—he replied by asserting that in view of the common enemy and the dangers threatening the Republics, an offensive and defensive alliance was an essential preliminary to any other form of closer union. Brand replied that, as far as the offensive was concerned, he would never be a party to attacking anybody's territory, and as for the defensive, where was the pressing danger or the common foe ? The Free State was on excellent terms with all its neighbours. Nor would the Transvaal have any need for such an alliance if only its policy remained peaceful and cautious. Finding, however, that Kruger still pressed for some more definite bond between the two States than his own treaty, Brand went a step beyond Kruger himself and suggested a Federal Union, of which he communicated a draft constitution on October 12.

This constitution, mainly modelled on that of the United States, gave into the hands of a President and a Federal Raad composed of an equal number of members from each Republic foreign relations, the power of peace and war, customs, coinage, power of raising federal taxes, promulgating federal commando laws, and constituting a Federal Supreme Court. Two-thirds of the Federal Raad, moreover, had the power of declaring inoperative any law of either of the Volksraads which it considered against the interests of the confederacy. The consent of Great Britain was to be obtained to a modification of the restrictions of the London Convention. It is difficult to say how far Brand was altogether serious or how far he wished to satisfy the closer-union section among his own burghers while at the same time completely nonplussing Kruger. There was nothing inherently absurd in such a scheme. The Transvaal and Free State were in those days much more alike and more equal in population and wealth than they have since become. Such a union would undoubtedly have had great results. Whether it would have remained separate or paved the way to a wider South African union is uncertain. What is certain is that the Uitlander question and the conflict with Great Britain would never have become so acute. The policy which the Transvaal subsequently adopted was entirely that of Kruger and the reactionary party which he just managed to keep in power by every device that the dispensation of office and the control of secret funds rendered possible. The policy of the confederation would almost certainly have been liberal to the Uitlander and less ambitious of picking a quarrel with England. But federation would have not only damped the ambitions Kruger was resolved to translate into action, but would also have deprived himself, Paul Kruger, of the power he had wielded and was determined to wield for the future. Not Kruger, but Brand or some other moderate would be chosen Federal President. That Kruger saw at once. That was not what he wanted. Then, as ever since, he wanted the resources of the Free State to be at his disposal, but had no mind to let the Free State have a voice in directing his policy. He knew well enough that by an offensive and defensive alliance he could pursue his schemes unhindered and uncriticized, while at the same time he could at any critical moment always rely on national sentiment to keep the Free State to its treaty obligation. His attitude at the conference is an interesting one. He does not like openly to combat so fair-seeming a proposal for that closer union of which he has been making so much. He expresses warm approval, but hints difficulties and delays,suggests that it would take years to work out a constitution acceptable to both Volksraads. Provisionally, at any rate, it would be best to secure things by the offensive and defensive alliance, or, if Brand objects

strongly, by an alliance by which each State should be bound to defend the other's independence with all its might, and in less important internal or external troubles allow volunteers to go over the border and help its neighbour. It is worth noting that even in 1887 Kruger thought it desirable to secure external aid in order to suppress by force any movement either of Uitlanders or his own Boers, which might be directed against his despotic Government. Brand declares that such an alliance is contrary to all rules of international law, that every State is supposed to manage its internal affairs by itself, and that one cannot ask the citizens of one State to do police duty or interfere in internal disputes in another. Besides, such a treaty might make the Free State a belligerent in a quarrel in which it had no idea of involving itself. The very furthest Brand will go is to conclude a treaty, to be in force till federation is accomplished, by which each State shall help the other with all its might if it thinks it unjustly attacked, but reserves to itself the right to decide whether it can help best by force of arms or by friendly mediation. Returning to his own scheme, he presents a draft treaty by which each State is to bind itself to try and get the federal constitution passed in its Volksraad within two years, and to use its best endeavours with her Majesty's Government to get the articles of the London Convention so modified that they need not affect the confederation. At this stage Kruger disingenuously asserts that his Volksraad has given him no power in the matter—in direct contradiction to his own previous statements, as Brand indignantly points out—and the subject drops. The result of the conference was that Kruger retired beaten, Brand having made it quite clear that he would not let the Free State be dragged into Kruger's policy or give up his power of independent action as regards either the railway or a Customs Union.

In the following year Brand died and was succeeded by Reitz. For a while Brand's influence in the Volksraad was strong enough to act as a check on Reitz's desire to subordinate Free State interests to Transvaal ambitions. Transvaal maladministration and the exclusive policy adopted towards the Uitlanders, many of whom were Free Staters, offended a large section among the more thoughtful people in the Free State. Nevertheless in 1889 Reitz succeeded in concluding a conditional defensive alliance with Kruger at Potchefstroom; and as Brand's influence died away the doctrines of Pan-Afrikanderdom, as expounded by the new President and still more eloquently confirmed by the growing wealth and power of the Transvaal, found ready acceptance. How far this change of sentiment had gone by the autumn of 1895, when Reitz resigned owing to mental breakdown, is shown by the fact that in the preliminary selection in the Volksraad of candidates for the Presidency only 19 votes were given to Mr. Fraser as against 41 given to Mr. Steyn, an out-and-out follower of the extreme Afrikander doctrine as preached by Reitz and Borckenhagen. In the interval between this selection and the actual election came the Jameson raid. Fraser, who had for years condemned Kruger's policy towards the Uitlanders and could not, therefore, enter into the denunciation of the raid with the same unqualified fervour of invective as Steyn, was disastrously beaten. Transvaal money is believed to have played no small part in the expenses of that election. Immediately after the raid the Free State Volksraad passed a resolution setting aside the Potchefstroom treaty and declaring that the Free State burghers should be at the disposal of the Transvaal if its independence were endangered from without or within. In the following year Steyn went to Pretoria, where he was received with tremendous enthusiasm and welcomed as the destined President of the United Republics. A definite treaty of offensive and defensive alliance was now concluded—the treaty under the terms of which the Free State declared war upon Great Britain two years later. It was in vain that the moderate party, headed by Fraser, protested and declared that there could be only one outcome of a policy whose whole object was to strengthen the Transvaal in its resolve to suppress the Uitlanders and defy the British Government—namely, war and the destruction of the Republics. In a speech to his constituents on March 17, 1898, Mr. Fraser condemned in the strongest language the misrule and corruption in the Transvaal, and, reviewing the whole history of the relations between the two Republics, denounced President Steyn for having sacrificed to a spurious sentiment the proud and independent position won for the Free State by President Brand, and for having reduced the Free State to be a vassal of the South African Republic, enjoying the extreme privilege of fighting its enemies and policing its citizens without having a voice in its affairs. The alliance was a sham which was destined to ruin both States. To quote Mr. Fraser's own words :—

> To what purpose have we got this alliance? Do we deceive anybody by that alliance? No, we are deceiving ourselves and deceiving our neighbours of the South African Republic. . . . I do not consider that the Government of the South African Republic is in a position to maintain our independence against any Great Power, nor do I consider that the Government of the Orange Free State is in a position to maintain the independence of the South African Republic against any Great Power by force of arms with the slightest chance of success. I say our strength lies in our weakness, in the position which we hold, and the convention which we have with the mightiest Power in the world, the Power which is guided by a sense of justice and righteousness, the Power which will not interfere with what has been conceded us in the convention to which they are parties as long as we act up to the conditions which this convention imposes upon us.

Mr. Fraser's protests fell on deaf ears. President Kruger and his agents at Bloemfontein had

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completely persuaded the people of the Free State that no British Government would dare to challenge the combined forces of the two Republics to the issue of war, and that beyond diplomatic protests there would be no interference with Kruger's policy as long as the Republics held closely together.

The Bloemfontein conference made some pretence at reviving the old mediating policy of President Brand. But it was only a pretence. There was no attempt at impartiality; still less could the Free State, bound hand and foot as it was by treaty, bring any real pressure to bear on its ally. Mr. Abraham Fischer, a plausible, ambitious lawyer, attended the sittings of the conference professedly as interpreter, really in order to mislead the Free State Volksraad as to what passed. It was upon his account of the proceedings that the Volksraad voted its resolution expressing its complete satisfaction at Kruger's first proposals. In the subsequent negotiations Fischer, while actively engaged on peace missions, did no little to make peace impossible. It was he who in August went to Pretoria and urged Kruger to refuse the proposal for a joint commission as an unwarrantable interference with his independence. Undoubtedly it was the attitude of Messrs. Steyn and Fischer and of the Volksraad which they swayed that more than anything else strengthened President Kruger in his resolve to resist the British demands. The history of the last few months, the secret session of the Free State Volksraad, where President Steyn openly accused the British Agent at Pretoria of having deceived and misled Mr. Smuts, the correspondence with Sir A. Milner ordering him to withdraw British troops from the Republican frontiers, the wholesale annexation of British territory and commandeering of British subjects to fight against their allegiance are too recent and well known to require fuller treatment. Never in history has the independence of a small, prosperous, and well-governed State been more wantonly and light-heartedly thrown away by its rulers than in the case of the Orange Free State. That independence cannot be formally restored. No one who knows South Africa would dare suggest such a retrocession. The one satisfactory feature in the situation in the Free State is that the policy which led to the war was largely the policy of a few leading people who had worked on the popular sentiment; it did not depend, as in the Transvaal, on a false and corrupt system of government, on the attempt of one section of the population to suppress the other. The Free State need undergo no fundamental change of political principle, no clean sweep, under the British flag. It will be as free as ever to continue all those traditions of political equality, liberality to strangers, devotion to progress, material and mental, established by President Brand which once made the Free State the model State of South Africa.

THE RATIFICATION OF MARTIAL LAW.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, MAY 8.

One of the most important questions to come before the Cape Parliament when it meets next month will be that of ratifying acts done and sentences passed during the period of martial law, such sentences and acts being according to English law legally invalid, or even rendering the officers carrying them out liable to prosecution for wrongful assault or illegal detention, unless ratified by a special Act of the Legislature. The question is at this moment before the Natal Legislative Assembly, and there is no reason to believe that the passing of the necessary Act will be much more than a legal formality. But there is no doubt that in this colony a very strong attempt will be made by some of the Bond members to try and prevent any such ratification, even at the cost of breaking up the present Ministry. The Bond organ, *Ons Land*, to-day publishes a letter by an anonymous correspondent which is interesting as casting a light both on Dutch sentiment and on the political situation. The letter, to which *Ons Land* prefixes the heading "The Ratification of Military Atrocities," runs as follows:—

Sir,—In your issue of Tuesday last you say that Parliament will be asked to confirm the acts of the military under so-called martial law.

We should like to know from what quarter such a proposal is to come. Rumour has it that the present Ministry are minded to make this proposal. It is almost incredible that men who have been supported by the Afrikanders through thick and thin should deal them such a blow in their very faces, but the idea of the merest possibility of such a thing is most painful.

Can the Ministry think it possible that Afrikanders, men who express their profoundest abhorrence of the deeds of the military and of men like Crewe and the Johannesburg reformers, should support such a proposal? Are we to insult those of our own flesh and blood by approving their illegal imprisonment and the robbery of their goods? Are we to rob our own brothers of the chance of an appeal to a higher authority? Do they expect us to ratify the savage destruction of property, the illegal treatment of our kinsfolk, the shameless plunder of their homesteads and farms? Are brothers of the same household to approve that their own should be condemned without due trial to do convict labour for five or ten years in districts where they have been formerly held in honour? What do they think of us? Truly one feels degraded by the very thought that any body could believe that we should approve to-morrow the atrocities we condemn to-day.

On whom does the Ministry reckon for support in this? On the jingoes? Alas! has it come to that?

I think our people must make their representatives in Parliament fully understand that they are expected to keep their hands from such a deed, and to make the Ministry understand that there are limits to Afrikander endurance. Are we to make ourselves hypocrites before God and men? Shall we let posterity scorn us?

It is suggested that the Ministry makes it a condition of staying in office that such a proposal is to be accepted by Parliament. If this is the case, I trust our representatives have enough character to say, "Let the heavens fall, but never in all eternity shall we give our approval to injustice, atrocity, and savagery." It is justice raises a nation. Therein lies our hope for the future, and not in political support bought at the price of selling our consciences and degrading our character.

In a leading article *Ons Land* draws attention to the letter, which it describes as a "powerful letter which we trust our readers will study with care . . . the gentlemen in Parliament, above all, should read it attentively." It is impossible to judge whether the letter is merely the ebullition of a private correspondent, or a veiled appeal from one of the leaders of the movement within the Bond to oust Mr. Schreiner from office, which has been growing slowly ever since the outbreak of the war. Mr. Schreiner's action in adding his signature to the High Commissioner's proclamations, in sanctioning the raising of local forces, especially that of the native levies in the native reserves of the Eastern Province, in taking off the meat duty for the benefit of the Uitlander refugees, in assenting to make the relief of Mafeking a public holiday, and Mr. Solomon's straightforward refusal to use his position as Attorney-General for the purpose of manipulating the law in favour of rebels taken in open fight or of trying to interfere with the operations of martial law, have deeply offended the majority of the supporters of the Ministry, who look upon any assistance to the Imperial authorities as an overt act of treason against the Afrikander nation. The prominence *Ons Land* gives to its anonymous correspondent certainly suggests the possibility of an open rupture in the ranks of the Ministerial party when the Session opens.

2nd June 1900.

THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, MARCH 31.

We have lived for so many months now under the conditions which govern a town during siege that we have become unconsciously identified with existing circumstances. We have ceased to wonder at the shortness of our rations, content to recognize that we might grumble from sunrise to sunset and gain nothing by it. We are no longer surprised at the enemy; they seem to take the siege as a joke, but it is a comedy which has a tragic lining, and it seems just now as though they might be supporting the unfortunate parts—those characters that are usually killed off before the curtain falls. We have astounding spirit; there is no question of the gravity of our situation; there is no doubt that if we were to relax our vigilance for a moment, if we were to withdraw an outpost, diminish the establishment of some trench, the Boers would be in upon us before the garrison had realized that any such alteration in the defences had taken place. Nevertheless, there is really an admirable exhibition of almost uncomplaining acquiescence in the hardships which have fallen to our daily lot. Here and there there is grumbling; but the man who grumbles to-day rejoices to-morrow, since no siege can be endured with fortitude and determination if one dwells unduly long upon the difficulties and trials which beset us. Lately we had an exhibition, and many people in the garrison have consumed the past three weeks in a feverish and untiring activity to complete their exhibits. Ladies accomplished something rather fine in lace-work, the men turned their attention to constructing models of the town's defences, and one and all entered into this little break in the monotony of the siege with the cheering intention of getting as much out of the event as was posssible. Prizes varying from £5 to a sovereign were offered, and indirectly each endeavoured to foster the spirit of the town. It had a beneficial effect, this artificial method of killing time, and it realized some £50 for the hospital. There have been other things besides the exhibition to stimulate the spirits of the garrison. Native runners brought us the news of the fall of Bloemfontein, a feature in the campaign which adds fresh laurels to the reputation of Lord Roberts. His continued successes have been an *elixir vitæ*, and, indeed, so freely have we imbibed of this new medicine that there have been many who have found themselves possessed of a fresh strength. There is, however, one thing which does not give any satisfaction whatsoever to the little band of men who have held this outpost of the Empire during so many weary months, and this is embodied in the absence of any very definite signs of a speedy relief. Lord Roberts has told us to hold out until the middle of May, but it is a weary wait, and we could well see the van of the column crossing the rise. Within the past few days the town has been swept by rumours about the propinquity of the southern column; we have understood Colonel Plumer has been within 50 miles of Mafeking for some weeks. The rumours anent the southern relief place this column at any point within 200 miles of Mafeking; some days it has reached Taungs, upon others it has not left Kimberley, again it is a week's march north of Vryburg, and in the meantime we receive telegrams from London congratulating us upon our successful and happy release. Where do these rumours come from? How comes it that London should be in ignorance of our condition?

We, who have followed with so much interest the fortunes of the campaign, sharing in the success of others with all sincerity and feeling reverses like personal insults, are disinclined to deny the existence of a relief column; but perhaps it is not altogether understood that, while we have food lasting till the middle of May, it is not impossible to feel famished upon our present rations in the middle of March. Of food in the abstract there is an abundance, but the condition and quality of the ration is such that it cannot be reduced any further without immediately affecting the health of the garrison and proving a very serious obstacle to the successful execution of any work which may be detailed to the command. Experiments have been tried for the purpose of discovering whether it were possible to exist and to work upon an allowance of 8oz. of meat and 4oz. of bread, and, while it was proved that the garrison might exist upon such short commons, it would be very injudicious to issue this allowance, since it caused a serious deterioration in the stamina of the men; it has, therefore, been condemned. The bread is impossible and, although every effort be made to improve it, it still resembles a penwiper more than a portion of bread. It is made from the common oats which one gives to horses; these oats are crushed, but, sift them as you please, treat them by every process which the ingenuity of the entire garrison can devise, they positively bristle all over with sharp-pointed pieces of the husks. Recently we have been promised Boer meal, but it would appear, according to Captain Ryan, who has managed the commissariat of the siege with no small skill, that the Boer meal is to be held in reserve as long as possible. For the moment we rather hanker after that reserve, and we do not take much of the composite forage which is served us as bread. However, if we are eating the rations of horses, the unfortunate people of Kimberley ate the horses, and so, it would seem, our lot might be much worse. Horses have not become our daily ration yet, although they form a basis of a curious soup which is made and served out to the natives. The smell of that soup turns many weary pedestrians from their usual paths, although the spectacle of the starving natives swarming round the soup-kitchen is one of the sights of the siege.

But, doubtless, those people who send us ridiculous messages of congratulation may think that this is, after all, but the mere detail of the siege—the side issue which should be expected, and which should in any case be endured with a fine toleration. That is all right; we do not mind the bread, we do not mind the aroma of the soup-kitchen, but we do object to preposterous messages of congratulation telling us "the siege is over," at the very moment when the enemy is shelling us simultaneously from five different points. The other day they endeavoured to concentrate their fire upon the centre of the town, and, if they did not do this altogether, they most certainly fired into Mafeking a weight of metal that has exceeded every other day's. We had from sunrise until dusk 79 Creusot shells, 100lb. each; 35 steel-capped armour-piercing, delay-action, high-velocity Krupp, 15lb. each; 29 9-pounder Krupp; 57 3-pounder Maxims; and such a merry flight of 5-pounders that these shells have become a drug in the market, and to such an extent that we would very gladly exchange between here and London a few such stormy petrels as a polite and cordial memento of the day of our deliverance. It is true that in part we are relieved, since we have chosen to take the initiative into our own hands and expelled the enemy from a position on the south-eastern facing of the town which they have occupied since the beginning of hostilities. This has given us immense relief, since it has practically placed the town beyond the effective range of the Mauser rifle and the Boer sharpshooters. We did this in a single night, having led up to such a climax by devoting our attentions to this particular quarter. We bombarded them by day, we sniped them by night, and sapped them in the intervals. For a brief moment the enemy checked us, but it was only for a moment, and our fire was so warm and so persistent that they relinquished their attempt to prevent our advance, leaving, however, in their trench at the moment of evacuation a little trifle, possibly unforgotten in their scramble to the rear, of 250lb. of nitro-glycerine. The mine had been at once located, the wires were cut, the trench was occupied, and in the morning when day dawned instead of there being the roar of a great explosion there was simply the ruddy blaze of our artillery fire from gun emplacements which they had constructed and which we had converted to our own use. But we have taken care of that little mine, and we have hopes, and for the present that is all, possession of the trench leaving us masters of the situation. This, however, is the only relief that has come to Mafeking.

2nd June 1900

THE WESTERN REBELLION.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

PRIESKA, APRIL 19.

On March 20 Lord Kitchener arrived in Prieska, only to find it empty. A few hours earlier the forces of the Transvaal and Orange Free State slipped across the river into Griqualand, taking with them two Krupps and a Vickers-Maxim purchased for them by Commandant Steevekamp, a wealthy colonial and the moving spirit of the rebellion. Next day General Settle, who had marched in from Orange River

Station and Hope Town, was entrusted with the work of pacifying the districts that lie west of the road from De Aar to Prieska and south of the Orange River as far as the German border. Sir Charles Parsons was understood to be on the road from Carnarvon to Kenhardt, 120 miles west of Prieska, with 800 men. General Settle's orders were to get in touch with Parsons and advance on Upington, a town situated on the Griqualand bank of the river, 70 miles north of Kenhardt and about 100 east of German territory.

On the morning of the 22nd we rode out of Prieska with a column about 1,000 strong, made up of the New South Wales Artillery under Colonel Smith, Kitchener's and Orpen's Light Horse, the Cheshire, Warwickshire, and Lancashire companies of the Imperial Yeomanry, and some detachments of the Bedfords, Gloucesters, and Suffolks. General Settle was accompanied by Major Heath, R.E., as chief of the staff, and Colonel Hughes, a Canadian officer, in charge of the Intelligence Department and 15 of the cyclist despatch riders, furnished and equipped for the C.I.V. by the Inns of Court.

For the first ten miles our road ran across a series of ridges: then, plunging down into a valley, wound through a pass with almost precipitous sides and with a well of excellent water at the further end. The place has been called Glenallen by Mr. Stewart, the owner of the surrounding farm and the oldest inhabitant of the district, which he entered in 1859, when it was still infested by hostile bushmen. An easier position for a small force to hold against a large one, fighting with water nine miles behind, could scarcely be found. The well, however, was reached at noon, and, though shortly afterwards a party of rebels in charge of wagons loaded with Martinis and ammunition were brought in by a patrol, it was felt that with the departure of the Republican troops the rebellion south of Griqualand had fallen flat.

That night the column bivouacked 18 miles from Prieska. Here the weather began to break, and we moved off next morning in a slow but steady drizzle of rain. The troubles of the transport now began. In a country where roads are hard and even, where water is frequent and fodder plentiful, a thousand mounted men can move with comparatively small difficulty; but in this part of South Africa forage for the horses must be carried, and the column with its first line of transport covered more than three miles of road. The second line of transport followed at an interval of a few hours with a mile or so of wagons, each drawn by 16 or 18 oxen. Under the pressure of countless hoofs the deep sand of the unmetalled track rapidly became a swamp. As day advanced and the rain increased the wagons began to sink and drag, and when at nightfall the men arrived at a farm called Spurman's Put they found themselves, after a march of 21 miles, without food for themselves or their horses. All night the rain poured with the violence of an English thunderstorm at its height. Morning brought no sunshine, part of the camp was a shallow lake, and it was nearly noon before the belated transport fought its way into camp and food was again to be had. The second line of transport fared worse than the first. The heavy ox wagons sank to the hub in mud; again and again the wheels were dug out, but many of the oxen lay down and died in the yoke. Some days later I had the misfortune to repass the same road, ploughed by the wagons like a great ditch across the veldt, and the dead cattle, now skinned by the Kaffirs, lay as they had fallen into it, an offence to eye and nostril for miles together.

Meanwhile the rain continued to fall at intervals, but on the third day a break in the clouds encouraged General Settle to push forward. Draghoender, the first station on the wire from Prieska, lay nine miles beyond, and this short journey the mounted men accomplished with ease. The transport, however, fared worse than ever when the first few wagons had broken the track; those behind became involved in the deep wet sand and only the two leading ones reached camp that evening. At sunset the rain returned and it fell all night with a violence and continuity such as the inhabitants had not seen for years in this part of the colony. The struggling mules fell helpless from exhaustion. The loss of animals began to be severe, and next morning in one team alone three of the mules lay suffocated in the mud. For the troops a little food was obtained from a store, but soon an impassable torrent divided the camp from the village, and a third successive night was spent in pelting rain. These are the inglorious incidents of a campaign, but success in modern warfare depends less on pluck than on capacity for endurance. Though some of the troops were Volunteers fresh from comfortable homes in England, these trying days were borne without a murmur. The morning of the 26th, however, brought back the sunshine. Forty of Orpen's Horse, under Captain Green, had already been sent to occupy the pont on the river six miles to the north, variously known as Draghoender Pont and Dack Bois Pont. Contrary to expectation the ferry was found unoccupied. The river is here flanked by a long range of hills. From the pont the road into Griqualand runs through a valley almost blocked by several of those kopjes so common in this country, which resemble the spoil heaps at the mouth of a coal pit. There can be no doubt that here the enemy lost by their negligence and gave us a golden opportunity.

Though nearly a week's hot weather was needed before the tracks were once more fit for heavy transport, Major Orpen was despatched on the 27th with his Light Horse to seize

Upington. This force was preceded by Colonel Hughes, accompanied by three scouts and two cyclists. Although Colonel Hughes is, amongst other things, a Member of Parliament and a Professor of International Law, he is better known in his own colony as Sam Hughes the railway man. The loan of this able officer is not the least amongst the services which Canada has rendered the mother country, and it is to be hoped in the interests of the Empire that larger opportunities will be found for the qualities he has displayed throughout this expedition. One is often tempted to wonder whether our Army might not make freer use of men whose experience has been gained in commercial organization. The besetting sin of British officers has been that they mistake the forms of business for its substance, whereas a man trained in the great commercial race, with shareholders to face and no taxpayer behind him,quickly learns that red tape spells ruin. But Colonel Hughes is more than a business man and has seen service before. He has a way of appearing where people least expect him, and this, together with a certain gift of cross-examination,renders him invaluable as an intelligence officer. Moving with his usual rapidity in search of arms and information, he found himself on March 30 a few miles from the pont connecting the town of Upington with the south bank of the river. There he learnt that the main body of rebels had quitted the town, leaving the pont intact. Whether they had dispersed or whether they would return and dispute the passage was uncertain. In the latter event the crossing could have been effected only with heavy loss,for the river is completely commanded by the town,which stands on the edge of a plateau 100ft. above it. Acting on this information Colonel Hughes resolved to rush the ferry. Extending his handful of men at long intervals, he rapidly pushed through the belt of woods that line the southern bank and seized the pont, which was worked across by some Bastards, who are to a man enthusiastic loyalists. One shot skipped on the water behind the pont, but the few rebels in the town, thinking the crossing had been captured by the advance party of a larger force, hastily retired, and five minutes later the British flag was floating over the residency. Major Orpen and his Light Horse arrived on April 2. In the meantime Colonel Hughes administered the town with characteristic energy. Suspected houses were searched for arms. One cyclist, Private W. L. Hichens, was sent singlehanded to Kakamas,70 miles west of Upington, to arrest the Rev. Mr. Schröder, the rebel member for the district, a task which he successfully carried out. Corn was collected from up and down the irrigated banks of the river, so that General Settle arrived on April 4 to find the political organizer of the rebellion in gaol and supplies for men and horses ready to hand. About the same time that Colonel Hughes reached Upington, Sir Charles Parsons entered Kenhardt.

A quantity of rifles and ammunition have been collected and the rebellion south of the river might now be said to have been stamped out. But Steenekamp is still at large with his Republican allies in Griqualand, where the coals are yet smouldering. On the 14th news reached Upington of a determined attempt to cut Draghoender Pont the day before. Major Orpen has enlisted some very pretty shots in his regiment, and had fortunately left some of the best of them with Captain Green, himself a noted marksman. On returning to Draghoender I satisfied myself that his party of under 40 men had had to face at least five times their number. Some of the enemy wore ribbons and uniforms which leave no doubt that they belonged to the Transvaal and Orange Free State, but Captain Green, after fighting from 11 in the morning till night, beat them off with a loss on our side of two killed and one wounded. How many the enemy lost in the skirmish is uncertain, but their loss was probably heavier than ours. Their object must have been to destroy the ferry, not to cross it, as they must have known that Draghoender was strongly held, but Major Orpen is to be congratulated on the fact that his men have kept open this passage into Griqualand for whenever we choose to use it. I have little doubt that it was this same party who exchanged shots with our patrols on Easter Monday at Prieska Pont. But Steenekamp and his friends have proved themselves more skilful at fomenting than at leading rebellion. At Prieska, Draghoender, and Upington the ponts were in their own hands. To have contested any one of them would have meant a serious loss in time and men. But to have abandoned them and then attempted their recapture argues an incoherence in generalship which goes far to explain the collapse of this rebellion in the presence of so small a force, sometimes operating 250 miles from a railway line. A further explanation is to be found in the precision and care with which General Settle and his well-chosen Staff directed these operations. He has given no opportunities and lost none that were given to him, and has so far accomplished his part without noise in a war in which to be heard of has not always meant good fortune.

The banks of the Orange River deserve more attention than they have so far received, and the time should soon be ripe for connecting Upington and Prieska with the railway system of the colony. Nothing is more striking in the country from Hope Town to Upington than its riches in cattle and poverty of cultivation. Bread is 2s. a loaf, meat a few pence a pound. To give Mr. Schröder his due, he was among the first to see the true value of Orange River water and silt, and it is to be regretted that he ever abandoned irrigation, for which he has a natural gift, to meddle with politics. Starting several miles above Upington and taking advantage of the rapid fall of the river, he con-

structed a small canal, or "furrow" as it is called, at a gentler gradient. When the furrow reaches the town it is only a few feet below it, and considerably above the flat alluvial lands between the plateau and river. This furrow is 15 miles in length. In the company of the cyclist who had arrested him I visited Camoes and Friarsdale, 40 miles down the river, where similar furrows had been constructed to some extent under his direction. One seemed, as one left the bare monotonous veldt of the plateau, to drop into a piece of the Rhone Valley, with its green luxurious gardens and long rows of poplars. At Prieska, which has no irrigation, American corn is brought on wagons 120 miles from De Aar. At Upington before the furrow was made meal cost £5 a bag, but here corn and mealies grew in abundance, and we bought wheat for the troops at 30s. a sack. We had tasted no fruit since leaving the railway, but at Camoes the dwarf trees stooped beneath a load of enormous yellow apples and a plum-coloured fruit called wine-apples. I noticed the blossom and the ripe fruit side by side upon the same tree. The oranges and lemons were just beginning to ripen, but the peaches were over and the grapes had been gathered from the vines, which grew in long, shady arcades, very pleasant to walk under in this climate. Lucerne is grown in abundance, and can be cut ten times in the year. In the centre of the village the Bastards have built a pretty little church, whose thatched roof was a pleasant relief from the almost universal corrugated iron. They were assembled there at the time, and at their invitation Mr. Hichens, my companion, mounted the pulpit and explained how, instead of dictating terms, the Republics had already sued for peace. Schröder has acted as their pastor and established a school which I found presided over by an ignorant old Dutchman with a cowhide thong in his hand. The Bastards are of Dutch parentage on one side, but, like the old Virginians, the Boer persistently degrades the half-breed to the level of the pure native. "When the English are gone," they said, "you Bastards will no longer touch your hats to us and say master, you will take them right off and say Baas." Hence their enthusiasm for our rule. They are even demanding to be taught English and to use it as their current language. It is much to be desired that one of the Presbyterian missions should find a successor to Mr. Schröder who would take the thong out of the Dutch teacher's hand. The services of the Established Church have a strong attraction for the Hottentot, but the Bastards have grown so used to the Dutch Reformed Church that a sudden change would puzzle them. They are a very childlike people, afflicted with two vices, brandy and indebtedness. But a Scotch minister, skilful in fruit growing, might make himself a little king among them, teach them enterprise and self dependence, and raise a race of children into a race of men.

The cost of conducting troops so far from the railway through a country traversed by sandy tracks is clearly a heavy one. Few shots have been fired, but the fruits of a war waged only that both races may live at peace beneath one flag are to be measured not by bloodshed, but by its absence. One rebel leader admitted that he would never have joined Steenekamp had he known that the whole English Army was so large as the force he saw at Prieska. It is a mistake to call the Dutch stupid, for they manifest a certain shrewdness in conducting their own affairs. But it is all important to realize how uninformed a population can remain living in the centre of farms of 20,000 acres, where mails are infrequent and telegraph stations 50 miles apart. One farmer asked me whether England lay to the north of South Africa; another if it ever thundered there. In the Bible, their one book, they read of a society to which their own pastoral life approximates more nearly than that of any other of the white races. They naturally accept the Bible as the source of all knowledge, scientific as well as rural. I have known one quote Scripture to prove the earth was flat with the sun moving round it. A story was freely circulated by the agents of the Transvaal in Griqualand which I repeat with some hesitation. The farmers were told that after Magersfontein an English officer, mortally wounded, galloped into Cronje's lines, demanding to see him before he died. Brought before him, he asked whether Cronje had posted on the right and left of the Boer army two men clothed in white and riding white horses. "No," replied the General. "Then," said the officer, "it was as I thought. God was on your right and Christ on your left." Having said this, he fell dead.

In a word, they are a very primitive people, owning no grievance against England, which is, indeed, no more than a name to them. They are even tending to intermarry with the few English who live among them. In Griqualand the rebellion was more spontaneous, owing to the neighbourhood of the unfriendly Republics. But south of the river the racial feeling was for the most part imported from without; for the Transvaal agents have been successful in creating a minority unfriendly to English rule. One agent, in particular, who was afterwards killed at Elandslaagte, was active here some months before the war, and had the misfortune to discuss his plans before a Prieska doctor, not knowing that he understood Dutch. But when, in December, the Republican troops entered Prieska they met with a cool reception. The people asked to be left alone, and even refused the troops shelter. But two months later British disasters had their effect. The invaders re-entered Prieska, were readily joined by the disloyal minority, and threatened the rest who declined to take up arms with confiscation. Persuaded that the Republics were masters of

South Africa, most of the farmers now came out. But as soon as the English appeared in force they crowded to give up their rifles and horses to Colonel Hughes, and were very wisely allowed to return to their farms in peace. In talking to Mr. Stewart and the English residents in Prieska, I was struck by their friendly feeling for the farmers. It is to be hoped that punishment will be meted out to these people in a form not likely to create a lasting rancour against our rule where none at present exists. Now that they have learned our strength, any wholesale measure of confiscation or beggaring of the farmers would be a political as well as an economic mistake. The Imperial authority need not stoop to vengeance ; but, forgetting the past, may look to the future alone. Already Johannesburg and Kimberley draw their meat from these districts. Ere long they will draw their corn and fruit as well. Any such displacement of farmers as has been called for would throw back the country for years and recoil upon the great towns, increasingly dependent upon it for their food. The greatest care, moreover, should be exercised in recruiting the police who will have to control the district later on. The pay for this work is good, but in a land where supervision is difficult the temptations and responsibilities are correspondingly great. Whoever in the future is responsible for their selection will be wise to find men of proved character, accustomed to rural life and not embittered by any suffering in the racial struggle here. To the Dutch inhabitants these men are the emblems of our justice and character. They will respect our rule just so far as they learn to respect its exponents, and no further.

4th June 1900.

THE ADVANCE ON BRANDFORT.

WITH THE MAIN COLUMN.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BRANDFORT, MAY 4.

The last week has witnessed a phase in our operations which in the history of the war will live as a period denoting a development of masterly strategy. I have already remarked upon the equanimity with which the threatened move on our communications was received, and how it was Lord Roberts's intention to roll back Olivier's force without dislocating the plan for the general advance. On May 2 the situation had sufficiently progressed to allow of the entire machinery being put in motion. An adequate number of remounts had arrived. Sixty days' supplies were in reserve at the base, and although the Boer force which Louis Botha had come down to extricate had evaded capture, yet it was engaged and held in its retreat so far on the right of the main line of advance that Lord Roberts was able to precipitate his forward move with little apprehension of serious opposition during the initial stages. The force which is destined to sweep into the upper districts of the Free State was situated on May 2 as follows :—It covered a semi-circular front of about 40 miles. The left rested on Karee and the right was in occupation of Thaba Nchu. The operations of the preceding week had been so arranged that when Hamilton threw up the right in pursuit of Louis Botha Lord Roberts would be able to advance his left upon Brandfort, and thus bring the whole force into line with the common objective of the 20 miles of railway dividing Winburg from Smaldeel. On April 30 General Tucker advanced his division six miles, and made a reconnaissance with General Hutton's Mounted Infantry towards Brandfort. The Boers were found in some force with artillery in the hills which surround the town, but their numbers were not such as to anticipate that preparation had been made for a serious resistance on this front. On the following day General Pole-Carew moved with his division from Bloemfontein to Karee Siding and took up his position on General Tucker's left. On the same date, as will be reported by *The Times'* Correspondent on the right, Generals French and Hamilton were in conflict with Louis Botha's force. Lord Roberts had elected to move with the left, and doubtless will remain with the force which sweeps the railway until Kroonstad is reached. The whole force at Karee halted on May 2, but General Hamilton was still pushing forward and on that date engaged Botha at Houtnek, which place he eventually occupied, having been supported during the day on the left flank by Broadwood's Cavalry Brigade.

On May 3 the general advance of the whole line was commenced. Following the railway communication the eight miles from Karee to Brandfort presents a flat, uninteresting plain, broken only by two bush-grown nullahs—one 2,000 yards from the Karee outpost, the other in the environs of Brandfort. The latter town lies in a dip and is commanded by several low kopjes. A big position stretches away from it due east, the underfeatures of which run down in a chain of small knolls towards Karee. It was believed that both these hills and the nullahs were held. The two infantry divisions were to advance as parallel columns, Tucker with the object of seizing the abovementioned under-features, while Pole-Carew advanced across the open directly upon the town. General Hutton, with two corps of mounted infantry and the artillery of a mounted infantry brigade, was to make a detour and come in upon the right rear of the positions which actually command Brandfort from the

west. The concentration at Karee had taken place with some secrecy, and, anticipating that if the enemy became aware of the intended advance they might hold the first nullah, Pole-Carew moved his division on the night of May 2 out of Karee. It bivouacked, in perfect silence and without the show of a single light, right upon the first nullah, which it was able to occupy before the enemy were cognisant of the move. Consequently it was occupied without loss. In fact there was only a single Boer picket, consisting of four men, watching the drift, who fired a couple of shots before falling back. Pole-Carew then advanced his division on the left of the railway line, with the Guards Brigade (Inigo Jones) on the right, the 18th Brigade (Stephenson) on the left. A peculiarity in the advance was that the infantry, which was extended over an enormous front, furnished its own screen. The whole division, which was admirably handled, moved forward with extreme caution and in such formation that if any of the broken ground had been held no portion of the force could have become involved in serious difficulty. But there was no opposition. The turning movement by the mounted infantry completely paralysed any attempt at resistance, and after an exchange of rifle shots and a little shrapnel fire over the bushes the mounted infantry occupied Brandfort at 1 30 on the 3rd of May. The division concentrated in the town an hour later. From the evidence of the townsfolk, it appeared that Delarey was in the town with about 2,000 men, composed of the Heidelberg and Middle Mud River commandos. On the previous evening the Uitlander corps, 200 strong, under Blake, had arrived, having retreated before Ian Hamilton. The Johannesburg Police, the original garrison of the town after the occupation of Bloemfontein, had recently been ordered off post haste to Fourteen Streams. The townsfolk received the troops with every evidence of good will, and the majority seemed to be heartily weary of the war. The railway bridge was found to be destroyed. But the damage was such as could be easily repaired within 24 hours. It now appears that the Republican forces were absolutely demoralized by the occupation of the Free State capital, and that all the destruction to the permanent way took place during the ensuing week. Residents with English sympathies are positive that, if Lord Roberts had been in a position to follow up his successes on the Modder River, he could have reached the Vaal without opposition. Brandfort is a pretty little rustic township. It is less Dutch than Dewetsdorp, owing, perhaps, to its proximity to the railway. It was better stocked with provisions than would have been imagined after the reports which have from time to time reached us of the internal supply in the enemy's territory. Lord Roberts arrived in the evening, and took up his quarters in the principal hotel. The infantry halted on May 4, while the mounted infantry reconnoitred the railway as far as Eensgevoden. The first construction train arrived exactly 24 hours after the occupation, having mended two breaks in the line above Karee. The work of this corps deserves the highest commendation, and the arrival of the construction train at Brandfort was the result of an exceptionally brilliant piece of work.

It was hoped that we should have found both the wounded officers who were captured in Monday's reconnaissance at Brandfort. But all the lightly wounded prisoners had been removed. From the Boer doctors we were able to glean some further details of the incident which befell the detached party of Lumsden's Horse on April 30. It appears that Lieutenant C. E. Crane, with 25 men of the Behar section of Lumsden's Horse, were ordered to hold a detached kopje at all costs. When the general retirement of the whole reconnaissance took place no intimation of the movement was sent. They were attacked by 200 Boers. The little party were practically surrounded and absolutely driven from their post by the enemy appearing on three sides of the knoll. They were then about 1,000 yards from their led horses. Lieutenant Crane and Sergeant-Major Marsham were shot at once. The former through the fleshy part of the thigh, the latter through the shoulder. Troopers Case and Firth faced the increasing fire and endeavoured to bring their officer away. He ordered them to leave him, but they refused to desert him, and both paid the penalty of their devotion with their lives. How they had died was pathetically shown by the little pile of burnt cartridges beside them —40 empty cases lay by Trooper Case. Since under the conditions of civilized warfare it was an unnecessary sacrifice, it was a pity; but this does not detract from the magnificent spirit which actuated it. Ten years ago the wounded subaltern and Trooper Case were at school together. Three other men remained upon the hill and defended it to the last. Of the little party originally told off to hold the kopje five were killed and nine wounded. Precedent might have justified surrender, since of those that broke through there are few who have not some mark upon their persons. As a corps Lumsden's Horse is unique; it was recruited in India almost exclusively from the class from which the British Army is officered. Of the little isolated group not one had previously played the cruel game of war. Though sad, the incident is one of which the corps may well be proud. The Boers, it was stated at Brandfort, had one killed and 14 wounded in this attack upon the knoll.

WITH THE MOUNTED INFANTRY DIVISION.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

BRANDFORT, MAY 4.

On Monday, April 30, the front of the line from near Karee eastwards to Thaba Nchu was consider-

ably broken up. General Tucker's (7th) Division in particular was separated into two parts by the interposition at Glen of Bruce Hamilton's (21st) Brigade consisting of the Derbyshires, Sussex, Camerons, and C.I.V. Thus, while Tucker's 15th Brigade under Wavell—the North Staffords, East Lancashires, Cheshires, and South Wales Borderers—was in the neighbourhood of Karee, the 14th Brigade, under Maxwell—Norfolks, Lincolns, K.O.S.B., and Hampshires—was some dozen miles to the south-east at Kraantzkraal. A little further east was stationed Broadwood's cavalry, with two batteries of horse artillery; while at Thaba Nchu and beyond—*i.e.*, 20 miles to the right—was General Ian Hamilton's Mounted Infantry Division. The concentration and simplification of these forces was therefore a matter that must be accomplished before an effective forward movement could take place. This preliminary operation began on April 30. The enemy were reported in force in the undulating, slightly hilly country to the north of Kraantzkraal, which is on the Modder, some 16 miles east of Bloemfontein. Maxwell's Brigade was the centre of the movement. It debouched into an open plain, closed on the north and east by a semi-circle of slightly higher ground. In one of the outlets from this saucer-shaped country, at Holzhuisfontein, was Broadwood's cavalry. As Maxwell's men moved off to the north-east, to occupy the hilly country beyond, Broadwood slipped through, and, advancing in a more or less northerly direction, tried to intercept any Boers who might be occupying the ground in front of the infantry. In the event the enemy failed to make any stand and were away too quickly, though Broadwood, advancing over-hastily, suffered some eight or ten casualties from shell fire. To the left, however, there was a brisk fire of guns and one-pounder Maxims ("pom-poms") from about 9 30 to 11 a.m., the Boers being reported to have two of each in action. This fire was to check the advance of the mounted infantry at Tucker's disposal; it at any rate enabled the Boers to make good their retreat.

During Tuesday, May 1, the movements intended to straighten out the front were proceeded with. At daybreak, Bruce Hamilton's Brigade, making a flank march from west to east, passed in rear of Maxwell's bivouac and by nightfall was in touch with Ian Hamilton at Thaba Nchu. Broadwood, well to the front, filled the gap between the two infantry forces. Heavy firing was to be heard from the direction of Thaba Nchu, but Tucker's Division was inactive, the Boers having all retired from in front of him, as explained. On Wednesday, May 2, the advance continued. Broadwood's cavalry and Bruce Hamilton's infantry had now amply secured the right flank. Consequently Maxwell's Brigade was brought forward almost into line with Karee and the remaining half of the 7th Division. Everything was now ready for the general advance. With Pole-Carew's 11th Division to left of the railway line, Tucker's Division had as objective the hills to the east of Brandfort. The advance was over open country—a wide, undulating plain closed to the north by successive ridges, rising by regular stages, one behind the other. The resistance offered by the Boers proved of the slightest. Wavell's Brigade advanced at 6 30 a.m. on the 3rd under a slight rifle fire, the Cheshires being in advance. The guns with this force were the 18th Field Battery, which suffered the loss of a couple of men and had a gun-carriage damaged from Boer artillery fire. Further east, on a ridge in the undulating ground across which the movement took place, Maxwell's guns opened with shrapnel on a cluster of Boers concealed behind the brow. The advance was necessarily slow to allow of the 11th Division coming up into line. About 1 p.m. Maxwell's Brigade appeared over the ridge just mentioned. They had had some half-dozen miles to march from their last bivouac, and in this fact Tucker had yet another reason for holding back Wavell's men during the forenoon. As Maxwell's Brigade appeared in sight, the Boer guns fired from 10 to 15 shells at them, but though these fell in among the advancing lines there were, I believe, no casualties. Then the Boer shell fire died away, as it had done in front of Wavell some hours before. From a farm directly in Maxwell's line of advance the Boers could be seen moving off northwards on their ponies. There was thus good reason to believe that there were no rifles to bar Tucker's advance, and as his two brigades were now in line, some mile and a half separating them, he commenced a general forward movement a few minutes after 3 p.m. and succeeded in occupying the hills that flank Brandfort on the east, without further opposition, while the 11th Division occupied the town itself.

4th June 1900.

WITH BRABANT'S DIVISION.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

THABA NCHU, MAY 9.

Before dealing with the advance of the Colonial Division to join General Rundle here, one or two points are deserving of notice. On the night of April 22-23, when the investment of the Jammersberg Bridge Camp was rigorous, from a Boer point of view, two men effected an entrance to our lines in safety. Lieutenant Smallwood, of 1st Brabant's Horse, accompanied by Mr. Hughes, a New Zealand Press representative, made their way over Jammersberg Mountain from Basutoland, and after several narrow escapes from Boer pickets reached the bridge, only to find another

Boer picket within a few yards of it. The Boers stood to arms, and it was necessary for Smallwood and Hughes to shelter in a donga by the river-side for some time. Fortunately the night was dark, and after considerable waiting the two managed to get on the bridge unseen and unheard and, passing over, were welcomed by the sentries on our side.

The horsing of the division after General Brabant's arrival was speedily attended to, and about 600 Basuto ponies were supplied within 48 hours, while numerous parties of men scoured the country for more horses and for oxen. It was inevitable that large numbers of horses and cattle should be lost from a position the grazing on which was practically exhausted within a few days. Several hundreds of both were shot by the enemy, but probably even more strayed into the enemy's lines in search of food, and not the most strenuous efforts of horse and cattle guards were sufficient to restrain them. Within three days a sufficiency of horses and cattle had been obtained by purchase and commandeering to permit of a move being made. The oxen were a very scratch lot, which required a good deal of licking into shape, and to this cause is mainly due the very slow progress made. The Basuto ponies were very satisfactory, though in many cases scarcely up to the weight. They presented a rather comical appearance when mounted. The large military saddles, with blanket, overcoat, &c., dwarfed them, and of the smaller ponies little could be seen but a rough head and tail and four legs. There were several under 12 hands, though probably the majority were fully 13 hands.

On April 28 General Hart moved off towards Smithfield with his brigade of infantry and battery of field artillery, and took with him also the New Zealanders and Mounted Infantry from Malta. He also marched off about a dozen prisoners made in Wepener, several of them being accused of firing on our men when Captain Goddard evacuated the town on the 9th, after having taken the oath prescribed by Lord Roberts's proclamation to abstain from further part in the war and having signed the declaration that they had surrendered all arms and ammunition.

During the Boer occupation of Wepener the commandants had the National Bank opened and took away all the specie, amounting to £700 and about £3,000 in notes, all of which belonged to private depositors. The representatives of the Free State Government previous to Captain Goddard's arrival withdrew all Government funds and, indeed, established a considerable overdraft, which the manager, much against his will, was compelled to grant. Many of the Boer depositors visited the town during our first *régime* and withdrew their money in coin and English notes, but would not accept either Free State paper or Kruger gold on any terms.

On April 29 a start was made with the force, consisting of C.M.R., 1st and 2nd Brabant's Horse, Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles, Border Horse, Driscoll's Scouts, and eight guns—in all about 2,650 men—under General Brabant. The transport train of about 135 wagons caused great trouble, and a march of nine miles to Berg's Farm was with great difficulty effected. The road was heavy and many of the wagons did not arrive till midnight, while the unfortunate rearguard could only look on, unable to hasten the progress of the teams.

On the 30th, Springhaan's Nek, by Donker Poort, was reached, whence a grand view of the Thaba Nchu hills, Thaba Pachoa, and the Platberg Mountains, by Ladybrand, was obtained. The enemy was reported in considerable strength in the neighbourhood. Accordingly, on the following morning, a strong reconnaissance, under the newly-promoted Lieutenant-Colonel C. Maxwell, R.E., towards Lapberg was made. About 150 of the enemy were speedily found there, who opened a heavy fire at long range on our men without result. Native spies stated that the men engaged with us were merely General Banks's German Scouts and that large bodies of Boers were in the hills beyond. The object of the reconnaissance being deemed to be accomplished, Colonel Maxwell was ordered by heliograph to return to camp. Communication with General Rundle at Thaba Nchu having been established, orders were received from him to retire and join him *via* Dewetsdorp. The distance by a good road over a rolling plain from our camp to Thaba Nchu was under 19 miles, while the prescribed route was well over 50 miles, with some very hilly country to traverse. The enemy, too, was encouraged by our retreat and the country to Wepener was thrown open to him. Orders had, however, to be obeyed, and the first retirement of the Colonial Division began on May 2.

It was not, however, effected without a slight mishap. An outlying picket was, by someone's default, not called in, and in consequence was surrounded by the advancing enemy. Some little firing took place, and Sergeant Riley, C.M.R., who was in command, told his men to do the best for themselves. Two were captured, the others managed to escape. One of those taken prisoner, Trooper Smythe, told a very pitiful story of his treatment. Wounded before being taken, he was at once disarmed, and told that he was free. On his walking away the Boers fired on him repeatedly, shooting him through the arm, leg, and on the head. Still conscious, he fell and feigned death, conceivably a not difficult task with such wounds. The brutal Boers came to him, kicked him over and, satisfied that their victim was dead, left him. Poor Smythe lay still till night, when he dragged himself away and actually made nearly three miles before daybreak, when he was found by a patrol of the Queenstown Volunteers. What happened to the other prisoner is unknown. Bad roads' made covering much distance impossible,

5th June 1900.

and Bokpoort, only a couple of miles beyond the junction of the Wepener-Dewetsdorp roads, was the furthest that could be reached after eight hours' trekking. On the morning of the 3rd a move to a better position was made, as Boer scouts were seen in the neighbourhood. A few miles west a force of infantry, M.I., and guns passed on to Wepener under Lord Castletown to garrison that place. On the 4th a good trek was made and the force arrived at Modder River outside Dewetsdorp. It was joined there by 40 additional wagons with supplies and ammunition, and the advance became still slower. Three days to Thaba Nchu, about 25 miles, for a mounted force shows the difficulty of moving with wagons. The convoy at times extended over six miles. There was no chance of blocking wagons in two or three lines. The numerous watercourses would have rendered the attempt impossible. On the 8th General Brabant marched through the village, where General Rundle paid a great honour to the Colonial Division. The streets were lined with infantry, who presented arms as the troops rode past. The division made a very fine show, and General Brabant received many compliments on their appearance. On the way from Donker Poort several prisoners were made, and I interviewed them exhaustively, as also many Englishmen and Dutch women living near our road. The information so obtained leaves no doubt as to the extreme disappointment felt by the enemy at their failure to capture Jammersberg Camp. The following 12 commandants directed operations and had at least portions of their forces there—namely, De Wet, Olivier, Froneman, Banks, De Villiers, Potgieter, Hassenbroek, Pienaar, Swampoel of Smithfield, Swampoel of Wepener, Crowther, and Lemmer. Banks, who was wounded near here a few days since and is now a prisoner in Thaba Nchu, says that he vainly advised a general storming of the position, which, if assaulted vigorously at all points, might conceivably have been taken, but the Boer commandants would not make the attempt, knowing the terrible sacrifice of life it would involve. The Boer losses were undoubtedly heavy. Several farms were passed with numerous wounded, and the women told me of many known dead, while at Dewetsdorp 37 wounded were found as the result of our fighting. Commandant Swampoel of Wepener, conducted a party of wounded, including Commandant Hassenbroek, to Ladybrand, and the Wepener people told me of a considerable number taken to their farms south of the town.

THE USE OF MOUNTED ENGINEERS.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

BLOEMFONTEIN, APRIL.

One of Napoleon's maxims, as far as I can remember, runs as follows :—" The general who omits to avail himself of the services of his engineers fails to make use of an arm which is always useful, never harmful, and often indispensable !"

I make use of this quotation to open an article which will be confined to the work which has been done during the present campaign by one of the smallest units in our service—a unit the development of which I feel is destined to prove indispensable in future warfare. The unit in particular is the field troop R.E. attached to General French's Cavalry Division.

In the present campaign, I believe, mounted engineers, in the full technical meaning of the term, have been used for the first time. Napoleon, it is true, found occasion in peculiar circumstances to mount his engineers. But this was only as a means of rapid transport. He had no special organization of mounted engineer detachments or corps trained and equipped to act in concert with cavalry. Further, I can find no record of such a corps existing and being used in European warfare of more recent date. The Germans certainly possessed no such organization in 1871. With us mounted engineers first found favour with General Sir G. Luck, the late Inspector-General of Cavalry, and the first demonstration of their utility seems to have taken place in India at the large manœuvres at Aligarh early in the 90's. Since then they have found a firm supporter in Sir Redvers Buller at Aldershot, and the experience of the last six months in South Africa has proved that this confidence was not misplaced.

As has been shown by the recent operations between Kimberley and Bloemfontein, the chief engineer work which has fallen to the cavalry has been the demolition of railway and telegraph lines and the arrangement for water supply in a country in which at periods it was extremely difficult to find water for the cavalry division. I will refer in more detail to the chief achievements of the field troop R.E. later, but, roughly, they were the destruction of the permanent way south of Ferreira Spruit on March 12, which led to the capture of an ambulance train ; the demolition of the railway and telegraph north of Bloemfontein on the following day, when Major Hunter-Weston's dashing enterprise resulted in the capture of 25 locomotives and 108 pieces of

rolling stock ; the cutting of the telegraph at Macfarlane's on February 16, and the several occasions upon which parties of mounted engineers, completely equipped, were sent out with cavalry-raiding expeditions. To this must be added the constant duty of the field troop to keep the three cavalry brigades and the mounted infantry supplied with water, though constantly moving and scattered over great distances. The admirable work which was done in the field by the telegraph section, working in conjunction with the cavalry, cannot be overrated, and in all probability Cronje would not have been taken if the cavalry division at Kimberley had not been connected by wire with the Chief of the Staff at Klip Drift. I fail to see by what other means the news of the enemy's retirement could have been transmitted in time for the instructions to arrive which enabled the cavalry to effect the move which brought about the i vestment.

The above record is sufficient to prove the value of the mounted engineer. I am inclined to say the necessity of having mounted engineers with every independent cavalry command is sufficiently demonstrated. The proportion in which they should be apportioned may at the present, with the limited experience gained, be problematical, but at the lowest computation there should be at least five mounted engineers to every 100 sabres. Previous to this campaign all demolition work has practically been left in the hands of cavalry pioneers with insufficient technical knowledge and insufficie t technical equipment to ensure that the work, for which they ofte i risk so much, shall be thorough. Cavalry officers and me i have so much to learn in their own specific duties that it is impossible for them to be good pioneers. But under the direction of e ngineer officers, and with the aid of artificers and trained engineers, they can become most useful. Throughout the campaign both have worked splendidly together. The field troop alone would not have been in sufficie t stre gth to have accomplished all that was do e. The pioneers unaid d would not have had the tech ical knowledge to render the work as thorough as it has been. The important features of the campaign have hinged upon the strategic value of railway communications, and in the demolition of railways, before all other branches of field engineer work, technical knowledge is essential. To make satisfactory demolitions it is imperative that the man who places the charges should understand strains, should be conversant with the technique of bridges, telegraph and railway construction, and should have experience in the delicate duties of fixing and firing charges. In the operations round Ladysmith alone there were two instances in which inexperience in these operations caused disappointment and delay. In the one case the delay in fixing the charge in a captured howitzer caused a considerable loss of life to the storming party which had captured the position. In the other, ignorance of the nature of the work rendered the plucky attempt which was made to destroy the Sunday's River bridge abortive. In such delicate operations it is impossible to be too thorough.

As the campaign proceeds, if it is to proceed, the difficulties and dangers of the cavalry's demolition duties will increase as the enemy learn our methods. As these difficulties increase, so will the demand increase for the services of technical experts for the more dangerous enterprises. And it will be then, I foresee, that once having been found useful, the mounted engineer will, in Napoleon's words, become indispensable. In my opinion, Major Hunter-Weston's dash for the communications above Bloemfontein furnishes a brilliant episode in the campaign, and one which admirably illustrates the advantages which will accrue to a cavalry general having at his disposal an efficient detachment of mounted engineers. At 3 30 p.m. on March 12 General French, who was then at Ferreira Spruit, entrusted Major Hunter-Weston, commanding the Royal Engineers with the Cavalry Division, with a mission to cut the railway communication north of Bloemfontein. The town was then in the possession of the enemy. Volunteers were called for from the Field Troop R.E. and the Cavalry Pioneers. One officer, Lieutenant J. R. E. Charles, R.E., and seven men were selected to accompany Major Hunter-Weston and two guides. The expedition, carefully equipped with gun-cotton and mounted on horses picked for condition, started at 1 a.m. on March 13. Steering by the hill north of the town and the lights burning in one of the prominent buildings, the party struck off in a N.N.E. direction, making a sweep of four miles to avoid any kopjes or rises likely to be occupied. It then turned north, crossing the Thaba Nchu road and the proposed Ladybrand-Wepener railway. From here it made a right angle west in order to strike the railway. The night was dark and the ground traversed was rough and broken with nullahs. The railway was reached north-east of Rustfontein, the Reddersburg-Bethulie telegraph line having been cut *en route*. There was a little delay. One of the guide's horses broke down from fatigue, and, as Mr. Hogg's local knowledge could not be dispensed with, a trooper was dismounted and sent back with the crippled animal. On passing a farm the party stumbled across a Boer patrol, but succeeded in passing it. Further on a solitary Boer rode into the group. The guide challenged him in Dutch, and, pretending that he commanded a police patrol, ordered the burgher back to his commando. It was 4 20 when the line was reached. The party split up to cut the telegraph communication in two places, to place a fault on the wires, and to find a culvert suitable for demolition. Luckily, after a short search, a double-span culvert was found. One of the iron

girders was rapidly prepared for destruction by placing a 10lb. charge of gun-cotton on booms and web at each clear of the abutments. Within 20 minutes of arrival both charges were fired, and the party rode off as the first streaks of dawn became visible. The return home was fraught with excitement. The daylight revealed the group to the various Boer patrols which formed the enemy's rearguard, and they were forced to run the gauntlet of a heavy musketry and occasional shell fire. But they succeeded in breaking through without casualty and reached the advanced scouts of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade at 6 a.m. The result of this enterprise was that 25 locomotives and 108 trucks, 50 of which were loaded with coal, fell into our hands. It also transpired that the enemy had timed trains to leave Bloemfontein at an hour's interval during the night. On hearing the explosion the station-master had despatched a pilot engine, which found the break and reported the line impassable. The panic which resulted turned the withdrawal from the town into a rout. The value of the capture of rolling-stock at such a period is self-evident.

9th June 1900.

WITH GENERAL RUNDLE'S DIVISION.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

THABA NCHU, MAY 9.

The 8th Division is still at Thaba Nchu. Various and numerous are the reasons assigned for the delay. It is known beyond doubt that the Boers are miles away, and yet we remain. It was supposed by many that all we were waiting for was General Brabant's force of mounted Colonials, as the only mounted troops with the 8th Division were about 1,000 of Imperial Yeomanry. Brabant's force arrived within a few miles of this place on the 7th inst., and still there is no movement.

To add to the awkwardness of the situation, whenever a column is halted indefinitely, as this one is at present, the telegraph is also stopped and "closed for private and Press wires" until further notice. That is the case at the present moment, and this is the second occasion within a month on which the wire has been closed to us for several days. The general of the division is not to be blamed for this state of affairs; these are orders from headquarters. In certain emergencies it is doubtless necessary for all telegraphic communication to be cut off, but in such cases correspondents should be permitted to explain at least the reason of their silence.

The reasons for delay, as I have already stated, given by the many knowing ones that you meet every day are not worth repetition, and the matter must be left with the Commander-in-Chief, who in his own way, though it may seem slowly, is surely teaching the Boer a lesson which he is not likely to forget, with regard both to our nation's power and its magnanimity. Lord Roberts is condemned by many for his leniency in allowing Boers of the Free State who surrendered their arms to return to their farms. How much more would he have been condemned both by our own countrymen in England and by those of the Powers of Europe had he erred in the direction of extreme severity. No, the position taken up by the Commander-in-Chief is one entirely in keeping with what should be, and is, England's present policy of demonstrating to a smaller State that though she has the power to tread the Boer into the dust it is not her wish to do so, but firmly and justly to enforce the one idea which the Boer has forgotten—that of British supremacy in South Africa.

On the 1st inst. news came to camp that General Ian Hamilton with his Mounted Infantry and the Infantry Brigade under General Smith-Dorrien had engaged the Boers at a place called Houtnek, about ten miles north of Thaba Nchu on the Winburg Road. The Boers were found on a line of kopjes running east and west over which the road passes at the left extremity. After shelling the position for some time the infantry were sent forward, the Gordon Highlanders coming in for the warmest share in the attack. A company of this regiment, under Captain Towse, on the left, got to close quarters with about 200 of the enemy who had taken up a position in a "kloof," or wooded ravine, running up between two small hills. The Boers, thinking that the attack was solely a frontal one, devoted the whole of their attention on the advancing Gordons. In the meantime part of the company had made a detour and came on the Boers from the top of the "kloof" with fixed bayonets, causing a general stampede and doing a lot of damage with their cold steel. Unfortunately Captain Towse received a very nasty wound from a Mauser bullet right across both eyes, resulting in the total loss of his eyesight. The position was soon taken, and General Hamilton resumed his march towards Winburg. Another incident occurred during the above engagement also to the credit of the Gordons. A signalling party were on a small eminence of ground when they were suddenly approached by a small party of the enemy demanding their immediate surrender, and that they should give up their arms. The demand was no sooner made than the signallers lay flat on the ground and discharged their rifles at the bold

band of Boers, killing or wounding the majority of them. During the engagement about five of the Gordons were killed and ten or 11 wounded. The Boer loss is not accurately known, but several were killed and over 100 wounded, besides 11 prisoners who were taken and brought into camp. Before this position was taken our lines of communication between Thaba Nchu and Bloemfontein were continually being threatened, but now, since the Boers have been beaten back to the north-east of Hout-nek, the road is quite safe, and the convoys are coming and going almost daily. On the 4th inst. General French and his cavalry left Thaba Nchu for Bloemfontein, General Rundle again resuming chief command.

18th June 1900.

THE ADVANCE ON KROONSTAD.

WITH THE MAIN COLUMN.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

SMALDEEL, MAY 8.

A halt of one day was made at Brandfort, but the Mounted Infantry under General Hutton pushed on along the line as far as Eensgevonden. They found the enemy still in retreat, and there was an exchange of artillery fire. The Mounted Infantry bivouacked on Friday night eight miles in advance of the infantry. It was the intention of Lord Roberts to bring both the infantry divisions of the main advance into line upon the Vet river by the evening of May 5. This move, even if there was no obstruction on the part of the enemy, would have entailed a march of 22 miles, perhaps a little more, for General Tucker's Division on the right. The advance was made in the original formation, that is, the Mounted Infantry covered the left front, and Pole-Carew's Division moved parallel with the railway, with Stephenson's Brigade leading. The country for the most part was open veldt, but it became more enclosed and hilly towards the basin of the river. Until midday the movement was uneventful. The enemy had made good use of their opportunities of destroying the railway line, and all the principal culverts had been demolished. It was significant to notice how they had improved their system of destruction. In every case the work of demolition above Bloemfontein has been very thorough.

About 10 o'clock the telegraph gave the news that General Ian Hamilton had gained a considerable success over the enemy on the right, and that he was already in occupation of Winburg. It appears that the position which the enemy held before Smith-Dorrien's Brigade had suddenly been turned by the unexpected arrival of the Highland Brigade. As the latter swept them from the kopjes, Broadwood's cavalry debouched into the plain and converted the hasty withdrawal of the German commando into a rout. But the details of this engagement belong to *The Times'* Correspondent with the column. As a result of this action General Hamilton was able to occupy Winburg on Saturday, a day earlier than was anticipated. The town surrendered, and it is curious to note that while the negotiations were taking place, Louis Botha rode into the far end of the town. But he was too late to influence the burghers to renew resistance. At one time it seemed that the incident would end in a *fracas*, for Botha was accompanied by a wretched little Hollander secretary who deliberately misinterpreted General Hamilton's message to the townspeople; so much so that Botha drew his revolver and threatened to shoot Captain Balfour, General Hamilton's envoy. Luckily the Landdrost stepped forward and placed the true meaning before the Boer general. The situation was hopeless as far as resistance was concerned—in half an hour General Hamilton would have been in position to have shelled the town. This Botha was powerless to prevent. Nothing therefore remained for him but to canter out of the town and rejoin his rearguard. President Steyn had been present at Winburg until within a few hours of its surrender. So great was his fear of capture that he let the world believe that he was leaving by rail, and despatched his State coach, with closed blinds, to Smaldeel by the last train, while he himself went north by road in a six-horsed vehicle.

While General Hamilton was occupying Winburg, the main advance under Lord Roberts was in contact with Delarey's force at the Vet river. The two infantry divisions had advanced as usual in line parallel to the railway, with the left front covered by Hutton's Mounted Infantry. The latter found the enemy in possession of the far hills covering the passage of the river at noon on Saturday. Colonel Alderson was sent to the left to attempt to outflank the enemy. His Mounted Infantry corps was supported by three 1-pounder Maxims. In the meantime the 3rd Mounted Infantry Corps, under Pilcher, was extended on a small ridge of hills which faced the drift. A party of the galloping Maxim (·450) accompanied the columns. A Horse Artillery battery shelled the hill on the far side of the stream from which the enemy appeared to be commanding the drift. The latter replied to this attack with a desultory

9th June 1900.

fire from a heavy gun which they appeared to have in position some distance in rear of the river, and with a solitary quickfirer, the fire of which was extremely erratic. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon the infantry fire increased as Alderson's flank attack developed. The enemy evacuated and galloped across the open under a heavy fire from the 12-pounder battery. The reserve was then pushed forward, and Pilcher advanced directly across the drift. The Boers retreated before the advance and the Mounted Infantry bivoucked for the night on the position which they had held. A Maxim remained in our possession. The work of the New Zealand Mounted Infantry, under Captain McMasters, was exceptionally brilliant.

On the right in front of the main and railway drift the situation was different. Such action as there was was almost entirely confined to artillery practice at long range. The enemy, who at the best could only have been fighting a covering action as they withdrew their convoys, had four or five guns in position. Against these three field batteries, four naval, and two 5in. siege guns came into action. The Boers could make no way against so overpowering an attack, and as the evening closed in they withdrew one piece after another.

A party of riflemen held a small kopje on this side of the river, and for three hours had subjected the advance guard of West Australian Mounted Infantry to a galling Mauser fire. Just as it was dusk 26 of the latter fixed bayonets and rushed the kopje. They drove the Boers headlong from it, losing seven men in the assault. This furnishes a most brilliant incident, as the quarter-hundred colonials who made this superb dash were outnumbered by the enemy by at least five to one. Thus, with Hutton across the river on the left and the Australians in position on the hill on the right of the railway, we were in complete possession of the Vet river by sundown. The force bivoucked as it stood, and on the following morning advanced into Smaldeel, to find that the enemy had retreated in dignified haste, destroying the railway communication behind it. The damage to the Vet river bridge was such that all hope of a temporary reconstruction of the bridge was impossible. But an old deviation was discovered which it was possible to reopen in four days. As the whole of the operations on the left had been conducted without cavalry, a halt was called at Smaldeel for 48 hours to allow of the forwarding of supplies and to enable General French with his three cavalry brigades to overtake the advance. It must ever remain a source of regret that the advance was commenced without cavalry.

THE OCCUPATION OF KROONSTAD.

RAID BY MOUNTED SAPPERS.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

KROONSTAD, MAY 13.

When the Cavalry Division under General French arrived at the farm of Boshof, on the night of May 11, Major Hunter Weston, commanding the Royal Engineers, with the division, volunteered to attempt a raid on the railway communication north of Kroonstad, similar to the excursion which he carried out so successfully on the night previous to the occupation of Bloemfontein. General French gave his sanction. Volunteers were called for, and again it had to be a matter of selection. Taking Mr. Burnham, the American scout, and Lieutenant Charles, R.E., Major Weston chose the following eight sappers :—Corporals C. Hyde and F. Kirby ; Sappers J. Austin, C. Collins, T. Costin, J. Crisp, B. Fearnley, and T. Pearce. As it was anticipated that it might be necessary to employ force to pass the demolition party through the outer picket line, Captain Yardley, Inniskilling Dragoons, and Lieutenant Harrison, Scots Greys, accompanied the expedition with a squadron of 50 men and 60 horses picked from the 1st Cavalry Brigade.

Crossing the Bospoortspruit the little column of desperate men moved north parallel with the Valsch River. Major Weston led the column, steering by the stars, and Burnham brought his extraordinary faculties of sight and ear into use to prevent the party from running into any outlying patrol or picket. About a mile north of the Modderspruit Burnham discovered a patrol of three men moving across the front. As it was impossible for the column to avoid detection, Major Weston determined to capture the group. The cavalry divided and charged in upon both flanks. It was a wonderful scene. The thud of the galloping horses in the deep silence of night, the sabres flashing bare in the strong moonlight, the intense excitement of the moment. The mounted men proved to be Kaffirs, and formed a patrol which had been sent out by a Boer picket lying about a mile to the east. At this point Major Weston considered that the outlying cordon was pierced. So he left Captain Yardley with the cavalry, in observation of a strong Boer picket on the right, with orders to return to camp as soon as the raiding party was clear. Then the little group, now 11 strong, with two led horses, moved north-east to a point in the Fairfield property. Here at the juncture of a wire fence a mounted picket of the enemy was descried. Burnham made out others all along the fence. This is the custom of the Boers when throwing out night outposts. Vedettes are stationed all along wire fences, with their

heads against the posts. As soon as a wire is touched or cut, some one of the vedettes is immediately aware of the fact. Major Weston tried to avoid the patrol, but when the party returned to the fence they found that it had moved parallel with them and had collected the vedettes along the line. Burnham dismounted and reconnoitred the group. He found that it was, as had been thought, in observation of the party, and that four dismounted men had been detached to lie in ambush under a small nek which lay in the line of advance. To shake off this following the party dived into the deep and wooded Dornspruit, and when they reached the dam found that they were clear. They then crossed the Damfontein Hills, from which position they could see the Boer camp fires, extending in an almost unbroken line from Kroonstad to Honingspruit. The retreating force seemed to be encamped all along the railway line. So, slipping past two mounted patrols, the party turned in to hit it off. Burnham again went forward and found a spruit in which it would have been possible to have hidden the horses. But just as the party arrived at the edge of the depression a Boer camp fire flared up in their faces from within the cutting.

Time was now getting short. There was only half an hour of moonlight and an hour of darkness left before dawn. Retiring west from the spruit and passing round a farm full of Boers—even moving through their hobbled horses—the gallant little band made another attempt to reach the railway. As had been hoped, the railway fence was here. But just as the party struck it the head of a large commando of mounted Boers turned up over a fold in the veldt. Thanks to Burnham the Boers were seen before they made the English out. Major Weston at once moved his party 20 paces into the veldt and in a whisper ordered the men to lie flat upon their horses' necks. As the commando passed the leading file challenged. For a moment it seemed that it would be necessary to give the preconcerted signal that the little party might break up and as individuals make a bid for safety. But as no response was given the Boers apparently mistook the group for a bunch of loose horses and passed on. It was a moment of extreme suspense, a moment when you hear each beat of your heart. But the crowd of burghers pressed on and, laughing and joking, passed into the shadow. The horses were then led further away from the line. Again the party stumbled upon another wire fence running parallel to the line. As Lieutenant Charles was cutting this three Boers suddenly sprang up out of the grass. Hunter Weston and Burnham each immediately "covered" a man, and Lieutenant Charles with great promptitude seized the carbine of the third. They proved to be three scouts of the Afrikander Horse. They were left with Lieutenant Charles and the sappers beyond the wire fence. Major Weston and Burnham then went forward alone and on foot to attempt the demolition. Almost at once they met a picket in search of the prisoners. Avoiding these by lying flat on the ground, they waited until they heard the men move on before again going forward. The Boers disappeared, accusing the patrol of deserting its post. Boers were all round, but the two desperate men crawled on to the road. Here they lay in the grass and waited while another long commando passed. Then came some wagons, and under the dust and noise both crossed the road in safety. Moving thus in the intervals between wagons and troops they were able to crawl to the top of the embankment and worm themselves flat against the ballast of the permanent way. The charges were fixed and the fuses lighted under Burnham's broad-brimmed hat while the enemy were passing within ten yards of the spot. They waited until Burnham's practised ear told him that there was an interval in the wagon-train, and then they hazarded the journey back towards the horses.

Then came the explosion. It was followed by a babel of noise from waking men, scared cattle, and a rush "to horse." Under cover of this tumult Major Weston and Burnham reached the horses, and, mounting the prisoners on the led horses, the whole party moved off north-west.

They were soon clear of the surrounding Boers, and they trotted steadily on for three miles till they were out of all possible contact with the disturbed convoy round the railway. At sunrise they were clear. But the increasing light suddenly disclosed a picket of 20 Boers directly across their path. Fortunately they were dismounted and engaged in catching their horses. One man only remained by the fire. The party galloped down upon this man. He surrendered at once, the stock of his rifle was immediately broken, also those of six others lying by him. There was no time to wait and the party pressed on to get clear of the rest of the Boers before they could collect their scattered horses and rifles. At first the burghers seemed dumbfounded. But they then collected and opened fire, slightly wounding Sapper Collins in the hand.

Seeing that it would be necessary to check this Boer picket now left with twelve rifles, Major Weston ordered every one to gallop on and himself remained behind to cover the retreat with rifle fire. Providence aided him, for his first shot emptied a saddle. The whole pursuit was checked and the Major was able to rejoin his party unmolested. An hour later the gallant little *cortége* with its three prisoners was clear of danger. They returned quietly to camp, having accomplished an expedition which, in its sequence of miraculous escapes, reads more like a fairy tale than a stern episode in war, and which presents one of the most stirring, gallant, and self-sacrificing side-histories of this war.

18th June 1900.

THE CLEARING OF NATAL.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

NEWCASTLE, MAY.

By about May 8 Lord Roberts had reached a point in the Free State on a level with Ladysmith, and the time had come for General Buller to continue his advance. Although, of course, many Boers had left Natal since the relief of Ladysmith, it was known that the force upon the Biggarsberg numbered between 7,000 and 8,000, with at least seven guns. They had two extremely strong positions commanding the roads from Ladysmith to Newcastle and Dundee, and they had also fortified Helpmakaar, which stands on the extreme eastern flank of the Biggarsberg range and commands the junction of the two roads from Ladysmith to the west and Greytown to the south. The position, which is one of great natural strength, is also of immense strategic importance, as the possession of it opens an advance across comparatively flat country and would enable us to turn the whole main Biggarsberg position. It was known to be held and fortified, for early in March Colonel Bethune, who had been quartered at Greytown with a force of Mounted Infantry since February, had reconnoitred the position and drawn a heavy fire from the enemy, whom he found strongly intrenched there.

The plan of attack adopted was to keep our left fixed at Elandslaagte, swing our right flank round by Helpmakaar towards Dundee, and whilst outflanking them on the right make a general advance all along the line.

At the beginning of the month General Hildyard's Division was camped at Elandslaagte ; the 4th Brigade and 3rd Mounted Brigade was at Buys Farm, about five miles in rear of them ; the 2nd Brigade was at Ladysmith, and General Lyttelton's Division was divided between Ladysmith and Modder Spruit. The 1st Cavalry Brigade was at Ladysmith, and the 2nd lay between Ladysmith and Lombard's Kop, patrolling our right flank.

On May 7 the 2nd Brigade marched out to Modder Spruit, and on May 9 the march to Helpmakaar began. A flying column was formed consisting of the 2nd Infantry Division, the 3rd Mounted Brigade, "A" Battery R.H.A., the 2nd Brigade Division of Artillery (7th, 63rd, 64th Batteries R.F.A.), the 61st howitzer battery, the Vickers-Maxim Battery of three guns, and eight naval 12prs. and two 4·7's, the supply columns of the various units engaged, and a convoy containing ten days' supplies. General Buller accompanied the column in person. For the first two days' march the column advanced along the roads from Ladysmith and Modder Spruit, and on the evening of May 10 had concentrated at Vlakplaats, the point where the main road from Ladysmith to Helpmakaar crosses the Sundays River, at a distance of about 22 miles from Ladysmith. The last ten miles had been through extremely hilly wooded country and the road was deep in sand nearly as holding as the mud had been on our march from Frere to Potgeiter's Drift. The Mounted Infantry always kept a day's march ahead of the rest of the column and reported the country free from Boers. There is no doubt the latter lost a great opportunity of harassing our march in not attempting to hold this country, as, owing to the transport, our advance was slow and the country was a difficult one in which to manœuvre troops, although well suited to the Boer methods of fighting. Had they been in strength on the high neck of land over which the road passes between the Sundays and Waschbank rivers, a position upon which they could easily have mounted guns, and from which, if necessary, they could have taken them away again in safety, it is doubtful whether we could have forced a way through. However, either because our advance had been too rapid or because they were satisfied with the strength of their Biggarsberg position, they made no attempt to stop us till we reached the open country beyond. On May 11 the column marched to the Waschbank River over ten miles of the worst road we had yet encountered. Here the country changed. We had crossed the hills, and before us lay open plain. Beyond it again lay the Biggarsberg like a great wall, rising steeply 1,000ft. above the plain, and unbroken save for the deep and narrow pass down which General Yule's column had marched in the retreat from Dundee. The Biggarsberg here runs nearly north and south, so after crossing Waschbank River it faced us. The main road runs straight up to the narrow pass, and nearly at the foot of the Berg the road from Helpmakaar to Meran crosses it, running in a south-easterly direction. On the 12th the supply columns of the various units were filled up from the convoy, the empty waggons were sent back to Ladysmith, and the rest of the convoy was packed at the Waschbank River drift, with the Scottish Rifles as guard. The rest of the column then moved in an easterly direction across the veldt and struck the Meran-Helpmakaar road at Vermaak Farm, about eight miles from the drift, and bivouacked there. This day the Mounted Infantry found the enemy for the first time, the South African Light Horse coming in contact with them on the plain, and skirmishing continued all day. At one time it looked as if an engagement would take place, as the enemy attacked a squadron of the Natal Carbineers in considerable force, but nothing came of it. It was evident the enemy were reserving themselves for our attack on the hills, where they could be seen moving about all day in considerable numbers.

Vermaak Farm lies within about three miles of the Biggarsberg, and is about seven from Helpmakaar, which lies due east. The Biggarsberg

ends abruptly at Helpmakaar, and, except for a narrow neck of land about two miles long running south-west, the hills slope steeply down from it in all directions. For this reason the Boers called it the " Gibraltar of Natal." The narrow neck connects it with some high and broken hills, through the middle of which runs a deep valley debouching to the north-westward. The Meran road runs up this valley, at the top of which it is joined by the road from Greytown, up which Colonel Bethune was known to be advancing ; it then turns a complete semi-circle, running along the neck and swinging northward again into Helpmakaar. At the point where the road leaves the head of the valley the Boers had dug several carefully-concealed trenches, and the whole position was one of great natural strength for preventing an advance up the road.

At about 8 o'clock on the morning of the 13th the Boers opened on our bivouac from the top of the Biggarsberg to the north-east with one of their long-range field guns. They fired about ten shells, one of which wounded two men in the Durham Light Infantry, but two naval 12-pounders came into action and silenced their gun. General Buller then marched down the Meran road, the whole column literally turning their backs upon the place from which they were being shelled. It was a bold move, for, if the enemy could check our advance upon the hills in front, our left and rear, where was all the transport, would be within easy range of their guns behind. Its success depended upon rapidity of execution and upon the prompt co-operation of the force which was advancing upon the enemy's right flank from the southward. Both these things fell out excellently. The Mounted Infantry were in advance, Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry on the left, the S.A.L.H. in the centre, and the colonial corps on the right. Colonel Thorneycroft seized Uithoek Hill, a big hill on the left of the road, without firing a shot, and was rapidly followed by the 2nd Brigade. The colonial troops occupied the heights to the right of the road, and advanced rapidly along them. Half-way along they were joined by two squadrons of Bethune's Mounted Infantry, who had ascended from the other side. Then there was a combined advance to the head of the valley. Up to this time there had not been a shot fired, but just as the mounted troops reached the point where the road turned to the left shells were fired at them from a kopje at the far end of the long neck and just south of Helpmakaar. A few minutes later the South African Light Horse, emerging from the valley on to the neck, were fired at from the concealed trenches. But the enemy who were in these trenches, finding their flanks threatened by the force which had climbed Uithoek Hill, retired almost immediately. Before us now lay the neck. On the kopje at the far end the Boers had made intrenchments and had mounted a long-range field gun and a Vickers-Maxim. " A " Battery, which had accompanied the Mounted Infantry, immediately came into action and shelled the kopje, but was not successful in silencing the enemy's fire. It was soon after withdrawn, and our Vickers-Maxim battery and the naval 12-pounders were hurried forward. The 4·7in. guns were unfortunately some distance behind,and although they were brought up as quickly as possible, they did not arrive in time to take part in the shelling. The unusual part of this artillery duel was that both the Boer guns could be clearly seen, especially the Vickers-Maxim, and the second shell from the 12-pounders fell right into the slight epaulement behind which it was being worked. It did not fire again, and we afterwards discovered that it had been damaged. Meanwhile the field artillery on the left had been shelling a considerable force of the enemy who were visible to the north of Helpmakaar, working at some kind of intrenchment. During the afternoon a very strong body was seen moving along the hills. This was a reinforcement of 1,000 men sent round from the main position. However, they had arrived too late to be of any assistance. The enemy had failed to hold the hills to the south-east of Helpmakaar, and they were now penned up on one small kopje in front of it. If they waited till the morning they would be exposed to a heavy artillery fire converging on them from a very broad front stretching from Uithoek Hill right across the road, to which they evidently had not many guns to reply with.

That night the troops bivouacked in the valley, and soon after midnight it was known that the enemy were gone. At dawn the Mounted Brigade followed in pursuit. The Boers had been burning the grass on the Biggarsberg for the last two days, and on that morning the whole of the top of the hill was in flames. For a distance of about two miles on either side of the road the grass had been set on fire every few hundred yards, and the whole of the broad tableland on the top of the Biggarsberg was obscured in smoke as if it were in fog. This naturally hampered the pursuit considerably and was probably the cause of our not making larger captures. As it was, the mounted troops traversed about 40 miles of country and engaged the enemy three times, and the latter were so impressed by the vigour of the pursuit that they retreated right out of Natal, thinking the mounted troops were close on their heels the whole way. The front line was composed of the S.A.L.H. and Major Gough's regiment of Regular Mounted Infantry. They came in touch with the enemy first at Spion Kop, a kopje about six miles north of Helpmakaar. " A " Battery, which accompanied the pursuit, shelled the hill whilst the S.A.L.H worked round the flank. The enemy were speedily dislodged, and retired before it was possible to come to close quarters. They retreated to the next line of kopjes at Blesboklaagte, where Thorneycroft's M.I., advancing through the smoke, came within 200 yards of them before they knew of their

presence. Two men were wounded. The position was again turned, and the enemy effected a retreat through the smoke. The last position they held that day was reached in the evening. It was a high ridge about eight miles from Dundee, a spur of Indumeni, the highest mountain in the Biggarsberg, which lay to the southward. Here they had three guns in position and shelled the advancing troops. But the position was again turned, and just before dark the enemy retired on Dundee. It was getting too dark to follow up the pursuit, and the Mounted Brigade returned about four miles to bivouac. Meanwhile the rest of the column had advanced rapidly. They were far more mobile now that the big convoy was left behind, and that afternoon arrived at Beith, a march of 18 miles.

The following morning, at 8 o'clock, scouts reported Dundee to be free of the enemy, about 3,000 of them having passed through in the utmost confusion during the night. The Mounted Brigade rode through the town about 10 o'clock, and the infantry marched in soon after midday. They camped on the old camping ground to the west of the town.

The town of Dundee had been considerably damaged by the Boers. The shops had all been looted, many of them had the windows broken, and there was a certain amount of wanton damage. A few English families had remained during the war, but only about six men had been allowed to stay. The town being off the main road to Ladysmith, not many Boers had passed through after the first invasion, when their numbers were estimated by some of the inhabitants I spoke to at about 35,000. A considerable number of families, however, of men at the front had taken up their residence there, and the town became to all intents and purposes a Dutch one. A Boer magistrate, or "vrederechteur," was appointed, the town was policed, the streets were rechristened President Kruger-street, Joubert-street, &c., and a Dutch school was formed, with a schoolmaster sent from Pretoria. The houses not lived in by Boers had been looted, and all the collieries with the exception of the largest one, the Navigation Colliery, which the Boers worked for their own use, had had their machinery destroyed. The English inhabitants were, on the whole, fairly well treated by the Boers, but not so well by the foreigners, of whom they said there were a considerable number. They described the Boers as passing through, both on the previous day and after the relief of Ladysmith, in a state of panic.

The following day there was no advance, in order to allow the convoy which had been left at Waschbank River to come up. They came by General Yule's Pass, which considerably shortened the journey. A portion of the Mounted Infantry, however, scouted the country to Dannhauser, a station on the main line 15 miles from Dundee, and reported it clear; and the Border Mounted Rifles occupied Glencoe Junction, whither General Buller transferred his headquarters in the evening. It was through Glencoe that the main body of the enemy had passed on the night of the 14th. Ten trainloads of men with seven guns had gone up the line, destroying most of the larger bridges behind them, and an unbroken line of mounted men and wagons had passed through from 4 p.m. till midnight. It was here also, on the station platform, that President Kruger, immediately after the relief, had addressed the burghers, calling them cowards and bidding them go back and defend the Biggarsberg. They did not return to the Biggarsberg, however, for over a week.

The Biggarsberg was now completely cleared of the enemy, and General Hildyard was advancing from Elandslaagte. His progress was slow, as he waited for the line to be repaired. Several large bridges had been destroyed, including the one over Waschbank River, which it was reckoned would take five days to mend. General Lyttelton was moving up the Newcastle road on General Hildyard's left, but, as he was advancing in conjunction with the latter, he could not advance any faster.

The operations up to now had been a most complete success. The enemy had been turned out of carefully prepared positions for a loss of only seven men wounded. Their losses had not been heavy, but they were in full flight, and it was most essential that they should not be given time to recover themselves. General Buller, therefore, made an extremely rapid march to Newcastle. On the 17th, the supply columns being once more replenished from the convoy, the column marched to Dannhauser, a distance of 15 miles, and the next day marched into camp, a mile north of Newcastle, a distance of 23 miles. The marching of the infantry was beyond praise. After ten weeks of inaction the men were not in the same condition that they were in when they marched into Ladysmith. A large number had been through the hospital, for the health of the troops since the relief has not been good, and, as was only natural, a considerable number suffered from sore feet. Nevertheless, in those two brigades, there was scarcely a man that fell out during the last day's march, and from the way they marched into Newcastle it might have been thought that they had only come from the top of the hill. In nine days they had marched 120 miles, but this included two days' fighting, and the first three days of the march their movements were hampered by a large convoy moving along very bad roads.

Though there had been more Boers passing backward and forward through Newcastle, the town had suffered less than Dundee. With the exception of the Catholic church, which had been burnt, there had been little wanton damage. As at Dundee, a considerable number of Boer families had taken up their residence there, and the town had been rechristened Viljoensdorp. A certain number of houses had been looted, but three shops, whose owners had remained, stayed open all the time, and the whole town presented a far less forlorn appearance than did Dundee.

19th June 1900.

The inhabitants reported the Boers to have passed through during the 16th and 17th with the utmost speed, believing our cavalry to have made a big detour and to be working round with the intention of cutting them off.

That night (the 18th) a farmer living below Langs Nek came in to report that there was not a single Boer on the nek or any of the hills round it, and next morning at dawn the Mounted Brigade pushed forward to reconnoitre and, if possible, occupy the nek. But, in the meantime, the flight of the Boers had been arrested—again, it is said, by President Kruger himself—and, reinforced by the Wakkerstroom commando brought round by General Botha from the forces opposing Lord Roberts, they had reoccupied the nek. The Mounted Brigade advanced to the Ingogo River and found Ingogo Farm, on the opposite side, held by a small force of the enemy. The advanced scouts were already past the farm before the Boers retired, just in time to save themselves from being surrounded. Lord Dundonald then advanced along the road. He found the Boers to be occupying Majuba and to be in considerable force on Langs Nek, which they were intrenching. There were also Boers upon Pongwana, a high hill to the east of the railway. The scouts reached the lower slopes of the nek and drew fire, though the enemy did not open with artillery. Lord Dundonald then retired his brigade to Ingogo Farm, about 12 miles south of Langs Nek, where he bivouacked, the 4th Brigade having meanwhile marched out to Ingogo Hill, about two miles to rear of him.

The present check seems likely to last some time. The country in front is extremely difficult, and to force a passage would be a costly operation, and would make the use of the whole available force in Natal necessary. This cannot be concentrated here until the railway is finished up to this point, a work which will take at least a week, and probably more. With only wagon transport the question of supply becomes a serious one, not so much for the men as for the horses and mules. The question has been solved for the present, as the authorities have obtained 20,000 sacks of mealies in Newcastle and the neighbourhood, but the local supply will soon be exhausted, and until we advance again we shall have to rely on our transport. The allowance per horse per day is 10lb. of oats and 10lb. of hay, a total of 20lb., which is the same weight as the rations for five men, and implies the carrying of an enormous bulk on an almost endless train of wagons, which on these bad and hilly roads is a very serious impediment.

One very tangible result of our success is to be found in the very large number of rebel farmers who have laid down their arms. They commenced to come in at Dundee and since then a large number have come in every day. They are for the present being very leniently dealt with, as, when they have given up their arms, they are, in most cases, sent back to their farms.

THE LAST DAY OF THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, MAY 13.

From time to time intelligence has reached us from native sources that the Boers were still anxious to make a final attempt to capture the town. We have had this story repeated to us so frequently that there were many in our midst who had altogether ceased to pay any attention to it; but that there was some sincerity in the desire to attack us has now been proved to be true, and it would seem that the obstacle which existed, and which prevented an earlier realization of the enemy's plans, was the absence of any leader sufficiently capable and enterprising to attempt the execution of so hazardous a venture. However, when General Cronje delegated full command to General Snyman, President Kruger sent from Pretoria his youthful but gallant nephew, Commandant Eloff, who had not only frequently expressed his desire to capture the town, but brought with him from Pretoria men whose special knowledge of our fortifications had been gained when serving as troopers in the Protectorate Regiment. It was these men who were destined to conceive and carry to a successful conclusion the work of projecting a body of the Boers within our interior lines. Weeks have elapsed since Commandant Eloff arrived from Pretoria, but he has bided his time, studying carefully our system of defence, our outlying earthworks, and collecting all scraps of information which would convey to him a more intimate knowledge of our position. For a time his plans matured, but, as he conned well over them, he began to make his preparations, recognizing that, if he allowed many more days to pass, the relief column from the south would be an additional and important factor in his scheme of operations. Upon May 10 the relief column had reached Vryburg, and Vryburg is only 96 miles from Mafeking. Upon May 12 this southern column had advanced to Setlagoli, a point only 45 miles distant from the town, and the receipt of this intelligence, which was brought to Commandant Eloff by his scouts, revealed to him the urgency and absolute necessity of carrying out his attack upon the town. It was a well-considered scheme, whose eventual success was only nullified by the lack of cohesion and estranged relations which existed between General Snyman and Commandant Eloff. It was a glorious day for Mafeking; it was a day of honourable misfortune for the Boers. Mafeking fell heavily upon Eloff, recapturing the fort which the Boers had surprised and taken in

the early morning, and thereby effecting the release of the 32 prisoners whom the Boers had caught, and causing known casualties among the Boers of killed, wounded, and taken prisoners, 139.

Commandant Eloff had designed to pierce our western lines under cover of a well-organized feint upon the eastern front of the town. Upon the morning of May 12 and a little before 4 a.m. the bells sounded a general alarm and the bugles summoned a general assembly of available arms to all posts. As in the early days of the siege, I ran from my hotel to Musson's Fort, where, upon similar occasions I have served as a volunteer. There was no sign of disturbance in the west, but very heavy firing was breaking over the town from the main position of the enemy in the east. Gradually this fire was extended until the flanking positions of the Boers north-east and south-east were also engaged. As we stood to our arms in the fort, it seemed that they were directing an attack upon the Brickfields, when, just as it appeared to be the usual innocuous fusilade, streaks of fire were seen leaping to the sky towards the west ; there was a lurid glow across the native stadt and dense clouds of smoke were drifting and piling heavily towards the north. There was instant commotion in the fort, everybody exclaiming at once that the stadt was ablaze. At that moment we did not realize that the conflagration which we saw was the deliberate work of the enemy, although there were many who, catching sight of the blaze, concluded that the attack upon our eastern front was the blind to a movement of much greater importance upon the west. Thoroughly aroused and anxious to learn the reasons of the fire, I returned to the hotel. By this time rifle fire had slackened upon the east of the town, but bullets were coming over from the west, the town being under this cross-fire. There were few people about the town, and, save for an occasional group of frightened women, one saw no one. My horse was already saddled, and, riding to the front of the town, I at once recognized that the Boers were in the stadt. Huts were burning in all directions, the separate fires blending into a sheet of flame ; dense smoke overhung everything. There was the crackle of the burning huts, and showers of golden sparks tossed themselves into the air. It was still dark and the hour was about 5 ; dawn, sheathed in the golden glory of the fire and obscured by the grey black waves of smoke, was slowly breaking. Heavy firing was proceeding from the direction of the stadt, and there was a confused babel of voices. Natives were running in all directions, and against the flames groups of figures were noticeable in silhouette.

There seemed little doubt that the situation at this moment was grave in the extreme. The Boers in the stadt, dividing rapidly, had advanced upon the British South Africa Police Fort, in which from the beginning of the siege the regimental headquarters of the Protectorate Regiment have been installed. At this moment Colonel Hore and the officers and men attached to the regimental headquarters staff, including four belonging to the British South Africa Police, numbered some 23. Preparing to resist the invasion, Colonel Hore had already manned the earthwork, which from the days of the Warren expedition has been designated as a fort. The distance between the stadt and the fort is about 400 yards, and around the regimental headquarters lie scattered numerous outbuildings. It is an impossible place to hold with a small number of men, while the outbuildings are so situated as to afford very excellent cover to any troops which may be advancing with the intention of surrounding the main buildings ; and it was this manœuvre which Commandant Eloff was endeavouring to carry to a successful issue. Scattering quickly, and under the cover of the different houses, he advanced within a very short distance of the fort. In the dim light, obscured by smoke, and in part concealed by the native refugees, it was impossible to tell whether these men were the van of a Boer force or our own outposts in process of retirement upon Colonel Hore. Under the guidance of Trooper Hayes, a deserter from the Protectorate Regiment, 700 Boers had rushed the interior lines of the outposts, making their way along the bed of the Molopo and through Hidden Hollow into the stadt. The movement had been noticed by the outposts, who, unable to do anything against such overwhelming odds, had given the alarm and fallen back upon either flank, delivering a flanking fire when the Boers were discovered. Arriving in the stadt, Commandant Eloff had ignited the huts in various directions, in this manner giving to the main body of the Boers their signal to advance. Before the rush of Commandant Eloff's men the Baralongs separated, reforming behind the enemy, in order to co-operate with our advanced outposts in repelling the progress of the main body. From the moment that this was accomplished the Boers outside our lines and those who were within the stadt were cut off from one another ; but, leaving half his force in the stadt, Commandant Eloff, with whom were Captain Von Weiss and Captain De Fremont, prepared to assault the fort, and, advancing rapidly upon it, had surrounded it with but little difficulty. When the little band of men saw the Boers emerging from the stadt, fire was at once opened upon them, but, as they claimed to be friends, and as it was understood that they were our own outposts, the fire from the fort ceased until the enemy were within 60 yards of its front face, being at the same time, unknown to the inmates of the fort, in occupation of the buildings upon either flank and in the rear.

This, then, was the situation which had come to pass within 300 yards of the railway and about

700 yards from the town. In the town itself the Town Guard, the Bechuanaland Rifles, and the entire strength of the Railway Division had been ordered at once to man the railway line. The men from the Hospital Redan and the establishment from Early's Corner Fort were detailed to the line in addition to the Bechuanaland Volunteers, while the Railway Division, screening their movements behind the corrugated iron fencing which encloses the railway yards, and perforating rifle holes in the sheeting of the fence, were given charge of the railway yards. Lieutenant Feltham and his troop of C Squadron supported Major Panzera and the artillery at the railway bridge, while, under orders from Colonel Baden-Powell, Lieutenant Montcrieff advanced a section of the Town Guard to occupy a house a little removed from the new line of defences which had been already taken up. The town itself, agog with excitement, had been reinforced by the Cape Police from the Brickfields and the British South Africa Police from the kopje, and with these forces opposing them the Boers at the fort found their further advance cut off, while, unless General Snyman forced the passage of the outposts and brought up his artillery, the entire body would be hemmed in.

In the meantime, Commandant Eloff demanded the unconditional surrender of the 23 men who were established at the fort, an order which, had Colonel Hore refused, implied that every man with him would be shot. The exigencies of the situation had thus suddenly thrown upon the shoulders of this very gallant officer an almost overwhelming responsibility. It was impossible to withdraw to the town. Such a movement would have meant retirement over 700 yards of open, level ground without a particle of cover and with a force of 300 of the enemy immediately in the rear. For a moment Colonel Hore had considered, but realizing that escape was impossible, that indeed the Boers were all round him, he ordered the surrender, accepting the responsibility of such an act in the hope of saving the lives of the men who were with him. But the situation imperatively demanded this action in consequence of events over which he had no control. It was, perhaps, a moment as pathetic and great as any in his career, which, honourable and distinguished as it has been, has brought to him some six medals. The surrender was effected at 5 25 a.m., and the news of such a catastrophe did not tend to relieve the gravity of the situation. With the Boers in the fort and in occupation of the stadt, it was necessary so to arrange our operations that any junction between the stadt and the fort would be impossible ; at the same time we were compelled to prevent those Boers who were in the stadt from cutting their way through to the main body of the enemy. The situation was indeed complex,and throughout the remainder of the day the skirmishing in the stadt and the repulse of the feints of the enemy's main body,delivered in different directions against the outposts,were altogether apart from the siege, which we were conducting within our own investment. From the town very heavy rifle fire was directed upon the fort, which the Boers in that quarter returned with spirit and determination. But the position in the stadt had become acute, since, behind our outposts and our inner chain of forts, which are situated upon its exterior border, were a rollicking, roving band of 400 Boers, who, for the time being, were indulging in pillage and destruction wherever it was possible.

Gradually, however, the situation changed. The rifle fire from the town had forced the Boers back from the limits of the stadt adjacent to the fort, enabling Inspector Murray and a troop of the Cape Police and Lieutenant Feltham with his troop of C Squadron to fight their way to this same border, affording to the town a definite and established barrier against any possible communication between the enemy in the fort and the Boers in the stadt. Skirmishing thenceforward progressed over the entire area of the stadt. Major Godley, with Captain Marsh and Captain Fitzclarence andB and D Squadrons, effectively supported by the Baralongs, chevied and rounded up the Boers from point to point, until, shortly after noon, they took up a strong position in a mule kraal and upon the facings of some neighbouring kopjes. To dislodge these men was the work to which Major Godley now directed his attention, and,manœuvring carefully and with discretion,he surrounded the position upon three sides and emplaced a 7-pounder under Lieutenant Daniel, of the British South Africa Police, within 200 yards of the kopje. The enemy were now compelled to fight or to surrender, and, refusing the request to surrender,they fought pluckily,and with such stubbornness that they kept Major Godley's men some time at bay. But, gradually drawing his circle closer, he poured in a few terrific volleys and charged the position at the point of the bayonet. There was a rapid volley from the Boers, but it was of no avail, and, as the glistening steel was poised for a moment over the walls of the kraal, a flutter of white from the interior betokened that at least this body of the enemy had surrendered. Major Godley then proceeded to shell the kopjes, but the Boers at this point were not proposing to increase by their numbers those of the 25 who had laid down their arms in the mule kraal. They scattered and broke into the stadt, fighting from hut to hut, from rock to rock, from snug hollows to the broken points of the many rugged mounds which characterize the configuration of the stadt. These skirmishes continued, and Major Godley contrived to drive the scattered Boers in the direction of Captain Lord Charles Bentinck, who, so conducting his operations, managed to hem the enemy in between the fire of Major Godley and that of his own men. It would have been impossible for the Boers

to escape ; but dusk was falling, our men were weak and hungry, and we already had a number of prisoners, and, after a sharp rally between the three squadrons, Major Godley instructed Captain Lord Charles Bentinck to withdraw C Squadron and assist in driving out the enemy.

These, then, were the events which were occurring in the stadt, and, if Major Godley had been successful in circumventing the Boer plan and checking any very definite occupation of the stadt, the outposts had also successfully repulsed the indifferent and weak-hearted attempts which General Snyman had made to assist his colleague. There had been a definite plan of attack, and, although a portion of it was successful, its main features had failed because their execution had been left to a man who, fainthearted and cowardly, was altogether unworthy of the command with which he had been entrusted. Upon General Snyman must fall the responsibility of Commandant Eloff's capture, inasmuch as he failed to support his share of the operations. The Boer movement upon the town was carried out with remarkable precision and extraordinary dash, but, despite their splendid gallantry and enterprise in penetrating so far within our lines, the fatality which would seem to attend their attacks upon Mafeking rendered their present efforts again unprofitable, causing their assault to recoil upon their own heads. It had been the intention of the Boers to make the fort the key of a position from which they were proposing to shell the town with the guns which would have been brought up by the main body. But General Snyman did not fulfil his obligations to Commandant Eloff, and, as a consequence, when the siege of the fort had been effected the little which they could accomplish had been concluded, and they found themselves compelled to defend their newly won position from the galling fire and spirited attacks of the townsmen. Their position, only 700 yards from the town, would have proved untenable much earlier in the day, had not the Boers secured the officers and staff of the regimental headquarters as their prisoners. We should have shelled them and in all probability caused tremendous carnage; as it was, however, killed and wounded upon either side were not numerous, although there is some ground to believe that the Boers were successful in carrying off a large proportion of their wounded. Upon the following morning, when the returns for the previous day were made up, it was found that 110 had been taken prisoners, ten had been killed, and 19 had been wounded. Our own casualties were four killed and seven wounded, while there were five natives who had received slight wounds. These are the figures, correct, so far as we can ascertain, of this very remarkable day —a day which is almost without parallel in the history of war, inasmuch as the garrison, who in themselves had sustained a seven months' siege, were yet able once more to turn the tables upon their enemy, who, although penetrating into the heart of the invested town, failed to carry the position.

During the morning of the fight, after accompanying Lieutenant Monterieff to Major Hepworth's house, where he was engaged in installing a section of the Town Guard, I thought that I would attach myself to Colonel Hore, since his headquarters appeared to be a central position in the engagement. It was only a short ride, a few hundred yards. The bullets whistled over from the stadt, and I scampered rapidly across in order to gain what I thought was protection from this fire. The light was not clear, and the smoke was still drifting across the line of vision. Men were standing about the regimental headquarters, some were scurrying, many were sitting upon the stoep facing the town. It did not seem to me possible that these could be Boers : but, as I galloped on, my horse was struck with a bullet, and, swerving violently, I found myself pulled up short by a peremptory demand to surrender. They were Boers, or rather they were the enemy, for there were Germans, Italians, and Frenchmen, and a few Republicans. The fort had surrendered. Colonel Hore, Captain H. C. Singleton, Veterinary Lieutenant Dunlop Smith, with 15 non-commissioned officers and men of the Protectorate Regiment, Captain Williams and three men of the British South Africa Police, and five native servants were prisoners in the hands of the enemy. The Boers then dragged me behind the shelter of a building, since by this time news had reached the town of the surrender, and it had begun to be comprehended that the figures which were strolling idly about the stoep of the premises were those of the enemy. Bullets were falling around them, and they in consequence bolted to the lee side of the buildings for cover. Here I found the prisoners who had already surrendered. Around them were numbers of the enemy talking rapidly in French, German, Italian, and Dutch, while there were also many who spoke English. They were all well armed, carrying some 250 rounds of ammunition with eight days' rations in their haversacks. Some were eating breakfast, many were drinking from bottles which they had looted from the regimental mess ; occasionally the group around us was swelled by the numbers of those who, hitherto engaged in looting the quarters of the officers, were now mostly anxious to preserve their skins from the fire from the town and to enjoy the consolation of an inspection of their plunder. In the short time which the enemy had been in possession of the fort many of them had ransacked the premises, breaking open boxes, cutting open bags, and generally appropriating all the effects which they found. It seemed to me at this moment that the men engaged in this work were Boers, as distinct from the foreign element in their force, and I thought that I caught a current

of conversation which was passing in French between two of our captors and which denounced the unnecessary and almost wanton destruction which was in progress.

From the remarks which were passing round us it seemed that the majority were discussing the precise treatment which should be dealt out to the prisoners. At this moment Trooper Hayes, deserter, swaggered towards the circle; he sported Colonel Hore's sword, and a gold chain and watch dangled from his belt. Hearing the subject of the conversation, he at once suggested that we should either be made to stand upon the verandah, a mark to the fire of our own men, or be given the opportunity of taking up arms and joining in the defence of the fort. But at that moment Commandant Eloff approached and ordered our removal to a building in the centre of the fort, which hitherto had been used as the store-room for the regimental mess. Into this they crowded us, together with three others who, visiting the fort in ignorance of the turn of affairs, had likewise been taken prisoners. We were thus 32, and were confined for the day in a cramped and ill-ventilated space. Firing from town had now begun in earnest, and the bullets whistled and cracked and spat all round the fort. They struck upon the stones and spattered the roof with splinters of rock and lead, while we could detect from these signs how ably directed and how fierce was the rifle fire which was delivered from the town. When they had safely secured us in the storehouse the space in front of the building was at once occupied by some 67 men, who crouched up against the walls of the house or lay within the lee of the exterior wall of the fort. From time to time these men moved to points whence the firing was hottest, seeming to take their share of the work in pleasing earnestness and with much keenness. Occasionally those who were without and around the door handed in fragments of dried meat and broken biscuits, but the quantity was not great, and there were many of us who had nothing to eat all day, while few Boers or prisoners had anything to drink. Early in the morning bullets from the town had perforated the water tanks, and as a consequence there was no water to drink, nor was there anything with which to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded. As the day wore on, many casualties occurred among the Boers in the fort, and the absence of efficient medical aid among his men prompted Commandant Eloff to appeal to us for assistance, whereupon Veterinary Lieutenant Dunlop Smith, Farrier Corporal Nichols, and Forbes, the regimental canteen-keeper, offered and rendered valuable services to the wounded Boers, running the gauntlet of our own fire in the cause of a common humanity. Early in the fight the Boers took over the Children's Hospital, which was located some 200 yards away from the fort, and in which those devoted nurses, Mrs. Buchan and her sister, Miss Crawfurd, remained the entire day, attending indiscriminately to the sick children, to the wounded Boers who were brought there, and bringing upon two occasions tea to the prisoners. During the progress of the fight we constantly caught glimpses of the Red Cross flag escorting one or other of these gallant ladies to points where wounded Boers were lying. Throughout the fight the Boers respected the Conventions, repeatedly expressing their appreciation and their gratitude for the services of these ladies.

In our prison the situation was more than uncomfortable, and when towards evening they locked the door the atmosphere became fetid. Commandant Eloff, however, constantly came in and out, chatting brightly with his prisoners, and sympathizing upon the fortunes of war. But as the situation became more critical, beneath the brightness of his manner he seemed to be feeling the gravity of his position. At times he lost control of himself and complained querulously in Dutch about the non-appearance of his reinforcements; at other moments he regaled the prisoners with scraps of information relating to the situation, and by this means we learnt that Limestone Fort had fallen, and that the trench beneath the railway bridge had surrendered. This news was, of course, not particularly pleasing, and it somewhat added to our dejection when we learnt that, when night arrived, we were to be marched to the south-western laager and thence to be conveyed to Pretoria.

As dusk settled down we prisoners, crowding in a small room, could hear echoes of desperate fighting outside. Bullets penetrated the wall, perforated the roofing, crashed through the windows, splintered the door. Ever and anon the fire would die away, breaking out again spasmodically within a few minutes. Through the grating of the windows we could see the enemy keeping an alert lookout; we could see them scurrying and scrambling to defend the points against which the firing was heaviest; we saw the limping figures of the wounded; we heard voices cursing us and threatening the prisoners; while upon one occasion the door opened suddenly and three wounded Boers precipitated themselves violently into the room. The inside of the building was pitch dark by now, and lighted only by the fitful flashing of the rifles, which made almost a glow within. Straining eagerly at the windows, we caught glimpses of a number of Boers scrambling over the exterior walls of the fort, in order, we afterwards learnt, to make good their retreat. This movement to the rear surprised us and was followed by a terrible outburst of firing, caused by the order of Commandant Eloff to shoot down the fugitives. Then time dragged heavily, and we were hungry and tired and faint when there seemed signs of a rally among the Boers. After an interval of extraordinarily heavy firing, in

19th May 1900 (written in London).

which the noise from the snap of bullets and the reports of the rifles were deafening, there was a sudden silence. Commandant Eloff rushed to the door, and, summoning Colonel Hore, stated that, if he could induce the town to cease fire, the Boers would surrender. It was an altogether unexpected *dénouement*. We feared a ruse, and whispered to Colonel Hore, as he advanced to meet the commandant, to be careful. Our momentary hesitation caused Commandant Eloff to surrender himself as a hostage until the cessation of fire could be arranged. The Boers, like ourselves, were unable to grasp the situation, and, seeing their commandant in our midst, made an attempt to rescue him, which only helped to increase the confusion of the moment. Commandant Eloff called out "Surrender, surrender," and endeavoured strenuously to pacify his men. We, upon our part, shouted to the town to cease fire; this was at once done, whereupon 67 Boers laid down their arms, handing them to the prisoners, who piled them up within the storehouse. Those of us who were not engaged in this work seized rifles and bandoliers from the heap and manned the defences of the fort until the prisoners could be delivered into proper custody. The Boers were then marched off and were found accommodation in the Masonic-hall and in the gaol. As I retraced my steps to the town and was passing the stables of the British South Africa Police Fort, the groaning of a wounded man caught my ear. I ran to him to find that lying within the shelter of the stables with a wound through his thigh, was the man to whom I had surrendered myself in the morning. We smiled as he handed over to me his rifle and bandolier. My revolver he had lost, but lying beside him, stiff and dead, with a bullet wound through his forehead, was, by one of those extraordinary coincidences which do happen, the man who had shot my horse.

next follows a
Summary
of the Siege of Mafeking.—
(October 15th 1899 - May 16th 1900)

See also Sir Alfred Austin's
Commemorative Poem m Page.

THE SIEGE OF MAFEKING.

The heroic defence of Mafeking has lasted seven months. It was fully invested on October 15, and on October 16 the first shot was fired of a bombardment which was to last almost without intermission until the place was relieved. The heavy siege guns of the Boers arrived from Pretoria and were placed in position on October 24. From that date the history of the little town and its gallant garrison has been a daily record of bombardment endured, attack repulsed, hand-to-hand fight sustained, amid conditions of constantly increasing privation, sickness, and even famine. During a great portion of the time the town received no communication from the outer world, but continued its single-handed contest with the besieging forces of the Boers in isolation as complete as though the little body of its garrison had been the sole defenders of the frontiers of the Empire. It has been only towards the end of the siege that news has reached the world of the hardships borne w th incomparable courage by the population, and from first to last the messages sent out from the town have been heroic in their cheerful equanimity. It is a splendid record—one of which garrison and inhabitants may alike feel proud, and one which causes the heart of the Empire to beat high with joy in the long and ardently desired news of their relief.

Mafeking is a little open town on the banks of the Molopo river. Its population during the siege has been estimated at about 9,000 persons, of whom less than 2,000 men, women, and children are white. In the early part of last summer, when rumours of war first began to take definite shape, it was entirely defenceless. Its position as a border town rendered its occupation by the Boers almost inevitable in the event of war, and much anxiety and some indignation were expressed by the inhabitants at the unprotected condition in which they were left. Strong representations are understood to have been made to the Imperial Government as to the absolute necessity for organizing some system of defence for the line known as the North-Western frontier, and, as a consequence, Colonel Baden-Powell was authorized to raise recruits for a special corps under the name of the Protectorate Regiment. Throughout the month of August he and Colonel Plumer were actively engaged in this business in the northern district of Bechuanaland and in Rhodesia. It was at first

announced that the regiment was to be about 500 strong, with ten Imperial and six colonial officers, and by the third week in August, when 300 Boers were already reported to be mobilized in laager on the Transvaal side of the border, recruits were pouring in readily to Mafeking. A camp was formed under Colonel Vivian at Ramathlabama, a few miles north of Mafeking. It was organized and drilled by Imperial officers, all working at high pressure, and among others who distinguished themselves by their readiness to take the initiative and assume responsibility for essential measures was Lord Edward Cecil. Though he occupied only the position of a junior officer, it was mainly owing to his decision, seconded by the enterprise and public spirit of a firm of contractors, Messrs. Julius Weil, that, while the military preparations were being carried out, an immense quantity of stores were most fortunately brought into the town. Without these stores it would have been impossible for any subsequent pluck to have enabled the garrison to hold out as it has done. When, on August 26, Major Hore took command of the camp at Ramathlabama he described the force as being composed of a "splendid lot of men," and expressed himself as highly pleased with the state of efficiency in which he found them. They were already provided with horses, arms, equipment, and stores. On the last day of August, when, the town of Mafeking itself being still quite unprotected, the inhabitants desired the Mayor to call an indignation meeting to protest against their defenceless state, Colonel Baden-Powell was able to announce that his special corps was almost ready. A detachment of 30 of the Cape Mounted Police were, in the first week of September, sent up to Mafeking. But the town remained still without fortifications. The camp at Ramathlabama was 16 miles distant; on the 18th of September it was announced that the Boers were encamped only eight miles away. The exact numbers and composition of the garrison of Mafeking have never been accurately known to the public; but on September 22 it was stated that the total number of troops then at Mafeking and Ramathlabama was about 600, of whom 500 were Colonel Baden-Powell's Volunteers. Half a battery of Kimberley artillery was added to these before the siege began, and, at a later period, a correspondent writing from Mafeking estimated the numbers of the garrison, including troops of the Protectorate Regiment, Bechuanaland Rifles, and Town Guard, at about 800 men.

Colonel Plumer's special corps for the defence of the Northern frontier by the end of September reached a strength of 1,000 men, and was moving south to Tuli; but there was every reason to suppose that it would have its own work cut out for it, and Commandant Cronje was at the same time reported to be in command of a mobilized force of 4,000 Boers on the other side of the Transvaal border.

In the first week of October Colonel Baden-Powell was directed to assume command at Mafeking. He immediately proceeded to the construction of defensive works, and, with the assistance of native labour, trenches were thrown up round the town. Rifles and ammunition were served out to townsmen enrolled as special constables, and the Transvaal border was from that time regularly patrolled. On October 8 it was expected that an attack might take place, and that night the garrison slept under arms. It was not until the 10th that the detachment of Cape Police and the half battery of Kimberley artillery arrived. On October 11 war was declared. On the 12th the Boer forces, estimated at 9,000 strong, marched under Cronje against Mafeking.

The Boers advanced from bases at Malmani on the east of the town and Maritsani on the south. At Maritsani they cut the line of communications. They also broke up the line between Mafeking and Pitsani upon the west. The first fighting took place at Kraaipan, about 40 miles south of Mafeking, where, on the night of the 12th, an armoured train, sent to escort into the town two 7-pounder guns despatched from Cape Town, was attacked by the Boers and captured. The town was then fully organized for defence. A large number of the women and children had been sent away. Those who remained were established in a safe position in laager about two miles west of the town. In addition to the earthwork defences all the streets of the town itself were barred with wagons. A number of houses were converted into hospitals and a nursing corps was organized, composed of sisters of the Roman Catholic convents and other ladies, who, when the option was given them of leaving the town, volunteered to remain for the purpose of nursing the sick and wounded. The last messages which the town was able to send to the outer world announced that they were fully prepared to stand a siege and confident of being able to hold their own. On the 14th there was a brilliant little skirmish to the north of the town, in which Captain FitzClarence specially distinguished himself. But it was, of course, impossible to do more than to beat back the advancing Boers. Outlying posts could not be defended beyond a certain range. On the 15th the Boers occupied the village of Lobatsi, a few miles to the north of Mafeking, and the investment of the town was complete. On October 16 Commandant Cronje brought his artillery into position and proceeded to throw shells into the town. The guns were, however, of light calibre, and the results of the bombardment were laconically announced by the garrison as "one dog killed." The Dutch Commander informed Colonel Baden-Powell that he had sent to Pretoria for heavy guns, and sent an envoy into the town to invite him to accept the inevitable and surrender. Colonel

Baden-Powell entertained the messenger hospitably at lunch and told him to tell Commandant Cronje that he would let him know when he had had enough.

The fortunes of war did not then seem to suggest that, of the two soldiers, it was to Commandant Cronje that the bitter lot of surrender was to fall. On October 23 the big siege guns arrived from Pretoria. The range was found by a few preliminary shells, and on October 24 the bombardment of Mafeking began in earnest. On that morning 200 shells from 7, 9, 12, 64, and 94 pounder guns were thrown into the town. The fact that Mafeking was mainly composed of a collection of little houses with mud walls and corrugated iron roofs appears to have been its principal safeguard. The effect of the shells in the earlier stages of the bombardment would seem to have been chiefly to raise clouds of dust, while little or no serious damage was effected. The Boer guns were at first believed to be chiefly Krupps. After a time it was ascertained that the most mischievous was a 100lb. Creuzot, which was soon christened by the garrison Big Ben. The distances from which the guns fired during the bombardment of October 24 were from 6,000 to 2,000 yards. Towards the end of the siege they began to come dangerously nearer. On this first day of the heavy bombardment an advance was attempted under cover of the cannonade, and the Boers were able to open rifle fire within 900 yards of the native stand outside the town. The garrison, however, drove them back, and pluckily opened a counter fire with one of their little Kimberley guns, so placed as to enfilade a portion of the enemy's position. With this gun they succeeded in silencing some of the enemy's artillery. The casualties on the British side after a long day's fighting were only two men wounded and none killed. On October 27 Captain FitzClarence led a brilliant sortie with about 100 men against Commandant Louw's laager, which it was attempted to take by a bayonet charge. The attempt was not successful, but the Boers were for the moment completely demoralized, and lost heavily. A counter attack which they made in force a day or two later on Cannon Kopje, an advanced position held by the Mafeking garrison and vital to the safety of the town, was, to the British garrison, one of the most costly encounters of the siege. Cannon Kopje, described by one of our Correspondents as in itself a mere cluster of stones, was high enough to command the south-eastern defences of the town. Had Commandant Cronje been able to capture the position and mount artillery upon it, the town would have been at the mercy of the invading force. It had been converted into a gun emplacement, and on the Sunday night following the British attack on Commandant Louw's laager it was held by 44 men under Colonel Walford. In the early hours of the morning a force of about 800 men was observed to be advancing in the direction of the kopje. At the same time a heavy shell fire from four guns, including Big Ben, opened on the position. The shell fire was speedily followed by a hail of Mauser bullets from the advancing Boer lines. The kopje was of such a nature that it was almost impossible for the defenders to fire without exposing themselves as targets to the enemy. The least panic on their part and the position must have been captured by the Boers, and with the loss of the position the fate of Mafeking would have been sealed. They lost heavily, but they stood their ground, bringing their Maxims coolly into play and taking deliberate aim with their rifles against the enemy, till, in face of the loss which they inflicted, the Boers fell back and proclaimed an armistice. It was in this most gallant action that Captain Pechell and Captain Marsham lost their lives—Captain Marsham shot as he was helping a wounded comrade; Captain Pechell as he was directing the rifle fire of his men. The total casualties out of 44 were eight killed and three wounded.

The events of these first few days of the siege were enough to show each side the temper of the adversary with whom they had to deal. On November 7, only a week later, a general attack on the town was made by the Boers, but unsuccessfully repulsed. Sorties, attacks, and counter-attacks were for a time a matter of almost daily experience, until towards the end of November it became clear that the town was not easily to be taken by assault. The Boers then settled down to the more patient methods of sapping and endeavouring to approach nearer to the town by parallels. Commandant Cronje himself went south to take up the command on the Modder River, and the forces round Mafeking were left under the command of Commandants Snyman and Malan. The town then settled down steadily to a state of siege. The issue of provisions was regulated; the population, as the bombardment grew more harassing, learned to live practically underground in bomb-proof shelters. The discomforts were severe, and business came to an end, but cheerful attempts were made to keep up the spirits of the town. Concerts, and even one ball, were given during the siege, and various entertainments were organized. The garrison met the sapping of the enemy with vigorous counter-sapping, and it was not long before they found themselves in positions which enabled them to enfilade the enemy's trenches with rifle fire. On the last day of November they began a long fight for the possession of certain brickfields, in which the trenches of the opposing forces came eventually into touch with one another. More than once, by these tactics, the garrison succeeded in forcing the Boers to remove artillery from positions which they had chosen, and up to March 23, when the brickfields position was finally abandoned by the Boers,

hardly any news received from the town was without some accounts of a skirmish in the brickfields.

The dulness of a siege record was painfully diversified in the first week of December by a terrific deluge and heavy flood of the Molopo. The women's laager, which had hitherto been fairly comfortable, was flooded out. Within an hour the river rose 8ft., and when the flood had subsided the greater part of the work done in the trenches had to be done again. Fortunately for the garrison, the area of the storm included the advanced works of the Boers, and the enemy were no less disconsolate over their muddy parapets than the garrison behind their demolished earthworks. On December 10 the Boers made a determined attempt to storm three forts, which was successfully repulsed. The general policy of the garrison at this period of the siege was to abstain from making attacks upon the enemy's positions and to confine themselves chiefly to a defensive attitude, but it was essential to prevent the enemy's investing lines from closing upon them, and, with the intention of breaking, if possible, through the cordon to the north, the gallant attack was made upon Game Tree Hill of which full accounts were received in this country. It will be remembered that this assault of a practically impregnable position, delivered with a courage worthy of the best traditions of British infantry, took place on the day after Christmas Day. and had, for its object to drive the Boers from a strongly fortified position which they held about two miles to the north-west of the town. It failed, for the position was too strong and was held in superior force. Out of 60 men engaged on the British side, only nine came out unwounded ; 21 were killed and 30 were wounded, some of them so severely that four subsequently died. In this engagement Captain FitzClarence received a severe wound, and Captain Sandford, Captain Vernon, and Lieutenant Paton were killed. It was the first engagement of the war in which the Boers were clearly proved to have used expanding bullets. The field-cornet of the Boers to whom the dreadful condition of the wounds received was shown admitted that at one time expanding bullets had been served out. During the siege the Boers frequently fired upon the Red Cross flag, and habitually, in spite of reiterated protest, shelled the women's laager. Many women and children in the late days of the siege were killed by the bombardment.

On January 1 more heavy guns were sent down from Pretoria, and it was on January 3 that the fire was for the first time specially directed against the women's laager. During the night Colonel Baden-Powell effected a concentration of the garrison artillery at an unexpectedly advanced point and succeeded in making so good a reply as to silence one of the enemy's guns. Casualties from the bombardment became from this time very frequent and the town began to realize the full rigours of siege life. All provisions were commandeered and short rations of bread and meat were served out daily. Luxuries had been long since commandeered for the use of the sick. Fortunately some Chinamen among the population continued to grow vegetables in gardens immediately round the town, and though the supply was small it helped to preserve the health of the population. On January 25 a welcome message was received from Lord Roberts promising relief, and on January 27, the 100th day of the siege, a loyal message was sent by the garrison to the Queen.

Though business in the ordinary sense was at an end, the garrison were by no means idle. Almost all adult males were required for military duty, and, under the direction of the railway engineers, a local siege arsenal was established, in which a howitzer was made and home-made shells and fuses were successfully manufactured. An acetylene search light was also constructed, which proved very useful in keeping the enemy's trenches under view.

By the end of February horse flesh and bread made from horse forage had become common food. The water supply of the town was no longer pure. Typhoid, dysentery and diphtheria became epidemic. The death-rate among the women and children became very high. The natives were starving and dying at the rate of about five per day, On March 6, just after the trenches in the brickfields had made contact with one another, the garrison was cheered by the happy news of the surrender of Cronje to Lord Roberts. On March 20 the western laager of the Boers was observed to be breaking up. On the 23rd the brickfields position was finally abandoned by the enemy, who left in their trenches mines charged with nitro-glycerine and fitted with electric fuses, which were fortunately discovered and rendered harmless by the sergeant in charge of the British party.

From this time relief was daily expected, and the history of the siege becomes a history of sheer endurance. Reports reached the beleaguered garrison of attempts made by Colonel Plumer's column to pierce the screen of the investment from the north, and on March 27 they were able to judge by the renewed severity of the bombardment that he was probably at no great distance from the Boer lines. This day is described as the "hottest day" of the siege, and no fewer than 200 shells from Creuzot and quick-firing Krupp guns fell upon the town. During 64 days of siege it was calculated that 1,300 shells from the 100lb. Creuzot, besides innumerable others, had fallen among the mud walls of Mafeking.

On April 8 the successful adventure of Lieutenant Smytheman, who carried news from Colonel Plumer through the Boer lines into the town and afterwards returned in safety to the northern

force, gave news to the garrison of the outer world and told them of the check by which the advance of Colonel Plumer had been delayed. The messages sent out by the garrison were still to the effect that they were well and had food enough to hold out on short rations till the middle of May.

Again the investment of the Boers drew close, but on April 19 the Creuzot gun was withdrawn, and the garrison gave proof both of their hunger and their leisure by joining with the natives in the sport, new to Englishmen, of catching locusts, from a swarm which passed not inopportunely over the town. These insects would appear to have afforded a change of diet, welcome to those who had for a long time experienced the monotony of mule and horse flesh. The daily ration of four ounces of bread had by this time been still further reduced, and the arrival of the locusts may have enabled Colonel Baden-Powell to reply more cheerfully than would otherwise have been possible to a message received from Lord Roberts on April 20, asking that the garrison should hold out until May 18. On April 25 the enemy's attack was once more renewed, and it would seem that the fighting has continued at constant intervals since that date. On May 7 Colonel Baden-Powell telegraphed, "All going well; fever decreasing. Garrison cheerful, and food will last till about June 10." On the 12th the Boers appear to have made a last desperate attempt to take the town by assault and to have succeeded in occupying the Kaffir stand outside the walls, but they were driven from the position on the following day.

21st May 1900.

MAFEKING.

OCTOBER 15, 1899—MAY 16, 1900.

I.

Once again, banners, fly!
Clang again, bells, on high,
Sounding to sea and sky
Longer and louder
Mafeking's glory with
Kimberley, Ladysmith,
Of our unconquered kith
Prouder and prouder.

II.

Hemmed in for half a year,
Still with no succour near,
Nor word of hope to cheer
Wounded and dying,
Fevered, and foiled of sleep
By the fierce cannon's leap,
They still, still vowed to keep
England's Flag flying.

III.

Nor was their mettle shown
By male and strong alone,
But, as intrepid grown,
Fragile and tender,
Without or tear or sigh,
Echoed the brave old cry,
"We, too, would rather die,
Die than surrender."

IV.

As pressed the foe more near,
Only with naked spear,
Ne'er knowing what to fear,
Parley, or blench meant,
Forward through shot and shell,
While still the foremost fell,
They with resistless yell
Stormed his intrenchment.

V.

Then, when hope dawned at last,
And fled the foe, aghast
At the relieving blast
Heard in the melly,—
O our stout, stubborn kith!
Kimberley, Ladysmith,
Mafeking, wedded with
Lucknow and Delhi!

VI.

Sound for them martial lay!
Crown them with battle-bay,
Both those who died, and they
'Gainst death could wrestle:
Powell of endless fame,
All, all with equal claim,
And, of the storied name,
Gallant young Cecil!

VII.

Long as the waves shall roll,
Long as Fame guards her scroll,
And men through heart and soul
Thrill to true glory,
Their deed, from age to age,
Shall voice and verse engage,
Swelling the splendid page
Of England's Story!

ALFRED AUSTIN.

Llanvihangel Court, Abergavenny, May 19.

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE LORD ROBERTS'S ADVANCE INTO THE TRANSVAAL.

COMPILED BY J.T. WOOD, COMPILER TO HER MAJESTY'S FORCES IN SOUTH AFRICA

SCALE 20 0 20 40 60 MILES.

25th June 1900.

THE ADVANCE ON PRETORIA.

THE OCCUPATION OF KROONSTAD.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

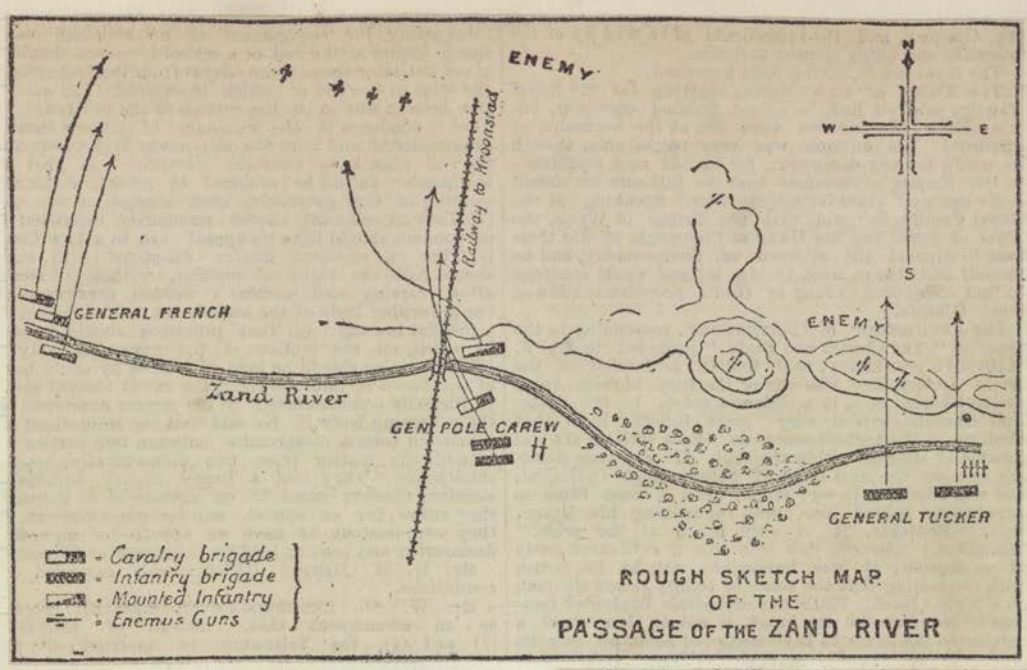
KROONSTAD, MAY 14.

On May 9 Lord Roberts had advanced half-way to Kroonstad. The enemy had fallen back 20 miles, and had taken up a position on an extended front on the Zand River. A strong reconnaissance by the mounted infantry had found both the drifts which cover the railway held in considerable strength with artillery. The cavalry, the absence of which had been so severely felt during the early phases of the advance, had now arrived, and the scheme for the general advance was planned as follows :—A concentration of the line of advance was to take place at Kroonstad. General Ian Hamilton, after leaving a brigade at Winburg, was to advance on the right flank with his mounted infantry, Broadwood's Cavalry Brigade, and the 19th Brigade, *via* Ventersburg. The main advance with Lord Roberts was to be made by the 11th Division, supported by Gordon's Cavalry Brigade, the connexion between the railway and right flank being kept by General Tucker's Division. The left was entrusted to General French with the 1st and 4th Cavalry Brigades and General Hutton's Brigade of mounted infantry. As the left in all probability would find it necessary to act independently, the Mounted Infantry belonging to General Tucker became attached to the main column for screening purposes. On Wednesday morning, when the advance commenced, the whole front which the army moving on Kroonstad covered had contracted to 25 miles. The railhead had arrived at Vet River bridge, seven miles to the rear, and the troops were being supplied by wagon transport between the railhead and the front. As the load of each wagon became exhausted it returned to the railhead to refill. This will be the system upon which "supply" will be organized throughout the advance upon the Transvaal capital. The demolition work at Vet River was very thorough, and the enemy in retreat have been careful to destroy all water-tanks and pumping adjuncts, so that water for some time will remain a very serious difficulty to the work of railway construction.

Reconnaissances by the mounted infantry on May 9 down to the Zand River found that the enemy were in force by the railway bridge, but that the ford leading to the diamond mines, four miles to the west of the railway, was clear. The country on the far side of the river was girt with an abundance of small hills, ideal for field artillery, but there were few succeeding positions. In fact, the country was, as it had been ever since Bloemfontein, vast rolling plain broken at intervals by small groups of hills. Actually opposite the Zand River railway bridge there was no position, but to the east the banks shelved up into a series of low kopjes. As the advanced patrols of the reconnaissance came within sight of the railway bridge the enemy destroyed it.

On Thursday, May 10, the whole force advanced to force the passage of the Zand River. General Tucker's Division covered the right and General French, on the left, crossed the Diamond Mine Drift. He was unopposed. At 7 30 a.m. Tucker's Mounted Infantry arrived at the Railway Drift. It was not held in the immediate vicinity, and the passage was made practically without opposition. But as the leading corps dismounted and advanced on to the opposite ridge they came under a musketry fire from the flats in front of them. General Gordon's Cavalry Brigade, which moves under the personal direction of the Field-Marshal, was at once sent forward to reinforce. It was then found that the enemy occupied the low hills on the east of the drift. They appeared to have chosen a position which, while it in nowise commanded the passage of the river, became automatically turned on the left flank as soon as our troops had crossed the river. Judging from the subsequent reports from the cavalry, the front which the enemy attempted to hold ran diagonally to the river, the line practically being Kaalpan-Vaalbank. It may be that the movement of French's cavalry on the left on the previous day had forewarned Botha of the danger threatening his right flank, and that he had thrown it back accordingly to what he considered a better position. But this is difficult to say. The enemy held this front with anything from 5,000 to 7,000 men and about 15 guns, the majority of which were isolated along the line. The Boer right was so much in advance of the left that they had no course open to them but to fall back as soon as the infantry of the 11th Division began to cross the river. In short, General Tucker's advance became the main attack. He shelled the kopjes in front of him heavily for about an hour and a half, and then pushed forward, arriving on the enemy's position to find that the Boers were gone. At 9 45 the enemy had abandoned the Zand River, for there were five heavy explosions along the line, denoting the demolition of the Riet Spruit and other culverts in our immediate front. They made no further attempt at resistance on the right, but in the centre they stood firm with five guns until 11 o'clock, while on our left they maintained a stubborn front against the 1st Cavalry Brigade.

The centre furnished a very pretty little mounted infantry fight. As the mounted troops debouched into the plain on the north of the drift they came under the fire of two guns posted on the hills on the right. A battery of horse artillery



ROUGH SKETCH MAP
OF THE
PASSAGE OF THE ZAND RIVER

was detached to keep down this fire, while the 4th and 8th Mounted Infantry Corps pushed on to the west of the railway. The theatre was an immense plain, studded with farmhouses and Kaffir kraals and broken by occasional nullahs. A depression extending about 3,000 yards divided the mounted infantry advanced guard from the enemy's rearguard. The five guns of the latter were unlimbered in the open on the crest of a sky-line rise. Loose skirmishers were out in advance of the guns. These skirmishers occupied the farmhouses or remained hidden in the many folds of the valley. They were so well concealed that a squadron of the 16th Lancers was allowed to ride almost upon one party before a single rifle was fired. The Dutch gunners served their guns as rapidly as possible, but the practice was poor. When it became evident that the enemy meant to show a front the 8th Mounted Infantry Corps was dismounted and advanced in extended order across the plain. They advanced to the attack steadily and well, especially Lumsden's Horse, who received a severe shell fire. As the mounted infantry pushed slowly forward the horse batteries followed them, and came into action at convenient ranges behind the advancing skirmishers. Then two 1-pounder Maxims were galloped into the firing line. Little puffs of dust and smoke began to creep up the slopes until the range of the enemy's battery was found. The fire from the enemy's guns slackened. Two mounted officers could be seen urging the gunners to their pieces. Again and again there was a shower of explosives right amongst the guns. It was more than they could endure—up came the teams and the battery slipped away into the shimmer of a South African midday sky line. The mounted escorts fell back after them. The mounted infantry pushed on in pursuit. But the Boers, though in retreat, had no intention of losing their guns. Rather, they were prepared to make every effort to prevent their capture. The 4th Mounted Infantry pushed forward a little too far in their eagerness to overtake the guns. A party of about 500 Boers lay in wait for them in a mealie patch, and our advance party was driven in; driven in so effectually that the enemy in their turn pursued, even bringing a gun round. The mounted infantry fell back on its supports, and then one of our 1-pounder Maxims came into action and the enemy fell back. Lumsden's Horse also had pushed forward and seized a kopje which partially threatened the Boer line of retreat, which kopje they held until they got touch with Hutton's Mounted Infantry, in spite of a heavy shelling. The enemy by turning had saved time, and for the day, even though the 3rd Cavalry Brigade was ordered up, the pursuit was over.

The Cavalry Division, however, had found a more difficult task. They had bivouacked on the evening of May 9 at Dupret's Laager. Marching at 6 they reached the diamond mines before 9. The enemy were reported to be in position on low hills at Vlak Plaat. The Scots Greys were detached to cover the right and reconnoitre forward. They had a smart skirmish and forced a

position which answered the purpose for which they had been detached. General French's orders were to turn the Boer's right flank if possible and to reach Ventersburg Station before evening. With this object he detached his 1st Brigade under Porter towards Vredes Vredrag. The Carbineers and Inniskilling Dragoons went forward and a squadron of the latter occupied a kopje. Shortly after the occupation a body of mounted men in khaki advanced across the plain towards the hill. To all intents and purposes they appeared to be our own mounted infantry. They advanced in three columns in close order until they were within short range. Then they suddenly opened fire, many without dismounting from their ponies. The fire was so deadly and so unexpected that the Inniskillings were driven from the hill back to their led horses, leaving 14 killed and many wounded on the field. It is believed that the attacking Boers were the recently-raised Afrikander Horse, a corps which for the sake of mobility has been double horsed, each trooper when on the march leading a second horse. The incident was the more unfortunate as General Porter had reported that all was clear in his front. At 11 15 the Canadian Mounted Infantry and a battery were sent to the right to support the 1st Brigade. In the meanwhile General French was still developing his flanking movement and had thrown a second semi-circle with the 4th Brigade. They deployed on the real right of the enemy, and were able to charge a body of the enemy about 300 strong. Owing to a misunderstanding the movement was a little late, but it resulted in the death and capture of a portion of the party. The 8th Hussars and 7th Dragoons were the regiments engaged. As is generally the case when cavalry come to close quarters under the conditions of modern rifle fire, such of the Boers who escaped the shock were able to gallop to a point of vantage and open dismounted fire on the rallying squadrons and inflict some loss.

Under cover of this development French withdrew the 1st Brigade and swung them to the rear of the 4th, which now retired magnificently under an artillery fire from long-range guns which the enemy had brought to bear upon them. But the enemy's flank had been fairly turned, and their centre and left, having already given way, the right fell back from before French shortly after 2 p.m. It had been the intention of the General to outflank his enemy strategically, but the oblique front which they had taken up frustrated the original plan, and the day ended in their being tactically turned. The bold manner in which General French relieved the pressure on Porter's Brigade by risking a more comprehensive attempt upon the enemy's right when the first semi-circle had failed is worthy of every commendation. It not only resulted in the removal of the stress on Porter, but fulfilled the object of the original move. Finding the opposition gone the whole Cavalry Division moved to Graspan. Unfortunately the touch with the main column was somewhat lost, otherwise some capture might have been made in the centre. If Hutton's Mounted Infantry had been supported when they found touch with Lumsden's Horse, the whole of the enemy's centre rearguard might have been surrounded. But, all said and done, the enemy's withdrawal was skilful, and if the occupation of an oblique line was by design and not accidental their disposition for a rearguard action was masterful. But, as a defence of the Zand River approaches, the choice of the line which they held was, of course, puerile. Our total casualties for the day were about 200.

The main force bivouacked at Riet Spruit and advanced on the following morning, May 11, with the object of occupying Geneva Siding in the evening, which was 16 miles from Kroonstad. The whole force was now converging upon the new capital. General Hamilton had occupied Ventersburg on the previous day. Ventersburg Siding, which Gordon occupied at 7 a.m., was a total wreck, and from prisoners it was ascertained that the demolition work had been entrusted to the Irish-Americans. Gordon's Cavalry Brigade and Tucker's Mounted Infantry reached Geneva Siding about midday. Here several prisoners were taken. They proved to be men who had remained behind with the intention of laying down their arms. The information which they volunteered was interesting, though, of course, there was doubt as to its accuracy. They said that it had been the intention of Botha and his subordinate generals to defend the Zand River drifts with determination. If successful here the Free State burghers were prepared to defend the intrenched position of Boschplaats and the difficult country which covers Kroonstad. But otherwise the town would be surrendered. They also stated that President Steyn had been present at Geneva Siding on the preceding day and had made an impassioned appeal to his burghers. But the latter were so demoralized that they openly informed Botha that they would not fight any more ; that if he wished to defend the Transvaal he might base his confidence upon his own Transvaal burghers. The last Boer train left the siding late on the preceding evening.

Gordon at once pushed on the six miles to Boschplaats. He found the enemy there partially intrenched with a front of about three miles. On the west of the railway line the position was one of the immense grassy rises so common to this country. This continued with the railway cutting through it until the eminence became a peculiar cliff jutting out into another prairie plain. The cliff was heavily bushed. As our cavalry showed on the rise which confronted the position the enemy opened fire with four field guns and one 1-pounder Maxim. The 17th Lancers made a detour to the right of the enemy's position, while dismounted parties from the 9th and 16th Lancers

25th June 1900.

pushed up towards the earthworks, which were clearly visible on the skyline. The position was not one which could have been seriously held against any force advancing upon a large front, and when we came back to camp that night after having exchanged perhaps 30 rounds the opinion prevailed that in the morning we should find the enemy gone and the road to Kroonstad open. This opinion was strengthened by the sound of explosions about 8 o'clock from the direction of the town.

While the main advance was reconnoitring Boschplaats General French had begun a third semi-circle with his cavalry. Finding that the enemy had fallen back all along the line, he determined to throw a really comprehensive detour and sweep round to the rear of Kroonstad itself. Already his men and horses had been one day without food, as the transport had gone back to the main column on the Zand River. French advanced both his brigades upon Bloemhof, a homestead 20 miles due east of Boschplaats. The mounted infantry took an inner line with Rietgart as the objective. Before the Valsch River was reached the two cavalry brigades divided; each advanced as rapidly as possible upon the two known drifts in the vicinity. It was absolutely essential for the success of the move which General French contemplated that we should arrive on the Valsch before the enemy became aware of the direction the force was taking. The 4th Brigade arrived at Valsch River Drift just in time, for as our men took possession of the difficult country which commands the river fords a strong force of enemy, with artillery, appeared debouching from the scrub country in the vicinity of Kroonstad with the undoubted object of securing the river passages on their right. One shell was sufficient to tell them that they were forestalled. This force of enemy then fell back and took up a position which barred the actual road into Kroonstad. But our cavalry had not marched 50 odd miles to attack an enemy in position on the direct road; and the brigades moved away to the left until by dark they had covered no less that 40 miles in the ten hours which make up the South African working day. The Boers fired a few gun-shots in the dark, doubtless to mask their retreat, which began as soon as they realized that the object of the cavalry was to outflank, not to attack. The cavalry had failed to accomplish their main object of cutting the railway communication in rear of the enemy. But Major Hunter-Weston, R.E., volunteered to make the attempt with a party of his mounted sappers. This party started a little before dark, while the cavalry bivouacked within striking distance of the town. Thus Boschplaats was turned. The main force was well up at Geneva Siding and would be in position to sweep away all resistance on the morrow, while during the afternoon far away to the east we had seen evidences that De Wet was in full retreat before General Ian Hamilton closing in from Ventersburg.

THE PASSAGE OF THE VAAL.

GROOT VLEI (19 miles from Vereeniging), MAY 26.

The advance of the main column of Lord Roberts's army from Kroonstad has been practically without incident. Such little opposition as has taken place has been experienced by the detached column on the right flank, and will be treated by *The Times* Correspondent with that force. When we left Kroonstad on Tuesday, May 2, the Cavalry Division under General French, consisting of General Porter's and General Dickson's brigades with two batteries of Horse Artillery and four 1in. Maxims and General Hutton's Mounted Infantry, had practically turned the right flank of Rhenoster River, the position which it was believed the enemy had intended to hold. On the same day General Ian Hamilton was in occupation of Heilbron. Thus the enemy had cavalry within 20 miles of either flank. The Intelligence Department reported that it was the intention of Botha to hold the Rhenoster River position with 13,000 men. This was probably a generous estimate of their strength, for with these numbers the enemy, if they ever had any serious intention of checking our advance otherwise than by a demolition of the railway, could certainly have shown some front to General French while making a more strenuous effort on their left than the feeble opposition offered to Hamilton by De Wet. As it is, the main force, leaving Kroonstad with seven days' supplies, has arrived within 20 miles of the Vaal River in five consecutive marches, practically without coming into touch with the enemy. From the reports of local farmers, who have remained on their farms and surrendered in considerable numbers, the enemy's rearguard, except the scouts, has retired about 30 hours in front of our advance. The federal army appears to have consisted almost entirely of foreigners and Transvaal burghers. That they had entertained some intention of disputing the passage of Rhenoster River was proved by the rifle pits which had been cut in the banks of the stream. But, with Hamilton converging in from Heilbron and with a division of cavalry threatening their right rear, the Uitlanders had not even waited to exchange shots with our advance scouts. But before they left they had made a complete demolition of the line. Both the bridges at Rhenoster were absolutely destroyed, and the permanent way had been blasted with dynamite for a mile to the south of the bridge, presumably with the object of delaying the work of the construction trains. The position at Rhenoster is one of great natural strength.

Two iron-bound kopjes command the river and drift, while on either flank are convenient artillery positions. A succeeding ridge also added to a position already rendered formidable in that it lay back from the river bed some 500 yards. As soon as it was ascertained that the enemy had vacated it, the opinion was universal that further resistance to the advance of the main column was unlikely. And this surmise has proved correct.

VEREENIGING, MAY 27.

I must pause here in my narrative of the advance to the Vaal to pay a tribute to the infantry. They have marched magnificently. Without a halt they have covered the 90 miles to Vereeniging in six days. The climate has been good, but the nights bitterly cold. The road has been the open veldt, which is not the best marching ground now that the grass is burned and slippery. Each man with his rifle, rounds, bedding, and canteen, has carried 41lb. That is, has supported the load which is carried by the average native porter of the country. When I watched the infantry crossing the Vaal this morning, laughing, shaking each other by the hand at the birth of another invasion, I realized that, all said and done, the British infantry, as it ever has been, is the stay of the Empire. I chanced to be beside the French attaché when some light infantry of General Tucker's Division were passing through Kroonstad. He could not disguise his admiration. His remark was :—" The marvel is, you can march them at any hour of the day, all day and anywhere and yet they do not tire. We would never think of testing our infantry as you do." And the compliment is deserved. Since Paardeberg, the Dutchmen even give them credit of being able to keep up with horsemen. In the matter of marching fitness it is not necessary to signalize any individual battalion.

On Saturday, May 24, the force advanced to Vredefort Meg. Here General Hamilton's column closed in from Heilbron and halted on the railway four miles in advance of the main column. From Vredefort Meg Lord Roberts made a strategical redistribution of the front of the three infantry columns. It will be remembered that when the force left Karee General Pole-Carew's Division, moving on the railway, was the left flank of the main advance, Tucker's Division forming the centre, while Hamilton, converging from Thaba Nchu, formed the right. The whole force concentrated upon Kroonstad in this formation. From Kroonstad Hamilton was detached again to sweep the right flank, but Tucker became the left division. Thus Pole-Carew and the railway became the centre of the advance. Hamilton when at Heilbron was two days in advance of the main column (headquarters). It suited the Field-Marshal's plan to bring him in to turn the left of the Rhenoster position. Then without warning the column was suddenly swung across the line to the extreme right flank, so that Pole-Carew on the railway became the right of the line of advance instead of the left, which was the position in which he had started. Tucker became the centre column. Hamilton pushed forward to Boschbank Drift, while both Tucker and Pole-Carew advanced upon Viljoen's. Strategically the move was masterly. The enemy still believing Hamilton to be two days in advance of the main column not unnaturally anticipated that he would follow the Heilbron road to the Vaal and attempt Englebrecht Drift. They massed there to receive and defeat him before the arrival of the main column at Viljoen's. But on the day that they expected him the main column arrived at the Railway Drift over the Vaal, which was so poorly held that Colonel Henry's Mounted Infantry pushed across with trifling casualty. But this is anticipating.

On May 25 headquarters bivouacked at Groot Vlei and heard the good news that General French, with his Cavalry Division and Hutton's Mounted Infantry, had crossed into the Transvaal by Parys Drift. The main column had found the country clear in front of them. But General Gordon's Cavalry Brigade, which was now covering the right flank of the advance, reported detached parties of the enemy on their right. It also transpired that the enemy had reoccupied Heilbron before the Highland Brigade, advancing parallel with the railway from Winburg, could take possession. They captured Lieutenant Webber, R.E., who had been sent to reorganize telegraphic communication. In fact, it is impossible to close one's eyes to the fact that the right of our communications are vulnerable to attack from any force which might organize at Frankfort and come in between Lindley and Heilbron. It will still be vulnerable north of Heilbron, even when General Kelly-Kenny's Division has occupied these two centres. Realizing this Lord Roberts ordered Lord Methuen and his division across from Bothaville to garrison Kroonstad and to watch the line of communications north of that town. But, even though the right may be weak, it must be understood that we are not now fighting the same enemy which stood to arms at Magersfontein and on the Tugela. Then it was a force flushed with the first taste of success in arms. It was held together with the promise of greater things. Now it is a beaten enemy. Invaded in its turn it has been retreating for weeks, and the majority are simply farmers whipped up to support a nucleus of religious fanatics and paid mercenaries. During the last month they have proved themselves incapable of standing to positions which in December last they would have held stubbornly. One can scarcely realize that an enemy so changed will undertake the risks of the initiative

in sufficient force to menace the automatic contraction of the circle closing in upon Pretoria. Halt and delay might perhaps breed a counter attack and present an opening for some systematic attempt upon our communications. But while we steadily advanced they have not the men to spare for detached enterprise on a scale that might be permanently serious.

On Friday, May 25, headquarters and the infantry divisions, the latter four miles apart on either side of the railway, bivouacked at Taibosch Spruit, seven miles short of Viljoen's Drift. The mounted infantry had encamped on the spruit on the preceding night. At daybreak they had pushed forward to the railway station of Viljoen's Drift, three miles this side of the Vaal. As the Oxfordshire Mounted Infantry and the advance squadron of Loch's Horse came within range a number of shots were fired into them from the railway building. The Horse Battery at once came into action, and a couple of shells sent about 200 of the Afrikander Horse streaming down towards the river. The country between Viljoen's Drift Station and the Vaal is broken with the shafts and plant of coal mines; the bluff formed by the Vaal is also thick with tin buildings and smoke stacks. Seeing that the enemy were vacating Colonel Henry pushed on his mounted infantry to the drift. Just as the first company were up to their ponies' girths in the wash of the Vaal a great pillar of smoke went up from the bridge. The railway bridge had gone. Then followed one of the prettiest skirmishes of the war. The Oxford and Warwick Companies of Mounted Infantry, the Bedfordshire Yeomanry, Lumsden's and Loch's Horse pushed over into the Transvaal in succeeding waves. The enemy were still in the mines. For an hour it might almost have been termed street-fighting. The Boers held outhouses and the compound of the mine manager's house. The mounted infantry, dismounted, and their horses, grouped behind mining plant, slag refuse, and coolie huts, were making the most of the shelter which is plentiful in coal mines. Groups reinforced groups. Half companies dashed from building to building. Irresistibly the firing line was fed from the river bed. Section after section galloped out of the drift, cheering in the enthusiasm of a fresh invasion. Two-horse guns dashed up under the whip—wet and splashing out of the Vaal—"Action front." Then all was over. Lumsden's Horse dismounted and skirmished out into the open. The last Boer fired a parting shot and galloped out of range of the shrapnel. A machine-gun with Compton's Horse exhausted a belt at the scattering horsemen, and ten minutes later the 4th M. I. were in Vereeniging.

The main drift over the Vaal was won. Our loss had been trifling, half-a-dozen wounded and two killed. It had been an ideal day for detached mounted infantry. It is the kind of fighting for which European cavalry must be prepared for in the future. I never remember having seen a prettier sight than the Vaal, belching up, as it were, section after section of mounted men, who at once rode their horses into cover, and then melted, as it were, into the firing line. It proved conclusively that the mounted infantry at least has profited by the lessons of the war.

That night Colonel Henry held the bridge and drift, and on the following morning Lord Roberts crossed into the Transvaal with the two Infantry Divisions which form the main advance, and encamped at Vereeniging.

A small commando of Boers was reported to have crossed Englebrecht Drift and to be moving upon our right rear. Gordon's cavalry Brigade found touch with them and shelled them from the hills they had occupied. It has not transpired whether this force was a hostile demonstration against our communications or a commando of Free Staters deserting the Federal cause.

We are now upon the eve of a bold move. With only one day's supply in hand we move upon Johannesburg to-morrow morning. The distance, if we meet with insignificant opposition is to be covered in two days. It is 42 miles by road, and the force moves on half rations. I say a bold move advisedly, for there has been some hitch in the forwarding of our supplies. The rail head at present is at Roodeval Rhenoster River, and for some reason those responsible on communications have sacrificed the railway-carrying capacity to troops, in preference to supply. Thus in the rapidity of its move the Army has outpaced the food convoys. This, in conjunction with the length of our communications, is sufficient to warrant the adjective with which I have qualified the dash for the railway at Elandsfontein and Johannesburg.

25th June 1901.

STATE-AIDED COLONIZATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JUNE 6.

The annexation of the Boer Republics has been the first, as it has been the most essential, preliminary to a settlement of the impossible situation brought about in South Africa by Transvaal misgovernment and Afrikander ambition. But it is only a preliminary, a clearing of the ground preparatory to the years of continuous effort necessary to ensure the satisfactory political and material development of South Africa. Nothing could be more fatal for the welfare of South Africa than that the Imperial Government, in other words the British people, should think that by

crushing the military power of the Boers it had done all that should be required of it, and could forthwith wash its hands of all things South African for all time to come. For the next few years the newly occupied territories will have to be under direct Imperial rule, and it will depend entirely on the character of that rule, or the use that is made of the period thus granted for reconstruction and for laying down the lines of new development, whether self-government when restored to these territories will prove successful or not. The establishment of a competent, impartial, and absolutely clean-handed administration, of a strong judiciary, the reform of the revenue, the devising of legislation controlling native labour with due regard both to the interests of the industries of the country and of the principles of fairness towards native races on which the Imperial Government has always prided itself, are all matters that cannot be settled in a day or by the drafting of a new Constitution, but only by earnest and unremitting effort. Of the tasks that the new Government will have to undertake none is more important than that of colonization, of the introduction of a strong English element into the country, the only sure method of counterbalancing disaffection and of leading up to the gradual reconciliation of the two races who are bound for all time to inhabit South Africa together. It is a task on which, if it is to be any success, money will have to be freely spent. But it will be well spent. Nothing would be more ill-advised than to grudge the comparatively small sums necessary to complete and perfect the result brought about at such enormous cost by the present war. A large state-aided effort to establish a strong body of English colonists on the land of South Africa is an absolute necessity for the future peace and welfare of the country.

There is not the slightest reason to doubt that the annexation of the Republics will be followed by a large influx of Englishmen into the towns. As a matter of fact the towns in the Republics, like the towns everywhere else in South Africa, are already English. Johannesburg, Pretoria, Standerton, Barberton, Bloemfontein, Harrismith are to all intents and purposes English towns. In the Transvaal the English element was in a majority even before the war. But there are very strong reasons making it desirable that the English should settle on the land as well as in the towns. In the first place there is a political reason. As long as the English are confined to the towns and the Dutch to the open country there will be no contact between them, no opportunity of getting to know and appreciate each other, of exchanging ideas. The introduction of an English farming element into the Transvaal is an essential to the process of reconciliation. There is also an economical reason. The introduction of a body of agricultural settlers imbued with energy and progressive ideas may profoundly modify the whole character of South Africa. At present South Africa is, with the exception of a few favoured districts, almost entirely undeveloped as an agricultural country. It has enormous potentialities of development, but both energy and capital are required to convert those potentialities into something real. The ordinary Boer farmer or stockkeeper is, as a rule, lazy, unprogressive, and poor. The difficulties and obstacles in the way of progress, the expense of water storage, the trouble of irrigation, the necessity for experimenting with new methods are too much for him. The result is that he has done practically nothing to develop South Africa. He has been content to squat on a large area of land and make a poor living off the few cattle which it will support. Under the present system, South Africa, apart from its mines, produces just enough to keep a thinly-scattered pastoral population alive. It is a land where food is inferior and scarce, and where almost everything has to be imported. The newcomer finds life in South Africa, especially up country, expensive, uncomfortable, and dreary. Under such conditions he can only be induced to stay by the payment of enormously high wages. The expense of wages, on the other hand, is a barrier to the industrial enterprise that ought certainly to spring up in a country like the Transvaal, where there is an abundance of coal, iron, copper, and almost every other useful mineral, as well as gold. But one of the chief things that will help to bring wages down to reasonable figures is the development of the land, with its concomitants of cheap bread, cheap meat, and a more pleasant life. Finally, there is also a strong military reason for the settlement of Englishmen on the land in the Republics. It would be foolish to try and shut one's eyes to the possibility of insurrection during the next few years. A complete disarmament of the Boers is an impossibility. Farmers living on isolated farms, surrounded often by a large Kaffir population, have a right to be allowed some weapon for self-defence. On the other hand, to keep a large standing army in the late Republics would be costly and undesirable. Farmers holding on some system of military tenure would form a far more efficient and, in the long run, cheaper garrison than regular soldiers. The farmer colonists would be in constant touch with the Boers all over the country; they would be present everywhere to detect and suppress a rising in its early stages. They would exercise a moral pressure much more effective than that of scattered military garri-

sons. There is little doubt that in December and January it was due to the influence of the English minority among the farmers of the north-eastern districts of Cape Colony that the rebellion made so little headway after General Gatacre's disaster at Stormberg. The interest *plus* amortization on the capital necessary to start a colonist on the land would be considerably less than the annual cost of the soldier who has to be kept in barracks, and whereas the military garrison would sooner or later have to be decreased, and leave no trace behind, the garrison of colonists would be permanent, and in all probability increase considerably.

At the present moment there are some 200,000 Englishmen in South Africa with the Army. Nothing could be more desirable than that a large proportion of them should be induced to stay, and that every facility should be given them towards that end. It is essential that steps should be taken at once to secure for South Africa those who are in any way inclined to make their home in it. There are thousands of them who, if properly approached, would stay now, who would not be likely for want of necessary funds, or for various other reasons, to come out again if once they returned to their homes. Every effort ought to be made without delay to find out those who would be likely to settle in South Africa, and to lay before them the necessary information about the country, setting forth its difficulties as well as its possibilities. Of the categories of soldiers who may be induced to stay, there are in the first place the Reservists and time-expired men. A very considerable number of these are skilled artisans of every kind, and will probably wish to stay on the Rand or in the various towns. But there will also be a certain sprinkling of men among them who would make good farmers. Among the Yeomanry the proportion of those who are both eager and fit to take to farming in South Africa is likely to be very much higher. But by far the best material for settlers is naturally to be found among the colonial Volunteers. To the men from Canada, New Zealand, or Australia, men used to rough, open-air life, to riding over wide, almost uninhabited areas, to driving stock, to breaking up new ground, South Africa does not bear the same strange, deserted appearance that it bears to the Englishman fresh from the busy streets and rich, enclosed fields of the mother country. These are the men who will undoubtedly succeed here, and every effort ought to be made to persuade them to stay. There is one man, at least, who is going to make a very determined effort to keep some of the colonial contingents in Africa. Mr. Rhodes has gone up to Beira with the express intention of persuading the men of the various Bushmen's contingents, now under General Carrington, to become settlers in Rhodesia. His scheme is to give each man a retainer of £25 a year for himself and £12 for his horse, on condition that he stays in the country, with liability to military service if called upon, and presents himself with horse, saddle, and gun on certain occasions in the year. The settlers can then either work on the mines, or avail themselves of the grants of grazing or irrigated land which Mr. Rhodes is prepared to give them.

In the Transvaal and Orange River Colony circumstances are somewhat different from Rhodesia. There are no vast tracts of land immediately available. There is also an enormous amount of work to be done in connexion with the settlement of the country, the restoration of order, the re-establishment of the mining industry, which will all claim precedence over the work of colonization. The problem is what to do with those who are ready to settle till provision is made for their receiving farms and the necessary equipment with which to start farming operations. A large mounted police force will be wanted in the Transvaal for the next few years. Recruits for this force should be invited on the understanding that land grants would be given to them as the force was gradually reduced and as suitable farms were found. Such a plan would have the further advantage that the men would get acclimatized and acquainted with the country, the ways of the natives, and the character of the seasons before they were actually called upon to start farming for themselves. Those with local experience would teach the others, and the men who would prove failures to-day might after, say, two years' riding about the country in wagons with South African colonials, Australians, Canadians, and others start with every prospect of success. Then, again, as battalions are withdrawn home those Reservists who wished to stay should be transferred to other battalions, or combined in special battalions, till opportunities were found for providing them with land to settle on. A considerable force will have to be kept in South Africa in any case, and a great saving would be effected if the gradual disbanding of a large part of that force could take place in Africa instead of in England. In fact, there is a great deal to be said for the suggestion that has been made that the Imperial Government should refund to every Reservist, time-expired man, or volunteer the equivalent of what it saves in transport charges by not having to ship him back to England, either in ready money, or by bringing out his wife and family free of charge.

The scheme of colonization to be really successful must be carried out on a large scale. A large loan, at least five, and preferably ten, millions, should be raised and spread over the next four or five years. The sum seems enormous, but it is small compared with the cost of this war, or with the cost of suppressing a widespread rising. And it is not improbable that if such a loan were raised and added to the general expenses of the war

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the Uitlanders would be ready to considerably increase their contribution to the indemnity, in consideration of the great advantages which would ultimately result from the settlement of a loyal and progressive class of colonists upon the land. The money should be put in the hands of a carefully chosen commission with full powers to make use of Government lands in the late Republics, to buy up other lands, either private or belonging to the great companies, and to construct irrigation works on a large scale. This commission should have its seat in the newly-occupied territories, but it should be empowered to buy up lands elsewhere in South Africa as well, for the strengthening of the English element and the elevation of agriculture are as urgently needed in Cape Colony as in the Republics themselves. The greatest care will be necessary in the selection of suitable colonists and in providing them with the necessary help to tide over the difficulties of the first few years. South Africa is not a country where a new-comer from England can simply be dumped on to the land and told to farm and make himself a living. Unless the settlers are carefully chosen and properly started they will all in a few years sell their farms to land speculators and drift into the nearest towns. That was the fate of the settlers planted in Bechuanaland after the Warren expedition, whose farms are now mainly in the hands of one or two large owners. Farming in South Africa has many difficulties. Water is scarce, though less so than in most parts of Australia. The "conquered territory" in the Orange River Colony and a few bits in the Southern Transvaal are the only parts of the upper plateau of South Africa where agriculture can be carried on successfully without irrigation. Locusts and other plagues abound. Native labour is for the new-comer often a very difficult problem. But all the same South Africa is a country with great possibilities. The climate is magnificent, and the soil, wherever a little trouble has been taken to store up the water that as a rule is allowed to run to waste, is surprisingly fertile. The fertile gardens round Kimberley, the forests that have sprung up round Johannesburg in the last ten years are but indications of what the barest veldt in South Africa can do if the slightest attention is paid to it. There is no reason why in time the soil of a great part of South Africa should not be capable of supporting a prosperous and contented agricultural population.

OUR WARS AND OUR WOUNDED.

VII.*

(By Mr. Burdett-Coutts, M.P.)

CAPE TOWN, April.

In the green roads and *allées* formed by the regular rows of marquees in which No. 3 General Hospital is laid out many an interesting hour may be passed, wandering in and out of the tents, chatting with the soldier-patients who love to fight their battles over again, observing the comfort and regularity of all the arrangements, the central table for common use, the neat little beds with a chest of shelves at the head of each, the temperature charts and diet sheets affixed to every sick case, the many little luxuries which lady visitors have added, the orderlies moving about methodically amongst the patients, and here and there a nursing sister looking in to see if her instructions have been properly carried out. Except in the special surgical and medical marquees, of which there are two in each of those divisions reserved for serious cases, many of the patients are up and sitting about, some on the beds, some in the entrance to the tent, and some outside under distant awnings. A large proportion of these, as previously mentioned, seem fitter subjects for a convalescent home than for a hospital fully equipped and manned for grave cases. Were a heavy pressure of the latter to come they could find no place in this hospital save at the expense of these convalescents, who are certainly not yet "fit for duty," otherwise they would not be here.

At the entrance to the broad central avenue some of the patients are making two large flower beds, neatly bordered with white stones and bedded out with plants brought by the neighbours. As dinner-time is near we will walk down the whole length of the avenue to the kitchen at the end. Within all is neatness, order, and precision. Seven cooks, consisting of a sergeant and six privates, are busy preparing the chief meal for some 500 patients. The head cook is a very smart and intelligent man, trained at Aldershot, and no mean artist. The seven "diets"—"roast," "varied," "convalescent," "chicken," "beef tea," "milk," and "plain milk"—have each its measured component parts, solids, liquids, and condiments, set down in the manual. No praise can be too high for the excellent cooking in this hospital, which of course depends on the individual attention given to the matter here. Even the Cape Town meat is made more than palatable, while the roast chops and cabbage, stewed chicken, soups, vegetables, and potatoes are most savoury. The rice and sago

puddings and custards are delicious ; the beef tea and chicken broth would tempt the feeblest appetite ; the barley water almost converts us from a deadly and life-long hatred of that particular beverage. In fact, we must confess to having made a capital lunch by conscientiously tasting all the dishes, taking them—we hope unobserved—in order, soups first, then meats, vegetables, and chicken, finishing up with the custards. Meanwhile, outside a long row of orderlies stand ready to carry away the meals on warming pans, so that if you walk to the furthest marquee you find the food arrives there quite hot.

The making up of the supplies required in the kitchen each day is a complicated affair, and the provisioning of the hospital still more so. In each ward the orderly draws up a " Diet and Extras Sheet " for the patients under his charge. This is the basis of all supplies. An abstract or " Provision Ticket " is made by the ward-master for each ward. All these provision tickets are then taken to the quartermaster, who collates them and gives the order for the next day to the various contractors. The quartermaster must be both careful and honest. It is in his department that most " leakages " can occur ; 1,200 pints of milk, 300 bottles of soda-water, 260 of lemonade, 78 of stout, and 57 of beer are a few of the items on to-day's list.

When we consider the large staff assigned to one of these general hospitals it might be thought they would be self-contained and self-managed as to provisions and equipment. Not at all. The hospital draws all its supplies from another military department—the Army Service Corps. Its transport also comes from that source. With regard to stores not kept by the A.S.C., the latter make the contracts for delivery direct to the hospital. The quality of the food depends on the supervision of the quartermaster and medical officer of the day, and the rigour with which they reject anything questionable. In the latter case they go and buy direct from the shops and the bill is sent in to the A.S.C.

Not even the equipment of the hospital—the tents, beds, furniture, and other things special to it—are to be found in the Army Medical Department. All these have to be drawn from another source equally distinct from the A.M.D. and the A.S.C.—viz., the Ordnance Department. The mass of forms, indents, requisitions, receipts, returns, reports, and correspondence involved in this arrangement, added to a terrible thing called a " diet account " which has to be sent to the War Office every month, are enough to make the two hairs generally left on a warrant officer's head stand on end. It is credibly reported that several of these officers have sunk into early graves under the strain. One civil doctor, after a month's wrestling with the " sheets for extras," one for every egg or half-pint of milk, is now a wandering lunatic in his own hospital, sheet in hand, still trying to fill it up.

The only thing the Army Medical Department possesses are medical stores. Even with regard to these, the smallest thing not actually in the hospital can only be obtained by a protracted journey through the circumlocution office. A patient with bad eyes requires a pair of dark spectacles. There are none in the hospital. A requisition has to be drawn up and sent in to the P.M.O. of the base. He sends it on to the base medical stores. They have them not. The base P.M.O. then signs an order for them to be bought. They are sent here and a receipt signed for them, which the tradesman has to take to the base P.M.O. to get his money. All this may take two or three days, during which the eyes are getting worse. Now, an orderly of the hospital could have gone to the shop, bought the spectacles, paid for them, and brought them back in an hour ! The former is the normal process ; but just recently it has been allowed to be shortened in cases of extreme urgency. The fact is that many parts of the system are breaking down under the test of practical experience. Why and how it was ever devised, and how soon its network of red tape will be cut through and the whole system simplified, are interesting questions.

An afternoon may be spent in examining the other parts of the hospital, some of which have been briefly alluded to in the description of its ground plan. The kit store is a tin building with some 300 large pigeon-holes in which the patients' kits, after being thoroughly cleansed and where necessary sprayed with perchloride of mercury, are packed away with name and number tied on. On the floor are heaps of ammunition—21,000 rounds to-day—rifles and carbines, and swords with khaki-covered scabbards.

The linen store contains bedding, blankets, and hospital clothing. It is here that we come across one of several instances in which well-intentioned philanthropic societies and funds duplicate the work of the hospital. When a patient leaves to go home on a transport, he is supplied from the hospital with a fairly complete outfit for his journey and for the climate to which he goes. It consists of an overcoat, a serge suit, a blue guernsey and flannel vest, a pair of boots, two flannel shirts, drawers, and pairs of socks. The hospital makes certain of his having these ; its officers know nothing except what they see in the newspapers of the philanthropic societies or their work. The consequence is that many of these articles are given over again at the ship's side, and money which might have been better spent in buying things the soldier does not possess, and which amounts in the aggregate to a very large sum, is practically wasted. The confusion points to a want of organization, and the absence of one head, whether civilian or military, or some central society acting in the joint interests of donors and patients, to adjust the incidence of official and voluntary aid. The economic vice of overlapping has not been con-

fined to the administration of the war funds at home.

After the store tents, including the issue stores containing the supplies and specially under the quartermaster, we visit the dispensary, which is sufficient for its purpose, although roughly furnished with shelves formed of upright packing-cases, in which hundreds of jars and bottles are arrayed, piles of "dressings," lock-up cases for "poisons," and various "extension apparatus" ingeniously made on the spot. There is a Röntgen rays tent, which would have been far more used 30 years ago when bullets lodged in the body instead of going clean through two or three men. The disinfecting process is carefully examined, and found as thorough as a department of such vital importance should be. All soiled linen is soaked in iron tubs in a solution of formaline and then either passed through Thresher's disinfector or boiled and dried in the sun, while the refuse of the camp is carried every evening to a distant spot and there burnt.

The church, peculiar to No. 3, is made out of a marquee 50ft. long by 30ft. wide It has a frame altar covered with a red-embroidered altar-cloth on which stand a cross and vases of flowers; the lectern is draped in a Union Jack, and there is a harmonium; the church is partly seated, and there is space for a congregation of 200. A long dining-tent for convalescents, seating some 150, is also used as a reading-room. An additional recreation marquee is being erected. A novel feature is a large pen of live chickens given by the neighbours for consumption as they are wanted. They are a nuisance, and anticipate their fate by eating each other.

After this lighter interlude we visit the enteric marquees, which, as previously stated, have been wisely isolated from the rest of the hospital and have a special ward master, orderlies, and nurses assigned to them. There are three marquees, 45ft. by 18ft., with 15 patients in each. In the daytime there is a nursing sister with three orderlies in each tent; at night an orderly in each, but only one nursing sister for all three.

The theory and practice of the Army Medical Department alike impose male nursing. It only needs a glance back at the normal staff (Letter V. in *The Times* of April 17), with its nine nurses and 78 ward orderlies, to understand this. Excluding India, there are only 56 Army nurses for England and the colonies. Under this system the nurse does no nursing; she directs and superintends the nursing by the orderlies. The chief ward master, who is responsible for the whole hospital within the wards, supports the nurses by his authority.

Owing either to the growing pressure of public opinion, or the deficiency of orderlies as the campaign extends, the allowance of nurses in these base hospitals has been materially increased. No. 1 General Hospital at Wynberg, with 630 beds, has now 39 nurses; but this large number is explained by that hospital having 120 officer-patients. Here, in No. 3, there are at present 19 nurses. It is a significant fact for our argument that this hospital started short of 38 orderlies, that number having been sent up with one of its medical officers to establish a stationary hospital at De Aar; 20 civil orderlies were taken on from the St. John Ambulance Society; and to make up for the remaining shortage of 18 orderlies, as well as the inexperience of the 20 civilians, ten nurses have been added to the normal staff of nine, making 19 in all. Female nursing is welcomed at No. 3, and there are many enlightened officers of the R.A.M.C. who hold the same view; but the traditions and practice of that body are tinged with a strong prejudice against it. Certainly at the headquarters of the department at home this prejudice remains; this was proved by the uncompromising rejection of a proper *quota* of nurses in the first offers of voluntary hospital assistance, in spite of the well-known opinion of Lord Wolseley, which is also said to be shared by Lord Roberts, in favour of female nursing.

A careful examination of the whole question, for which there is hardly space in these letters, has brought us to the conclusion that the absence or totally inadequate supply of female nursing laid down in the manual is a glaring blot on our present Army medical system. It is a violation of nature; for nursing—not superintendence only, but the actual handiwork of the process—is woman's work, not man's. It is an antediluvian prejudice, dating from the time when Mother Gamp ruled in the sick room, and taking no account of the enormous development of scientific and efficient female nursing which has been one of the brightest features in the domestic history of the last 30 years. Since the Crimea, in the days of the Gamp *régime*, we have fought no war where nurses were possible; they can rarely go into savage countries. Even then Florence Nightingale taught us the lesson. She sowed the seed which was treasured and grew up in thousands of hearts, finding thoughtful minds and willing hands innumerable to prepare for the harvest of another great war time.

Fifty years later the day comes. Two hundred thousand British soldiers are facing wounds and sickness in a distant, but civilized, country, a country in which none can say the sanctity of womanhood is not recognized. Where are the women? Where are the nurses? A wretched hundred or two or three are here; while thousands—trained, skilled, willing, eager—are sitting at home wringing their hands! And all this for an antiquated tradition, an unnatural, blind, stupid prejudice of some fusty "department," which the War Office ought to have knocked on the head at the outset of the war, with the medical profession and public opinion at its back.

The arguments against female nursing in the Army in war time may be briefly stated, with the

natural answers to them. We will give the Ancients all the rope they can claim ; we are too polite to indicate the result. The premiss, more than once laid down in these letters, must be borne in mind—that hospitals strategically safe afford the best, though not in a country like this the only, field for female nursing. What harm came to Mr. Treves's four nurses at Colenso? De Aar, Orange River, Modder River, Naauwpoort, Bloemfontein, and many other advanced stations, where only a few nurses have been employed, all suggest the same question.

1. Soldiers prefer being nursed by orderlies, and do not like women about them when sick or wounded. Answer.—Direct negative ; simply not the case. A soldier is not a fool but a man. Any man who has been seriously ill knows the difference between a rough-hewn orderly with horny hands and creaking boots, smelling of tobacco and other things, moving about his bed, tending him with a man's touch, and the real ministering angel, the female nurse. It is not the poor orderly's fault, he does his best ; but he is built that way.

2. There is no place for women to live in in a hospital camp. Answer.—Nonsense ; make a place. It has been done over and over again, as in No. 3, with perfect comfort and propriety. "Fine ladies," nominally, have gladly submitted to this stupendous difficulty.

3. Half the patients in a military hospital are convalescent, sitting about smoking and chatting, and a woman's presence or proximity interferes with their freedom and natural enjoyment of each other's society. Answer.—If this is true, it is in the nature of a *petitio principii*, because it is another proof that these hospitals ought not to be occupied by convalescents. Moreover woman's presence invariably raises the whole tone of a hospital, its comfort, *moral*, manners, and everything else about it. Tommy has plenty of time for swear-talk—that is the suggestion, otherwise the argument has no meaning—when he is in barracks or on the march. Any one who used the argument to a group of Tommies that they cannot behave themselves in the presence of a nice woman, would be likely to come away with his features somewhat rearranged.

4. Not all the cases in a military hospital are suited to female nursing. Answer.—This is merely a question of classification and separation which ought to be done under any circumstances. It is just as easy as isolating enteric or scarlet fever cases.

5. The Old Law, or what may be politely termed the sentimental difficulty—"philandering." Answer.—This is an argument somewhat difficult, not to answer, but to discuss. To be quite fair, there is something in it unless the nurses are carefully chosen and accompanied by a good matron. The whole nursing world will rise up in arms against the weakness of this answer. But what we have heard, we have heard. It is very little and very rare. There is no more danger than in a male ward in a civil hospital, and that has not yet been found sufficient to expel female nursing from those institutions, and never will be. It really depends on the character and conduct of the woman. Once that is assured she is perfectly safe, and the argument falls to the ground. To say that it cannot be assured would be an unwarrantable insult to a large class of our meritorious, self-respecting, single-minded, virtuous English womanhood.

There is no need to further urge the arguments on our side, but one should be set down which only knowledge makes obvious. If the department of nursing, almost more important than medical treatment in a campaign, which is always marked by a variety of fevers, is to be enlarged by civil aid in war time we can only turn to female nursing. It is there alone that practical experience lies. Even the St. John Ambulance orderlies, who deserve great credit and praise for their aptitude and devotion in this war, and for whom there is plenty of room at the front, where they would prefer to be, must necessarily start with nothing but theoretic training. They have never seen, much less handled, a patient. They learn quickly, but during the period of active probation—say a month or six weeks—the sick or wounded soldier is the *corpus vile* of the experiment.

The case is over. It only remains for common sense and humanity to give the verdict.

30th June 1901.

OUR WARS AND OUR WOUNDED.

VII.* (continued).

(By Mr. Burdett-Coutts, M.P.)

CAPE TOWN, April.

There remains one more scene before the curtain falls on this long day. A large convoy of wounded from the front—Rensburg and some from Paardeberg—is timed to arrive in the camp at 5 30. The Army Service Corps at Wynberg has been notified to meet the train at Rondebosch, a mile distant. But a delay of three hours has been announced, and during the interval the camp relapses into its normal quietude at the close of day. As night falls the stars come out in myriads, and the dark outline of Table Mountain stands clean cut across their jewelled arch. The moon, which turns night into day here, has not yet risen ; and the tents beneath are shrouded in the land-darkness which starlight fails to penetrate. Only now and then a figure flits like a shadow between the tents, or stands out dark and giant-like against the light

within a half-drawn curtain. These are the only signs of life ; all is darkness and peace.

Suddenly, at the sound of a bugle, the camp springs into action and movement. Short, sharp orders break the stillness ; lanterns swing like fire-flies in every direction ; little squads of orderlies stand to attention on the roadside. Two nurses in white aprons and red capes, with the big red cross on their left arms, wait beside each squad ; a surgeon stands close by. Staff-sergeants, sergeants, corporals take their appointed places. Some bring out sheets of blue foolscap ruled in columns and filled with writing ; these are the convoy reports sent on beforehand, with particulars of the men and their injuries. Some sit at little tables, with large manuscript books open before them, and lantern, pen, and ink. All is ready ; a few moments of well-ordered preparation has transformed the silence of rest into the silence of expectancy.

Slowly and noiselessly along the sandy road a ghostly column of white-hooded ambulance wagons moves out of the dark pine trees. " Halt !" cries a voice, and the whole line stops. Four orderlies, sitting erect on the front seats, jump down and disperse. The squad by the roadside cluster round the back and peer into the dark cavern beneath the hood. Two bodies lie side by side on stretchers, lengthways along the floor of the wagon. Two orderlies take the projecting handles and slide one of the stretchers half out on its little flat wheels. A corporal holds his lantern up to read the tally tied to the end of the stretcher, and a sergeant stands by, blue paper in hand. " What's this ? " asks the latter. " Gloucesters, 007, injured head," says one orderly. " Gordons, 1001, fractured thigh," says the other. " Gloucesters pass on," replies the sergeant, and then—falling into the Zolaesque—" Thigh, tent 37." The stretchers are pushed back, and the little mules strain at the big wagon, which moves heavily forward.

The next one stops in its turn, and the process is repeated. " 10th Hussars, chest wound, dangerous," reads the orderly. " 10th Hussars, here." Four orderlies, one to each handle, lower the stretcher gently from the wagon and place it on the ground, a little way from the road. Two return to the wagons, and two remain stooping between the handles at either end. " Lift—steady ! " and like a machine the stretcher rises from the ground, slow and level, and moves off to a neighbouring tent. An orderly within pulls the flap aside ; the other patients raise themselves on their elbows to look at the newcomer ; the stretcher is aligned with the empty bed, with the length of one shaft resting on the edge. Very tenderly the two orderlies and a nurse half lift and half slide the body on to the bed. I notice the nurse does as much as the two orderlies, standing on the other side and making a cradle of her arms into which the body is gently moved. A fine young man this, fair and Saxon ; his eyes are wide open, his mouth drawn with pain, for he is shot straight through the left chest ; he has spoken no word yet. As the soft bed changes his position one low groan comes through his set teeth and one half-stifled cry, " God—my side !" We pass out, leaving him to skilled and tender hands.

At the entrance to the broad avenue of No. 3 a larger group is collected ; the stretchers have been unloaded quicker than they could be passed to the tents. Five forms lie in a row on the ground huddled in blankets. A corporal, bending low on one knee to hear the faint voice, fills in the particulars on his paper, and two more sitting at a table take them down in a book. The wind blows chilly across the flat, and from Paardeberg to Cape Town by Modder is five days' journey at least. It struck me that wounds need not be bound up in red tape and that most of the details might have been taken after the patient was comfortably housed in his tent. The pitch of the military voice is a little grating as the corporal goes steadily on with the first of the five prostrate forms. " Surname ? " I do not catch it. " Christian name—in full ? " " Benjamin." " Regiment ? " " Kitchener's Horse." Kitchener's Horse—in action already, and one at least come back ! They only seem to have started yesterday, amidst waving handkerchiefs and tear-stained faces ; for the populace of Cape Town gave many of its brothers and sons to this latest effort of the loyal colony. " Nature of injury ? " " Right leg, left eye "—the tone is mechanical. " Religion ? " The answer comes in a low monosyllable, unwonted here. Even the corporal repeats it inquiringly, and a quick movement runs round the group. " Jew ? " " Jew " repeats the low voice ; but more firmly now, and with a suggestion of " Why not ? " in the accent. A young face, thin and white, strongly marked to the type and wearing the look that painters gave the race in the old days of persecution—almost a smile, deprecating, patient, pathetic. He is a brave man, for in the tent he never flinches while his dressings are removed. He, too, like the Catholic buried this morning, has fought for the Great White Queen.

Here is one who fought on the other side—a wounded Boer prisoner. Being shot in the lower part of the leg only he is carried by two orderlies, who make a chair of their gripped hands while the patient puts an arm affectionately round the neck of each. He wears no uniform ; an old black jacket, ill-fitting corduroy trousers, a wide-brimmed soft felt hat, and beneath it a pair of restless watchful eyes and the inevitable unkempt straggling beard. He is carried into a tent, and while his blood-stained clothes are being changed for a comfortable hospital suit the usual process of taking stock of his worldly possessions goes on. First comes his watch—a handsome gold one. " That goes under yer piller," says the orderly ; " see, I put it there.

Anything else—any money ?" The Boer, satisfied as to his watch, hesitates about the cash. " Any money ?" repeats the orderly, blue paper and pencil in hand. " You'll have it all back—Boer and Briton, we treat 'em all alike here." " A shilling," replies the Boer after a pause, and fumbles in his pockets. The shilling is duly entered in its appointed square on the blue sheet. He hands it over reluctantly, and his eyes follow it from the orderly to the staff-sergeant. " Anything else ?" " No, nothing else," replies the prisoner, somewhat doubtfully. " Sure ? Remember, Boer and Briton, we treat 'em," &c. Then slowly and with difficulty the prisoner produces something from every pocket, a nameless collection—pipes, tobacco pouches, a silver match-box, a Bible, a gold snuff-box, little pots of beef essence, and a dozen other knick-knacks, and, lastly, from the bottom of each deep recess half-a-dozen cartridges. They cover the little table at his bedside, and the orderly goes on methodically with his inventory. " Have you got that shilling down ? " asks the Boer anxiously. Only then something that has been familiar in his English from the first takes a definite note. It seems to carry us far away, north of the Tweed, and things are getting confused. After all our Boer turns out to be a Scotchman, long resident in the Transvaal, and commandeered to fight. Somehow our interest in him fades. Probably he could not help it ; but we think of Wauchope and that sudden gap, wide and deep, in the Highland column as the dawn broke over Magersfontein. So we go out.

By this time the convoy have all been housed. Within the tents doctors, nurses, and orderlies are busy with the wounded, changing their dressings and making them comfortable for the night. The low murmur of voices, broken now and then by a groan or cry, is all that is to be heard in the camp. The moon has risen, the tents gleam like a white city in its brilliant light, and the distant fringe of tall pine trees that surround the open plateau forms a dark wall against the pale sky. Darker still—majestic, protecting, friendly —Table Mountain looks down over all like a statue of Eternity watching the changing drama of Time.

VIII.

BLOEMFONTEIN, April 14.

A famous march must always pay its withering toll ; and behind the victorious columns that move through the Market-place with flying colours and bands playing there drags like a lengthening shadow the long trail of yellow, hollow-cheeked, enfeebled men, in every stage of physical suffering and depression, who disperse silently into such quarters as they may find, like moles into the ground. It is a melancholy and thankless task to follow them into their varied hiding-places ; but is it too much to ask of people at home who have supped full of joy and " demonstra 'on " at the combined feast of Paardeberg, Kimberley, Ladysmith, and Bloemfontein ? Perhaps not, now with the anti-flavour of Koorn Spruit and Reddersburg to remind them that all is not over yet and that possibly the real Boer war is only about to open.

At present there are fully 2,000 sick and 200 wounded in the hospitals of the town and the field hospitals around it. The former have come from the march, growing day by day, and borne along as best they could be in field hospitals, whose ambulance transport was from the first cut down by four-fifths—two ambulance wagons per bearer company in place of the normal ten. Many of those wounded in the advance were sent back to Kimberley in bullock wagons, and we can well imagine the excruciating sufferings caused by such method of conveyance. " Bullets first, pills afterwards," was the grim military order, until the morning after Driefontein the " Chief " saw 30 wounded men still lying out on the ground, although the bearer companies and doctors had been working for 20 hours without cessation and had gathered in 400. Then he said he thought the rest of those ambulances had better come up. But they were a long time coming. The fact is now recognized that few modern campaigns have involved such hardships to the fighting and marching forces as the recent advance to Bloemfontein, and every excuse must be made for military exigencies which have been rendered more pressing by a distant base and a single line of railway. Yet those who have read the foregoing letters will be prepared to hear the opinion expressed that at least the normal ambulance transport should have been provided from the first, whatever the difficulties of the case, and that a lack of adequate provision for the sick and wounded in these days cannot fail to tarnish the glory of military successes.

However, they have got here somehow, these 2,000 sick men. They include from 400 to 500 enteric cases, the remainder being cases of dysentery and various forms of low fever. Dysentery is well known to be one of the most common and obstinate complaints in every campaign. Rations mostly of meat, little bread, and no vegetables, heavy marches by day, sleeping out night after night without cover on cold ground and often in soaking rain, are conditions under which the symptoms must be allowed to grow long after they have set in. As far as can be ascertained enteric is not on the increase, although opinions differ on this point. Nearly all the cases at present in hospital here have contracted the disease on the march, some even as far back as Paardeberg, which was a veritable pest-hole. The cause in almost every case has been bad water, the one curse which nature has laid on this fair land, and the greatest difficulty the medical staff have had to deal with certainly in the western campaign.

In contemplating the future of the country it need hardly be pointed out that a proper system of well-sinking could do much to obviate this natural defect, just as irrigation in various forms could change its whole face and transform what are now arid wastes dotted with scanty mimosa bush into rich pasture and fertile agricultural land. The apparently barren soil contains natural properties of great value which only require moisture for their rapid development. In a few places, however, even a properly-sunk well does not produce palatable water. At De Aar, where from its strategic position a stationary hospital has been located from the beginning of the war, the water is so saline that boiling only makes it worse, and a glassful is equal to a dose of Epsom salts. Add to this frequent and furious sand-storms, which in a few minutes cake patients, beds, clothing, and food with dirt, and an equipment always insufficient for the great pressure of patients at the rail-head, and it is small wonder that few of the thousands of sick and wounded who have passed through the hospital at De Aar can have pleasant memories of that name.

Enteric is known as the "scourge of South Africa," another proof, if any were wanted, of the connexion between that disease and bad or insufficient water. These natural difficulties are greatly increased by the conditions inseparable from marching, particularly if the progress of the Army assumes the nature of a forced march, as was the case from Paardeberg to Bloemfontein. In many cases water must be obtained from "dams," ditches, or small nullahs, where the water is mostly stagnant and horses, mules, and oxen have already drunk and wallowed. As already stated, most of the enteric at present in and around Bloemfontein has been brought, not generated, here; but new cases are arising every day, though not in such numbers as to cause immediate alarm. What will happen in the near future may well give rise to anxiety for more than one reason. The water difficulty still remains. Ever since that fatuous disaster when the convoy of wagons and six guns walked blindly into the ambuscaded drift, and drivers and gunners one after another silently dismounted under a deadly semi-circle of Boer rifles at point-blank range, the waterworks, the main source of supply to the town, have been in the hands of the enemy.

At present there is an adequate supply of fairly good water from the wells in the town; but in most cases this has to be carried to the outlying camps, and to the field hospitals contained in each, in water-carts every day. All washing has to be done in the dams and stagnant pools adjacent to the camps or the water for that purpose drawn from them. The water supply therefore still remains a potential cause of increased sickness at Bloemfontein. To this must be added a growing scarcity of fresh milk—so essential for the treatment of enteric and many other prevalent forms of sickness. If the waterworks are retaken—an effort which, considering its importance, has been unaccountably delayed, and are found not to have been materially tampered with, and if the surrounding country is cleared of the enemy, enabling the rural population to resume their normal life, the two difficulties already mentioned will be greatly relieved.

There remains a third, of hardly less moment. The town is surrounded on all sides by huge military camps at distances varying from one to ten miles. A proper system of sanitation, always difficult where water is scarce, is much obstructed by the Kaffir encampments which accompany every brigade, and are almost beyond control from a sanitary point of view. The eye is not the only sense that leads a visitor approaching a camp to make a wide detour round these kraals—black clusters of flat wigwams formed of wagons outspanned and bucksails stretched over them. Soldiers who die are buried in the cemeteries. But there are other soldiers of the Queen by thousands in every camp—four-footed ones these, as loyal, strong, and patient as their masters—many of whom die every day, and must be buried with little trouble and less transport. Horses, mules, oxen—their graveyards are never far from where they fall, and the graves are not dug deep.

Beyond the railway, at the lower end of the town, a great level plain stretches wide and far into the distance; a green prairie on which hundreds of herds and flocks could pasture, and as fine a gallop as Newmarket Heath can offer. Five miles away a white farmhouse is almost the only feature that arrests the eye, and close to this is the camp of the 12th Lancers. Returning from there late in the afternoon—riding into the sunset, against which the low roofs of Bloemfontein looked like a toy city—a sickening odour, two miles at least in breadth, had to be traversed. For beasts must be buried, and sunset-time in a war-worn land does something more—or less—than please the eye.

It must necessarily happen that when the army moves forward it will leave a wide belt of poisoned ground encircling the town. The large general hospitals which are now coming up, none too soon, and even the smaller private or voluntary ones, will have difficulty in finding locations for their camps free from contamination and at the same time within reasonable distance of their necessary centre. Nor is the town itself in any sense a pure oasis in the midst of this questionable area. On the contrary, it lies at the bottom of a vast shallow basin of open veldt, and many of these camping-grounds naturally drain into or under it, while just now it is dotted all over with extemporized hospitals, hastily equipped under the pressure of the moment, insufficiently manned, and at present crowded with sick.

Such are the possibilities which a careful survey of existing conditions compel us to con-

sider in connexion with this advanced base of the largest British army that has been mobilized in any country. Three reasons, however, justify the hope that this sombre picture may take on lighter and more cheerful colours. First, the ground-plan of the town and the construction of its buildings, the broad open avenues and streets, to which there is hardly an exception, and the low houses, many of them single-storeyed and with garden spaces, are calculated to prevent the atmospheric congestion which in an ordinary city is favourable to the spread of disease. Secondly, the climate is magnificent, and the air pure, fresh, and exhilarating. Thirdly, the cold season is coming on, and will bring with it not the rains of the south, but light frosts and clear, cold weather. Add to this the daily improvement in hospital arrangements, sanitation, and food which a freer railway service and a release from strategic pressure will soon facilitate, and we may await, not without anxiety, but with some hope, a better rather than a worse state of things.

24th June 1900.

OUR WARS AND OUR WOUNDED.

IX.

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, MAY 29.

A long time has elapsed since the despatch of the last preceding letter.* During that period the growing scenes of neglect and inhumanity, of suffering and death, which have been the lot of the British soldier in the closing chapter of this war have made up a picture which it is impossible any longer to conceal from the eyes of the British public.

A natural aversion to hasty criticism or exaggeration, and still more to anything approaching sentiment when dealing with the hard necessities of war time ; a hope that the lamentable disorganization and inefficiency of our medical system under the sudden strain of sickness at the front was only temporary, and that the gaps in its *personnel* and equipment which left thousands of stricken men unnursed, on the ground, in the most painful stages of a deadly disease would quickly be filled up ; these combined to arrest my pen until, just returned from the front and within touch of news from home, I read that which proves that truth concealed serves the same purpose as falsehood and that the time has come to speak out.

To a mind stocked with scenes which would sicken the hardest heart it comes like a blow between the eyes, leaving one dizzy and bewildered, to learn that at the very moment when these horrors were at their worst and when men were dying like flies for want of adequate attention, a large company of intelligent and well-meaning gentlemen at home, both lay and professional, were feasting on—amongst other things which the war-worn soldier out here would have been equally glad to have—the perfection of the medical and hospital arrangements in this campaign !

On that night (Saturday the 28th of April) hundreds of men to my knowledge were lying in the worst stages of typhoid, with only a blanket and a thin waterproof sheet (not even the latter for many of them) between their aching bodies and the hard ground, with no milk and hardly any medicines, without beds, stretchers, or mattresses, without pillows, without linen of any kind, without a single nurse amongst them, with only a few ordinary private soldiers to act as "orderlies," rough and utterly untrained to nursing, and with only three doctors to attend on 350 patients. There were none of the conditions of a forced march about this. It was a mile from Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State, a large town which we had occupied for more than six weeks, with a line of railway to two seaports, along which thousands of troops and countless trainloads of stores and equipment of all kinds, and for every one except the sick ; had been moving up during the whole of that leisurely halting time. About the same day a convoy of wounded men were being subjected to nameless torture for want of any ambulance transport or the simplest comforts, huddled together in rough springless ox-wagons, jolted over spruit and drift for 40 miles ; the road being strategically safe and their destination this same Bloemfontein, provided with most things except humane appliances for the wounded. These are two typical instances of the state of things here on April 28.

From morning to night the gloomy processions followed each other across the Market-square at slow march with arms reversed, bearing shapeless figures sewn up in blankets to unknown crowded graves in the cemetery on the southern hill, day after day and week after week in ever-growing numbers. How many of these might to-day be strong men full of life rejoicing at their near return to home and friends is a terrible speculation which must be left to those who consider the conditions attending their sickness and death.

By what incredible ignorance of then current facts, by what bankruptcy of insurance against patent dangers, were such funeral bakemeats permitted to furnish forth that ill-timed feast at the Reform Club, where the spirit of congratulation filled the atmosphere and nothing was heard but eloquent and highly authoritative statements

that " it would not be possible to have anything more complete or better arranged than the medical service in this war." Next morning very naturally the Press took up the chorus, and a comforting sense of satisfaction and pride settled down on the public mind. Amidst all the chequered course of this war here at last was one white illumined square, one just and righteous cause of national congratulation. The reputation of England for humanity had been vindicated, for all was well with the sick and wounded.

It is a painful and thankless task to rob the British public, ever ready and generous, of that cherished consolation ; but the bubble must be pricked, and they must wake up and look the troublesome things that lie beneath straight in the face ; for these are lives of men. It is a stern duty to tell the truth," lest we forget," or, worse still, go out of this campaign misled and uninformed as to the capacity of our present medical system to meet the exigencies of a great war.

Neither the audience who heard, nor the public who read, nor the Press which commented so favourably on the speeches referred to could be expected to go behind their high authority, or to question their reiterated assurances. All took their cue from the same prompting, an experience of the medical arrangements which closed when the war was half over, in volume of human pressure if not in time, when its only victims were the wounded, and sickness was but just appearing, yet in forms suggestive of terrible possibilities in the near future.

Up to that time things had been fairly, but not wholly, satisfactory. The favourable note had been sounded from the first, from the plains of Colenso and other lesser battlefields where the splendid bravery of our Army doctors under fire seized and engrossed the public imagination. In that quality, indeed, the record of the R.A.M.C. shows no flaw ; but it can no more provide a proper medical system in war than the bravery of our troops can supply tactics and strategy. When the talk is of " perfect medical arrangements " it is only misleading to keep the attention fixed on acts of heroism in the field. Then came the pleasant descriptions of the base hospitals at Cape Town to complement the general satisfaction. To the latter these letters did full justice as the writer saw them. But was there nothing else witnessed by or known to those who " had an opportunity of examining the medical arrangements both throughout Cape Colony and Natal, and did not believe it would be possible to have anything more complete or better arranged," and who did not leave this country till March ? Even at Cape Town was the Woodstock Hospital, old, condemned, and running over with vermin, a fit place for sick soldiers to be moved into from arriving transports ? Were the hospitals at De Aar and Orange River, " stationary hospitals " formed early in the war and always certain from their position to be largely used, perfect in staff and equipment ? Let the inmates answer. Was the medical service on the line up from East London to Sterkstrom perfect ? Ask the civilians of Queenstown who, in the absence of all military provision, received a telegram on the morning of the Stormberg disaster to take in 100 wounded that afternoon, or the New South Wales Ambulance Contingent who as late as February rescued the column from an almost complete dearth of medical arrangements. And Paardeberg ? This, too, was within the limits of the first chapter on which the speeches were founded. Was the medical service at Jacobsdal and Paardeberg included in the sweeping eulogy ? The horrors of those scenes, the tortures suffered by our wounded there owing entirely to shortcomings of medical equipment, staff, and transport, were a by-word in every mouth before that first chapter closed.

So far as the sick are concerned there have been two plagues in South Africa—the plague of blindness and the plague of whitewash. Whitewash can easily be got rid of, but if allowed to remain it doubles the dangers of blindness when that supervenes. Just as there was no quaver in the note of absolute perfectibility about the past, so there was no warning as to the future. Read the two speeches through from end to end and no whisper of it is to be heard. The past accounted for the extreme limit of patients which the Army Medical Department could deal with efficiently—say, 5,000. There had been no sickness to speak of. Yet the lesson of every war that ever occurred is writ large in history and carved on a million tombstones—three sick at least to one wounded. Was there no place for reservation as to the 15,000 and more to come, and how they were to be dealt with by an organization suitable to 5,000 and already full ? Was it fair to the British Army, was it just to the British public, to go on thumping the tub of " perfection," and to pronounce the verdict before the real trial had begun ? Would it not have been common prudence to wait and see what would happen ? It was no longer even a matter of speculation. Already typhoid had opened her deadly wings, and spread them like some monstrous vulture over march and camp and field and town, from front to base. But typhoid is the known " scourge of South Africa." The danger was always patent. Was it no one's duty to think, to warn, to prepare ?

Your readers will remember the calculations presented in the first letter of this series showing the hospital accommodation which it would be prudent to supply for this war. They were based on previous facts and experience open to any one interested in the subject—10 per cent. of the whole force under arms was taken as a *minimum* —say, 20,000 beds. If from the first these requirements had been fearlessly laid down and

provided for in time, what disasters might not have been averted! The Government would not have refused; the people would have poured out money like water. The second letter described the feeble and confused process of "muddle through" by which enlargement was being attempted, and its results on the efficiency of units, arising not less from the inadequacy of *personnel* and equipment than from the inelastic nature of the system. It would be as easy to stretch an old glass bottle, tied up with red tape and sealed with official stamp, as effectively to adjust the present system to a sudden pressure of numbers. The new measure can only flow over and lie on the ground, and be lost. We shall see that this is more than a parable.

There are 20,000 sick and wounded troops this day in South Africa, and more than half of these are down with typhoid. The figures are not official; but they may be relied on. From the Vaal River by Kroonstad to Bloemfontein; through Springfontein and Norval's Pont to Naauwpoort; on to De Aar; then up by Orange River to Kimberley; down again from De Aar through Deelfontein—all these being great centres of sick—to Cape Town, which is full now, in spite of its 800 shipped home every week; back from Naauwpoort down to East London; at Port Elizabeth; at Durban, Maritzburg, Mooi River, Ladysmith—20,000 British soldiers sick and wounded, not a man less, and probably some thousands more. It is a respectable British army, larger than we have won some wars with, and about the strength people said at first that we should require for this one; but it is an army of sick men. At Bloemfontein a few days ago there were 5,000 sick on one day left after another 5,000 had been sent down the line in the previous fortnight; this is official. How have these stricken thousands, or most of them, been housed and tended? How have they been nursed? How have they been moved? An indication has been given; a few specific instances will follow in this and the succeeding letter.

For a month after our occupation of Bloemfontein, where, it will be remembered, our forces remained seven weeks before the general advance, the hospital accommodation there consisted of two kinds—(1) the field hospitals situated in the various camps about the town; and (2) the extemporized hospitals in the town itself in various public buildings commandeered for the purpose. These latter, according to the official list, contained about 700 beds. The conditions of the town and the surrounding country were explained and the possible danger of an epidemic clearly indicated in the last letter, although the authorities maintained that typhoid was not on the increase. In that letter the sick were given as 2,200, which, with 700 in the town, would leave some 1,500 in the field hospitals.

We will deal with the latter establishments first. It was difficult to ascertain their number, and it would be useless to state it at any given time, as those hospitals were constantly being evacuated as brigades moved away. The large exodus of troops in the direction of Dewetsdorp and Thaba Nchu on the fruitless attempt to cut off the enemy in the south-east closed many field hospitals, and the later general advance caused nearly all to be evacuated. It will be better, therefore, to take one of them as an illustration. It was the first I visited on my arrival, it remained after the others, passed through the highest pressure of sickness, and was on the point of being abolished a few days ago.

An ordinary field hospital contains 100 beds—a *façon de parler*, because it has no beds. When stretchers are available they are sometimes used as beds in the tents. The theory of a field hospital is that it is to be always moving with troops. When troops make a long stay in one place it may be used as a "stationary" hospital, and its equipment should be improved for that purpose. It is an axiom laid down by an accepted authority that "if the hospital is to be long in occupation every effort should be made to raise the patients off the ground." Ten weeks existence of this hospital in one spot is certainly a period satisfying the condition; but no attempt was ever made to supply beds or even mattresses for it. Situated within a mile of Bloemfontein, nurses could have been accommodated in it just as well as in a "general" or "stationary" hospital, where they are allowed. There were never any nurses in it, or, indeed, in any field hospital. The distinction between a field hospital used as this was and a stationary or general hospital is rendered merely nominal by strategic security, permanence *in situ*, and enlarged accommodation. In these respects some of the field hospitals around Bloemfontein differed in no way from general hospitals, and least of all in the necessity for proper nursing. But hardly any nurses at all came to Bloemfontein for a month after our occupation of it. Of this anon.

The staff of a field hospital comprises 40 all told, apart from those engaged solely in transport, which is supplied by the Army Service Corps. There are four medical officers, two ward-masters, 14 trained nursing orderlies, and six supernumeraries—for 100 patients. The field hospital in question before it arrived in Bloemfontein had been broken into two, one half having been sent in another direction, leaving this hospital with half its equipment and staff. It should consequently have accommodated 50 patients. On my first visit to it (April 9) there were 250 in its tents, 90 of whom were typhoid cases. It was in such a condition of crowding, insufficient equipment, and general misery that I hesitated to describe it in my last letter, hoping for a speedy improvement which the authorities promised.

More than a fortnight later another visit dis-

closed the following state of things. With no further equipment than two marquees and a few bell tents, no addition of staff or anything else, there were 316 patients, of whom half were typhoids. Their condition was almost indescribable. The tents were bell tents such as were mentioned in a former letter as affording sleeping accommodation for from six to eight orderlies when working and in sound health. In many of these tents there were ten typhoid cases lying closely packed together, the dying against the convalescent, the man in his " crisis " pressed against the man hastening to it. There was not room to step between them. Think of this, you who know the sort of nursing a typhoid patient requires. With no beds or mattresses, and only 42 stretchers in the whole hospital, it followed that 274 patients had to be on the earth. There was a great scarcity of blankets, and no patient could have more than one, with a waterproof sheet, between his body and the ground. The ground is hard as stone, and at night the temperature falls to freezing point. Besides other deficiencies which cannot be described there were no sheets or pillow-cases or pretence of bed linen of any kind ; only the coarse rug grated against the sensitive skin burning with fever. The heat of these tents in the midday sun was overpowering, their odours sickening. Men lay with their faces covered with flies in black clusters too weak to raise a hand to brush them off, trying in vain to dislodge them by painful twitching of the features. There was no one to do it for them. Seventeen orderlies had come with, or been raised for, the half-section of the field hospital ; 10 had been taken from it, the number being made up from the Bearer Company ; but they had other duties to perform than brushing flies off patients' faces. At night there were not enough to prevent those in the delirious stage from getting up and wandering about the camp half naked in the bitter cold. In one tent, where some slept and others lay with eyes open and staring, a case of " perforation " was groaning out his life huddled against his neighbour on the ground. Men had not only to see, but often to feel, others die.

It was a sad and sickening spectacle this, which I describe exactly as my eyes saw it, and without exaggeration or excuse. I leave it and other similar facts it will be necessary to relate to the consideration, not of wives and mothers—we will put them out of sight—but of hard, practical men, accustomed to the hospitals of the poor, of the medical profession, of the great nursing community, of the whole British public, who at the moment when this sight was to be seen out here were reading those comforting words spoken at Calais on April 26, as an avant-courier of the speeches two days later at the Reform Club :—" Nothing that prevision could suggest or that money could purchase was wanting anywhere. The supply was simply lavish. . . . Here everything was sent up with the utmost promptitude and medical stores and comforts were always on the spot."

We have hardly come yet to the question of local responsibility. Certainly in the case of this particular field hospital it did not lie with its chief medical officer, who was an energetic, painstaking member of the R.A.M.C., working day and night, never leaving his hospital, and sitting down each evening to his blue paper " returns " after 14 hours' work in the tents. " Yes," he said simply, as we parted, " we do our best, but it makes one's heart sick to look at them."

There is no need to pile on the agony, but worse remains behind which must be told. Therefore I will pass over an incidental visit to the hospital after a heavy rain, when many of the patients—typhoid had increased—were to be seen lying three inches deep in mud, and come to my last visit, four days ago, on my way down to the front. The chief medical officer had been changed ; from all reports this one was as painstaking as the last. He told me that at one time his patients had increased to 496 ! Three hundred of these were typhoids. The few trained orderlies had been mostly taken away ; in their place were 25 untrained and ignorant privates from an infantry regiment, most of whom were themselves " convalescents," to do the whole of the nursing. The medical staff remained always at three. Let the " Manual " throw its own light on this. The patients here were within 24 of the number (520) allotted to a general hospital. A general hospital has 20 medical men, 78 trained nursing orderlies, 27 untrained privates, and nine nurses. The sick require far more attention and nursing than the wounded ; the general hospitals at Cape Town, equipped as above, were mostly occupied by wounded. Here was this hospital crowded with typhoid left to three doctors, 25 untrained privates, and no nurses.

With one more incident graver than all the rest the dark history of a field hospital at Bloemfontein must close. On the occasion of my last visit the hospital had been mostly emptied, as it was to move on to the front. In the course of this process 20 of the worst cases were removed to a more permanent hospital a mile and a half off. How were they taken ? They were lifted out of their tents and put into rough ox-wagons—all typhoids and many of them dangerously ill—and then jolted across the veldt, which in this place is much broken by spruits and gullies. One case was in a state of " hæmorrhage " when moved. The order had come to evacuate the hospital ; the medical officer had no choice but to obey ; there were no ambulances. In three days four of these 20 were dead men.

It must be remembered that these events occurred at Bloemfontein, and mainly during the second month of its occupation by our Army. The town had always been marked down as our advanced military base, and from the day we

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entered it became, what it will never cease to be, a British stronghold. The strategic conditions surrounding the scenes described must therefore be clearly differentiated from those which attend a continuous march, in order that we should not be misled by talk about "military exigencies" and the like. No practical man will question the prior claim of military exigency over humanity where the interests of the two are irreconcilable; but whenever the former is not really endangered by the latter humanity cannot, and must not, be entirely neglected. This raises a question of policy, apart from and above that of the disorganization of a medical system. It need not be discussed here; but in the writer's opinion there were no military exigencies really involved that could necessitate, there were none so pressing that they can excuse, the sufferings and horrors to which our sick and wounded were subjected at this time and place. To relieve these, and others which must be related, there were certain obvious methods, none of which could have seriously interfered with military exigencies.

Before indicating these or completing the medical history of Bloemfontein, I must beg leave to offer a few words of personal explanation. Your readers will remember that towards the end of last year your special Correspondent at Cape Town called attention to certain imperfections in the Army medical system, and particularly in the base hospitals. Those reports, denied in some quarters, supported in others, were the proximate cause of my visit to South Africa. Immediately on arriving I applied for leave to go to the front, being anxious to follow the treatment of the sick and wounded in its natural sequence from the field down to the base. Considerable delay occurred before I could obtain the requisite facilities, and this, while it lengthened my stay at Cape Town, necessitated my reversing the process of examination. The time, however, was not altogether wasted; first, because it enabled an analysis of our Army medical organization to be made under conditions most favourable to it, the base hospitals being then in admirable order; and, secondly, because had I left South Africa before the pressure of sickness occurred my mission would have been less than half completed. Although in my analysis I confined myself to describing what I actually saw at Cape Town, much subsequent evidence arose, not only to support the earlier criticisms of your regular Correspondent, but to create uneasiness as to the future and to strengthen my determination to see the system through to the front. The reverse side of the picture has, however, presented a contrast which it was impossible to anticipate.

As there are statements contained herein the gravity of which I fully appreciate, while I hold myself responsible for their accuracy, I beg to subscribe my name.

W. BURDETT-COUTTS.

THE MINISTERIAL CRISIS IN CAPE COLONY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JUNE 13.

The Ministerial crisis which has now come about is no new thing, but has been gradually maturing ever since the outbreak of the war. Even before the war the germs of it were contained in the composition of the now retiring Ministry. In the country the last general election was very largely fought on purely racial lines. It was in the main a struggle between English and Dutch, between the Afrikander Bond and Imperial supremacy. But the common tie which held the Ministry together was not opposition to the Imperial Government, but opposition to the policy of Mr. Rhodes. The elections were carried by the Bond, but the Ministry was not a purely Bond Ministry. As a matter of fact a purely Bond Ministry has never been a possibility in this country, for the single reason that the Bond does not contain sufficient men of the ability requisite for filling the more important Ministerial posts. Thus Mr. Solomon, the Attorney-General, was in no sense a Bondsman, or even a strong sympathizer with Bond aspirations. Mr. Merriman and Mr. Sauer have in the past been among the very strongest opponents of the Bond policy. Mr. Schreiner himself, the chosen Parliamentary leader of the Bond, never has been fully representative of its prejudices and aspirations. His Afrikander sympathies, his detestation of the deception practised upon him and his party by Mr. Rhodes in the preparation for the raid, threw him entirely on the side which was opposed to the policy of the Imperial Government. But his opposition to the Imperial Government was one due to a profound difference of opinion as to policy, not, like that of many of his supporters, an opposition to the very existence of the Imperial supremacy in South Africa. During the negotiations preceding the war Mr. Schreiner strongly opposed the policy of the High Commissioner. But at the same time he did all he could to persuade the Republics to be reasonable and to accept the terms which at least he really knew to be reasonable. His opposition to Sir A. Milner went to lengths which provoked, and to some extent perhaps merited, the severest criticism. The haste with which he rushed into print last July to declare himself satisfied with the inadequate and insincere proposals of President Kruger was a grave mistake, and fatally weakened Mr. Schreiner's influence with both parties when it was found

that he had effected nothing. But there is good ground for believing that he was seriously misled as to the character of the proposals by Kruger himself; and no one knowing Mr. Schreiner's character could expect him forthwith to retract so strong a declaration as the one he had just made. The passage of ammunition through to the Republics and the refusal to send troops or guns up to Kimberley and Mafeking created a storm of loyalist indignation in the colony. But Mr. Schreiner honestly, if mistakenly, believed that any indication of a belief on our part that war was possible would precipitate it on the part of the Boers, and that, even if the Boers declared war, they would never invade Cape Colony. There is little doubt that on these points, too, he was deliberately deceived by Mr. Fischer and President Steyn. The famous "neutrality" speech was an appeal to his supporters to remain neutral—an appeal unfortunately not followed by a great portion of them. That he did not mean to put difficulties in the way of the action of the Imperial authorities was evident, though it is true that for a long time he strongly discouraged the use of colonial Volunteer forces. Whatever the judgment that may be passed on Mr. Schreiner for his policy during the summer and autumn of last year, he undoubtedly intended, whether in his secret negotiations with Bloemfontein and Pretoria or in his open opposition to the High Commissioner, to do nothing that he conceived contrary to his duty as a Minister of the Crown. Whether the same could be said of other members of his party is a different question.

When the war broke out Mr. Schreiner considered it his duty to remain at his post in order as far as possible to preserve the colony from the horrors of civil war, which he believed would be imminent if a strongly English Ministry were at the head of affairs. He hoped as Prime Minister to be able, on the one hand, to assert the views and protect the interests of the Dutch population whose support had brought him to power, and, on the other, to be able to exercise his great influence over them in order to keep them quiet. He was by no means always in full accord with Sir Alfred Milner. But the grounds of his opposition were always questions of expediency. At no time was he inspired by any desire but that of loyally co-operating with the military authorities in the task of carrying through the war. And gradually, too, as he was brought into closer relationship with Sir Alfred Milner, he learned to appreciate his moderation and wisdom as well as his firmness. On the other hand, the Governor no less learned to appreciate the honesty of purpose and fundamental loyalty of the Minister whom he must often have had such difficulty to persuade. The course of the war, too, the invasion of the colony, the ambitions so openly proclaimed, the spread of rebellion, must have contributed much to shaking the Prime Minister in some of his convictions as to the peacefulness of the Republics and the loyalty of the Dutch colonists. The co-operation between the Governor and his Prime Minister grew gradually better as the war went on. In his co-operation with Sir A. Milner Mr. Schreiner was well seconded and supported by Mr. Solomon, the Attorney-General, who throughout has given the Imperial authorities the most loyal assistance in the extremely vexatious and thorny questions that inevitably arose out of the administration of martial law and the outbreak of rebellion.

But that was almost all the support Mr. Schreiner had. In the Ministry itself he encountered the bitterest opposition from those of his colleagues who wished in every way to thwart and hamper the military authorities in the conduct of the war. Not a single proclamation of martial law, not a single measure for the checking of rebellion, but was fought inch by inch within the Ministry. Moreover, it must be remembered that in the Bond party the Ministry is not the real Government. The real centre of power is in that mysterious "committee of control" worked by Mr. Hofmeyr, which settles the policy of the Bond, and administers the political conscience of nine Dutchmen out of ten in Cape Colony. And the committee of control soon expressed their dissatisfaction with Mr. Schreiner. Already, in December, Mr. Hofmeyr openly declared to the writer that Mr. Schreiner had failed in his duty to his party, and had lent himself as a willing tool to the man who had declared he would crush Afrikanderdom. The Bond Press, above all the all-powerful *Ons Land*, from the first carried on a campaign of abuse and calumny against the Imperial Government and its representatives, of the most seditious character, and directly calculated to provoke rebellion. Even the *South African News*, which was originally started as a Moderate paper, was captured by the Extremist party and vied keenly with *Ons Land* in its endeavour to thwart Mr. Schreiner's efforts to keep down race feeling and prevent the spread of rebellion. As long as the Republican forces were successful in the field, the anti-British campaign confined itself to complacent accounts of British defeats and veiled exhortations to the "nation" to rise and shake itself free from the yoke of the power that was already tottering to its downfall. The real agitation began only when Lord Roberts cleared the colony of invasion and when Cronje's capture at Paardeberg convinced even the most sceptical and malevolent of the ultimate certainty of the defeat of the Republics. Under the name of conciliation movement a violent campaign was started with the objects of preserving the independence of the Republics and securing the absolute immunity of all those who had taken any part in rebellion. When it was discovered that Mr. Schreiner in no way countenanced the agitation and that Mr.

Solomon intended to bring forward in Parliament a proposal to appoint a judicial commission to visit the rebel districts and try the cases presented before them, the indignation of the extreme party knew no bounds, and the break-up of the Ministry became certain. A special commission will undoubtedly be much more to the interest of the rebels themselves than an interminable series of trials before the ordinary Courts, but the irreconcilables determined that there should be no punishment of rebellion at all, and that a general amnesty should be proclaimed. In the original draft of his proposal Mr. Solomon had suggested to Sir A. Milner that the punishment should extend only to the ringleaders and that the rank and file should be amnestied, but, yielding to Sir A. Milner's objections, he agreed that the commission should be empowered to disfranchise the rank and file for a period of five years. The leniency of the proposed penalty is evident when one considers the gravity of the offence committed. But this deference to the High Commissioner's wishes was a thing Mr. Hofmeyr and his followers could not forgive. For a while every effort was made through the Press, by Mr. Hofmeyr and by Mr. Schreiner's own colleagues, to intimidate him with the threat that he would find himself deserted by his party. But without avail. Whatever Mr. Schreiner's defects as a politician, fear is not one of them.

At last, after a "conciliation" congress at Graaff Reinet, which was made the occasion for speeches and resolutions of the most violent character, demanding the unqualified independence of the Republics and a permanent arbitration treaty, involving the withdrawal of the British troops from South Africa, and after a series of evidently inspired articles in *Ons Land* declaring that the Afrikander party must treat the war as a whole and consent to no half measures, but insist on absolute amnesty for all rebels and the refusal of the customary indemnity for acts committed by the military authorities under martial law, with the Bond Congress imminent on the 18th and Parliament due to assemble on the 22nd, Mr. Schreiner felt he could no longer delay taking action. Accordingly, he convoked a general conference of the Bond party for Friday, June 8, resolved to have the matter out frankly, and either to persuade his followers to abandon their unpractical and disloyal attitude of resistance to the Imperial Government or to break with them. The proceedings of the conference soon showed that the breach in the Ministry was irreparable. Mr. Schreiner addressed the party in a long speech, in which he announced his intention to carry through the extremely lenient measure he had decided upon for the punishment of rebellion and to pass an Act indemnifying the military authorities. His speech was coldly received and was met by violent denunciations from Mr. Merriman, Mr. Sauer, and Mr. Te Water. The last-named is said to have openly charged him with being guilty of the blood of the Afrikanders shed in the war. The conference was renewed on the 9th and ended with the complete break-up of the Bond. Mr. Schreiner was left with Mr. Solomon and Mr. Herholdt, the Minister for Agriculture, and about ten of the rank and file of the party; the remaining 30, led by Mr. Hofmeyr and the dissentient Ministers, declared their intention of carrying through a policy of the most uncompromising opposition to the Imperial Power.

Messrs. Merriman, Sauer, and Te Water informed Mr. Schreiner that they were ready to resign their offices. It was at first thought probable that Mr. Schreiner would accept those resignations and lay them before the High Commissioner, and ask his advice as to whether he should endeavour to find two men to take the places of Messrs. Sauer and Merriman (Mr. Te Water has no portfolio, so his place need not necessarily be filled) before making up his mind to resign. Eventually, however, after several days' further deliberation and hesitation, and after submitting to the High Commissioner a memorandum calling his attention to the irreconcilable difference of policy existing in the Ministry, Mr. Schreiner resolved to hand in the resignation of the whole Ministry. This he did this morning, with what result it is impossible yet to foretell.

The one thing certain is that none of the three parties now existing—the Progressives, the Schreiner party, or the irreconcilable Bond party—can form a Ministry alone. As Mr. Schreiner has finally broken with the Bond, some sort of coalition between him and the Progressives, or, at least, a mutual understanding, is indispensable. Sir Gordon Sprigg would in ordinary times be naturally called upon to succeed, but, in view of the peculiar nature of the crisis, of the need for conciliation, and of the bitter feelings which might be aroused among the Dutch by the immediate transfer of power into the hands of the Progressive leader, a coalition of Moderates under Mr. Schreiner himself or under Mr. Rose-Innes, the most moderate and respected statesman in South Africa, would appear to be preferable. At any rate, it is very desirable that Mr. Rose-Innes and Mr. Solomon, or one of them at least, should be included in any Ministry formed by Sir Gordon Sprigg.

9th July 100.

THE ENTRY INTO PRETORIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

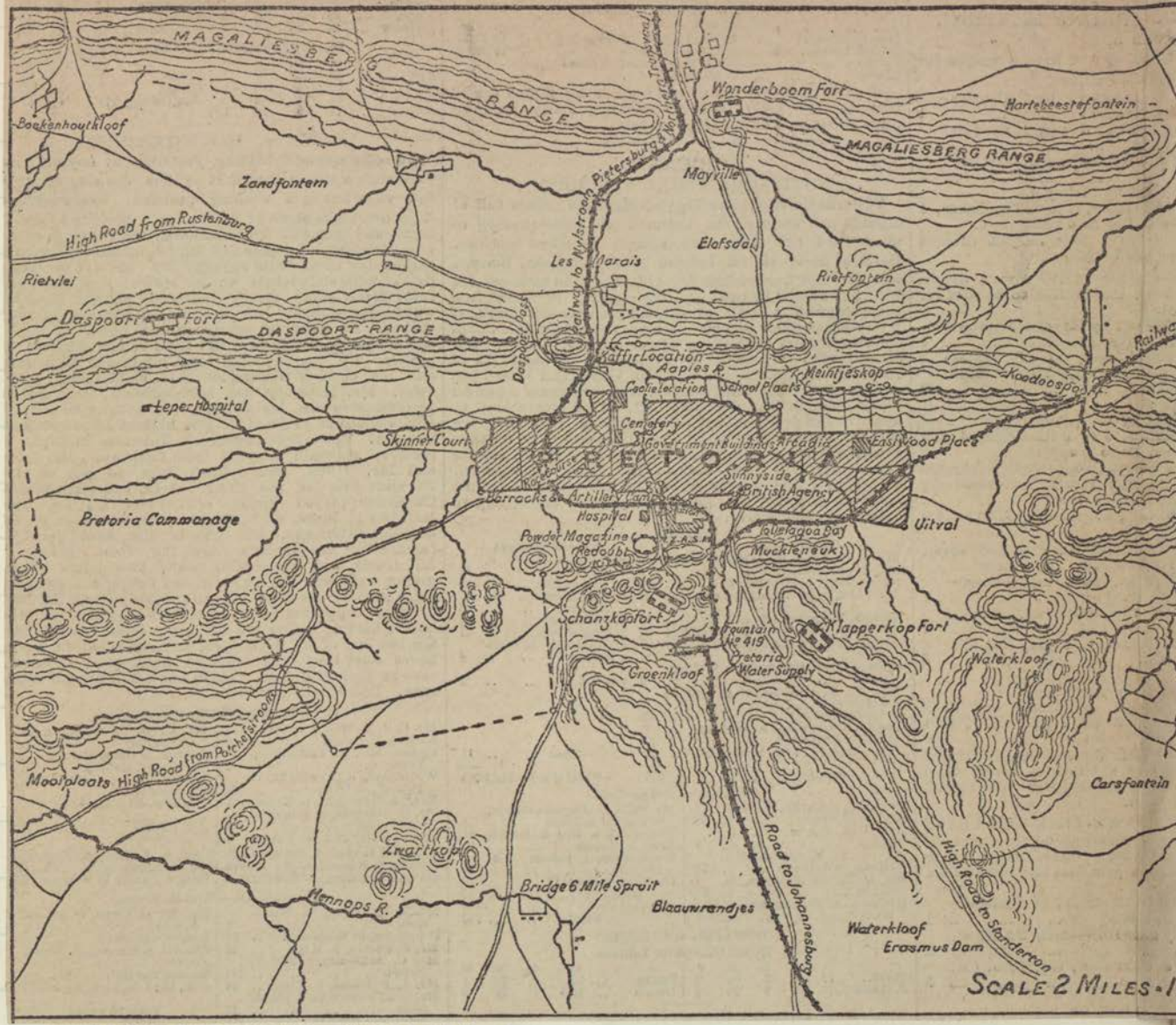
PRETORIA, JUNE 11.

On the morning of June 5 the infantry of Pole-Carew's Division woke from their bivouack uncertain whether or no the enemy were still in position on the hills in front of them. They had not heard of the surrender ; but there was no sign of movement in the plain before Pretoria, and the forts stood out solitary and deserted against the rising sun. The news then passed down the line that Pretoria had been evacuated during the night. The leading companies of the Coldstream Guards were pushed forward in extended order to occupy the hills which overlook the town, while the advance guard of the main body pushed through the country where the brick-fields lie. General Pole-Carew and his staff followed the road which leads directly upon the railway station. As the advance guard appeared over the nek a train was seen to be moving in the station-yard. Although the burgomaster had surrendered the town on the previous evening, it was still necessary to advance with caution, as it was understood that Botha had agreed to the surrender of the capital with great reluctance. Thus, when a movement was seen in the station buildings,a halt was made to allow the flankers to take possession of the hills immediately below the forts. This short delay lost us a train and two locomotives, for as the staff galloped down towards the station a long empty train moved out. The escort did all they could to stop it. Lieutenant Walker galloped for the signal-box. Just as he dismounted a man fired at him point-blank from the cover of some trucks. He climbed up into the box and pulled down all the levers, and a section of the Guards which arrived at the double were just in time to stop a second train as it left the platform. Half a dozen shots were fired and Pretoria was British. It subsequently transpired that these two empty trains had been detained for the purpose of removing the British prisoners.

An excited crowd gathered round the station, and for a short period we were not sure that the capitulation had been *bona fide*. Great uncertainty prevailed as to the fate of the prisoners. The railway officials were reticent and surly in the extreme, and it was impossible to elicit any information from them. But from a lady nurse I was able to gather that although some of the prisoners had been removed by train on the preceding night, yet the officers were still in prison at "Mudhill." Finding a man to direct me I rode through the town in search of them. My impression as I cantered down the streets was that Pretoria had received the change in circumstances with extreme equanimity. No one seemed surprised at my presence. Men lounged at the street corners with their pipes between their teeth as unconcerned as if the arrival of an invading army was an every-day occurrence. It was two miles to the prison, and as I rode up the avenue which leads to it I met the prisoners themselves. The Duke of Marlborough had been before me, and as soon as the imprisoned officers had seen a British uniform they had turned upon their not unwilling guards, had disarmed them, and liberated themselves. They were now trooping down into the town, free at last after months of weary waiting. They looked pale and worn, and I missed the enthusiasm which I had expected. Perhaps I was too late for it, or it may be that the iron to some extent had entered into their souls. The most striking point was the smart appearance of their uniforms. I passed on to the prison. It was a simple enclosure of barbed wire. A treble line of posts had enabled the builders to construct a *cheval-de-frise* which had the appearance of being impassable. At each corner of the enclosure were sentry-boxes, while to prevent escape during the night electric lights were so arranged that no part of the fence stood in shadow. The officers were quartered in a long galvanized-iron building. It was divided into a sleeping apartment, dining-hall, with storeroom and offices. The sleeping-room reminded one of a school dormitory. To kill the tedium of their forced inactivity many of the prisoners had constructed cubicles ; while all without exception had decorated their walls with prints and pictures from illustrated papers. To me, straight from the veldt, this prison dormitory did not look uncomfortable. But I am told that it was bitterly cold and so drafty that a naked candle would not burn. This latter accounted for many curious lanterns manufactured from biscuit boxes which hung at intervals about the building. But as prisoners of war I do not think that the British officers in Pretoria have much to complain of in the treatment which they received. The scene at the gate when I arrived was extremely ludicrous. The soldier servants of the officers had disarmed the guards, had possessed themselves of their Mausers, and were now marshalling their late sentries into the enclosure. The other prisoners were at Waterval, 14 miles away, and they were not released until the following day. But if the officers had been treated well, the same cannot be said of the other prisoners. They were treated abominably. Their food consisted of mealie porridge and a

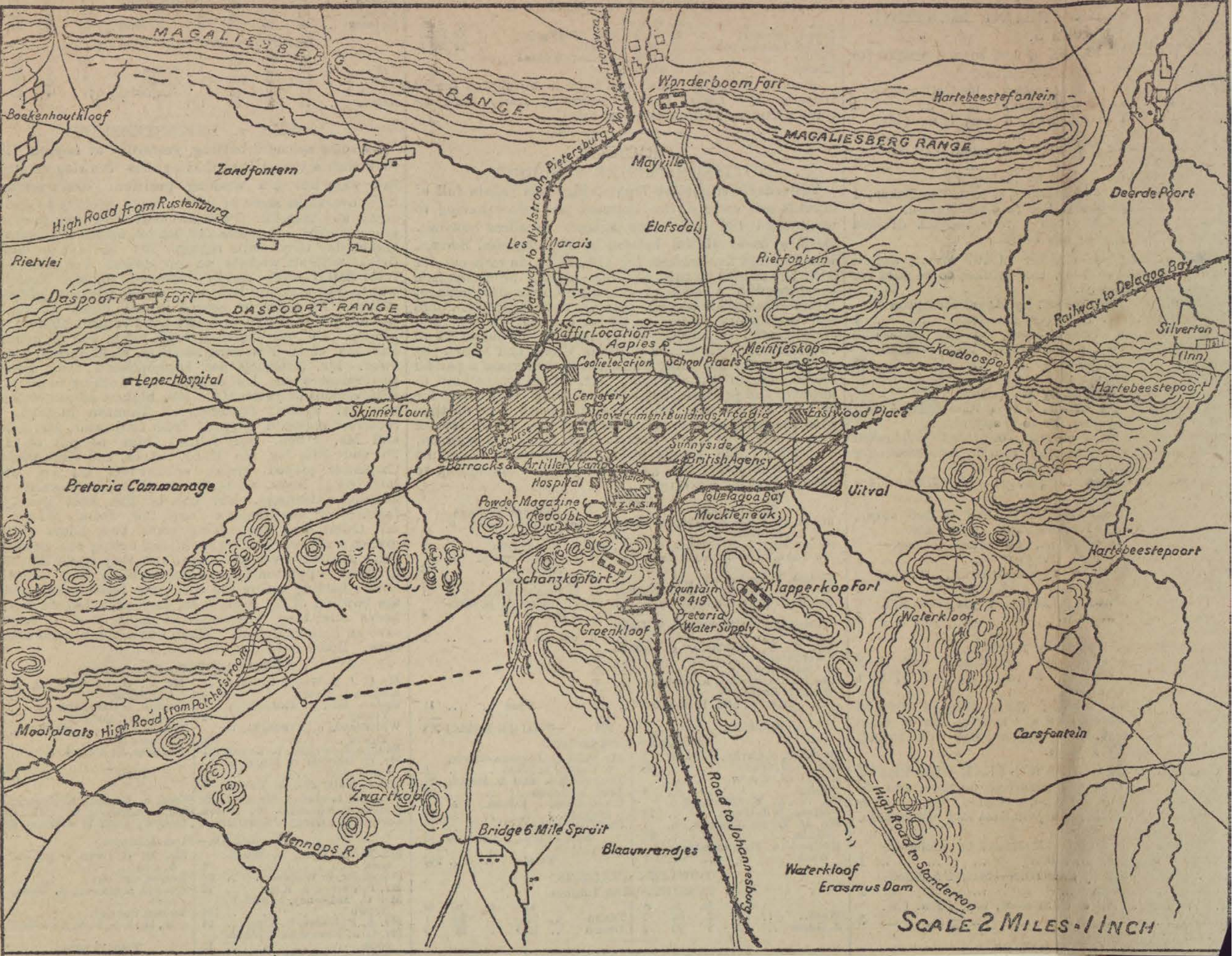
6th June 1900.

MAP OF PRETORIA AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.



scant ration of tea and coffee. Once a week they were allowed a pound of meat. Little or no sleeping accommodation was given them except the bare covering afforded by the tin shelters. If it had not been for the charitable spirit of the British subjects who remained in Pretoria they would have still been sleeping without mattresses and bedding other than that which they had with them when they were captured. The sanitary arrangements were so bad that no individual attempt at cleanliness could keep the place clear of the vermin with which it had become infested.

MAP OF PRETORIA AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.



It appears that on the preceding day nearly a thousand of the prisoners from Waterval had been removed by rail to Middelburg. It had been the intention of the authorities to remove the officers as well. About 2 o'clock on Tuesday morning they had been aroused by the Commandant and told that they must be prepared to leave in two hours. The officers responded to this order by detaining the Commandant as a prisoner. His assistant who came in a few minutes later was similarly treated, and by dint of argument and good-natured protest these officials were induced to wait for more definite instructions. The feelings of the prisoners can be imagined. All day they had watched the bursting of the British shells. They knew that the burghers were in full retreat and that daylight would probably bring relief—the relief for which they had watched for months. Yet at the 11th hour carts and wagons had been sent to remove them into a worse state of bondage. All that they had to depend upon was the vacillation of their Commandant and guards. Luckily Botha had left. Commandant Westerenk deserves well of the British nation.

I returned at once to the railway station. Colonel Maxwell's brigade had already arrived and had taken over the station from the guards and was supplying pickets in the town. Lord Roberts was conducting the preliminary business of the surrender in the station-master's office, and I found that he was not to make his official entry until 2 p.m. I glanced up at Fort Klapperkop. When we had entered I had noticed that the Republican flag was floating above it. The flagstaff now was bare. But there had been some skirmishing on the hills east of the fort. A few of the stragglers of Botha's rearguard had fired upon our troops as they picketed the hills. From information gathered in the town it appeared that the enemy had removed most of their guns on the previous day. As I had surmised, the big gun which had been in action against us had not been in the forts. This gun had been removed late on Monday night by road. A party of Montmorency's Scouts and Derbyshire Yeomanry were at once despatched to pursue it. They followed the tracks of the gun for some miles, and then came upon a rearguard of the enemy. After desultory skirmishing a portion of this rearguard was captured. But the party was unable to overtake the gun.

When the Infantry pickets took possession of the public buildings the people of Pretoria seemed to wake up to the fact that the invading army had arrived. Crowds collected in the market square, and women appeared on the pavements for the most part dressed in holiday attire. The composition of the crowd was heterogeneous; Germans and Hollanders predominated, and I feel confident that many of the able-bodied men who paraded the streets were members of the foreign legion who considered that they had followed a lost cause and that the time for mercenary allegiance had passed. Many made no concealment of the part which they had played, and stood in the streets with rifle and bandolier, anxious to surrender to the first man in British uniform.

10 July/00.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN CAPE COLONY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JUNE 20.

The Ministerial crisis is now happily over, and after a fortnight of unusually keen political speculation and excitement a new Ministry has come into being. As I indicated in my last letter, Mr. Schreiner after some hesitation decided to place his resignation in Sir Alfred Milner's hands. It was quite impossible for him to continue in office any longer in face of the bitter opposition waged against his extremely moderate policy by Messrs. Merriman, Sauer, and Te Water within his own Cabinet and by Mr. Hofmeyr and the Bond Press without. It would have been in many ways an advantage if Mr. Schreiner could have continued in office with the support of the Opposition, replacing the dissentient members of his Cabinet by men from his own party or by moderate men selected from among the ranks of the Progressives. But with the following of only nine men in the Assembly Mr. Schreiner felt it impossible to accede to Sir Alfred Milner's suggestion that he should stay in office. As he declared in a letter to the Bond Congress, now sitting, he would have been ready to continue in office if only a bare half of his supporters had remained faithful to him, but could not face Parliament with a little band of less than a dozen followers. If Mr. Schreiner had been really eager for office and had before the actual breach took place made one half as determined an effort to canvass for support among the Bond members as was made by his opponents, it is quite possible that he might have considerably increased his following. But Mr. Schreiner has refused throughout to take up anything but a purely defensive, almost indifferent, attitude towards the intrigues carried on against him.

Accordingly, on June 13, Sir Alfred Milner, in due conformity with constitutional precedent, sent for Sir Gordon Sprigg, the leader of the Opposition, to consult with him as to the possibilities of forming a new Ministry. As the Progressives will be in the minority of five, even after deducting from the Bond party those members who have taken an open share in rebellion and are now in prison or have made

their escape from South Africa, it was obvious that no Progressive Ministry could be formed without some definite agreement with Mr. Schreiner as regards both its composition and the policy it was to pursue. The alternatives now open were, first, an ordinary Progressive Ministry under Sir Gordon Sprigg relying on Mr. Schreiner's support for the carrying out during this Session of the series of measures proposed by Mr. Schreiner, or, secondly, a coalition. In political circles the feeling at first was distinctly in favour of a coalition. But there were serious obstacles in the way—obstacles partly political and, to some extent, also of a personal character. The political gulf between Mr. Schreiner and Sir Gordon Sprigg had always been a wide one, and had not been lessened by the very embittered contest of the last election. An immediate reconciliation was thus very difficult. It would have been almost out of the question for Mr. Schreiner to have agreed to serve under Sir Gordon Sprigg immediately after resigning the office to which he had been called by the vote of the Afrikander party. Even if he had consented to do such a thing he would almost certainly have alienated the small band of his followers. On the other hand, the Progressives were not over eager to make Mr. Schreiner their Premier or to lend him the services of their leading men in constructing a coalition Ministry. In South African politics temporary coalitions have a way of growing into permanent parties. Having spent great efforts in the creation of an organized party, the Progressives were not unnaturally somewhat averse to seeing it replaced by a composite party in which the chief share of power would be held by men who had been their former opponents. There was, however, one man under whom the coalition might have come to pass. The Hon. J. Rose Innes, Q.C., the leader of the Cape Bar, is a man whose personal authority and whose reputation for political integrity and absolute moderation separated him entirely from the ordinary run of Cape politicians. Mr. Innes was the only man under whose leadership a coalition of all those who were ready to co-operate loyally with the Imperial policy might have been possible, and Mr. Schreiner strongly urged Sir Gordon Sprigg to induce Mr. Innes to undertake the responsibility of the Premiership. But to such a course there were certain objections not altogether easily surmounted. In the first place, Mr. Innes undoubtedly is not very popular with a certain section of the Progressive party. His attitude of extreme caution and detachment, his unwillingness to commit himself to any programme of policy unless completely convinced of every detail of it, or to throw himself unreservedly into alliance with any set of politicians whose personal views he does not wholly share, have given him, somewhat undeservedly perhaps, the reputation, so fatal to a politician, of being unpractical and a sitter on the fence. Moreover, there was the further difficulty that Sir Gordon Sprigg was in no way anxious to resign his recognized claim to the leadership. It has been remarked that the formation of Cabinets in times of crisis has become an inveterate habit of Sir Gordon Sprigg's. Such habits of a lifetime cannot easily be cured in a moment. It is true that Sir Gordon Sprigg has been only the official figurehead of the Progressive party, whose real leader hitherto has been Mr. Rhodes. At the same time, it would have been a very extreme measure for those Progressives who favoured a coalition under Mr. Innes to have endeavoured to thwart the wishes of their own leader, who undoubtedly, according to ordinary Parliamentary usage, had the best claim to the Premiership. With regard to the majority of the Progressives, who favoured Sir G. Sprigg's claims, it must not be supposed that in wishing to see their own leader at the head of affairs they are in any way eager for an extreme party policy. There is no desire among the leading men of the Progressive party to pursue any other policy than the extremely moderate and conciliatory policy advocated by Mr. Schreiner. What they were a little unwilling to admit was that the men who had been against them or had not borne the brunt of the political struggle with them should now have the lion's share of the fruits of office.

The idea of a coalition Ministry was, however, not altogether abandoned. An attempt was made by Sir Gordon Sprigg to form a Cabinet which should include not only Mr. Innes, but also Mr. Solomon, the late Attorney-General, and which should have the active support of Mr. Schreiner. Such a coalition offered many advantages, and, as a matter of fact, was very nearly brought about. Mr. Solomon, though in the past a very strong political opponent of Sir Gordon Sprigg, was quite ready to subordinate his personal feelings to the duty of endeavouring to carry through himself those measures for the punishment of rebellion and the settlement of the questions arising out of the administration of martial law, the general principles of which he had himself already framed. Mr. Schreiner was inclined to favour this alliance, and it was so near coming into existence that on the morning of June 18 the *Cape Times* actually published a list of the Ministry in which Mr. Solomon was included, as continuing in his office of Attorney-General. At the last moment, however, other political considerations prevailed. By joining Sir Gordon Sprigg's Cabinet Mr. Solomon would, to some extent, have left Mr. Schreiner isolated and might have seriously weakened his control over the small party of moderate Bondsmen who had not deserted their leader. Mr. Solomon's inclusion in the Ministry would undoubtedly have provided Messrs. Sauer, Merriman, and Te Water with an opening for a violent attack which might seriously have influenced the attitude of

wavering members. The possibilities of a coalition Ministry having thus been exhausted, it was agreed between the leaders that a moderate, but purely Progressive, Cabinet should be formed under the Premiership of Sir G. Sprigg, which should have the active support of a small but compact middle party under Messrs. Schreiner and Solomon. The vexed question of coalition once settled, the formation of the Progressive Ministry offered no particular difficulties. Practically the whole of the last Progressive Ministry, with the exception of Sir J. Sivewright, was available. The following are the names and offices of the new Ministry :—Sir J. Gordon Sprigg, P.C., Treasurer, and for the fourth time Premier ; Mr. J. Rose Innes, Q.C., Attorney-General ; Mr. T. L. Graham, Q.C., Colonial Secretary ; Dr. Smartt, Minister of Public Works ; Sir Pieter Faure, Minister of Agriculture ; and Mr. J. Frost, C.M.G., Minister without portfolio. On the whole the new Ministry ought to prove a very satisfactory working Ministry. Sir G. Sprigg is a veteran Parliamentarian and an admirably businesslike administrator, and his colleagues have all had the advantage of previous experience in office. The chief work of the approaching session will, however, fall on Mr. Innes. The vexed questions which caused the break-up of the late Ministry fall almost entirely within the domain of the Attorney-General. In drafting and carrying through his measures Mr. Innes will have the most thoroughgoing support both from Mr. Solomon and from Mr. Schreiner. Messrs. Sauer and Merriman are clever and effective speakers, but they will find it difficult to cope with so strong a debating combination as that furnished by Messrs. Innes, Solomon, and Schreiner.

It is as well that due credit should be given to the late Attorney-General for the very conscientious stand he has made during the past six months against the determined attempts of members of his party to induce him to prostitute his office to the purposes of thwarting the military authorities and trying to cover up and protect rebellion. Very persistent efforts were made at one time to intrigue him out of his office when it was found that he was not amenable to party pressure. But they failed owing to Mr. Schreiner's loyal co-operation with his colleague. Since their break with the Bond the ex-Ministers have done all in their power to assist in bringing about a satisfactory solution of the crisis. That the breach between Mr. Schreiner and the Bond is almost irrevocable seems certain. In his recent letters to the Bond Congress Mr. Schreiner declares indeed in general language his hope to continue co-operating with the Afrikander party for the good of the country, but at the same time he insists on his adherence to the policy he has proposed—the policy which the Bond is determined to fight tooth and nail.

There can be no doubt that the intention of the Bond and the extremists who now control it is to carry on a prolonged and bitter agitation against the whole policy of the Imperial Government. Their chief aims are, first, to save the nationalist ideal by preventing or reversing the annexation of the Republics, to whose existence they still fondly cling. As Mr. Theron remarked a few days ago at the Bond Congress, now meeting at the Paarl, " Our eyes are still fixed on the north, and shall remain fixed on the north, till the day shall come when the necessity for an Afrikander Bond in Cape Colony shall have passed away " ; secondly, to secure absolute immunity from punishment for the mass of the rebels ; and, thirdly, to pay the military out for their action in arresting rebels or suspects in the districts put under martial law.

With regard to the second point it is worth remarking that the issue is not one of humanity, but purely of politics. Mr. Solomon's proposal that the rank and file of the rebels should suffer no worse penalty for their crime than being struck off the voters' roll for five years is to all intents and purposes absolute amnesty for the rebels themselves. But it does inflict a penalty on the political organization that has been so largely responsible for rebellion. Hence the fierce outcry, the talk of wholesale proscription, of savage revenge on a helpless population forced into rebellion by the absence of all protection. In some cases, no doubt, pressure was used by the Boers to induce people to rise. In no case was that pressure of a kind that would amount to compulsion in the eyes of the law. In its severest form it only amounted to an alternative of joining the commandos or leaving the district within a certain number of days. And when it is remembered that the Free State commandos crossed the Orange River by special invitation from deputies sent from the leading towns and villages of the border districts, that the North-west, Griqualand West, and Bechuanaland did not even wait for the entry of any large force to rise, the absurdity of the plea of compulsion is manifest. The plea of ignorance is as inadequate. If these men were so little alive to the seriousness of the crime of rebellion, are they likely to be alive to any other of the responsibilities attached to the right of electing the Government of the country ? The Bond relies for success, as it openly confesses, mainly on a change of public opinion in England, which it hopes will spring up from a sense of weariness of the war and which it intends to stimulate by noisy agitation and by a campaign of grievances. It is for this special purpose that a deputation sails for England to-day, to harrow the feelings of the British people with long lists of atrocities committed on " peaceful " and " loyal " subjects by British officers. It is perfectly true there have been cases in which men have been arrested and confined against whom there afterwards turned out to be no very

definite evidence. But with a whole countryside more or less in a state of rebellion is it possible that mistakes should not sometimes have occurred? Nothing is said of the cases, almost infinite in number, in which men, against whom there has been the strongest suspicion amounting almost to certainty of disloyal action, have not been interfered with in the absence of sufficient good evidence, while every mistake is zealously noted down and exaggerated out of all recognition. One indication of the eagerness of the Bond to capture the opinion of the Liberal party at home has been the extraordinary attempt made persistently ever since the Ministerial crisis by the Bond Press to misrepresent the internal history of the break up of the late Ministry in such a way as to throw odium upon Mr. Chamberlain and to represent that the crisis was due to Mr. Chamberlain's insistence in overriding the policy adopted by a unanimous Ministry. The *South African News*, directly inspired by Mr. Sauer, continues steadily to talk of the Ministry as intrigued out of office by Mr. Chamberlain. The misrepresentation is so monstrous and at the same time so plausible that it is necessary to refute it by an account of what actually took place between the Ministry and the Imperial Government. When the question of the trial of rebels came into the foreground Mr. Schreiner suggested that an amnesty of the rank and file, if made by the Imperial Government, would be a gracious and politic act. A minute was drawn up suggesting such an amnesty and asking Mr. Chamberlain for an authoritative expression of opinion. Mr. Schreiner definitely held that the question of the treatment of rebels was not a local but an Imperial one. When Mr. Schreiner received an intimation that the Imperial Government could not favour a policy of complete amnesty he acquiesced, and Mr. Solomon drew up a proposal which comprised a five-years' disfranchisement for the rank and file of the rebels. Shortly afterwards arrived Mr. Chamberlain's own suggestion, which was substantially identical with Mr. Solomon's own. There is not the slightest foundation for the assertion that Mr. Chamberlain forced a measure on the Ministry which Mr. Schreiner could not induce his colleagues to accept. On the contrary, Mr. Schreiner in no case disputed the justice of even sêverer penalties for the rebels, but in his position as leader of the Bond party it would have been impossible for him to begin by asking for anything else but amnesty for the rank and file. Any other proposal of his which might have been accepted would have at once exposed him to the reproach of having got less for " his own people " than he might have done.

As regards the prospects of the Session which has been postponed a month, it is certain to be a stormy one. On the other hand, there can be little doubt that, unless Mr. Schreiner's followers desert him *en masse*, the new Ministry will have a majority. As parties stand at present, only one man is wanted besides Mr. Schreiner and Mr. Solomon to give Sir G. Sprigg a majority. Mr. Rhodes will not be present, but it is known that he has declared that he will support loyally any Ministry that will carry out the policy of Sir A. Milner and the Imperial Government.

16th July 1900.

THE OPERATIONS ROUND LANGS NEK.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LANGS NEK, JUNE 15.

When General Buller found his advance checked at Langs Nek on May 18 it meant that a considerable time must elapse before he could hope to continue the movement he had so successfully begun. His rapid march to Newcastle with a division of infantry and a brigade of mounted troops had left the rest of his force far in his rear, the railway was only completed to a point 50 miles behind him, and the supply columns he had brought through had not anything like a sufficient reserve to enable him to make any extended operations for some time to come. He was, therefore, compelled to take up a position from which he could watch the strong force of the enemy in front of him and guard against any offensive measures on their part. The 4th Brigade of Infantry and the 3rd Mounted Brigade moved to Ingogo to act as containing force to the Boers on Langs Nek. The 2nd Brigade remained at Newcastle. The completion of the railway was now necessary before anything more could be done, and General Hildyard's Division was made use of to assist the Natal Government engineers with fatigue parties. This materially increased the speed with which the work was done, and after the Queen's birthday had been celebrated, according to a special Army Order issued the day before, by a " record day's work on the railway " it was completed on May 29. Meanwhile, however, the Boers had had time to reorganize after their flight from the Biggarsberg. On that occasion many had retreated eastward across the Buffalo River, and it was probably the same men who now appeared on our right flank at Doornberg on the road to Vryheid. Nothing could be easier for them than to strike at our lines of communication from their new position, and it was essential to drive them away before advancing. A double movement to the eastward was therefore made a few days before the railway was completed. On May 28 General Hildyard with the 5th Division, the S.A.L.H., and a strong force of artillery, including a howitzer battery and the naval guns under Captain Jones, R.N.,

marched from Newcastle to Wools Drift, on the road to Utrecht, and General Lyttelton with one brigade of infantry and the second cavalry brigade marched from Dannhauser to State's Drift, on the way to Vryheid. General Hildyard's objective was Utrecht, and General Lyttelton's was the Boer force at Doornberg. The latter scattered before Lyttelton and retired northward. General Hildyard reached Utrecht after two days' march on the 29th. That evening the S.A.L.H. had a skirmish with a force of Boers whom they found occupying the town, but who evacuated it during the night. The following day the Landdrost surrendered the town, and a proclamation by General Buller, who showed the utmost desire to avert bloodshed, was posted. He called upon the men who were under arms to lay down their rifles and return to their farms, reminding them, as a guarantee of his good faith, of his old friendship with them in previous wars, when they had fought under him. The work of the flanking columns was now accomplished and they returned, General Hildyard to DeWet's Farm on the Ingogo road, a few miles south of Ingogo, and General Lyttelton marching north to Coetzes Drift, on the Buffalo River, due east of Ingogo.

Meanwhile, the Boers had been steadily strengthening their position on Langs Nek. Their intrenchments, at which they could be seen hard at work all day long, now extended from Pongwana Hill, a mile to the east of the Buffalo, to a point halfway up Majuba, and again beyond Majuba for several miles to the westward towards Quagga's Nek. The main position between Majuba and Pongwana was about three miles in length, the only break in it being the deep defile of the Buffalo. From Majuba to the river there was an almost unbroken line of trenches, the ridges immediately to the east of the nek which the 58th Regiment attacked in 1881 being the most strongly fortified, as if the enemy expected General Buller to repeat Colley's attempt. On May 28 they fired a few shells from a 6-in. gun in a vast gun epaulement built at the beginning of the war on the summit of Pongwana, and this was repeated almost every day. They usually fired shrapnel, but, as a rule, burst them too high to do much damage. Inkwelo, a high hill south of Majuba, had been occupied by some of General Dartnell's Natal Volunteers on May 23, and was now held by them and by part of the 4th Brigade. These troops were generally the objective of the shelling, but they suffered very few casualties. On May 29 two naval 4·7's and two naval 12-pounders were mounted about half-way up Inkwelo on an eastern spur, and desultory artillery duels took place almost every day.

In his desire to save unnecessary bloodshed General Buller asked for a meeting with the Boer general. This was agreed to and took place between the outposts on June 2. General Buller pointed out the uselessness of protracting the struggle now that Lord Roberts was in the heart of the Transvaal, and offered the most liberal terms to the force opposing him—namely, that they should surrender their artillery and would then be allowed to return to their farms with their rifles to await Lord Roberts's final decision. Christian Botha, the Boer general, who is a younger brother of Louis Botha, the commandant-general, said that he had no power to accept the terms, and General Buller then gave his word not to attack Langs Nek or in any way advance his outposts for three days, in order to give General Botha time to consider the offer. On June 5, just before the three days had expired, General Buller moved his headquarters up to Ingogo, and there received Botha's answer that the terms were not accepted.

The question now was how to attack the Nek. A frontal attack was practically impossible, and even had it succeeded would probably have cost 2,000 men. To turn it from the east would also probably have failed, owing to the extreme difficulty of the country behind Pongwana and the fact that the enemy could see all our movements on that side, but the flanking movement of the previous week must have been an excellent blind as to our real intentions. There remained only the west, and that meant crossing the Drakensberg. The only available passes in northern Natal are Quagga's Nek to the north-west of Inkwelo, and that was known to be exceedingly strongly fortified, and Botha's Pass, slightly south of west of Ingogo Hill, also known to be fortified. The characteristic of the Drakensberg here as elsewhere is that it presents an absolutely unbroken and wall-like face to the eastward. Botha's is not a pass in the true sense, for it is the same height as the rest of the range ; it has only been made a pass because a projecting spur below it allows the road to ascend at a slightly less steep gradient than elsewhere. Immediately to the north of the pass the range juts right out into Natal, and the salient is formed by a hill known as Inkweloane—Little Inkwelo—about three miles south-west of the big Inkwelo. Beyond the crest of the Drakensberg the ground does not drop, but remains at the same level, forming the great rolling uplands of the high veldt. These hills the Boers were known to have been in possession of for some time, and they had intrenched them and on one occasion had brought up a gun with which they threatened the camp at Ingogo. The road to Botha's Pass runs practically due west from De Wet's farm, where Hildyard was encamped, and skirts the base of a hill slightly higher than the Drakensberg, called Van Wyk, which lies almost equi-distant from Botha's Pass and Inkweloane and commands the crest line between those points. As an artillery position it is invaluable in an attack on Botha's Pass, and on June 6 General Hildyard received orders to reconnoitre it with a view to discovering good

gun positions for the projected attack. He marched from De Wet's farm with the South African Light Horse and the 10th Brigade, and sent the South African Light Horse up the hill from the north. At 10 o'clock two squadrons were in possession of the top of the hill, and the squadron on the left were in touch with the enemy, who were on a higher hill beyond. By 11 o'clock Colonel Byng had every available man holding the crest line, for they were extended along a front of three miles and the enemy were found to be in considerable strength on the other side. As the last squadrons came up a Boer high velocity 9-pounder opened on them from the Drakensberg. It could plainly be seen firing in the open, and as we had no artillery it continued with impunity all the afternoon, but though its fire was accurate it caused practically no casualties. The musketry fire was extremely heavy all day. The Boers, realizing, perhaps, what the possession of the hill meant to us, made during the day several determined attacks, especially at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when, knowing our habits with regard to reconnaissances, they came on expecting us to retire. After seeing the determined resistance made by the enemy, it had been very wisely decided to hold the hill, and at 2 o'clock the Middlesex Regiment came up to reinforce the S.A.L.H., who had now been under heavy fire for four hours, and a good deal later in the afternoon the Dorsetshire Regiment and the Dublin Fusiliers came up. In the evening the enemy set fire to the grass and under cover of the smoke made another unsuccessful attack, and at about 7 o'clock retired altogether. Our casualties for the day amounted to two men killed and about 20 wounded, and it speaks most highly for the way the S.A.L.H. were handled that, though they had borne the brunt of the day's fighting, they had only three men wounded.

That night, a bitterly cold one, the troops bivouacked on the hill. All that night and the following day were spent by the Naval Brigade in dragging their guns up. The 4·7's had to be taken off their carriages and put on wagons, and wagon and gun-carriage were then treble-spanned to get them to the top. A battery of two 4·7's and two 12-pounders was eventually mounted on the northern extremity of the hill. The same day two 5in. garrison guns were mounted on the southern spurs of Inkwelo. We were thus able to command the crest-line of the Drakensberg with heavy artillery with a cross-fire that would render it untenable. All was now in readiness for an attack on Botha's Pass, and General Buller mobilized a strong flying column for the purpose of forcing the passage and subsequently turning Langs Nek from the west. It consisted of the 5th Division and 2nd Brigade of Infantry, part of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade (the 18th and 19th Hussars), the 3rd Mounted Brigade, the naval guns under Captain Jones, R.N., and the naval guns under the garrison artillerymen, two brigade divisions of field artillery, "A" Battery R.H.A., two howitzer batteries, and the Maxim-Vickers battery (three guns), with six days' supplies for the whole force. The force was under the direct orders of General Hildyard and under the general supervision of General Buller, who accompanied it, but also kept in touch with the containing force at Ingogo. The force had orders to attack Botha's Pass on June 8. At about 10 o'clock the bombardment began from the guns on Inkwelo and Van Wyk and from naval and garrison guns on the plain between the two. There were altogether about 16 long-range guns in action. At noon the S.A.L.H. occupied, without opposition, Spitzkop, a large, conical kopje midway between Van Wyk and the Drakensberg, on the right of the Botha's Pass Road. Then the infantry advance began. The 11th Brigade advanced along the road at the foot of Van Wyk, and when they got clear of the hill deployed on to the plain, while the S.A.L.H. guarded their left flank. Their objective was Botha's Pass. The 2nd Brigade was in echelon to their right rear with the 3rd Cavalry Brigade guarding their right. Their objective was practically the whole of the salient from Botha's to Inkweloane. The advance in this formation conformed closely to the shape of the line of hills we were attacking, and when the time came the enemy found themselves attacked practically simultaneously all along a very much curved front of about four miles. About 2 o'clock the field batteries opened fire from the plain below Botha's Pass, and, together with the big guns behind, searched the crest-line and every wooded kloof in the sides of the hills. At 3 the infantry began to climb the Drakensberg, which was everywhere steep and in many places precipitous and rose at least 1,500ft. above the plain. At 4 Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, who had gone up on the right of the 2nd Brigade, were on the top and immediately met a sharp fire from the enemy in carefully-masked trenches half a mile back from the crest-line. They were quickly followed by the infantry, who were now reaching the top all along the line and engaging the enemy at long range. Then we understood why the enemy had not resisted the advance across the plain. It was absolutely impossible to hold the crest-line against the cross-fire of the batteries on Van Wyk and Inkwelo. The ground for half a mile back from the crest-line was swept by our shell fire, and it was only behind that that the enemy could make a stand. The admirably timed attack made successful resistance impossible. The enemy opened with two Maxim-Vickers and a high velocity gun, and for half-an-hour there was sharp firing. But on the right the Colt gun battery, which had gone up with Thorneycroft's, swept and cleared the trenches, and two guns of "A" Battery which had been pulled up Inkweloane by hand silenced one of the Maxim-

Vickers, whilst at Botha's Pass the S.A.L.H. drove back the enemy's right flank. Then the enemy began to retire. At first in twos and threes, and later in twenties and thirties, they galloped away, setting the grass on fire as they went. There was a sharp wind blowing, and in a few minutes the whole field was obscured in rolling smoke dense as a fog. Half-an-hour later the cavalry reached the top and slowly followed the retreating Boers for a few miles, but returned at dark without having been engaged. Watchers on the top of Inkwelo could see the whole engagement clearly. They reported the enemy to be about 1,000 strong with an infantry reserve of between 300 and 400 men drawn up at a farm about two miles to the rear. These never came into action, but marched off when the retirement began. The troops bivouacked that night on the top, and all night long the transport was slowly moving up the steep road to the pass. In the morning so much still remained below that General Buller decided not to advance till next day. The whole of that day and the following night were spent in getting the rest of the transport up. The hill was a mile long and very steep, and a large number of wagons required to be double spanned. As it always took the conductor at least half-an-hour before deciding to make use of a second span it was a long and wearisome business.

On June 10 General Buller resumed his march, which was now through the Orange River Colony, in a northerly direction, with the S.A.L.H. scouting in front of the column, the 2nd Cavalry Brigade guarding the left, and the 3rd Mounted Brigade acting as rear and right flank guard. About noon the S.A.L.H. came in touch with the enemy on a hill north of the Gansvlei Spruit, which had been selected for that night's bivouac. Guns were brought up and the hill was quickly cleared and occupied by a squadron, whilst the rest of the regiment worked round the west side of the hill and occupied a broad front to the north of it. From here large bodies of the enemy could be seen moving down the Volksrust-Almonds Nek road from the eastward, crossing our front at a distance of about three miles, and then turning away in a northerly direction. They were evidently a part of the Langs Nek force who were either retiring in consequence of our flanking movement or moving across to intercept it. In about two hours it was estimated that 3,000 Boers had passed, but though urgent messages were sent back no guns arrived. To our left front lay a long ridge within about half a mile of the road along which the Boers were passing. At the nearer end of it was a stony kopje, and this was occupied by a troop of the S.A.L.H. who were scouting to the left front. The Boers, fearing an attack, promptly sent their best commando—the Lydenburgers—up their end of the ridge. Major Brooke, who was in command of the right, brought two more troops to the assistance of the one already on the kopje and a sharp engagement took place. Then Colonel Byng sent another squadron, and with this and two of the three troops already there Major Brooke made a most dashing attack upon the highest part of the ridge. The Boers had already erected a rough breastwork, and behind this they held their ground and checked the South Africans' advance when within about 40 yards. Then in their turn they advanced. Creeping unperceived along the steep eastern face of the ridge, they suddenly opened an enfilading fire at a range of less than 20 yards. The situation for a few minutes was critical, and was saved by the magnificent coolness and pluck with which the irregulars fought. After losing six men killed, almost every one of them shot through the head, Major Brooke withdrew his right, which allowed the troop who had been left on the kopje behind to open a heavy fire on the Boer flanking party. Before that it had been impossible to fire at them, so close were they to our men. The left held fast under good cover, and the enemy, who had lost heavily, gradually withdrew along the ridge. During all this the 2nd Cavalry Brigade had remained inactive on the extreme left. They now, however, sent forward a squadron which managed to occupy a low ridge to the westward, whence they harassed the Boers on the main ridge with a long-range cross fire. As soon as it was dark the force was withdrawn. The S.A.L.H. had lost six men killed and eight wounded, but it was afterwards ascertained that they had killed 14 of the enemy. They had been greatly outnumbered and had fought a most successful engagement.

The following day General Buller took the Volksrust Road, and after marching about six miles in a north-easterly direction came in touch with the enemy on the hills to the east of Almonds Nek. A high ridge, unbroken save for this one pass, runs for many miles north-west from the Drakensberg, and on this the Boers were found to be in force with several guns. To turn the position was impossible, and a frontal attack was the only alternative. At about noon the 3rd Mounted Brigade came in contact with the enemy several miles to the east of the nek and shelled them with the horse battery, to which they replied with a high velocity 9-pounder. The Composite Regiment of Mounted Infantry was meanwhile working along a spur of the main ridge on the extreme right and the long-range guns were being hurried forward in the centre. At about 1 o'clock a heavy bombardment of the ridge was commenced by four 4·7's, six 12-pounders, and a battery of howitzers. At 2 the infantry advance began. General Coke's brigade, with the Dorsets in the firing line, the Middlesex in support, and the Dublin Fusiliers in reserve, were directed to attack the ridge immediately to the right of the nek; the 2nd Brigade, with the East Surreys and the Queen's in front, were

to attack, the former regiment straight up the nek, and the latter on their left. The mounted infantry were already engaged on the extreme right. This disposition of the troops gave us a front of something like five miles. The advance was across an open plain with no cover, and the hills towered very steeply over it to a height of about 1,000 feet. Immediately to the right of the point where the pass debouches into the plain is a steep rocky kopje some 600ft. high; it is connected with the main ridge by an open nek about 300 yards wide, and above it the ridge is very broken and rocky, affording excellent natural cover to the enemy. At about 3 o'clock the enemy suddenly opened with a 9-pounder and two Maxim-Vickers on to a small kopje immediately above the guns, where General Buller was standing watching the advance. General Buller promptly ordered three field batteries that were in action and the Maxim-Vickers battery forward and to the left. From that position they raked the right-hand side of Almonds Nek, which had hitherto been sheltered behind the rocky kopje. The result was immediately appreciable. The Boer artillery ceased at once, and a heavy rifle fire directed on the advanced lines of the 2nd Brigade slackened considerably and enabled them to reach cover in some broken ground at the mouth of the pass. Meanwhile the Dorsets had reached and taken the stony kopje without much opposition, but they could not advance beyond it. What seemed to be the main body of the enemy lay concealed among the rocks of the ridge beyond, and at a range of under 400 yards advance was impossible. Then the massed batteries of heavy cannon and field guns concentrated their fire on the place. This time the Boers had not the deep trenches against which our shell fire is comparatively innocuous. They had trusted to the rocks for cover and they did not protect them. After half-an-hour's shelling their fire had slackened considerably. Meanwhile the Middlesex were working slowly forward on the right of the Dorsets, and the Dublins were still further to the right assisting the Mounted Infantry. At 4 o'clock, after an hour's shelling, the Dorsets rushed across the 300 yards of open ground and climbed the ridge in front. Their total casualties that day were ten killed and over 40 wounded, and they lost most of those in that short rush. The charge was most gallantly done and proved irresistible. Getting better cover in the broken ground beyond, they went up rapidly with fixed bayonets and in a few minutes reached the top. As usual, the Boers did not wait. A few prisoners were taken, five or six dead were found, and the rest were seen galloping away over the plain beyond, setting fire to the grass as they went. Long-range volleys were fired at them, and it is said tha nine saddles were emptied. Almost simultaneously with the Dorsets, the East Surreys, who had been for a considerable time under a nasty cross fire at the mouth of the pass, advanced and took the hills on the left of the pass, and their advance enabled the Queen's, who had suffered considerably in the open ground at the foot of the hills, to advance further to the left. In half an hour the whole ridge was ours and the Boers were flying for their lives across the plain beyond it.

Meanwhile on the extreme right the mounted infantry had fought the most stubbornly-contested fight of the day. The Composite Regiment had climbed on to the hills about mid-day at a point where a spur of the main ridge curved round in a south-westerly direction, and, working along it, had found the enemy holding a strong position on about the highest point. Captain Johnson, the adjutant, was considerably in advance of his men and rode within 50 yards of the Boers' advanced post before they opened fire, and he fell riddled with bullets. The regiment, with whom was a squadron of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, then took up a position under good cover and returned the enemy's fire at a range of about 800 yards. This lasted for a considerable time, the enemy gradually giving ground. Our casualties were slight, but, unfortunately, included two officers—Captain Mann, of Thorneycroft's, killed, and Captain O'Brien, commanding the company of the Scottish Rifles in the Composite Regiment, mortally wounded. At about 4 o'clock the Dublin Fusiliers, who had worked across the plain considerably to the right of the rest of their brigade, attacked the enemy on their right flank. This completed what the mounted infantry had begun, and just as the infantry in the centre swept the heights of the main ridge the enemy on the right broke and fled. Our total casualties were 20 killed and about 100 wounded, and our success was not dearly bought. Of the great strength of the position and the extreme importance to the enemy of holding it there can be no two opinions, and it was the able way in which men and guns were handled and the excellent manner in which the two arms combined that won the day. The result of the battle was almost instantaneous. That night the Boers evacuated Langs Nek, retiring through Volksrust and Wakkerstroom, and next day General Clery occupied it without firing a shot. The next day's march brought General Buller to the railway four miles west of Volksrust, and on the 13th he marched to Langs Nek, dividing his force between Volksrust and Charlestown.

The two marches with which General Buller has cleared the Boers from northern Natal will probably rank among the most brilliant achievements of the war. The difficulty of the country it is impossible to describe to those who have not seen it. The opposing force has throughout been very large when compared to the size of the force at General Buller's disposal, and in the three actions which have decided the success of the operations—namely, Helpmakaar, Botha's Pass, and Almonds Nek—the enemy have been taken by surprise and completely out-manœuvred, and all this has been done with a casualty list of under 200.

18th July 1900.

THE OPERATIONS EAST OF PRETORIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

PRETORIA, JUNE 17.

There were many who believed that with the occupation of the capital of the Transvaal by Lord Roberts that active hostilities would cease. Unfortunately this has not proved to be the case, for on the very evening of the occupation De Wet placed himself across the communications in the Free State, and from then up to the date of this letter we have practically been isolated from all direct communication with the south. A single wire has been working spasmodically from the western frontier, otherwise little or no news would have filtered through. In a previous letter I pointed out that when Lord Roberts withdrew General Hamilton's Division from the right flank after the occupation of Heilbron he undertook a great risk—a risk which left De Wet master of the situation between Lindley and Heilbron, and which practically invited him to tamper with our communications. It must not be thought that this risk was not realized. It was an unavoidable weak spot in the scheme which enabled Lord Roberts to hurl an army corps across the Vaal before Botha had time to rally his forces from the demoralization of rapid retreat. There is no doubt that General Hamilton should not have fought the rearguard action outside Lindley if time could have been spared for him to do otherwise. Under ordinary circumstances De Wet should have been thoroughly hounded out of the positions of his own choosing before Lindley was evacuated. But this could not be. There was only one course open to the Field-Marshal, and that was to follow up the advantage which his rapid movement from the south had already given him. He realized that De Wet would touch his communications sooner or later. The risk lay in the Free State general coming astride of the railway before the vital blow upon the capital had been struck. This is why there was no halt upon the Vaal, why the cavalry and Hamilton's divisions were fighting at Roodepoort on half rations. Once we were in possession of the Rand and Pretoria any attack upon our southern railway communication came too late to have any permanent effect upon the issue of the campaign. Johannesburg and the capital supplied the army with a month's food. Once established there two alternative lines of communication were within reach. Two brigades were sufficient to hold the towns, and consequently the rest of the army was set free to move in such direction as the Field-Marshal considered fit. But if De Wet had closed in a week earlier than he did; if he had established himself at Rhenoster when we were upon the Vaal, the result would have been very different. It would then have been necessary to detach a strong force south to re-establish communication. This would have left only a weakened force with which to strike against the capital, a force to which Botha, armed with news of De Wet's success, might have shown a very different front. It was a great risk, which none but a great man would have undertaken. De Wet's movements were calculated to the hour, and as Lord Roberts had calculated the Free State general made his effort too late. We can now view the situation with equanimity.

While Louis Botha on June 4 was endeavouring to check the British advance at Six Mile Spruit the greatest consternation prevailed in Pretoria. There was no discipline at the front, and it seemed that all cohesion had left the commandos. The town itself was in a state of chaos. But the individuality of the Commandant-General appears to be great. When he arrived in the evening he collected the scattered commandos and withdrew them in some order to Eerste Fabrieken. Here during June 6 and 7 the officials of the Republics discussed the advisability of continuing the struggle. When the last trains had left Pretoria, the Republican cause certainly had not been encouraging, and upon the first few days succeeding the occupation the majority of the burgher military leaders seemed disinclined to continue the war. Not that their military system completely collapsed. While these deliberations were taking place Botha had seized and put into a state of defence the long range of hills known as Pienaar's Poort, from the railway cutting of that name which passes through them, and the British troops which were moving out to the east of Pretoria were constantly exposed to long-range shell fire. But from the reports which came in concerning the conditions of affairs in the Boer lines it seemed that the general feeling leaned towards some arrangements which might lead to peace. All confidence was gone. Except among the most ignorant and fanatical of the burghers all reliance in President Kruger and his constitution had vanished when he had left his capital after plundering the banks. The President left on Monday, May 29, and he took with him two and a half millions in specie. But this was not all. The ordinary State officials, whose arrears of salary had been allowed to accumulate under the plea that the war was engrossing all attention, were paid by the President in a paper money specially issued. Cheques were issued and dated after the hour specified for the closing of the banks to the public. Thus, when the "seat" of government moved, the ordinary educated officials of Pretoria and the Transvaal,

other than those closely connected with "the Royal family of Pretoria," found that the enemy was at their gate and that their President, who had led them into their trouble, and to whom they not unnaturally turned in the moment of despair, had vanished like "a thief in the night." Not metaphorically, but actually. He had stolen their money and left them with bare signatures, the only value of which will be the few pence which they may fetch as curiosities. From the day that the President swept clean the public coffers of Pretoria, abandoned the city and left its defrauded inhabitants to their fate, the cause of the Republic was lost. How far Louis Botha was cognisant of the movements and actions of the State officials it is impossible to say upon present information. But we have during the last month had constant proofs of his inability to infuse his own fighting spirit into the hearts of his men. Even his great personal influence could not rebuff the shock caused by the President's flight. And then, when, on the day preceding the occupation, the State Attorney followed his chief into flight, taking with him the final sweepings of the wealth of the Republic, the people of Pretoria "held up their hands" and surrendered. Five thousand stand of Mausers were handed in to the Provost-Marshal during the first ten days of the British occupation of Pretoria.

But an untoward influence was suddenly brought to bear upon the negotiations, for negotiations were now proceeding—that is to say, emissaries were passing between Lord Roberts and Commandant Botha. The news that De Wet had placed himself in command of our communications probably reached Botha on Saturday, June 9. For on the preceding day he had shown even some eagerness to treat, but on the day following his whole attitude changed and he sent an answer to the Field-Marshal couched in language studied to convey the impression of haughty indifference.

Now, although Lord Roberts was quite prepared to receive any overtures which might represent the unanimous wish and feelings of the burghers of the Transvaal, he had no intention of leaving Botha to gather strength and confidence in the commanding position which he occupied at Pienaar's Poort. The chain of hills which form the position define a front of about 25 miles. This is difficult to trace on the map, as the hills on the ordnance survey sheets are indifferently marked. But, roughly, the Boer position was an unbroken chain of kopjes extending from Krokodil Spruit on the north to Rhenosterfontein-Riet Vlei on the south. In the use of the defining adjective "unbroken" it is meant that the irregularities which existed in the range were such that a force could not make use of them without finding the enemy in position within short range. To the east of Pretoria you shake off the hilly country, and a more or less undulating plain stretches away until it is rudely broken by the cliff face of Pienaar's Poort. Half-way between Pienaar's Poort and the capital the small hills of Koedoesnoort and Hartebeestepoort break the plain. But their existence is immaterial to the present history, as the enemy did not hold them to any extent. The actual approach to Pienaar's Poort, as seen from Hartebeestepoort, bears a great resemblance to that great gate of the Himalayas—the entrance to the Khaibar Pass from the Jamrud plain. The actual poort through which the railway passes is crowned on either hand by cliffs which seem to rise sheer from the plain like the portals of the Indian pass. But, of course, the Transvaal hills are on a much smaller scale. The poort may be said to have been the centre of Botha's position, and it certainly had the appearance of being impregnable. On Friday, June 8, Ian Hamilton's divisional headquarters were at Garsfontein, about eight miles south-east of Pretoria. These headquarters consisted of Bruce Hamilton's Brigade (General Smith Dorrien's having been detached to the south for duty in the line of communications), de Lisle's M.I., and Gordon's and Broadwood's Cavalry Brigades. General Pole-Carew's Division was at Hartebeestepoort. Henry's M.I. held the spur of hills which, running north of Pretoria, connects with Pienaar's Poort, while General French, with the remainder of the cavalry and Hutton's M.I., was at Haartebeestefontein, eight miles north-east of Pretoria, and north of the connecting spurs occupied by Henry. Pretoria itself was garrisoned by Maxwell's Brigade. On Saturday, June 9, Lord Roberts commenced the movement by which he intended to dislodge Botha from his position on Pienaar's Poort. The cavalry were ordered to attempt both flanks of the position. In the event of this movement not proving sufficient to cause the enemy to fall back, the infantry were to advance and feel their way for an opening possible of assault. The country towards the left of the position seemed the most promising, and General Hamilton had orders to move to his immediate front from Garsfontein in the event of Broadwood and Gordon making headway. It will be seen that the Field-Marshal, when he moved against Pienaar's Poort, was undertaking the most comprehensive operation which he had had under his personal direction since Paardeberg. It was evident that, if the enemy showed any tenacity of purpose to hold their position, it would take several days before it would be possible to turn either of the flanks sufficiently to be able to assault the main positions with a certainty of success. And just at this moment the army was so circumstanced that it could not afford to undertake an operation and not succeed. On June 9 Hamilton's cavalry moved out on the left, the 2nd Cavalry Brigade towards Rhenosterfontein, and the 3rd Brigade away again to the extreme right. They worked

the Boer left with some success. It seemed that Botha had not anticipated so wide an enveloping movement, and on the night of June 9 Broadwood at least was in position to strike for some kopjes which practically commanded Elands River Station. But, unfortunately, orders arrived that night directing the cavalry on the right to halt on the following day. The reason of this suspension of the original plan was that negotiations, which seemed likely to terminate in a personal interview between Lord Roberts and Commandant Botha, were proceeding. It may be that the Boer general was only trifling with the object of gaining time, or it may be that the despatches received from De Wet decided him, but he brusquely repudiated his expressed intention of a meeting. In the meantime he had, during the halt on Sunday, taken advantage of Broadwood's inactivity to occupy the very hills which the 2nd Brigade would have secured on Sunday morning if it had not been detained. Botha had evidently realized the jeopardy in which his flank was placed during the negotiations, and had reinforced from his centre. This move on his part was the cause of all the cavalry fighting on the Boer left on Monday, June 10, the narrative of which comes within the province of *The Times* Correspondent who was present during Hamilton's action on the left during June 10, 11, and 12.

The movement of French on the extreme right of the Boer position furnished another surprise to Botha. But it was a surprise from which he recovered with rapidity, and, realizing that French was again bent upon rolling up his right, he reinforced with all his available strength, entrusting the counter move to Delarey and Grobler, his two most trusted lieutenants. French, whose command through casualties to the horses was now considerably reduced and, including Hutton's Mounted Infantry, did not exceed 1,800 men, pushed on on Saturday and crossed the first of the three spruits in front of him at Kameel Drift. The country was an impossible one for cavalry, and few cavalry leaders would have continued. On Monday night they were at Kameel Drift, across the Pienaar River. It was then that they came into close contact with the enemy. Porter's Brigade was on the left in the vicinity of Krokodil Spruit, Dickson on the right. Speaking of a cavalry brigade at this period means a few hundred mounted men and an underhorsed battery. As Porter advanced small parties of Boers were seen galloping across his front to the left. The enemy were evidently attempting to outflank an outflanking attack. A machine-gun was detached to cover the left and to deter the small groups of enemy from reinforcing those already across the front, when suddenly a heavy Mauser fire broke out from the direct front. It had been well reserved and the range was short. But it was not disastrous, neither had it the effect for which it had evidently been reserved. General Porter conceived that he would be able to hold a low smooth kopje on his left front, and he dashed for this. He was able to secure the position, while " O " Battery, R.H.A., from a smart trot came into action in the open against the rifle fire, which had been augmented by field artillery. This was another instance of the supreme discipline of this branch of the service. This battery remained in action all day in the open, exposed to a galling rifle fire. It kept down the latter with shrapnel and subdued the artillery fire. The cavalry bivouacked for the night on the positions which they held. They had by this time, as far as the existing situation was concerned, ceased to be cavalry, for they were spread out along the summit of the hills, and only maintained their position by the use of the carbine. It was a situation which few cavalry leaders would care to have faced out, especially on the Monday, when Botha, drawing from his centre, reinforced Delarey until he had at least 3,000 men and 12 guns, including one large calibre French howitzer. One is almost inclined to think that General French would have been justified in withdrawing the cavalry. It was evident that the Boer commander realized the weakness of this flank attack and was endeavouring to surround the force. In fact, Lieutenant Brinton, who was sent back on Tuesday night with a verbal message to the Field-Marshal, found the enemy in occupation of one of the drifts in rear of the division. He himself succeeded in getting through, but his escort have been missing since. Lieutenant Brinton was able to rejoin on the following morning with the orders that " the cavalry were, if possible, to maintain their position, but were not to undertake any severe risks."

But on Tuesday night the Boers in front of the cavalry division fell back parallel with their centre and left as it retired before Hamilton, and the situation was relieved. On Tuesday evening they had bombarded the positions, which the cavalry held, with great vigour and had withdrawn under the cover of this fire. It will be remembered that they had followed similar tactics when they had evacuated their positions in front of Generals Rundle and Chermside at Dewetsdorp. The casualties in the Cavalry Division had been 20 wounded, including Major Hathaway, R.A.M.C., and one killed. The proportion was absurd in comparison with the amount of ammunition which the enemy expended. But the men were much extended, often 30 and 40 yards apart. Consequently the Boer gunners had few targets. In any other formation it would have been impossible to have withstood the artillery bombardment. But the severity of the fighting can be realized from the fact that the horse batteries on Wednesday had only a few rounds remaining. The division pushed on and bivouacked for the night at Tweefontein. On the following day it came upon the tail of the Boer retreat upon

Elands River. It was impossible to go further. The cavalry is utterly spent; squadrons now parade 40 and 45 strong, while during a 20-mile march the men are forced to walk ten miles leading their animals. The remount department telegraphed to inquire the requirements of the cavalry. General French's reply was that he required 5,000 remounts—an eloquent testimony as to the state of the horses. The condition of the mounted infantry is no better.

A frontal attack against Botha's position on the Pienaar's Poort range was out of the question. The approaches which the Lorenzo Marques Railway followed crossed an almost flat plain, intersected with spruits, it is true, but affording no substantial cover right up to the frowning cliffs of the hills, many of which appeared almost perpendicular. The plain was also singularly deficient in artillery positions for the attack, except at very long range. Monday was spent by the Field-Marshal in feeling for an accessible opening against which a successful attack might be developed. From the first reconnaissance everything pointed to the left of the position being the most vulnerable. Consequently General Hamilton, advancing from Garsfontein, was able to work straight upon Donkershoek, the portion of the position which is crossed by the Pretoria wagon road. But Monday was an anxious day. As already pointed out, the halt of Broadwood's and Gordon's Brigades on Sunday placed them at a disadvantage on Monday—a disadvantage which the former was not able to shake off on the following day. In fact, the operations on Monday all along the line were not promising until the evening. French on the extreme left was checked, Broadwood heavily engaged, and Hamilton himself had found that the Heidelberg commando had evaded Gordon on the extreme right and was in a position to menace his own right rear or the Johannesburg communication, weakly held from Pretoria to Vereeniging by Smith-Dorrien's Brigade. So severe was the menace that Hamilton found it necessary to detach a battalion (the Derbyshire Regiment) and the section of a field battery to protect this flank. The little column, taking advantage of a country under mealie cultivation, were able to roll aside the Heidelberg attack and drive the latter back upon Gordon. But the enemy in front of General Hamilton were very tenacious, and they held the broken ground in the vicinity of Kleinfontein for the best part of the day. In fact, at one time it seemed that the infantry was making such little progress that the Field-Marshal sent a message to General Hamilton to ascertain if he found the position too strong for him. But then the 11th Division, where headquarters were, was about six miles distant, and the telescope did not represent the true state of affairs. The enemy clung on to the lower ridges with extreme tenacity, but when in the afternoon the heavy guns as well as the field guns began to search them out they broke and fled, and the infantry of General Hamilton were able to bivouack on the first position which they had held.

(FROM ANOTHER CORRESPONDENT.)

PRETORIA, JUNE 17.

Rather more than a dozen miles east of Pretoria the Lorenzo Marques railway has to pass through a lofty chain of hills which run north-west and south-east. The country between Pretoria and this range is tolerably open the few scraps of hill and undulation hardly serving to modify the general character of the country which is that of a well-watered and wooded plain. To the north of the range and stretching out westward at right angles to it is another chain of hills, also fairly high, overlooking Silverton and having the plain aforesaid to its south. It was these two hill masses which General Botha selected as the place of that resistance to our advance which we had expected would be made before reaching the capital instead of after. The fact that Lord Roberts was allowed to enter Pretoria almost unopposed only to find that he was not to be suffered to advance further without a fight may seem somewhat strange; yet the Boer policy can be easily explained. Pretoria is not really defensible against a large army well supplied with big guns advancing from the south. After the capital had been taken, but not till after, Botha would learn of the disturbances in the north-east of the Orange River Colony and the temporary successes of De Wet; while in a hostile country it was not possible to prevent spies informing the Boer general that the army which entered Pretoria was now much weakened by detachments to guard the lines of communication. Moreover, the position of Pienaar's Poort or Donkershoek—for both names will be given to it—is one of great natural strength, with considerable artificial additions. In fact, it had been chosen long before as a spot whereat to arrest the invaders' progress. The operations for the capture of this position lasted from Saturday, June 9, to Wednesday, June 13. The main scheme was that French should, as left wing, turn the Boer position on the mass of hill which juts out to the westward. Pole-Carew's 11th Division was to make the centre. Further to the right was Ian Hamilton's Division. This body had been much weakened since the occupation of Pretoria by the loss of Smith-Dorrien's 19th Brigade, which had been sent south to guard the lines of communication. The turning movement on the right wing was entrusted to Broadwood's 2nd Cavalry Brigade and Gordon's 3rd Cavalry Brigade, the latter making the extreme right wing of our force. On Saturday the right wing com-

menced the turning movement, and by nightfall had extended beyond the Boer flank ; their commanders were in good hopes of completely turning the enemy's left. Unfortunately, negotiations were commenced the day following, Sunday, for the surrender of General Botha, and during the *pourparlers* that ensued operations on our side were suspended ; the turning movement was arrested. The Boer leaders were not so nice ; they used the breathing space so obtained to push out their left and recover the lost flank. It is hard not to stigmatize this as a piece of very bad faith ; and, if taken in connexion with the attempt to carry off the captive officers on the night of June 4 after Pretoria had surrendered, it seems to furnish clear indication, were that needed, that the methods of our opponents are Byzantine to a degree. In any case, the negotiations were broken off, and when on Monday, June 11, operations were recommenced the best chance of turning the Boer position and possibly surrounding their force was gone.

On this day the great concerted movement started in earnest. French, with Hutton's and Henry's Mounted Infantry, pressed forward against the Boer right. Throughout Monday there was a heavy artillery duel ; but, though the Boers were pressed back and the range of hills north of Silverton cleared of their forces, still French was not in sufficient strength to accomplish anything of importance. The centre, Pole-Carew's Division, was refused all through the day. On the right, however, some very interesting fighting took place. Broadwood pressed the attack against the Boer left, advancing against a portion of the long line of hills held by them. Gordon was guarding his right and the Mounted Infantry were extended on his left. Just before noon he perceived a gap in the Boer position. In this gap were placed two guns firing shrapnel. To silence these guns and, if possible, to drive a wedge through the enemy's line, he ordered Q Battery, R.H.A., to advance. Hardly had the battery unlimbered than a large body of Boers came down upon it, charging in close formation—a most unusual thing with the enemy. On getting to within 600 yards they dismounted and opened fire. It was a most critical moment and the guns seemed in peril. A prompt resolution was necessary, and General Broadwood at once ordered the 12th Lancers to charge. This they did with very good effect. It was too much to hope that the enemy would await the Lancers' charge. Still, though the horsemen were unable to get right home, they reached the hindermost of the flying enemy, killed ten and wounded several more.

At the very moment that the 12th Lancers were clearing off the Boers in front of our guns another party was observed to be threatening our right. To drive them off another cavalry charge was necessary. The Household (Composite) Regiment were at this moment dismounted and firing with carbines. They received the order to mount and charge with the utmost eagerness, glad to be cavalry once more instead of partially effective infantry. The regiment charged with loud shouts and swords waving. The sight of these men coming down upon them, line after line of naked steel, quite demoralized the Boers who scattered and fled in the utmost confusion. Some 50 of the Household Regiment were directed against a Kaffir kraal held by more than 100 Boers. Behind the cover so afforded they could easily have repelled the charge, but they made no attempt to do so and fled like the rest in great disorder. Had our men been mounted on English horses they would undoubtedly have got home, but with the worn-out country-breds which are the cavalry mounts at present they were unable to do the damage which should have rewarded their efforts.

These cavalry charges were carried through with but slight losses. The casualties to the 12th Lancers—which included Colonel Lord Airlie—occurred not during the charge but after the reformation and during the retirement which must follow every cavalry charge, however striking or successful. During the rest of the day the cavalry were not seriously engaged. Mounted infantry were extended in front of General Broadwood's position, and their fire effectively checked any movement on the part of the enemy.

General Gordon's 3rd Cavalry Brigade had but little to do. He successfully kept the extreme flank of our line, and his only losses occurred in the 17th Lancers, who were unfortunately "flushed" by some Boer riflemen while rounding a kopje.

During Monday General Ian Hamilton advanced against the main Boer position. His artillery—which was well directed—shelled the enemy out of the under features of their stronghold. During the afternoon from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. shrapnel fire from our guns forced the Boer skirmishers out of the woods which fringed the ridge of Dondershoek, and the infantry, sometimes under heavy fire, hastened and completed their retirement. To many witnesses of this fight, it seemed that the rocky strength had been abandoned and that the line of hills was won. The morrow showed the contrary.

During Tuesday, June 12, the cavalry had but little to do. General Broadwood was occasionally threatened on his right flank by the Heidelberg commando, but carbine fire and an occasional round of shrapnel sufficed to keep them at a disance. But Botha's main position was yet to be won, and it was left to the infantry to obtain this stronghold. Roughly speaking, Botha's position was a line of riflemen posted on the crest of a steep and rocky incline ; to dislodge them from this crest constituted a sufficiently difficult task. Behind this crest-line stretched for some 1,200 yards an almost entirely flat plateau, on which was short grass, burnt in many places and with scarcely a stone behind

which a man could find cover. Beyond the eastern edge of this plateau the ground slopes gradually for some five miles to Elands River Station, eight miles east of which is the well-known Bronkhorst Spruit, another position well capable of defence. The natural defensive capabilities of this plateau had been carefully added to by the Boers ; the ranges had been ascertained and sangars built. About 2 p.m., Tuesday, June 12, the infantry of General Ian Hamilton's command stormed the crest of the line of hills held by General Botha. With the two 5in. guns helping their advance they cleared the ridge in the following order :— The C.I.V., making the centre of the attack, advanced first, and were the first to arrive on the edge of the ridge. To their right was the Derbyshire Regiment. This body, originally on the left, was brought across and formed into the right wing of the infantry attack. To the left the Sussex was directed against a spur which jutted out from the Boer position on which was placed a 37-millimètre gun (Pom-Pom) enfilading by its fire the main infantry advance. Somewhat later in the afternoon three regiments from General Pole-Carew's Division were sent up to the assistance of the 21st Brigade. Of these three, the 3rd Grenadier Guards were held in reserve, the 2nd Coldstream Guards were directed against the outer flank of the spur whose inner flank had been attacked and taken by the Sussex, as mentioned above ; the 1st Coldstream Guards were sent across the position from left to right, and, finding room for their advance between the C.I.V. and the Derbyshire, succeeded like them in obtaining a lodgment on the crest. Further to our right the line of hills held by the enemy makes a slight trend eastward—the main direction of the position being, of course, north and south. Thus, the left of the enemy was thrown back *en potence* through the accident of the ground and was in consequence not rendered any the easier to attack. This portion of the position was attempted by De Lisle's Mounted Infantry. Like the regiments to their left, they reached the crest and made good the ground gained, but were unable at once to advance further. The interest of the fight now centred round the artillery possessed by the two sides. The Boers had two guns in the centre, a Vickers-Maxim (Pom-Pom) on their right, already mentioned, and one on their left, on the part of the position attacked by De Lisle's Mounted Infantry. On our side were the two 5in. guns, which at first were posted nearly in the centre of our line of attack, but were afterwards moved to the right and paid particular attention to the Vickers-Maxim in front of them ; this gun was eventually silenced. But, owing to the steepness of the slope climbed by the infantry, the Field Batteries (76th and 82nd) were unable to follow them. Condemned to remain below the summit line, they were unable to give assistance to the infantry on the crest above. This infantry was therefore for a time in a very trying, and even critical, situation. With little or no cover available, their lines were enfiladed by the Vickers-Maxim on either flank, while the guns to their front deluged them with shrapnel. Exposed as well to a rifle fire from men who knew the ranges accurately, it was obviously impossible for them to do more than hold the ground they had won. Advance was out of the question ; even to hold on where they were was a task of the greatest difficulty ; and that they did so is one more proof, if proof were needed, of the great qualities of the men of General Hamilton's command. Thus they lay, exposed to a most searching and murderous fire, for over two hours. Unless the guns came up nothing could be done, and people were beginning to think of Spion Kop and to wonder if that fight was to be repeated.

About 4 30 the 82nd Field Battery appeared on the crest, opened on the enemy at 1,000 yards' range—and the situation changed as if by magic. It was only by the greatest possible exertions that the guns could be brought up, for the ground is broken and the slope steep, and the successful accomplishment of a difficult piece of work reflects the greatest credit on Major Conelly, the officer in command of the battery. Their arrival, as I have said, turned the scale. The Boer guns were silenced and the rifle fire died away under the well-placed shrapnel of our guns. The range was short—1,000 yards—and for some moments guns and gunners alike were under a hail of bullets ; but they fought their guns with admirable coolness and a very good effect. Botha's position was gone. He must have begun his retreat at once, for when, just before darkness, the infantry advanced over the plateau with fixed bayonets the Boers had disappeared. Once again a strong position had proved incapable of barring the British advance, and once again insufficiency of horses and the worn-out condition of those available had prevented us inflicting on the enemy the losses which should have resulted to him from his temerity in making a stand.

That night the troops slept on the position they had won. Next day, Wednesday, June 13. General Hamilton advanced his whole force, including Broadwood's and Gordon's Cavalry Brigades, to Elands River Station, some five miles to the east. The mounted infantry, catching General Botha's rearguard unprepared, inflicted loss upon him and quickened his retreat. He did not, as expected, take up a position at Bronkhorst Spruit, but retreated with all speed in the direction of Middelburg. The worn-out condition of both men and animals precluded any idea of following him up.

It is difficult to estimate the Boer losses during the three days' fighting, but, having regard to the accuracy of our artillery fire, one has some ground for saying that they must have been considerable. Natives say that from one part of the position alone eight wagons full of wounded

were removed, and, allowing for the exaggeration natural to the Kaffir mind, it is clear that the enemy did not come out of it scathless. In its general purpose and effects this fight may best be compared with the battle of Karee. On each occasion it was essential to obtain a position commanding the important town recently taken by our forces ; with this position still in hostile hands, our occupation of the particular town would always be slightly precarious. On each occasion the position was taken after hard fighting, and in neither case did we continue our advance when once our immediate object was obtained. At the end of March, as in the middle of June, the condition of our transport and animals made a prolonged halt imperatively necessary.

25th July 1900.

THE CAVALRY IN SOUTH AFRICA.

(FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JUNE 18.

With the exception of one weekly journal, whose correspondent showed such complete ignorance of the abnormal conditions under which our cavalry served in South Africa that his adverse opinions and criticisms merely brought ridicule on himself, the operations of the British cavalry in the South African war have been done full justice to in the Press ; and, moreover, by the Commander-in-Chief in South Africa unstinted praise has been bestowed on this branch of the service. We are gratified by the commendations of the Press of our country, we are elated at the praise of our Commander-in-Chief, and we are thereby certified of the value and undoubted success of the branch of the service that we love. (I am alluding solely to cavalry operations on the frontier of Cape Colony and in the Free State ; I know nothing of those in Natal, which country is about as suitable as Switzerland for the operations of cavalry.) Nevertheless, in spite of the praise showered on us, I am quite prepared to admit that our cavalry is very far from being perfect, and I consider that any man of ordinary intelligence who has taken part in the Kimberley relief march, the operations at Paardeberg, and the subsequent march to Bloemfontein could suggest many important, I might say necessary, changes. I contend that as our material in men and horses is by far the best in the world, so our cavalry is *facile princeps*—but do we make the best use of the splendid material at our command ? No, certainly we do not ; and I maintain that our cavalry ought to be, could be, must be doubled in efficiency.

Let us take the blackest spot first and see what can be done to eliminate it. This is, undoubtedly, the ridiculous weight that our horses have to carry. It is an impossible weight. All cavalry officers who have been brought up—as cavalry officers should be—in the hunting field, where they learn a very valuable part of cavalry soldiering by the same methods that ducks learn to swim (and this part of the science it is almost impossible to learn later on, that is the reason why some of our cavalry commanders, otherwise able, fail somewhat as horse masters), have recognized this for some time and it is thrust on their notice in the most unpleasant way possible in a campaign like the present one. Think of it, that a light-weight horse should have at least 18st. put on his back and after being piled up with this impossible weight must (if our cavalry is to be efficient) satisfy the following requirements. He must be able to march for many days consecutively at least 20 miles a day—30 would be nearer the mark ; he may then be called upon at any time, possibly at the end of a long day, to gallop two miles and charge, and then with his 18st. on his back take part in a pursuit in which the problem to be solved is how to catch a fleeing enemy on comparatively fresh horses riding 4st. or 5st. lighter. Is not this the *reductio ad absurdum*, and yet this is what our cavalry must do to give their full value ? And why is it that our cavalry horses are crushed down with this ridiculous and unnecessary weight ? Simply because none of our authorities have brought their ability and intelligence to bear on this the most important and difficult problem connected with cavalry soldiering. When I say difficult, the difficulty lies in reducing the weight to rational dimensions, for there is no difficulty whatever in reducing the weight considerably, though there might be a little extra expense incurred. Put to any expert or to a committee on the subject the following problem—" Can you possibly reduce the weight of the saddle, the carbine, the sword, the lance, the bit and head-piece, the men's cloaks and capes ?" The answer would be in every case " Yes." In fact, the only thing one cannot reduce is the weight of the rider ; but after all these had been reduced to a *minimum* the weight would still be an impossible one. What is to be done then ? I have mentioned a rational weight, and you will ask me what I call rational—from 13st. 7lb. to 14st. Then you will say, how is it possible to solve this problem, seeing that if one could reduce the actual weight of arms and equipment by 2st. (which would be the most one could hope for) it would still leave our horses burdened with 2st. over the " rational " weight. Manifestly the solution is that this 2st. must be carried elsewhere than on the horse. I feel sure that the majority are with me as far as I have gone, that these crushing weights must somehow or another be taken off our troop horses' backs ; but how they should be carried requires careful

thought and working out by an expert or, better still, by a committee of experts.

May I, however, be allowed to offer the suggestion that light carts, one per field troop—that is, four per squadron—might be added to the establishment for this purpose? These carts would, I think, be best drawn by mules and should accompany their squadrons in the field wherever they go, whether with the main body of cavalry or on outpost or other duty. I have no doubt that someone of inventive genius could construct a cart which, when emptied, could be turned into a field kitchen or some equally useful machine. Limit the men's kit to be carried in these carts to, say, 28lb. weight, then each cart would have to carry 30cwt. for one field troop of 120 men. I know there are disadvantages to this, but the saving in horseflesh in sore backs alone would pay the extra cost many times over in one month of campaigning. There may be other and better ways of carrying the kits than this. This is only one that suggests itself to me. The conditions that should be satisfied in carrying the kit otherwise than on the horses are that they must be able to be got at any moment they are required, they should be kept dry, and every man in the troop should know where his kit is,and be able to get it without disturbing the rest. With a cart none of these requirements would be very difficult to deal with. In considering, therefore, how the weight can be reduced from 18st. to 14st., we should begin with this item—weight of kit to be carried elsewhere than on the horse, 2st. Then the problem would begin to solve itself, for the saddle, having much less to support, could be reduced enormously in weight. It now weighs the absurd burden of 28lb. ; I am told that the American cavalry saddle weighs considerably less than 14lb. Have you ever taken up in your hands a cavalry bit and bridoon and head collar, reins, &c. ? It is a marvel how a horse can carry his head with it all. Away with it, it can and must be reduced, say, 25 per cent. The lance weighs up to 5lb., making it a too heavy weapon for any but a very strong man to use effectively, and this weight is useless. Take 3lb. off it. Look at the cavalryman's sword, heavy and clumsy throughout, with a needlessly heavy steel scabbard which is not only unnecessary but spoils the edge of the blade when sharpened. Let us return to the old leather scabbards with steel shoes and rings. Lee-Metford carbine, very heavy ; if a magazine carbine is necessary for cavalry, which is open to question, still the weight can be reduced.

No doubt all this means increased expenditure for finer material, but if it could save the wholesale waste of horseflesh on service it would be true economy. One squadron of lancers had more than 400 horses through their ranks up to the end of April in this campaign, and these were not by any means all killed by the enemy. Another squadron of dragoons I saw, which only had seven horses left fit for duty, and these are not exceptional cases. But I am wandering somewhat from my subject. We have got rid of 2st., to be carried elsewhere than on the horse, and have reduced all the items of equipment to their *minimum*. Let us see what must be carried on the horse. The soldier and his clothing, bandolier with 150 rounds, water-bottle, and haversack. Do away with his cloak and cape on service. The Indian regiments in South Africa have a garment called officially " the coat warm British " made of khaki serge, thick, with a flannel lining and pockets, much lighter and less cumbersome than the cloak. This rolled in the waterproof sheet, carried as either a front or rear pack, preferably the latter, is all the kit that should be required. Nose-bag with one feed, or even that might be in the cart (in a very dry and hot country the 'chagul for water might be carried), lance, sword, and carbine. I think the wallets might then be done away with, the men would ride much better and more comfortably without them (for our cavalrymen would be far better horsemen than they are if wallets had never been invented), and the absence of straps and buckles would be a great advantage, the haversack would carry all that was necessary ; in this case the coat and waterproof sheet must, of course, be carried as a rear pack. Everything else should be carried in the cart—horseshoes, blankets, built-up rope (or one long rope for the troop), and any change of clothing that is absolutely necessary. There is a great deal more to be said on this subject, but I hope I have written enough to give your readers food for reflecting whether some trouble and possibly expense should not be devoted to reducing the weight carried by our troop horses on active service. From time to time it has been hinted to me that our cavalry soldier does not take sufficient care of his horse on service. I believe this insinuation arises from the excessive mortality amongst horses during the war, and one of your contemporaries even attributed it to what he was pleased to call " the peace traditions of the British cavalry." I think if this writer were to study the Army List and note the honours won by the British horse he would be shamed into withdrawing this offensively silly paragraph. But alas ! how many writers on military subjects nowadays are grossly ignorant of all military matters ? I propose, therefore, in my next article to show that this libel on the British cavalry soldier has no foundation in fact, and at the same time to explain the reasons for this equine mortality.

25th July 1900.

THE LOSS OF THE HEILBRON CONVOY.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

PRETORIA, JUNE 20.

"The strength of an army lies in its communications." In a previous article I gave the reasons for the apparent weakness of our line of communication in the Orange River Colony. But, although it was anticipated that De Wet would cause trouble, we were hardly prepared for his wholesale successes during the early days of June. As a matter of fact, when he was in front of Heilbron he mustered a following of barely 1,000 men. This was augmented by a desperate band of ruffians who had been driven out from Thaba Nchu in front of Rundle's advance. And it is probable if De Wet had not been successful in his attack upon the Heilbron convoy that his successes would have terminated much earlier than they did. The history of the loss of this convoy is so unfortunate, and marks such an important phase in the military operations, that it is worthy of special mention. The convoy was under the command of Captain Corballis, A.S.C., and started for Heilbron with 55 wagons, carrying foodstuffs for the Highland Brigade, a quantity of warm clothing, and ammunition for all arms. Its escort consisted of 60 details belonging to the Highland Brigade marching from Kroonstad, under the command of Lieutenant Mowbray. It was understood that when the convoy left the railway communication at Vredefort Road that an escort would be detached from Heilbron to meet it half-way. On June 1 the escort was increased by 100 further details under Captain Johnson, Seaforth Highlanders, and Lieutenant Lang, Highland Light Infantry. Here the first of a series of deplorable mistakes occurred. The convoy received conflicting orders. By one authority it received orders to "move on Heilbron." Then the staff officer at railhead advised the officer commanding to wait. A further authority gave the information that the escort had already started to meet the convoy. In consideration of these conflicting instructions the convoy laagered on June 2 north of Rhenoster. It will be seen that at this period a large and very important convoy was adrift on the line of communication, and that there was no one in authority to direct it with confidence. The enemy were known to be in the vicinity, yet the convoy was only provided with a scratch escort formed from details from various corps, and though the enemy were known to be in possession of artillery it was allowed to start with simply an infantry guard. It so happened that by the luck of war a force of 1,000 men—drafts waiting to join their regiments at the front—were assembled at railhead. Otherwise there was no force within reach to which the convoy could look for aid in the event of the enemy menacing its progress. On June 1 a colonial conductor had been despatched to search for some loose oxen. This man was absent from the convoy for a period which was out of all keeping with the requirements of his quest. From remarks which subsequently escaped De Wet, in the hearing of the prisoners, and from the undoubted precise knowledge which the Boer commandant had of the strength and movements of the convoy, a grave suspicion is attached to the actions of this conductor.

Corballis determined to move on the night of June 2. At 1 30 a.m. the convoy was four miles beyond Steyn's farm. The convoy was supposed to be moving with its infantry escort detached half a mile on either flank. It is regrettable, but it is no less a fact, that during the night march the infantry officers so far neglected their duty that part of the escort were asleep on the wagons. This I give as an incident to show how in some cases the trust given for the safety of the army in the field was kept. It is only fair to the men in the fighting line that this should be made public. The convoy moved on steadily throughout the morning. At 2 p.m. oxen were seen on its right flank. This was the first indication of the presence of the enemy. These oxen undoubtedly belonged to De Wet's laager. As the road to Heilbron passed over a low ridge commanded by two kopjes, and suspicion being already aroused, the convoy was laagered and devices considered as to the best means of securing aid. A Kaffir was detached with a note to Heilbron. This man, meeting another Kaffir, who informed him of the presence of the enemy, returned without accomplishing his mission. Captain Johnson then conducted a reconnaissance with an orderly. He apparently simply despatched the trooper a short way and then returned to the laager to report failure. Conductor Webster was then sent to Vredefort Road. He returned on June 4 at 8 a.m. with a message from Major Haig, K.O.S.B., commanding the details at the railhead. The message ran, "Started with 600 men; got to within four miles of your camp." At 9 a.m. a flag of truce was sent in by De Wet with the following curt message:—"I have twelve hundred men and five guns. Surrender at once." At this juncture Captain Johnson, being the senior combatant officer, took over the command. He sent Lieutenant Lang to get terms from the Boer commandant. Not unnaturally, seeing that the convoy lay in the hollow of his hand, De Wet refused to negotiate, but insisted upon unconditional surrender. After a short parley, Johnson capitulated under the condition that the details of the force and convoy were to be prisoners of war and to retain their kit-bags and personal effects. It appears that Major Haig with his relief column of 600 men had come to within two miles of the laager, but had returned without making a

junction as he had heard that the unprotected railhead was threatened. This portion of the history will not be clear until the Court of inquiry has sifted the evidence, which at present is conflicting. But the bare facts remain that an inadequately protected convoy marched through a country known to be in the occupation of the enemy, and that a relief column turned back when it was within a short march of the trouble. It is probably untrue that De Wet had only the force with him named in his formal summons to surrender, but it is certain that the news of the capture of this convoy played an important part upon the whole operations of the campaign. It brought scores of waverers to De Wet, and it certainly influenced Botha in the negotiations which took place immediately after the surrender of Pretoria.

The following history of an officer who was captured with this convoy, and ultimately escaped, is interesting in that it shows the feeling existing in the Orange River Colony with regard to the war. The prisoners were taken south-east, whence De Wet left them to conduct his raid against Roodeval Bridge. They were then taken north-east to Vrede. The Boers seemed absolutely sick and weary of the campaign. They were only held together by the personal influence of De Wet and the terrorism of Theron, who had joined the Free State commando with his outlaws. Many deserted along the road. Even Field Cornets came up to inquire about passes to return to their farms. Smythe deserted with his following of 160 men. Those that remained were anxious to hear about Lord Roberts's proclamations, which had been carefully kept from them by the officials. All that they had seen had been " bogus " copies, which gave a complexion diametrically opposed to the real terms offered. When informed of the true tenor of the proclamations they openly admitted that they would desert as opportunity presented itself.

De Wet was so short of men that he could only spare an escort of 20 men to guard the prisoners. On June 9, when they had reached Woodside, the sound of General Buller's guns was distinctly audible. In fact, some of the prisoners were taken under escort to view the sight of 1,500 Free Staters holding Botha's Pass against the attack, real or feigned, of Buller's men. The Boers seemed demoralized, and whenever they heard firing collected in groups and sang psalms to keep up their spirits. The chief of the police passed the convoy that day going west with what remained of the treasury of the late Orange Free State. The headquarters of the Free State force appeared to be Frankfort. The late President is a nomad, without influence and without following. He spends his time wandering from farm to farm. On June 10 the officer who relates these facts nearly induced the commandant in command of the convoy and prisoners to desert his cause and to go over with the whole party and the wagons to General Buller's lines. Unfortunately on the following morning the heart was taken out of him by the arrival of a strong commando of Transvaalers, who were bringing guns from Standerton. As the officer could not induce the other prisoner officers to overpower the weak escort and to break away he determined to make the attempt himself. He therefore bought two horses from one of his guards and, taking one of his conductors as guide, slipped away across the convoy in the direction of Buller. Three roads to escape lay open to him. East to Buller, south to Rundle, or west to Vereeniging. He chose the latter. The journey was not without incident. The first was pathetic. He passed 450 of Spragge's Imperial Yeomanry, incredible as it may seem, guarded by eight armed men. Fifteen miles from Vrede he met a Boer convoy for the front of ten wagons, in the custody of one armed burgher. Having spent the whole of one day in a cave in the bed of the Valsch river, he arrived, without further incident, to tell the story just given, which reflects so little to the credit of British arms in South Africa.

DE WET'S RAIDS ON COMMUNICATIONS.

JUNE 22.

The satisfaction of being in the possession of the enemy's capital was rudely broken on June 6 by the news that Commandant De Wet, our old enemy in the Free State, had captured a convoy and set himself to destroy the communications which the Railway Company R.E. had repaired with such labour. His movements have been so rapid, and so shrouded in mystery, that it is impossible to give more than a brief diary of the events as they succeeded each other. On June 4, as has already been shown, De Wet effected the capture of a convoy in the vicinity of Vredefort Road. This convoy was carrying stores and ammunition to the Highland Brigade then at Heilbron. The Highland Brigade was in an extreme state as regards supplies, and for six days had subsisted upon quarter rations. General Methuen, who had moved out from Kroonstad, was at Lindley. On June 5 De Wet, with a detached party, demolished Roodeval Bridge. On the following day another force of Boers so threatened Vredefort Road that Major Haig, K.O.S.B., who was there with a miscellaneous force of about 1,000 details, was forced to take up a defensive position south of the railway station. There was some sharp rifle fire, but Haig maintained his position, ultimately falling back upon Vredefort Road, when the Boers desisted from their attempt. On June 7 General Methuen arrived at Heilbron from Lindley. De Wet thereupon demolished the line at Vredefort Weg and moved south to join Commandant Nell, who had undertaken a raid against the military post at Rhenoster. This raid had been a complete success. The post was held by a battalion of Derbyshire Militia. Nell surrounded the

position and, to his surprise, was unchallenged by the outposts. He placed his artillery in position and waited for the moon to rise. He then attacked in the moonlight, with the result that the whole post surrendered in the morning. On Friday, June 8, general movements were set on foot to check the trouble on the communications. Lord Kitchener came down from Pretoria and a flying column, consisting of the Shropshire L.I., the South Wales Borderers, two guns of the 74th Battery, and four guns of the 87th Field Battery, marched south from Vereeniging. It is uncertain where De Wet had his headquarters on June 9, but part of his force was watching the Heilbron-Vredefort Road. Methuen, advancing west from Heilbron, was able to engage this force and utterly scatter it, taking 23 prisoners. On the following day the flying column from Vereeniging and Methuen's column concentrated at Vredefort Road. The latter force consisted of 1,400 Mounted Infantry, mostly Imperial Yeomanry, 5th Northumberland Fusiliers, Loyal North Lancashire Fusiliers, Munster Fusiliers, and the Northamptonshire Regiment. They also had the 38th and 39th Batteries R.F.A. and half a battalion 42nd Highlanders. There was a small skirmish between the Mounted Infantry and the Boer rearguard outside Vredefort Road. On the following day Methuen marched south to clear the line. The Vereeniging flying column took the west of the line, the main force the right. The enemy were engaged on both sides of the line at long ranges. They scattered east and west, leaving a laager of empty wagons. The British force halted for the night at Rietvlei. On June 12 news was received that Kroonstad, garrisoned by a single battalion of Argyll and Sutherland Militia, had fallen. Methuen, therefore, continued his march south, but on learning that the news about Kroonstad was false he turned east. On Wednesday there was little news, but on the following day (June 14) the Boers again appeared on the railway. The construction train, under the personal supervision of Lieutenant-Colonel Girouard, had arrived to repair the damage which the Boers had done. The men were working at night when they were suddenly fired into. The rifles of the construction party had, unfortunately, been left in the rear train. In the actual working train there were only nine rifles available. The men turned out pluckily with these and answered the enemy's fire with such good effect that they kept them at bay. By a merciful chance 150 Mounted Infantry, with two guns, were within earshot. They arrived on the scene at 3 45 a.m., and one round from a field piece was sufficient to scare away the attacking Boers. The morning revealed how narrow the escape had been. A dead Boer and patches of blood-stain were found within 20 yards of the construction train, the coaches of which were riddled with bullets. It is also interesting to note that Lord Kitchener and his staff were bivouacked a few hundred yards from the scene of the conflict. The enemy succeeded in carrying away 40 of the construction workers as prisoners. In the morning the Boers were still in the vicinity. The Mounted Infantry, with one gun, pursued, and the enemy, as is their custom when on these raids, scattered to the four winds. During the next three days the relief forces were encamped in the vicinity of Rhenoster, it being reported that De Wet had withdrawn towards Frankfort. There was no further menace to the line north of Kroonstad ; but a small raiding party, presumed to have fallen back from before Rundle, appeared in front of the Zand River. The post at this important bridge was sufficient to repel the enemy, and they retired after having done some temporary damage to the telegraph line. On June 18 Methuen moved from Rhenoster back upon Heilbron. In the meantime all due precautions are being made to prevent a serious recurrence of De Wet's enterprise. Strong posts with artillery have been established all along the line well within support of each other and a military train carrying field and automatic guns passes up and down the line at all hours. Having satisfied himself that all was in order, the chief of the staff returned to Pretoria on June 18. On June 21 a train ran through from Pretoria to Bloemfontein without a break.

The incidents of this fortnight's upheaval on the line are many. At one of the stations a party of officer's servants and details were stranded. They could only muster nine rifles between them, and they had not 15 rounds of ammunition apiece. A party of 15 mounted Boers was seen approaching. The men turned out to repel attack, when the Boers quietly rode in and surrendered as prisoners of war. At Vredefort Road three weeks' mails for the army at the front had been detrained to be forwarded by convoy. These fell into De Wet's hands, and he ruthlessly burnt them after he had extracted all that was of value. The commandant himself apologized to one of his prisoners for this ungracious act. He said it was a mistake, but this did not deter him from opening a parcel containing cigarettes and offering them to his prisoner guests.

28th July 1900.

THE ENGAGEMENT OUTSIDE PRETORIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

PRETORIA, JUNE 7.

There has been no second siege of Pretoria. And, judging from the fact that we are now in possession of the town, I feel that I can safely offer the opinion that the back of the South

African war is broken. As was pointed out in a previous letter, if the Boers had not the cohesion and strength of purpose to make stubborn resistance in the country which lies between Johannesburg and their capital they will never again be able to furnish a front which could in any way alter the issues of the struggle. There may possibly be guerilla warfare for months, but as far as combined military opposition is concerned they are a beaten nation. On the night of June 3 we had information in camp that the enemy intended to defend the hills which cover Pretoria on the south. Botha was reported to have collected an army of about 1,500 men with which to dispute the passage of Six Mile Spruit by the British army. This information made no difference in the dispositions. The advance was continued in the same order as it had been commenced from Johannesburg. Colonel Henry, with the mounted infantry, arrived at the ridges which overlook the spruit at about 7 in the morning. Zwartkop and its attendant ridge was found to be in the occupation of the enemy. The nature of the country here requires some description. Pretoria lies in a hollow, and it is impossible to see the town until you are almost upon it. The hills which surround the basin in which the town is sunk are of such a description that if they were held with resolution a small force would be able to defy an army. Nothing short of siege operations could reduce the place. To the north the country is infinitely more difficult of approach than from the south. In the latter case the hills which naturally protect the town stretch away in a succession of rocky ridges, 1,500 to 2,000 yards apart. Each of these ridges is a stronghold in itself. Between Six Mile Spruit and the last kopje leading into Pretoria are three of these ridges, the most northern of which is protected by two block fortresses. And it was for the possession of these that Lord Roberts's army battled on Whit Monday.

Fort Schanzkop commands all the approaches by the wagon road, while Fort Klapperkop is constructed to hold the railway at its mercy. But the strength of the position does not lie in these earthworks. In view of the heavy ordnance which was with the invading army they but stood out as excellent targets. The enemy themselves appear to have recognized this, for, as far as I could judge, both forts were unoccupied ; they certainly had been dismantled of their guns. The strength of the positions covering the approaches to Pretoria are natural. The country in the vicinity is not unlike that of North Natal, and, as the cavalry found later in the day, it is a country very difficult to conduct aggressive military operations in. The Boers had been careful to burn all the grass in the surrounding hills. The veldt, black and charred, formed a background against which all moving figures stood clearly defined.

The day certainly seemed to open with every advantage pointed to the side of the Boer, and when I first saw that the Zwart's Kop ridge was occupied I feared that the infantry had a heavy day before them. But the heart had gone out of the enemy. Without rhyme or reason they fell back from Zwartkop, and the mounted infantry occupied it without molestation. When it was discovered that the enemy were still holding the town, orders were sent to General Gordon on the right to strain every nerve to place his brigade astride of the Lorenzo Marques communication. An officer's patrol of the 17th Lancers had already started from the 3rd Brigade to work up the Pretoria line, and if unopposed to make its way into the town. But, just as the order arrived to make the detour east, news came in from the patrol that the country in front of it was too strongly held to allow of its further progress. In the meantime, Colonel Henry had pushed on to the second ridge. Here the wagon road passes over a low saddle in full view of the two forts. From the saddle the low ridge to the west becomes a decided kopje. Two thousand yards from the road it suddenly breaks and then reappears in a series of lofty hills and decided spurs. The whole front of the ridge may be a matter of five miles. Directly north of it, and for the most part parallel with it, is a very similar ridge, which, after several eccentricities, ultimately becomes the conical hill upon which Fort Schanzekop is built and one of the natural curtains of the town. A valley varying in breadth from 1,500 to 2,000 yards separates the parallels. Part of this valley is wooded to the west, as well as a considerable portion of the slopes of the northern spur. It appeared that the enemy had left the second ridge much as they had deserted Zwartkop. But just as Colonel Henry's men were breasting the glacis adjacent to the saddle a large calibre shell came skimming over their heads. Another and another followed, while, taking the cue from this hidden battery, dropping Mauser shots were fired from the ridge in front. Then we who had been in Ladysmith looked longingly back for the pillar of dust raised by the bullock teams of the siege guns, hoping that we were destined to see a second siege during the campaign—this time from without the beleaguered walls. But after half a dozen shells had come shrieking over the road we were satisfied that the enemy were not firing with guns in position in the forts. The foreign artillery had doubtless realized how useless such structures as Schanzekop would be against heavy calibre guns, and had cunningly brought their guns into action, masked by the bush-covered rises on our immediate front. The flanking parties of the mounted infantry had worked up to the top of the lower slopes of the

high kopje on the left. They were received with a really heavy fire. So heavy was the fire and so enterprising were the enemy on this front that Colonel Henry received orders to withdraw the main body of his mounted infantry from the wagon road and to take and hold the left end of the ridge until General Tucker's Division relieved him or General Ian Hamilton's Division enveloped the enemy from the left. It was about 11 o'clock when the main body of Colonel Henry's corps again pushed up to the brow of the high hill. The top of the kopje is bevelled ; when the leading section crossed this slope the enemy declared its hand and opened such a heavy fire that the men of the leading sections who had ridden up the slope were forced back again. The opposite crest and the wooded slopes of the next parallel gave the enemy excellent cover, and until the mounted infantry had dismounted and again skirmished up the hill, it was impossible to locate their positions with any accuracy. The Mauser fire was heavy and well sustained but the execution trivial in comparison with the intensity of the fire. But the summit of the left hill furnished excellent cover once the men had dismounted, and they held on to the crest-line grimly while "J" Battery R.H.A., with its weak teams, toiled up the hill to assist them. When the mounted infantry had secured their hold General Tucker's Brigade Division unlimbered upon an underfeature which gave the gunners a field of fire through the break in the ridge. On the right greater developments had taken place, and at this period it quite looked as if the enemy had at last braced themselves to make a stubborn resistance and that we were about to commence a battle. General Pole-Carew's field guns had been brought up under cover of the ridge to the left of the wagon road, and as I arrived the naval guns were just unlimbering. They had been hurried forward with expedition. Up to the present it was impossible to estimate the strength of the opposition. Desultory Mauser fire continued all along the enemy's front. But, just as the naval 4·7in. guns were unlimbering, a well masked 1-pounder Maxim opened upon them. A shell from the first belt wounded Commander De Horsey in the foot. A Yeomanry Colt automatic gun, which was served with great gallantry on this front throughout the day, found the enemy's machine gun, and so far inconvenienced its detachment that the naval guns were able to come into action without much further trouble. This was about midday. The enemy's heavy calibre gun had been silent for some time, but there was much firing on the left where General Tucker's artillery were heavily shelling the right centre of the Boer position. In the meanwhile the infantry had crossed the Zwartkop ridge and in column was steadily advancing across the valley, the Guards Brigade on the right, General Stevenson's on the centre, and General Maxwell's on the left. But as yet there was no sign of the approach of General Hamilton's Division, who by this should have begun to have made itself felt on the enemy's extreme right. The infantry columns of the main advance moved up and halted at the foot of the ridge where our guns were in action, the right of the Guards resting on the wagon road. For two hours there was no further forward movement, and no sign that Hamilton was making way on the enemy's right. The guns continued a steady bombardment of the enemy's position. The forts were fired at, but without drawing a reply. Then the gunners trained their pieces so that the shells might drop, where, from the map, it was conjectured that the railway station and magazine of Pretoria stood. Still the only return fire which they drew was from rifles on their direct front. About half-past 2 the fire on Tucker's front slackened, and General Pole-Carew received orders from the Field Marshal, who was directing the operations from Zwartkop Ridge, to push forward as the enemy seemed to have lost ground on their right.

General Pole-Carew then made his dispositions for the advance of his infantry. It was no simple task that he had before him. The nature of the ground was such that if the enemy stood upon the third ridge an infantry attack could only be attempted at an enormous sacrifice of life. On the second ridge actually on the summit the nature of the ground afforded cover. But the plain below was as flat as the palm of a man's hand. General Pole-Carew determined to advance his left brigade to the crest above the wagon road, while his right brigade—the Guards—moved out into the plain on the right, then to sweep northwards over the undulating rises which lie between Zwartkop and Pretoria. Just as the leading battalion of the Guards—the 1st Coldstream Guards—received their orders and were moving off to the right in extended order a shell shrieked in the air and, bursting, raised a column of red dust, right amongst the ammunition wagons of the Naval Brigade and the head of the baggage which had pushed up rather far. Eight shells came in rapid succession, fired, I believe, from the same masked battery which had opened on the mounted infantry in the morning. They were beautifully ranged, but luckily did but little damage, bursting in soft ground. Matters looked serious for the advancing infantry ; it seemed probable that the enemy had been holding their fire for the final advance. But the naval guns and the 5in. siege guns, which had been brought up to the saddle, commenced rapid fire. Two lovely bursts took place right in the centre of Fort Schanzkop. But most of their energy was directed against the valley in which Pretoria Station lies. The Guards advanced steadily across the open, while Stevenson's Brigade, with the Warwickshire Regiment leading, moved on to the main ridge. Both brigades topped their respective rises about

24th July 1900.

4 10 p.m. As soon as they appeared upon the crest-line the enemy opened fire. But it was not the deadly peal of musketry for which we, who were watching, had waited in trepidation. It was spasmodic : at periods heavy : but it was not the fire of thousands determined to defend their position to the end. The Warwicks, who were the first to show and who came under fire at the comparatively short range of 1,200 yards, had between 20 and 30 casualties. But the leading battalion of the Guards found excellent cover upon the broken summit of the rise and were able to pour into the enemy's position a fire out of all proportion to that with which they were received. The enemy opened for a short period with a small calibre field gun firing black powder. But the fire of this piece was effectually checked by a naval 12-pounder, which came into action behind the extended infantry. It was to be regretted that a field battery had not been detached to the same point as the naval gun, as groups of the enemy could be seen lying out in the open plain, just out of rifle range. As night fell we were in undisputed possession of the whole of the second ridge and every kopje which lay between the wagon road and Fort Schanzekop. The men bivouacked on the ground which they had won. Tucker had occupied his own front practically without casualty, but there had been some losses to the mounted infantry early in the day. In fact, it may be said that the mounted infantry practically secured our left and held it while Tucker's field artillery broke the enemy's right. General Hamilton, who came extremely late, was barely engaged, but his mounted infantry under De Lisle pushed on behind the third ridge and bivouacked for the night almost in Pretoria.

Headquarters and much of the baggage of the main column encamped for the night at Six Miles Spruit. The casualties for the day had been about 70—a wonderfully light list when it is considered that we were practically in possession of Pretoria. Late that night the burgomaster of the town came out under a flag of truce. He came with credentials from Botha to negotiate with Lord Roberts for the surrender of Pretoria. He asked for terms somewhat similar to those which had been allowed to the commandant of the Johannesburg district. But the case was not analogous, and he was told that no terms would be considered. He then offered the unconditional surrender of Pretoria in the morning.

MARCH OF THE COLONIALS TO THE RELIEF OF MAFEKING.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, JUNE 20.

The siege and relief of Mafeking are now ranked amongst the glorious records of the British Army, and the names of its brave defenders and gallant commander are known all over the civilized world, but in the midst of all these enthusiastic rejoicings we have overlooked one of the finest forced marches which has ever been made, and this, too, by troops which have been sent to help the mother country by her colonies. On April 13 C Battery of the Royal Canadian Artillery, under Major Hudon, received orders to proceed to Cape Town and embark for Beira, where they were to form part of the Rhodesian Field Force under General Sir Frederick Carrington. The following morning they left Stellenbosch and did a forced march of 30 miles into Cape Town, and sailed on board the Columbia with their guns the same evening. Arriving at Beira on April 22, they disembarked on the following day, and part of the battery left by train the same evening *en route* for Marandellas, where the General had established his base camp. The remainder of the battery started for the same destination the following morning, accompanied by four officers and 100 non-commissioned officers and men of the Queensland Mounted Infantry, who were detailed as escort to the guns. Despite having to unload the guns and baggage at Bamboo Creek, where the narrow gauge ends, and reload everything on the broad-gauge wagons, the first part of the contingent reached Marandellas on April 26, after a journey in open trucks, on what is certainly one of the worst railways in the world, of 380 miles, the remainder arriving on the following day. General Carrington considered it advisable that, if possible, more artillery should be with Colonel Plumer's column, and made his plans accordingly ; the outcome shows with what precision they were made and how excellently they were carried out by the men entrusted with them. It must be borne in mind that both guns and escort were without horses or mules, so the " Salisbury to Bulawayo " coaches and animals were monopolized by the General's orders, to be exclusively at his disposal until the column was safely through. Two guns left Marandellas on April 30, the remainder following on May 1 and 2, and reached Bulawayo on the 6th, a distance of nearly 300 miles. On arrival there they immediately

entrained and proceeded to Ootsi, where the line was cut, and detraining did a forced march from there to Safeteli, a distance of over 60 miles, and joined Colonel Plumer's column at that place on the 14th. Colonel Plumer moved the same day and met the southern column under Colonel Mahon at Jan Massibis, and relieved the long-besieged Mafeking on May 16, after a march of 33 miles.

In order to appreciate the pluck and perseverance shown by the Canadian artillery and Queenslanders on this occasion, one must consider the obstacles they had to contend with on the line of march. To start with, many of the men arrived at Marandellas without coats, as these had been burnt off their backs by sparks from the engine, which is fed by wood fuel and does not carry a spark protector on the funnel. The rolling-stock is absolutely deficient, and the men sat in open trucks on their ammunition, baggage, &c., exposed to the great heat by day and at night to a biting cold and fever mist, which makes itself felt soon after sundown; add to this the constant danger by fire, which had to be very carefully guarded against on account of the ammunition. At Marandellas, when every available coach and wagon had been procured, it was found that the men would have to sit on top of the ammunition and baggage, so that once more they were forced to undergo the severe trial of having to sit through the long day's jolting in a mule wagon, very much overcrowded, and often unable to move in order to change their positions and relieve their strained and cramped limbs. Yet they did it without a murmur and reached their destination, a distance of nearly 700 miles, which they had completed by train and mule wagon, in eight days. Their journey from Stellenbosch to Mafeking, *via* Cape Town, a distance of 3,130 miles, was accomplished in 33 days, and included, roughly speaking, 1,900 miles by sea, 120 miles marching, 300 miles in mule wagons, and nearly 800 miles by train.

31st July 1900.

THE MORTALITY AMONGST OUR CAVALRY HORSES IN THE WAR.*

(FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JUNE 15.

The mortality among horses has not been in any way owing to neglect or want of care of the horses by the British cavalry soldier. Not one case of neglect was reported, and there was absolutely no foundation for this libel, as regards the cavalry. But let me impress on your readers that the majority of horse soldiers in South Africa were not cavalry soldiers; there were swarms of mounted infantry and irregular horse, a very great many of whom were not accustomed to horses and who undoubtedly did treat their horses without sufficient care, for the most part through ignorance; and it is probably partly from this cause and partly from the excessive mortality that this unjust rumour was started. There were three primary causes for this excessive mortality amongst our horses, and I will put them in order of precedence.

1st. They were systematically starved by the supply department.

2nd. In their weak condition caused by No. 1 they were weighted by impossible burdens, as I tried to show in my last letter.

3rd. There were many killed by the enemy.

The first two causes were avoidable, the third, of course, could not be avoided and is what we must always anticipate on active service. For every horse killed by the enemy I am of opinion that up till about the middle of April at least four or five died from the first two causes. I wrote sufficiently, as I fear your readers will have discovered, about the second cause in my former letter, and I will now devote myself to the supply question.

I speak advisedly when I say the horses were systematically starved; because it was not through convoys being captured by the enemy, nor from any sudden failure in supplies that this happened, but simply because the department concerned had, possibly through inexcusable ignorance of their duties, not made preparations for giving the horses sufficient rations to keep them alive; and this, I consider, has been the great blot in our war, and has cost the nation casualties in men counted by hundreds and horses by the thousand. Officers commanding cavalry and Royal Horse Artillery continually protested that their horses were being starved and could not live on the meagre rations allotted, and the question was then referred to the head of the department responsible; but no improvement manifested itself until nearly all the horses had died and the remainder had become unserviceable, when changes were made in the department responsible, and fresh estimates were asked for. The new broom (and this head of his department has the supreme merit of being always a new broom) thereupon furnished estimates, and although the authorities were prepared for a large increase they considered at first that the new estimate was due to a misapprehension and that double the actual number of horses were being estimated for; but, finally, this estimate, having been proved, was passed; this alone shows the starvation rations that had been

allotted under the old *régime*. Our cavalry horses, though they had plenty of hard work, were not overworked, and had they been properly fed and properly weighted would have come through the march to the relief of Kimberley and thence to Paardeberg in first-rate condition. When the Cavalry Division arrived at Paardeberg it was still, though reduced in numbers, a fine fighting force. We were then told that we should have no hard work there, and that of the horses that were left the majority would pick up and be as good as ever. Let us see what happened. There was practically no grazing there. The horses were starved on 6lb. of oats and 4lb. of hay, and many died. They had only a fair amount of work, but when we left that place, on the morning of the Poplar Grove fight, instead of the division being a fine fighting force, the horses were absolutely done for. The cavalry horses could scarcely raise a trot, and that only for short distances; the Royal Horse Artillery could merely crawl. The condition of my own charger, a good "Waler," was such that, on being obliged to canter half a mile, I found her "dead" under me, hitting her joints through weakness, falling at every stride. And yet I had coddled this horse and, having others, had never ridden her two long days consecutively, nor ever had a heavy weight on her back. And if this was the condition of my own charger that had been saved and cared for, you may imagine how it was with some of the troop horses. This was* purely starvation, and not 5 per cent. of those horses ever recovered from it. What happened? We turned the Boer positions and they bolted, and we had the mortification of seeing the whole force in retreat in the open and no possibility of a pursuit. Many of your readers are, no doubt, hunting men; let them imagine starting in a run on a good scenting day from their favourite covert over an ideal country, but riding a horse that they know to be so unfit that he cannot possibly get over two fields. That is a nightmare in itself. But that only deals with sport; this deals with men's lives. They can then realize the unpleasant feeling of starting on important cavalry operations with "dead" horses. Both Steyn and Kruger were with the enemy at Poplar Grove. The Boer army, with guns, &c., retreated within view of us in the open; with three or four miles start they were as safe from our starved cavalry as an express train would be from a donkey cart. It is my firm belief that a fresh cavalry division, lightly weighted on good horses, would have taught those retreating Boers such a lesson that they never could have been got into the field again. After we had left Paardeberg there were hundreds of sacks of oats and other forage there that had to be burnt because there was not sufficient transport to carry them along; tons of forage being burnt and horses having been starved to death close by—truly an edifying spectacle! And let me remind you what a valuable animal the cavalry horse is. At home he costs £40 to purchase, he is then put through a very thorough course of training, which lasts perhaps a year and a half. I do not mean to say that he is in the riding school for that period, but he has a great deal to learn after he leaves the school, and the average value of the troop horse at home must be at least £60. It is, of course, considerably more in South Africa. The "Waler" horses that our cavalry from India are mounted on cost a great deal more than this and take more trouble and a longer time to train.

Therefore, when we get thousands of horses starved to death in a space of three months and at the same time tons of forage burnt, one wants to get a more satisfactory explanation of the fact than an irresponsible rumour that the cavalry soldier does not treat his horse properly, or that "the peace traditions of the British cavalry" have ruined the cavalry private's grooming capabilities. One of the principal veterinary surgeons said to me, "To give horses in this state extra oats is next door to useless; you might as well give a starving man a beef lozenge or two. What they want is hay in some form to fill their stomachs."

* A previous letter from the same Correspondent appeared on July 25.

6th August 1900.

WITH GENERAL BULLER'S FORCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

VLAKFONTEIN, JULY 7.

After eight months what was formerly the Ladysmith Relief Column and subsequently the Natal Field Force has marched out of the hills into open country. The Boers are cleared from Natal, and the work of General Buller's column *qua* Natal Field Force was accomplished when on July 4 it joined hands with Lord Roberts's forces near Heidelberg. At Almonds Nek the enemy offered their last determined resistance, and the march from there to here was, for those at least who have followed the campaign in Natal, quite striking in its uneventfulness.

On June 13 General Buller completed the turning movement and pitched his camp at Langs Nek. The sappers were immediately set to work to repair Langs Nek tunnel, and very well they did it. The tunnel had been damaged in three places, and large quantities of *débris* had to be cleared away before the lines were relaid. On June 18, at exactly the hour promised, the sappers had completed the work and the first train ran through the tunnel to Volksrust. Mean-

while, however, the force had not been sitting idle. Wakkerstroom, which had formally surrendered to General Lyttelton—still at Coetzees Drift—after Almonds Nek, had now on the arrival of its commando returned to its former allegiance. General Buller promptly sent an expedition that, had it met with any resistance, would have been a punitive one. General Hildyard, with the 11th Brigade, the 3rd Mounted Brigade, and a strong force of heavy artillery, including the Naval Brigade, marched from Volksrust on the 16th, arriving at Wakkerstroom on the 18th. The effect of the expedition was excellent. The farmers of the Wakkerstroom district are said to have been against the war from the beginning, and a large number took this opportunity to surrender their arms, notwithstanding the fact that there was a commando in the hills within a few miles. Captain Fitzgerald, Intelligence Officer to Lord Dundonald, visited this commando under the white flag and found them all, from the Field Cornet downward, heartily sick of the war and only anxious for a pretext to surrender. It is quite probable that had General Hildyard been able to remain a few days longer in the district the whole commando would have laid down its arms. There were other considerations, however, which prevented this. Events on the other side made it important for General Buller to open up the railway to Johannesburg and join hands with Lord Roberts as soon as possible. So on June 19 General Hildyard marched to join General Buller, who had left Langs Nek the day before and was moving on Standerton. The same day the 4th Brigade marched from Langs Nek, joined the 2nd Brigade at Charlestown, and bivouacked that night six miles beyond Volksrust. The Light Brigade's place was taken by General Lyttelton, who moved up to Langs Nek from Coetzees Drift and guards the line from Volsksrust to Newcastle, though some of his battalions are far south of the latter point. The 11th Brigade (General Coke's) was left at Volksrust, and the 10th was left at Paardekop, about 24 miles from Volksrust, where the force arrived on the 21st. It was here that we first entered open country, and it was like seeing the sea after being inland for many months. From Paardekop to Standerton is 30 miles. On the 22nd Lord Dundonald's Brigade marched into Standerton, the infantry stopping about eight miles short of the town. A squadron of the Composite Regiment which was acting as advance guard to the infantry was the first to enter the town under Major Gough, accompanied by Major Henderson, of the Intelligence Department. The rest of the brigade arrived later. As the squadron marched down the hill into the town about 20 Boers were seen to gallop away. There was no resistance. It was found that the centre span of the railway bridge over the Vaal River had been blown up and the goods shed, containing chiefly sleepers, had been burnt. In the station were 18 engines slightly disabled in various ways, most having had their connecting rods taken off, and about 200 trucks and carriages. It was ascertained that the damage had been done by the Hollander railway officials, and they were promptly imprisoned.

The difference of feeling between the Boers of this district and those of the one we had just left was curious to observe. Standerton, the best horse-breeding district in the Transvaal, is, like Wakkerstroom, also considered one of the wealthiest and most enlightened of the pastoral districts, but whereas at Wakkerstroom and Volksrust the farmers had almost all returned to their farms and were only anxious for peace, here it was different. Round Standerton scarcely a farmer was to be found at home ; they were all gone on commando. And in the town itself the Landdrost and most of the citizens were out too. General Hildyard had received 150 rifles in a day at Wakkerstroom, but here they dribbled in in tens and twenties. The reason is hard to find. Possibly a more vigorous Field Cornet, possibly that they have suffered no severe losses to make them sick of the war, but the reason given by the inhabitants that remain is the fear of St. Helena. Certainly this is a very real fear to the Boers. A boy of 16, who lived at Standerton and had escaped being commandeered all through the war by reason of his youth, joined the commando the day before we reached the town simply through fear of being sent to St. Helena. The following proclamation, telegraphed from Pretoria in Dutch and English throughout the Transvaal, perhaps explains his fears. It was taken by Lord Dundonald, to whom I am indebted for this copy, at one of the stations. The English version runs as follows :—

Burghers,—What will it avail you to lay down your arms as Roberts has issued a proclamation that he will not in future let any burgher out under his oath, as he has found out that the burghers shoot him again notwithstanding having taken such an oath ?

He has above all decided to take every man above 12 years prisoner, whether armed or not. When they are taken prisoner they are sent to St. Helena. Children are therefore not safe any more.

We are consequently determined to fight to the last.

Be faithful and conflict in the name of the Lord, because any one deserting his position and running away from commando runs straight to St. Helena.

THE STATE PRESIDENT.

This kind of thing and our inability to protect farmers who have laid down their arms in outlying districts from their own commandos seem the two chief difficulties to a general pacification at present. Throughout this march we have encountered small parties of the enemy wandering about the country, only too ready to descend upon the hapless farmer who has given up his rifle and carry off either him or most of his goods. Yet it is impossible to prevent this happening until the time comes for a great combined movement which shall sweep all those who still continue to fight before it and leave the country behind really pacified.

The column remained at Standerton for six days, during which the 11th Brigade, which had come on from Paardekop, was again sent back there with Bethune's Mounted Infantry to guard the line. General Hildyard's Division and the 2nd Cavalry Brigade (General Brocklehurst's) were now on the lines of communication guarding the railway from Volksrust to a point west of Paardekop. On June 30 a column was sent to open communication with General Hamilton's force now at Heidelberg. It consisted of the Light Brigade, Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, Strathcona's Horse, A Battery R.H.A., 63rd Battery R.F.A., a section of the 86th Howitzer Battery, and two 5in. guns. The force was under the command of General Clery, and Lord Dundonald took command of the two regiments of his own brigade. Strathcona's Horse, a very fine body of men, had joined Lord Dundonald's Brigade the day he returned from Wakkerstroom. They had previously marched through Zululand without coming in contact with the enemy, and were extremely keen for an engagement. During the second day's march they had their opportunity. Two troops scouting on the right flank became engaged by a considerably superior number of Boers. The men, though evidently very new to this kind of warfare and ignorant of mounted infantry methods, fought pluckily and well and succeeded in driving off the Boers before a section of A Battery came to their rescue. They lost a man killed and two missing, including the officer in command of the party, but accounted for four Boers. The Boers, possibly mistaking them for their own men, had at one time come within 30 yards, and one was shot with a revolver. That was the only event of the three days' march to Greylingstad, where the column halted for a day, though every day there was a little sniping at the flank guards. We had now got amongst hills again, and it was reported that the Heidelberg commando, 400 strong, was in laager about eight miles to the west. On July 4 General Clery left the Rifle Brigade, half the 60th Rifles, and both the 5in. guns at Greylingstad, and advanced with the rest of the force to Vlakfontein, about 20 miles from Heidelberg. For about three miles the road and railway run through a defile; on the north side of the defile, beyond a piece of open country a mile and a half wide, lies a big hill, and here Thorneycroft's scouts found the enemy in some strength. One of these scouts came under a heavy fire and had his horse shot. He would probably have been captured but for the pluck of one of the native Basuto scouts in the employ of the Intelligence Department, who galloped up to him with a led horse and enabled him to get away under a hot fire. There was no object in attacking the hill, as we could not have held it, although it threatened the road and railway in the defile, and the column marched to Vlakfontein, about three miles further on. That evening Major Henderson, of the Intelligence Department, rode through to Zuikerbosch Spruit, eight miles further on, where General Hart, who was now in command at Heidelberg with a battalion and a half of infantry, was engaged in mending the railway bridge which had been blown up. He met General Hart and rode back with him to General Clery at Vlakfontein, General Hart returning to Heidelberg that night.

The object of this last march was now attained; the whole of the Natal Field Force is extended along the line, and there it will probably remain, at any rate until the Free State becomes settled. The railway between here and Standerton is not much damaged. Fortunately the Boers had no dynamite, so could not blow up the bridges, and have only overturned considerable lengths of line, which will not take long to repair.

The presence of the Boers on the hill north of the defile between here and Greylingstad is a constant menace to communications.

On the 5th a squadron of Strathcona's Horse returning through the defile got into difficulties, and had to be extricated by Thorneycroft's M.I. and the Chestnut Battery, with a loss of six men taken prisoners. On the 6th General Buller was expected to pass through on his way to Pretoria, and a large convoy was also expected. All the mounted troops, some infantry, and nearly all the guns were sent out early in the morning as a covering force. General Buller arrived in camp about 12 30, just as the convoy was entering the defile five miles away. Unknown to us the Boers had the previous evening received reinforcements in the shape of about 300 men and either two or three guns—a Vickers-Maxim, a high velocity gun, and possibly a larger one also. At any rate, as the head of the convoy entered the defile a shell dropped within a hundred yards of it. This continued for some time, the shells always falling close, but never actually hitting the convoy. Then followed the most inspiriting incident of the day. A section of the Chestnut Battery, under Lieutenant Eden, was ordered to go forward to engage the gun. They galloped about 1,000 yards forward into the open, unlimbered, and opened fire. The Boer gun replied, and a Vickers-Maxim followed suit. Usually in this

war when we enter upon an artillery duel we turn a great many of our guns upon one of the enemy's. This time it was two to two, only the Boers were on a hill and we were in the open below them. It lasted half an hour and we were victorious. The Boer guns were silenced, but the Chestnut Battery had not come out unscathed. A man killed, another wounded, six horses wounded, and an ammunition wagon overturned with its wheel smashed were the casualties, and it is wonderful that they were not more, for the Boer practice was magnificent; but by far the most magnificent thing was the behaviour of our men under it. Meanwhile the convoy had got safely home. Thanks to the Chestnut Battery our object had been absolutely successfully achieved, and a general retirement began. The Boer gun had climbed a thousand yards higher up the hill and opened again from a position of safety, but without doing any damage. Then it was brought down and came round on our right flank at a distance of about 4,000 yards, whence it shelled the two howitzers which had been in action also earlier in the day and were now returning to camp at a walk. The shells fell thick all round the guns amongst the infantry again without doing the least harm, till the gun was driven away for the last time by a section of the 63rd Battery who came into action on the kopjes above the camp. That ended the day. The Boers returned to their hill and we to camp. Our only casualties were those in the horse battery, and we most undoubtedly came off cheaply. It was an artillery action lasting several hours in which the enemy had the superior position, firing with guns that outranged ours at our guns, wagons, and men in the open below them. It was, in fact, again, as at the very beginning of the war, the gun with 5,000 yards range pitted against the gun firing 10,000 yards, for we had with us not a single long-range gun. It must have been by some extraordinary oversight that this force of nearly 6,000 men left Standerton to guard 50 miles of railway and took with them only two guns that could range against the Boer guns, leaving behind them four 4·7's and a large number of 12-pounders lying idle at Standerton. This force is now split in four, and two of those detached forces are only half battalions (of the 60th Rifles) with no guns at all. Here, where the main force of between three and four thousand men with only field guns lies, we cannot keep open the eight miles that lie between here and Greylingstad without fighting an action; we cannot, in short, do what two half battalions of infantry each intrenched on a commanding kopje with a big gun, the one here the other at Greylingstad, could probably do without stirring from their intrenchments. On the lines of communication it is surely the best policy to keep your enemy at a safe distance from the line you are guarding without committing yourself to an action in doing it. The best way to do that is with guns that outrange his. Probably a series of half battalions, each intrenched with a naval gun on a commanding hill (and of the latter there is almost a superfluity) along the line, with, if necessary, a mobile brigade of mounted infantry, or infantry travelling by train, that could reinforce any threatened point would, against an enemy like the Boer, whose genius does not lie in attack and who, unless he is in a trench, has a pious horror of shells, guard our lines of communication better than the present system of large forces at long intervals, and would also economize men.

7th Aug.t 1900

THE CAPITAL OF THE TRANSVAAL.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JULY 18.

With the capture of Johannesburg and Pretoria the war has, to a great extent, lost its military interest, and questions of an administrative character are beginning to come into greater prominence. Not the least important of these is the question as to where the seat of government of the Transvaal colony is to be fixed in the future. For the immediate present, as long as military operations are still in progress and as long as the country remains under direct military rule, the capital of the existing provisional administration is situated in Lord Roberts's headquarters wherever they may happen to be. But this state of affairs cannot be protracted indefinitely, and it can only be a matter of another two or three months before a regular civil administration steps in to undertake the task of paving the way during the next few years to the grant of free constitutional self-government to the inhabitants of the Transvaal. And this civil administration must have a definite centre. It has recently been suggested that this centre of government should be fixed in Johannesburg instead of in Pretoria, and the suggestion has been backed by a weighty and moderate letter to *The Times* appearing over the signature of "Africanus" in your issue of June 26. It is possible that there may be an inclination at first sight to scout the suggestion of the proposed change off-hand as a capitalist move, an endeavour to bring the Government of the new colony completely under the control of the leading financial houses of the Rand. A perusal of "Africanus's" letter will show that, so far from arguing the case for Johannesburg from the capitalists' point of view, he advocates the transfer on the very ground that the Government will be less under

the control of the big financiers and their agents if it lives in constant touch with the real public opinion of the population which depends on the great gold-mining industry. The case for Johannesburg is a strong one which cannot be dismissed off-hand, but requires careful examination and balancing of arguments before it can be either accepted or rejected. Stated briefly, the argument for removing the capital of the Transvaal to Johannesburg is as follows. A complete change from the old order of things will have to come to pass. The traditions of reckless national ambition, of intrigue, of administrative corruption which marked the old Pretoria *régime* will have to be broken with, and to do this thoroughly the seat of government ought to be removed from the politically and administratively tainted atmosphere of Pretoria to a more bracing air and within the influence of a healthier and more vigilant public opinion. The more convincingly the change from the old *régime* to the new is brought home to the Boers the more quickly and surely will they settle down. Johannesburg, an almost purely English town, will exercise a greater assimilative influence on the country if the latter is obliged to resort to it as the capital than Pretoria, which will always be largely hybrid. Pretoria is an artificial capital which, but for the attraction of the official connexion, would rapidly decline into a small village. The experience of the United States is certainly not in favour of the divorce of the seat of Government from the real metropolitan city, a separation which encourages the whole class of professional politicians, lobbyists, and go-betweens, and directly favours the interests of the very class of capitalists whose political influence in the Transvaal it may be thought necessary to keep within proper limits. The real active elements of the community who understand its needs and wishes, the professional and business men, cannot afford the loss of time or money involved in travelling to another town even if it be only 40 miles away. Johannesburg is the natural railway centre and under British rule will become the railway centre—for there is no likelihood of the new Government endeavouring to hamper the industrial development of the country with a view to a centralization of all power at Pretoria—and will then be more conveniently accessible from all parts of the country than Pretoria. Lastly, Pretoria lies in a hollow and is very hot and relaxing in summer, while Johannesburg, nearly 6,000ft. above the sea, has a climate which has few equals anywhere in the world.

These are serious arguments. From the point of view of self-government especially they are very strong, and if the question were not complicated by a political situation of exceptional difficulty, and the choice lay merely between the busy city on the hill and the little garden community in the hollow, there could be no doubt that the decision should be in favour of the former. On general grounds, in fact, the argument in favour of Johannesburg is most convincing. But when we come to the actual facts of the present situation the disadvantages of any change, at any rate for the immediate present and for the period of Crown colony government, are so patent that it is in the highest degree unlikely that Sir A. Milner will for a moment contemplate taking any such step as the removal of the central administration of the Transvaal Government from Pretoria to Johannesburg.

Before proceeding to the positive arguments in favour of the retention of Pretoria a short criticism of the arguments advanced for Johannesburg will not be out of place. It may be argued, not unfairly, that the complete break with the old traditions took place when the Union Jack was hoisted over the Raadzaal at Pretoria. The "tainted atmosphere" of Pretoria was not so much a local malarious exhalation as a political condition brought about by the rule of a corrupt and ambitious political clique. Sir Alfred Milner and other British officials appointed to control the administration of the Transvaal are not going to accept bribes or to intrigue against British supremacy in Pretoria any more than in Johannesburg. With regard to the argument that Johannesburg as the capital will more quickly assimilate and appease the Boers, the question may be asked whether the assimilation is not more likely to take place in a capital containing a Dutch as well as an English element than in a purely English industrial centre, and whether it is not possible that the establishment of the new Government in Johannesburg may not accentuate and prolong the cleavage between it and the Dutch section of the population. Even under self-government elected representatives cannot be forced to come to the capital if they refuse to recognize its authority, as Austrian statesmen found to their cost when they tried to make Vienna the Parliamentary capital of the whole Dual Empire. On the question of capitalism it may be said that with an honest Government the persuasion of daily intercourse with the great financiers is more likely to have its effect than the negotiations of go-betweens. It is not suggested that the officials of the new *régime* will be corruptible, but nobody can deny that they are human and liable to be influenced by their environment. As far, at any rate, as the period of Crown colony government is concerned the capitalist is not likely to have a greater influence at Pretoria than at Johannesburg.

But there are stronger arguments for the retention of Pretoria than these merely negative criticisms. In the first place, Pretoria possesses the finest public buildings in South Africa. The Transvaal Government did not spare the money raised from the Uitlanders in beautifying its capital. The Raadzaal, the Law Courts, the barracks can bear comparison with many of the

finest buildings in European countries. To replace them would cost, perhaps, £1,500,000, which would have to be added to the indebtedness of the new Government and for which the Uitlanders would have to pay. This sum may be considered trifling, but the revenue of the Transvaal, considerable though it is, is in reality only a small one and every penny of it that can be devoted to the development and settlement of the country will be wanted. The trifle of £1,500,000 would be far more usefully expended in works of irrigation or colonization than in duplicating existing public buildings. Again, Pretoria as the seat of government will become an English town. It is more than half English already, and the addition of a considerable new English element, combined with the subtraction of a considerable Hollander element which is going, or will soon go, back to Europe, will make it still more English. And when the period of self-government comes it will be desirable that the English majority should be diffused as much as possible over the whole country. Even if the population of the Rand was more than double that of the rest of the Transvaal put together it would always be an anomaly and a grievance that a small district 40 miles long and ten miles wide should govern a country as large as France. By making Pretoria the centre of the new government the traditions of the old government will, as it were, be swamped. Whereas, if Pretoria is left alone, it will remain an opposition capital for Dutch nationalist sentiment over the whole of South Africa, with its magnificent public buildings standing empty and with its deserted streets. It will be inhabited by an opposition composed of clever, educated men, who might otherwise have been absorbed or assimilated by the new government, but who will then remain left to themselves, embittered by the inevitable depreciation of the value of their property, to conspire and agitate for the restoration of the old *régime* which it will be no difficult task for them to idealize. It is this educated Afrikander section which it will be our special task to win over and not to drive into irreconcilable hostility.

There is a still stronger argument for the retention of Pretoria as the capital, at any rate, for the next year or two. The important task of government for the immediate future will be the task of pacifying the country, keeping it in order, and preventing the possibility of insurrection. Our rule will have to be firm, very firm, on all that is essential, but, in other respects, as conciliatory as possible. Above all, it will be the task of the administration to keep its finger ever on the pulse of the Boer population. It will be impossible to fulfil that duty properly at Johannesburg. The next two years will see a tremendous revival of industrial activity on the Rand which will probably far exceed anything that has ever occurred there before. The inevitable tendency of an administration placed in the midst of such a centre of activity and progress will be to devote its attention entirely to Johannesburg and to neglect and forget the outlying districts. Moreover, it will tend far too much to follow the advice of the Uitlanders with regard to the treatment of the Boers, and thus to commit blunders of the most serious character. The Uitlanders are not unnaturally prejudiced against the Boers by their experiences in the past and by their sufferings during the war, they have had no experience of administration, and it may also be said, not altogether unfairly, that they really know very little about the Boers, their only experience having been with the Government officials of Pretoria. There will be a great danger, if Johannesburg is made the administrative centre, of the Boers being treated unsympathetically and harshly, and at the same time not sufficiently watched—in other words, of repeating the errors of our administration under the first annexation.

But, allowing that Pretoria remains the seat of Government, every precaution should be taken that no consequences should follow from this retention which could in any way retard the development and progress of the great industrial centre whose revenues really support the whole country, or could lead to any sense of estrangement between the British Administration and the British community of the Rand. Though the Transvaal will be governed as a Crown colony, it can never be a Crown colony in the sense that Ceylon or Barbados is a Crown colony. The Government will have to take the British population into its confidence and keep in touch with them if it wants to rule them with any success. It is quite possible, nay, probable, that the representative of the Crown in the Transvaal Colony, instead of shutting himself up in Pretoria like President Kruger, will think it advisable to spend part of the year regularly in the industrial metropolis. Johannesburg is admirably suited for a summer residence, and a very small fraction of the sum required for erecting new Government buildings at Pretoria would suffice to improve railway communication between the two cities so as to bring the administrative capital into such close contact with the business capital that an annual visit of the Governor to Johannesburg during the hot season would not involve the wholesale migration of the departmental staffs which dislocates the public service in India during the Simla season. Johannesburg, moreover, seems geographically destined to become the centre of the railway system in that part of South Africa, and it would be for the Director of Railways to decide when and to what extent the headquarters of his administration should be transferred thither. Nor can the expediency of removing the headquarters of the Mining Commission to the capital of the Rand be disputed any more than the legitimate claim of Johannesburg to have a Court

of three Judges which would dispose of all ordinary law suits, leaving only cases of the most important and complicated character to be sent on to the higher Courts at Pretoria. Possibly it might ultimately be found convenient to remove the Deeds Registry to Johannesburg. These changes would satisfy the most pressing needs of the Johannesburgers, and might easily be effected without detriment to the *status* of Pretoria as the administrative centre of Government. With a good railway and telephone service between two cities only 42 miles distant their interests could unquestionably be fused with a *minimum* of racial or political friction, and I have little doubt that the solution of the problem will be found in some such compromise as I have ventured to outline. The best public opinion in British colonial circles and many of the leading Uitlanders themselves are strongly in favour of a compromise, and the moderate Boers would certainly welcome it as an earnest of the conciliatory spirit in which the British authorities intend to carry out the task of reconstruction in the conquered territories. No definite decision has yet been arrived at, I understand, in responsible quarters, nor can any decision very well be arrived at until the High Commissioner has had an opportunity of studying the question on the spot. But, unless much more cogent arguments can be brought forward than any of the out-and-out Johannesburgers have yet produced, it is hardly likely that so prudent a statesman as Sir Alfred Milner. and one who has so warmly at heart the real pacification of South Africa, will recommend a radical change, which, if it is to come at all, should come only after the need for it has shown itself beyond all possibility of doubt as the fruit of actual experience when the time for restoring self-government to the whole community approaches.

13th Aug. 1900.

THE OPENING OF THE CAPE PARLIAMENT.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, JULY, 25.

The Session of the Colonial Parliament was formally opened on July 20 by Sir A. Milner. The ceremony is at all times an imposing and picturesque one, and gained no little in interest by the peculiar circumstances of the time which will make the session of 1900 the most important in the whole Parliamentary history of Cape Colony. The chamber of the Executive Council was filled to overflowing with the representatives of the Consular corps, of the Imperial forces—for the first time attending such a function in khaki—the members of both Houses of Parliament, and visitors of both sexes. Conspicuous by their absence were the three members of the late Ministry whose irreconcilable and unreasonable attitude forced Mr. Schreiner to resign—viz., Messrs. Sauer, Merriman, and Te Water. There was breathless silence as Sir A. Milner read out clearly and with emphasis the speech prepared for him by his new Ministers. The Governor's speech, as was to be expected, was devoted almost entirely to the war and to the special problems created by it. After a reference to the unprovoked invasion of the colony and the widespread rebellion consequent upon it, the speech referred to the patriotic efforts of the loyal population of Cape Colony, of whom upwards of 24,000 men have taken the field, a force considerably exceeding the total sent by all other colonies in the Empire, including Natal. Special praise was given to "that true-hearted colonist" General Brabant and to the colonial division which, under his direction, had "rendered inestimable service to the Empire and to the cause of freedom," and to the garrisons of Kimberley and Mafeking. The conduct of the Civil Service of the colony, more especially of the railway and telegraph departments, was singled out for commendation, as was also the steadfast loyalty of the native tribes under very severe temptation to lawlessness and rebellion. The speech not unjustly claimed this loyalty of the natives as strong testimony to the capacity, good temper, and moderation of the magistrates administering the native territories. The proposed legislation for the punishment of rebellion and the compensation for damage done to the property of loyalists, and the indemnification of the military for actions done in good faith under martial law was next set forth. The details of it, the judicial commission for the trial of prominent offenders, and the *quasi*-judicial commission for the trial and disfranchisement for five years of the rank and file of rebels, are sufficiently well known to readers of *The Times*. The remaining paragraphs of the speech dwelt upon the necessity of strict economy in the expenditure for the coming year and the inadvisability of legislation of a general character for the Session, the only Bills indicated being certain necessary Bills for railway construction and a Bill authorizing the necessary expenditure for a census of the colony. The speech concluded with an expression of hope that the deliberations of the Legislature would be "characterized by wisdom and moderation, so that when the present troubles have passed away you may all be prepared for the great developments which assuredly await a united South Africa under the beneficent sway of the sceptre of the Queen."

After the speech the members of the House of Assembly flocked back to their chamber and the

formal business of the Session began. Many expected that the slightest occasion might provoke a display of the strong feeling prevailing among members on both sides. There are few members on either side in the House that have not lost relatives or friends in the course of the war, and the bitterness of the loyalists against the men whom they believe to have fostered and encouraged the rebellion which has devastated the whole north of the colony and cost the lives of many loyal colonists is as intelligible as the resentment of the Afrikanders, who see their national ideal shattered. But not the slightest trace of the emotions which agitated the House was allowed to manifest itself openly. The Speaker read out the roll-call of the House, passing hurriedly over the names of honourable members who had taken part in the rebellion and are now in gaol or have escaped across the borders of the colony. Not a whisper disturbed the dignity of the House. Then followed the introduction of the new member for Kimberley, Dr. Jameson. Among the spectators in the gallery were prominent members of the Johannesburg Reform Committee, to whom the sight of the little doctor hurriedly walking up the House to shake the Speaker's hand must have brought strange reminiscences. Here again might have been an occasion for a display of feeling, but not a sound was uttered. The House remained silent and impassive as the new member hurried back to his seat. Then followed notices of motions, one for the publication of the minutes relating to the question of the punishment of rebels, which Mr. Schreiner moved should be translated into Dutch, so that his former supporters should know clearly the causes that led to the break up of the late Ministry. Mr. Schreiner, it may be added, now sits on the cross benches at the end of the Opposition seats, and with him Mr. Solomon and their following, Messrs. Sonnenberg, D. C. de Waal, Wessels, Searle—a small band, but quite sufficient to secure for the Government a majority of eight in the House. Besides these Mr. Schreiner may perhaps be supported by some other members of the Afrikander party. It is an open secret that no small section of them are really at one with their former leader and distrust their new guides, but dare not resist the pressure of the party organization which has fallen into the hands of the extremists. Such, for instance, are Messrs. Weeber and Oosthuizen, who at Beaufort West a few days ago defended Mr. Schreiner's policy, but after protracted "heckling" from their constituents, led by Mr. Mahon, the editor of *Our Land*, who had travelled up 300 miles by train for the purpose, somewhat weakly promised that they would vote with the Afrikander party. The only notice that really excited interest was Mr. Merriman's notice to move that "the continuance of martial law after the suppression of rebellion and the punishment and prosecution of persons under the forms of so-called martial law, after the termination of armed resistance and the reopening of civil Courts in the disaffected districts, is contrary to the inherent rights of British subjects in violation of all the principles laid down for guidance in such cases, and that it is expedient that the proclamations declaring martial law within this colony should be rejected forthwith."

It was a curious motion in its form; a demand that the House should by a resolution interfere in a purely executive matter without even instituting an inquiry into the working of martial law. It is not easy to discover what prompted the Opposition to take up such a line, unless it was the hope that so vaguely-worded and general a resolution might catch the support of some of the waverers of Mr. Schreiner's following and definitely fix them down on the side of the present Opposition leaders. The debate only began yesterday, July 24, but as far as it has gone it has undoubtedly not done much either to strengthen the hands of the Opposition or to improve Mr. Merriman's chances of the still vacant leadership of the party.

16th Aug. 1900.

THE OCCUPATION OF BETHLEHEM.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

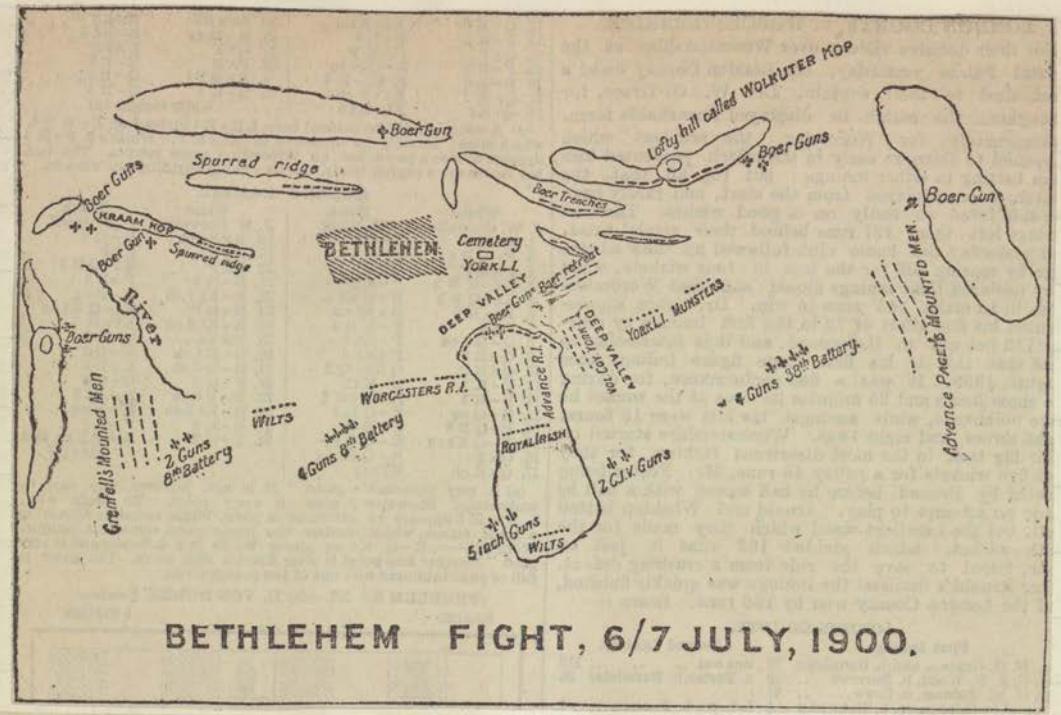
WITH CLEMENTS'S COLUMN, BETHLEHEM.
JULY 8.

His right flank cleared by the operation on the 4th inst., and General Paget having also swept away all opposing parties of the enemy from his front, a move nearer Bethlehem was made on the morning of the 5th by General Clements. General Paget being on the more direct road arrived at a point about four miles from Bethlehem first where he vigorously engaged several obnoxious Boer guns. The Boers, however, had the last word as usual and General Paget having occupied the neighbouring heights returned to camp. General Clements fixed his camp about a mile behind that of Paget. Early on the 6th a long range gun, probably one of their Creuzots, played into General Paget's camp without doing much harm. General Clements took the command of the joint forces and instructed General Paget to send his mounted men out on the right to ascertain the enemy's position on that flank and, if possible, to turn it, his infantry also were despatched to the right, while the troops of

General Clements were disposed in the centre and on the left. Colonel Grenfell, with about 800 mounted men, made a very wide movement to the left but speedily found that the enemy was most advantageously posted at a great distance on the left with a Creuzot and several other guns in position. General Paget's mounted men made a similar discovery later on on the right and several attempts during the course of the day to outflank the enemy were frustrated on both flanks. The extent of country held by the enemy showed great strength and the movements on the centre and left with infantry, necessarily slow, were perhaps, too long delayed to bring matters to a definite issue the same day. The enemy was found on every spur and hill for from six to eight miles on both right and left of the town while the hills behind were also strongly occupied and, in addition, on a lofty ridge in front of the town two guns were discernible. This latter position, a very strong one, was evidently the key of the situation and its occupants were enabled to annoy and harass the infantry advancing on both sides. From time to time there were heard at various points exchanges of rifle fire of some volume, but, broadly speaking, for the main part the first day's fighting was an artillery duel of great interest. At intervals could be seen our mounted men advancing here and there, in most cases followed by a retirement as a fresh gun opened on them. The field guns changed their positions from time to time, but as a general rule were in the vicinity of the spots indicated in the accompanying sketch, while the big guns from the end of the ridge dispensed their favours on the Boer guns according to the necessities of the moment. Urgent messages would arrive addressed "C.O. big guns" complaining of the harassing attentions of a particular Boer gun and begging relief. Lending a willing ear, the complaisant C.O. would have the cumbersome guns turned in the desired direction with, as a general rule, the desired effect, temporarily at least. Several of the Boer guns were changed a dozen times at least during the day to avoid the lyddite guns, but the new localities were generally very speedily found. On the top of Wolhuter Kop could be seen groups of spectators, whom we imagined to be the Boer leaders, and an entreaty to the all-powerful "C.O. big guns" to place a shell in that neighbourhood was gratified with a magnificent shot right on the summit 7,000 yards off which caused that place of vantage for sight-seers to be nearly deserted for the remainder of the afternoon. In this wise the day wore away without substantial result, but General Clements was determined to lose no time in the morning, and accordingly the infantry was ordered to sleep on their positions, while strong pickets of the mounted men were also left out. While the two guns and their ammunition wagon with Colonel Grenfell were being slightly retired in the darkness an incident occurred, fortunately not attended with such serious consequences as at one moment seemed probable. The two guns were got along the river (probably the end of Liebenberg's Vlei) bank safely, but the ammunition wagon, on which were two men, coming too near the edge, turned topsyturvy into the water, carrying with it the men and dragging down the horses as well. The men escaped by a miracle but three of the horses were drowned and the wagon could not be got out.

At dawn on the 7th, however, the wagon was recovered, but Colonel Grenfell's men and supply wagons were handsomely shelled by the guns on their left with, fortunately, only a few casualties. Meantime our guns in front busily attacked those of the enemy, and for an hour and a half gun fire was maintained without intermission. To the Royal Irish was entrusted the pride of place, and General Clements by no means tied the hands of their gallant colonel. His instructions were to storm the ridge if he should think the opportunity favourable, and, extended in three widely spread lines, H Company in front, the attempt was made. Without hesitation or stop for a moment the brave fellows responded. Received with a shower of fire, to which they barely paused to reply, on they went, down a long slight depression on the ridge and up the swelling slope, here and there men dropping but never stopping their comrades. The front company had the best fortune and escaped with only about eight casualties, but the second and third lines suffered more severely, about 40 wounded, showing that the Boers can still on occasion shoot straight. On the charge being perceived the enemy at once began removing their two guns, but the reverse slope for once was favourably for us a steep rocky descent. With ropes, one gun was safely manhandled down the cliff, but the second overturned, and the precipitation of the Boer retreat was such that they bolted, leaving the gun with a broken wheel. Finally, the gallant Irish reached the edge of the hill to find their prey escaped them and in flight 200 yards off. They gave them a few volleys, dropping a couple before the fleeing enemy reached the shelter of the next spur. Then three cheers followed by three times three when the gun was found 50 yards below. That *rara avis*, a dead Boer, unseen hitherto by many of the officers and men, was found in one of the trenches on the right. The amount of ammunition wasted by the Boers was illustrated by the hundreds of cartridge cases in every trench. They were of all sorts, Mausers, Lee-Metfords, Martinis, Steiers, No. 3 Express, and the old-fashioned paper cartridge for the Westley Richards falling block had also been used in quantity, judging by the the number of cartridge covers about.

It was speedily evident that the fight was practically over. On all hands were to be seen bodies of the enemy on the run. The fight dragged on for several hours, but Mr. C. De Wet, who had promised proudly to defend Bethle-



BETHLEHEM FIGHT, 6/7 JULY, 1900.

hem for weeks, was fain to order a speedy retreat. Two guns were brought on the conquered ridge and several more on the right, and they shelled Wolhuter Kop while the Yorkshire L.I. took the position. The Yorkshire L.I. Vol. Co. had been in a valley on the right of the Royal Irish and advanced simultaneously with them, and, moving round the corner of the ridge, took a prisoner and captured a quantity of stores. Advancing with them was a small number of Royal Irish, who had extended too far to the right, and, curiously enough, while the Yorkshire Vol. Co. had no casualty there, four of the Irishmen were hit. This company continued to advance towards the town and in front of the ridge, but, after having a man hit from a house on the outskirts of the town, were retired to the cemetery walls till the general advance, including the encircling of the town, occurred.

A quantity of gun ammunition manufactured in Johannesburg was captured with the gun, which proved to be one of the 77th Battery taken at Stormberg. It has been handed over to Colonel Grenfell for use with the advance guard, and the Boers will enjoy the probably unique experience so far in the war of having their own ammunition fired at them.

I followed the line of retreat of the Boer guns down the ridge, and certainly it was a most enterprising route. I found it in places well over 45deg., with frequent perpendicular drops of several feet from boulders. A very long rope was attached to the recaptured 15-pounder, but even granted a large number of men to safeguard the descent it appeared to us all a wonderful feat to have, in the heat of a hurried retirement, managed to get one of two guns away. In the course of my walk along the track of the gun I found evidence, if indeed evidence were required, that at any rate every Boer is not the Spartan some of his admirers would have us believe. A bottle of champagne in a horse-rug dropped by the way showed that the luxuries of life are not beneath his attention. After a short visit to the Yorkshires at the cemetery I went on into the town, the first by over an hour in Bethlehem. I was at once taken to the Landdrost, who treated me very civilly and was full of information. Two English parsons, residents, shortly after arrived with the bulk of the women and children from the refuge outside, where they had gone for safety during the fight. I was informed that at a council of war held on the 5th inst. the decision to continue the war was only carried by two votes after Mr. Steyn and Mr. Christian De Wet had made two burning patriotic speeches about fighting to the death, &c. The German ambulance shortly afterwards came in with a number of wounded, and a crackle of fire from snipers on the east of the town, evidently directed on the advancing infantry there, showed the enemy still hovering in the outskirts

of the town. The returning inhabitants speedily flocked to the Landdrost with stories of the devastation and looting wrought by the Boers during their absence.

Among the prisoners liberated on the arrival of General Clements was Van der Horen, nominated assistant magistrate by Captain Goddard at Wepener. He had had a very bad time—sentenced to death, taken from place to place, the sentence hanging over his head the while, his relief may be easily understood on the Boer retreat.

The credit of General Clements's victory is undoubtedly due to the excellence of his dispositions, magnificent service of guns, and the bravery of the Royal Irish. The mounted men, who had the chief fighting along the line of advance from Senekal and to whom and Colonel Grenfell in particular great credit is due, had little influence on the actual fighting at Bethlehem. They served, however, the useful purpose of so threatening the flanks of the Boers as to keep them extended over a length of position too wide for their numbers, and in this sense their services were invaluable. Without, however, in the slightest sense endeavouring to minimize his victory, General Clements undoubtedly had to deal with an enemy very different in courage and determination from the Boer of the earlier part of the campaign. Easily disheartened, lacking in enterprise, an appearance of resolution in their antagonist was sufficient to shake them, and position after position which a few determined men might have held against a host was surrendered after the weakest resistance by the Boers, whom Messrs. Steyn and De Wet have vainly tried to galvanize into something like their former selves.

21st Aug.t 1900.

SKIRMISHES ON BULLER'S LINE OF ADVANCE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

VAAL STATION, JULY 16.

The method first adopted for securing our communications did not prove a success. The enemy had collected in considerable strength in two laagers—one to the north of Greylingstad, the other 15 or 20 miles to the north-east of it. The former force occupied the attention of our two forces at Vlakfontein and Greylingstad, the other had the long stretch of railway between Greylingstad and Standerton, undefended save for half a battalion of the 60th Rifles at Vaal Station without guns, at its mercy. Consequently, the line was cut for the first time on the 7th. On the night of July 8 the railway was again cut and a bridge 15 miles from Greylingstad blown up. By a strange irony General Buller, who had some days previously wired that communication was complete to Johannesburg, and was now on his return from Pretoria, had to wait 24 hours at Greylingstad before he could get through. A construction train sent out from Standerton was fired on and forced to retire, and the Devon Regiment and a squadron of the South African Light Horse had to be sent out from Standerton, but it was now obvious that the force thus disposed could not successfully guard the line. On the 11th General Clery was recalled to Greylingstad, and the next day he formed a flying column and marched northward. The column consisted of two and a half battalions of the Light Brigade (the Rifle Brigade remaining at Greylingstad with a 5in. gun and half the 60th being still at Vaal Station), 500 of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry and Strathcona's Horse, two sections of the Chestnut Battery, the 63rd Battery, R.F.A., two howitzers, and one 5in. gun.

It could never have been hoped that a column so constituted could administer a severe blow to the enemy, the paucity of mounted troops and long-range guns in its composition making this impossible. It was probably sent merely to divert the enemy's attention from the railway, and in this, as long as it was out, it succeeded. The first day's march was to Vidpoort, six miles north of Greylingstad. The enemy were found in small numbers on some ridges beyond, and were driven in a running skirmish, in which the horse battery and the Colt gun battery took part, about six miles to the north-eastward, over ground which, though by no means mountainous, was considerably more hilly than most of this great tableland and was covered with rocky ridges, which gave excellent cover to the enemy. The column had halted at Vidpoort, and the mounted infantry, who were too weak to act independently, returned to camp. Next day the enemy were found in much greater force holding the same ridges that they had been driven off the day before. Strathcona's Horse became engaged on a long ridge about two miles from camp. On the right the enemy had brought up a high velocity gun and a Maxim-Vickers, and speedily drove in the advanced squadrons. On the left they began to press Strathcona's, and would probably have driven them off the hill, but two Colt guns were brought up, and under a heavy fire at a range of about 800 yards drove back the advancing Boers. The way in which these guns were handled and their practice were both admirable. Their work was completed by the Chestnut Battery, and the Boers retreated just as the infantry came up. Lord Dundonald followed them up and engaged them again four miles to the eastward. The Chestnut Battery, the Colt guns, and Strathcona's Maxim-Vickers opened fire at a range of 1,700 yards and drove them from their position, though at that short range two of the gunners were wounded by rifle fire. The Boers had four

guns in position further behind and opened fire on the ridge as soon as their men retired, but as it was late in the afternoon we did not again follow up, and the force returned to camp. After their first retirement the Boers brought their four guns round into the open on our flank at a distance of between 5,000 and 6,000 yards. The 63rd Battery was using shrapnel with the new fuse, which enables them to burst it up to 5,900 yards. They promptly opened on the Boer guns and burst a shell almost on the top of one of them. After that the Boer guns only fired a couple of shells and then retired. It was one of the few occasions when the Boer field guns have been silenced by our own. The next day was more or less a repetition of the previous one. The Boers were again in considerable force on the ridges from which they had been driven the day before, and held a position far too large for the mounted infantry to attempt to attack, though behind it we could see through the smoke of the grass fires a Boer convoy of 16 wagons moving rapidly away. The mounted infantry had to remain inactive waiting for the infantry; and by the time the head of the column had arrived, both Boers and convoy had disappeared through the smoke. Next day the column turned southward and returned to the railway near Vaal Station.

This kind of fighting is eminently unsatisfactory. It had certainly achieved its object in diverting the enemy's attention from the railway, but it was the kind of fighting which if anything encourages the Boers to go on with the war. Only the mounted infantry were ever engaged—that is to say, an available dismounted force of 375 men. Against this the Boers had a force varying between 200 and 1,000 and always in position. It was the kind of fighting which the Boer likes best and which he practises to perfection. They lay hid till the favourable moment came and then fired till they became too hotly pressed or till the artillery opened on them, when they always made a safe retreat. Good as our mounted infantry has become, after eight months' fighting, it cannot under these conditions be expected to cope very successfully with a very much larger force of Boers. They were constantly falling into little traps—once they rode over a ridge, and were met by a close range volley; another time they occupied a kopje and received a string of Maxim-Vickers shells. These little things, though they do not discourage our men, encourage the enemy immensely. One of them confided to a wounded trooper of Strathcona's Horse who fell into the hands of the Boers and was afterwards brought in by our ambulance, that he had thoroughly enjoyed the last three days' fighting. Certain it is that the Boers grew bolder each day, until on the third day a climax was reached when three or four of them stalked a kopje which some four or five hundred of our men were occupying, and at a range of a little over 300 yards fired several deliberate shots at a group of officers who were viewing the situation from the top, and did not stop firing until the officers had disappeared from view and three Colt guns and two Maxims had opened fire. Another test of the moral effects of the expedition is the number of surrenders we have had. Until the day we started from Greylingstad there have invariably been each day a certain number of Boers, not very many, who have come in and surrendered their rifles. Since that day there has not been a single one.

These three days of fruitless skirmishing have at any rate taught us one thing, and that is the necessity of mounted troops. To force a fight at this stage of the war the Boers must not merely be engaged; they must be enclosed. He has learnt too great a respect for our infantry ever to come to hand grips with them again, so long as there is an alternative. A strong force of cavalry on our flanks, ready to swing round when our centre comes in touch with the enemy, will henceforward be an indispensable part of each fighting force; and the day has come when the two cavalry brigades who are at present patrolling the mountains of Natal might be made of the very greatest use to an army which has hitherto done without them.

23rd Aug.t 1900.

THE CAPE PARLIAMENT.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, Aug. 1.

The debate on Mr. Merriman's resolution demanding the immediate repeal of martial law in all districts of the colony has now lasted more than a week and may possibly still continue for some time. But from to-day onwards, when the second reading of Mr. Innes's comprehensive Bill for the indemnification of acts done under martial law, for the punishment of rebels, and the compensation of loyalists will take precedence on Government days, the martial law debate will be relegated to a position of less interest. Up to the present, however, it has held the first place in the public attention, and has had no small importance in determining the balance of parties and the whole tone and character of the session, and some brief account of it may help to make clear the telegraphic summaries of the results of the debates both on this motion and on Mr. Innes's Bill, which will probably be concluded within a few days of the arrival of this letter in England.

Even before Parliament assembled it was generally considered that the Bond extremists would throw their whole weight into an attack on the administration of martial law in the Colony. There had undoubtedly been cases of hardship suffered by Dutch colonists in martial law areas ; farmers had been arrested and detained on suspicion of treasonable conduct who had to be dismissed afterwards on the ground of insufficient evidence, others had been kept unduly long awaiting their trial. As a whole martial law had undoubtedly been administered with a leniency and a scrupulous fairness which had never been equalled under similar conditions. Still it was thought that the Opposition might be able to get together a sufficient number of facts to give some backing to the allegations of oppression and unfairness published daily in *Ons Land* and the *South African News* and to present a plausible case. Moreover, any attempt directly to exculpate, or even justify, rebellion would be awkward and alienate sympathy in England. On the other hand, it might be possible to obscure the issue of rebellion, and by glowing pictures of atrocities committed by British officers suggest that the rebellion was really caused by military tyranny instead of being a spontaneous effort to overthrow British rule in South Africa. And at the same time it might be easy to play upon the strong aversion to anything savouring of the exercise of arbitrary power which has always distinguished the British nation. It should never be forgotten that the anti-British party in South Africa has always looked to party divisions in England as one of its chief sources of strength. The support given to Mr. Kruger's agitation during the annexation by Radical members, from Mr. Gladstone downwards, undoubtedly encouraged the rising in 1880 ; the letters from prominent Englishmen, including members of Parliament, during the summer and autumn of last year no less certainly encouraged Mr. Kruger in his stubborn and defiant attitude ; even after the overthrow of the Republics those British subjects who shared their aspirations now hope, by appealing to a section of British public opinion, to preserve their own power in Cape Colony and, if possible, to save the Republics from annexation. A still further purpose that might be served by a heated discussion on martial law, in which every exaggerated story of ill-usage could be dragged forward and stated as fact, and in which English members might be tempted into violent denunciations of their Dutch fellow subjects as a body, might be to induce some of the more wavering of Mr. Schreiner's followers to throw in their lot with the extremists.

Accordingly no surprise was felt when, on the first day of the meeting of Parliament, Mr. Merriman gave notice that he would move a resolution to the following effect :—

1. That the continuance of martial law after the suppression of rebellion, and the punishment and prosecution of persons under the forms of so-called martial law after the termination of armed resistance and the reopening of civil Courts in the disaffected districts, is contrary to the inherent rights of British subjects and in violation of all the principles laid down for guidance in such cases.

2. That it is expedient that the proclamations declaring martial law within this Colony should be repealed forthwith.

The debate was opened by Mr. Merriman on Tuesday, July 24. The galleries were crowded, for Mr. Merriman, when at his best, is the most eloquent speaker in the Cape Assembly. But for once the House was doomed to disappointment. With the exception of an occasional flash of eloquence the opening speech was singularly ineffective. The greater part of it was taken up by the quotation of extracts from Sir Mathew Hale, Sir J. Mackintosh, and other legal authorities, and by an elaborate examination of the exercise of martial law in Ceylon, Demerara, Jamaica, and Canada. Special prominence was given by Mr. Merriman to the case of the missionary Smith, who was confined by the military authorities on suspicion of being concerned in a negro rising in Demerara at the beginning of the century and died in prison—a case which came before the House of Commons and elicited some of the most striking opinions ever given on the subject of martial law. Martial law, Mr. Merriman insisted, was so exceptional a measure that it could be justified only in the midst of actual tumult. The moment opposition had been so far overcome that it was possible for the Queen's writ to run and for the magistrate to hold a Court, the exercise of it became a crime. Continuing, Mr. Merriman indignantly denounced the investigations held after the reoccupation of districts which had risen in rebellion, which he described as a " smelling out " of rebels. Why had men like Mr. George Farrar, one of the Johannesburg reform leaders, or Mr. Crewe, secretary of the South African League, been allowed to conduct those investigations ? Those unfortunate districts of the colony which had been occupied by the enemy were now overrun by these delators or informers, who from political or other motives were thirsting to proscribe the whole Dutch population. Mr. Merriman described the rule of martial law in Cape Colony as a veritable reign of terror. Innocent men were convicted of high treason or their stock was plundered and sold on an officer's warrant ; Kaffirs were bribed to give evidence against their masters ; respectable farmers were herded for weeks and months in vermin-infested cells. There was much talk o loyalty just now. But there was one word that was as dear to him as loyalty, and that was liberty.

The speech was as inconclusive in argument as it was ineffective oratorically. The attempt to

compare a widespread and formidable rebellion such as that in Cape Colony with a two days' riot in Demerara or Ceylon could convince nobody on the Government side, while it evoked no interest from the stolid rows of Dutch members on the Opposition benches. The assertion that the investigations into rebellion were conducted purely from partisan motives meant nothing in a country where active loyalty has been almost entirely confined to one political party. No one imagines that the secretary of the Afrikander Bond would offer his services for the " smelling out " of rebels. It is much truer to say that the whole agitation against martial law and against the punishment of rebellion has been carried on from party motives, because the Bond fears that, deprived of the rebel vote, it will be in a minority. But even weaker than Mr. Merriman's argument was his case. The vague generalities about oppression were backed by nothing concrete in the shape of a mass of genuine evidence to support them. If the Dutch members had expected anything, it was a convincing exposition of the wrongs suffered by their fellow-countrymen, and they got little but academic argument and vague denunciation. Whatever Mr. Merriman's chances were of leading the Bond extremists ten days ago, they were destroyed by his opening speech.

Mr. Innes had an easy task in replying. If there was anything at all in the academic argument that martial law was a crime the moment armed opposition ceased, Mr. Merriman was not the person to urge it. Mr. Merriman and his colleagues, Messrs. Sauer and Te Water, had, as Ministers, assented to the proclamation of martial law in many districts before rebellion had broken out, and while the Queen's writ was still running. They had allowed martial law to continue in force in the districts south of the Orange River for nearly four months after armed opposition had been overcome. In some districts proclaimed by the late Ministry no invasion or open rebellion had ever taken place, and the Queen's writ had run all the time. But, apart from that purely personal question, how was it possible to apply the *dicta* of eminent men delivered in connexion with some trifling local rebellion to so unique a case as this, where whole districts, led by their most prominent men, had gone over bodily to an invading enemy? Armed opposition in the colony had ceased, but the war was still continuing, and every act in it reacted upon the disaffected districts. Hundreds of rebels from those districts were still fighting in the Republics. Martial law was a necessity, even in the interests of the rebels themselves. Thousands of men had been guilty of high treason, and if the ordinary law were in operation they would all have to be arrested and lodged in gaol. As it was, they were allowed to stay on their farms and pursue their avocations, subject only to certain special regulations to prevent their rising again in rebellion or escaping from justice, regulations not contemplated in the ordinary law, and, therefore, possible only under an exceptional *régime*.

Mr. Innes here touched upon what is one of the most vital points of the question which the Opposition have throughout tried to obscure. The martial law which the eminent English jurists quoted by Mr. Merriman condemn, the wholesale trial of men for high treason and other offences by military Courts, has never prevailed at all in South Africa. Not more than half a dozen men have been tried for high treason by military Courts, and those trials took place at the beginning of the war. Ever since the cessation of armed opposition martial law has been purely administrative and not judicial. Practically the only offences for which men have been tried since the month of January by military Courts have been contraventions of martial law regulations—*e.g.*, for secretion of arms, &c., for which there could obviously be no trial in the ordinary Courts. Almost all the cases of hardship, of mistaken arrests which have been quoted by Mr. Merriman's party throughout this debate, have been cases which occurred months ago, during the prevalence of actual fighting. Many of them were not acts of martial law at all, but acts committed by individual soldiers and officers in the field. Practically none of them have reference to the administration of martial law as carried out at present. But they are all dragged forward as an argument that all special restrictions should at once be removed from the districts lately in rebellion. Mr. Innes declared that he and every member on the Government side of the House were eager to get rid of martial law as soon as possible. He had suspended it in three districts already, and would do it in others the moment it was considered safe. At present almost all the civil magistrates in the districts under martial law had reported against its suspension. In any case it was a matter for the Government to decide, and it was preposterous to attempt to bind its action in so delicate and responsible a matter by an irresponsible resolution of the House.

Mr. Innes's speech was a complete rejoinder and effectively disposed of the whole of Mr. Merriman's case. For some time it seemed as if no one wished to continue the debate at all, and the Speaker actually put the motion. It was, however, discovered that Mr. Solomon had risen, and the Speaker agreed to the continuation of the debate. Mr. Solomon declared that the motion was absurd and that not a single member of the House could honestly support it. There had undoubtedly been hardships under martial law, but he felt sure that the administration of martial law in South Africa compared very favourably with any of the cases of the administration of martial law quoted by Mr. Merriman. The military authori-

ties had done everything in their power to secure fair trials and had shown the greatest readiness to co-operate in every way with the Attorney-General's department. Mr. Solomon did not mention that the successful working of martial law in the Colony and the avoidance of serious irregularities were due in no small measure to his own loyal co-operation with the military authorities. Between them Mr. Innes and Mr. Solomon had completely demolished Mr. Merriman's case. After their speeches the debate tended to degenerate into a series of recriminations between members on both sides of the House. It was evident that the motion was a failure, and that it would not carry with it any of Mr. Schreiner's supporters in the House. Accordingly the Bond members resolved to tone it down by an amendment which should be less peremptory and might be agreeable to Mr. Schreiner's followers. The move, which was discussed fully at a meeting of the Bond party, was successful. Mr. Schreiner himself, who attends the meetings of the party of which he still considers himself a member, found that unless he wished to lose his hold of several of his more doubtful followers and secure their vote on Mr. Innes's Bill he would have to support some modified amendment expressing the hope that martial law be withdrawn with all speed. On Friday Mr. Theron, the chairman of the Afrikander Bond, proposed the amendment which had been agreed upon and which declared that the House, without disapproving of the proclamation of martial law, is of the opinion that its continuance in districts in which armed resistance has ceased and its operation is not indispensable for the success of her Majesty's forces in the field, is contrary to the inherent rights ofBritish subjects, and should be repealed. The news of Mr. Schreiner's intention to support this amendment at first caused some consternation in the Ministry, as his defection seems likely to mean that the amendment will be carried. At one time there was some doubt whether the Ministry might not even be tempted to vote with the amendment itself to avoid the unpleasantness of a defeat. Any doubt on the subject was, however, dispelled by Sir Gordon Sprigg, who declared on Monday that the Government could not accept the amendment any more than the original resolution, and that it would not consider a defeat upon the amendment as in any way implying that it had not got the confidence of the House. Sir Gordon Sprigg undoubtedly has taken the right course. He may possibly be defeated on a purely academic resolution by a few votes, but on a motion of no confidence or on the Bill brought forward by Mr. Innes to-day he will have the full support of Mr. Schreiner and can therefore reckon on a safe majority of six or eight. On the other hand, to accept the motion of his opponents would have put the Government in an extremely false position from which it would not have found it easy to extricate itself. Mr. Sauer's speech yesterday, though ably delivered, added nothing really fresh to a discussion whose main object has been to afford a preliminary trial of strength between the parties, and which now practically yields the field to the real subject matter of the session.

To-day Mr. Innes introduces the second reading of the one important measure of the Session, the measure whose passing is really the *raison d'être* of the present Ministry. The Bill, which has now been in the possession of members for over a week, embodies the whole of the policy upon which Mr. Schreiner's Ministry split. It is, in fact, the Bill Mr. Schreiner intended to have brought in if his colleagues could have been induced to agree to it. Even the actual drafting of it has been to a very large extent done by Mr. Solomon, and the Bill in its final form has Mr. Schreiner's complete adherence. And in the task of carrying it through Mr. Innes can reckon on the fullest measure of support from the middle party. The Bill is a very comprehensive one, embracing an act of indemnity for all acts done by the military authorities, appointing judicial and *quasi*-judicial commissions for the trial and punishment of rebels, and providing for the compensation of those who have sustained direct losses during the war through military operations or the acts of the enemy or of rebels. The first chapter of the Bill deals with the indemnification of the Governor, the Commander-in-Chief, and all persons acting under them for illegal acts committed in good faith and under proper authority in the interests of the public safety. The sentences pronounced by Courts-martial duly constituted are confirmed and shall be deemed to have been passed by duly constituted Courts of the colony and carried out accordingly, and all persons arrested or detained for high treason shall be deemed to have been lawfully arrested as if they had been arrested on lawfully issued warrants. The second chapter empowers the Governor to appoint a special Court for the trial of high treason cases. The Court is to be composed of three members, two at least of whom are to be Judges of the Supreme Court of the colony and the other a barrister of ten years' standing. The Court is to possess all the powers of the Supreme Court of the colony, as well as the functions of a jury, save that a verdict of the majority of its members will suffice for conviction. The Attorney-General is empowered to indict before the special Court after a preliminary investigation by the military authorities, without requiring that preparatory examinations shall be taken in the usual manner. He can, however, direct a supplementary investigation if not satisfied that the preliminary investigation has been sufficient. The Court can impose any penalty which a Judge of the Supreme Court is entitled to impose for high treason.

The object of the Special Court is the trial and punishment of those rebels who have been ringleaders in instigating rebellion or who are sufficiently influential in their districts to have seriously encouraged rebellion by their example. In many districts the Field Cornets, practically all the leading members of the local Bond organization, even the members of Parliament, have taken part in rebellion, and it is for their trial that the Court is intended. The third chapter of the Bill deals with the rank and file of rebels. For these a number of *quasi*-judicial commissions are to be appointed, each of which is to contain at least one barrister or some one who has filled the office of resident magistrate. These Courts are only empowered to impose the penalty of five years' disqualification from being registered as a voter for Parliamentary, divisional, or municipal elections or from holding any public office. The procedure in the case of this Commission is considerably simplified. Thus in the case of rebels who have surrendered their arms and returned to their farms in accordance with Lord Roberts's proclamation, their names will be posted up in their districts and they are to be treated as guilty unless they appear in Court to prove the contrary. Conviction and disfranchisement by this Court shall be a bar to any other proceedings for the same offence or the same set of actions. The last chapter provides for Commissioners to assess direct losses arising out of the war and recommend the amount of compensation to be paid. The whole measure is statesmanlike and moderate, and there is every hope of the second reading being carried, in spite of the very determined opposition that will be offered by those political leaders who believe that their own position is endangered by the disfranchisement of the rebel voter. The opposition to it will be a purely Parliamentary one. The rebels themselves are only too eager that the measure should pass through. To be disqualified for five years is no punishment to them. On the other hand, the failure of the measure may very well mean a series of prosecutions under the ordinary law dragging on for months and keeping their districts in a state of continuous unrest.

25th August 1900

FIGHTING IN THE ORANGE RIVER COLONY.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT WITH GENERAL CLEMENTS'S COLUMN.)

JULY 7.

On the morning of June 28 General Clements started from Senekal with the object of effecting a junction with General Paget at Lindley, where that officer was said to be faced with a force of the enemy so strong alike in numbers and position as to be unable to advance. The junction accomplished, Bethlehem was to be the objective. The route adopted involved a considerable detour, but was, under the circumstances, necessary, and had the compensating advantage of being through a comparatively easy open country, as against the dangerous defiles between the mountains on the direct road from Senekal. General Clements's force consists of four infantry battalions—the Royal Irish, the Worcesters, the Wilts, and the Bedfords—the mounted infantry companies of the Royal Scots and Malta Regulars, 2nd Brabant's Horse, and the Yeomanry companies of Yorkshire, Wiltshire, Middlesex,and Staffordshire, with two 5-in. guns and the 8th Field Artillery.

The force is, indeed, an admirable one, but its mobility is very much reduced by the necessities of transport. Moving at a great distance from the railway and having consequently to carry rations for men and horses for a considerable time, an enormous train of wagons is a *sine qua non*. The discarding of tents for all hands but slightly relieves the pressure, while it increases the hardship for the men enormously. With the prospect of hard fighting, however, the spirit of the men is such that no hardships are accounted important so long as opportunities are offered them of engaging the enemy. With regard to tents, a good story may be here interpolated. It appears incredible, but is absolutely true. The East York Regiment, under Colonel Ward, has recently been attached to the 8th Division, and like all other portions of that force is without tents. Payment of " Field allowance " to officers and men of that regiment has not been sanctioned by the Pay Office on the ground that the paymaster is credibly informed the regiment is not " under canvas." The brilliant financial genius responsible for this new reading of the regulations should yet go far, one would think.

The character of the country and road does not lend itself to the advance of wagons in several lines, and a train about seven miles long of wagons and carts was necessary, rendering the march slower and the defence of the convoy a very difficult task. The presence in his force of about a thousand mounted men, however, materially lightened General Clements's work, as the country on either flank and in front was well scoured before the advance of the transport. On leaving Senekal Colonel Grenfell, with 2nd Brabant's, Middlesex and Staffordshire companies of Yeomanry, and two guns, was placed in charge of the right and advance, while to Colonel Ridley, with the Mounted Infantry, Royal Scots and Malta Regulars, the Yorkshire and Wiltshire Yeomanry, was entrusted the care of the left flank and

advance. After the first few days, however, the advantage of a single command for the advance guard and flanks became apparent, and Colonel Ridley, with characteristic generosity, placed himself under Colonel Grenfell's orders.

The greater portion of the convoy was still in Senekal when it became evident that the passage to Lindley was to be disputed. About three miles out numbers of the enemy were found in front and on the left, who, however, gave way after some little trouble, while about a mile further on the Boers showed in some strength on the right front. There, also, the enemy gave ground, their progress hastened by some well-placed shells from the 8th Battery guns. The advance on the right was shortly afterwards suspended, as Colonel Ridley was not able to make equal progress. The enemy on the left was found in a very strong position and opened with their guns and some Vickers-Maxims and considerable rifle fire on the approaching Mounted Infantry and Yeomanry. Two guns and the 2nd Brabant's Hotchkiss were moved over and replied to the Boer guns, while from the rear four more of the 8th Battery were speedily sent to a ridge on the left, followed later by the two 5-in. guns. The Boer guns were never quite silenced; indeed, as usual, they had the last word, and threw into camp, just at dark,a couple of shells, which, fortunately, did no harm. The big guns are credited with having damaged at least one of the "Pom-Poms" and a Krupp gun, but the Boer riflemen maintained their positions till dark, and so rendered any further advance impossible for the night.

Meanwhile, on the right front, some very pretty fighting was taking place. "F" Squadron Brabant's, under Captain Garner, located a party of Boers in a deep donga, and these were very well stalked. Lieutenant Friedlander and ten men got into the donga and worked their way up it while a troop rode along the top. Finally, a number of the Boers made a dash in the open for life, two being knocked over, while below in the donga Friedlander's men accounted for six dead and another wounded severely. Shortly afterwards the enemy brought forward a Krupp gun, and a demonstration in strength was made on the right flank, to counteract which Colonel Grenfell brought over his two guns to right and they speedily silenced the enemy's Krupp, though his riflemen maintained a hot fire on Brabant's and the Yeomanry. The enemy's guns on left were frequently changed, but the new positions were, sooner or later, discovered. The Boer gunners manned their guns in most determined fashion and in several cases managed to change the positions of their guns so cleverly as to deceive our gunners for some time. A camp was formed and General Clements arranged a plan of attack for the early morning, but the elusive enemy disappeared in the darkness from positions to drive them from which must have cost many valuable lives.

Colonel Grenfell's pet Hotchkiss (the present of Mr. A. Beit) was of but little use, as the ammunition was so faulty that it was too dangerous to use to protect advancing men. The driving bands of the shells were almost all loose and came off when leaving the gun, so that no reliance could be felt in placing the shell. The casualties during the day were about half a dozen, though the Boers must have expended several hundreds of shells and many thousands of rounds of rifle ammunition.

On the 29th a substantial advance was made and the Zand River crossed after a sharp little fight. The cavalry screen worked very wide and must have covered a ten mile front, and at every turn the enemy, finding their flanks threatened, retired after but a weak resistance. A couple of hundred Boers, however, setting the grass on fire with a strong, favouring wind from them to us, made for a time a rather stiff dispute at the river. Lining the banks, they engaged the advance guard so obstinately that the infantry had to be called on, and the gallant Worcesters, covered by excellent shrapnel shelling, steadily advanced through the smoke and burning grass. They were not to be denied, and the Boers, seeing Grenfell's men making a wide encircling move to the right, retired precipitately, after which, save for a few snipers on the flanks, no further opposition was encountered during the day. The passage of the river cost several casualties, among them Major Beatson, of General Clements's staff,and Lieutenant Orr,of Brabant's, both happily only slightly wounded. Numerous narrow escapes were sustained. Captain Hawtrey, of Brabant's, had two horses killed under him and a third wounded. Altogether a large number of horses were killed or wounded, as the dongas running to the river afforded superb cover and excellent line of retreat for the cunning Boer. Late in the afternoon a large troop of Blesbok was mistaken for a party of Boers, and the Hotchkiss and two guns played on them for some time, without, it must be said, doing much harm. Later, however, a few sportsmen shot so many that venison was to be found on every mess table.

Kruisfontein, six miles from Lindley, was reached on the 30th, the Middlesex and Staffordshire Yeomanry having all of the fighting in the advance guard. At the farm, called Landdrost Elignaut, a small party of Boers lined a very ugly ridge behind the farmhouse, but a few shells sent them off in a hurry. At Kruisfontein the Boer scouts were encountered by the Yeomanry, but after a short exchange of fire without result galloped off.

On July 1 Colonel Ridley, accompanied by Captain Seele, of the Royal Scots M.I., with Major Jenkinson and the Wilts and Yorkshire Yeomanry, patrolled the country to the right of

Lindley and came to very close quarters with the enemy, causing General Clements to order out two guns and all mounted men under Colonel Grenfell to proceed to their assistance. General Paget from Lindley also sent out several guns and a ody of mounted men, and after some skirmishing the enemy retired. Several of the Yeomanry were missing, including Major Jenkinson, and Captain Seele, of the Royal Scots. It is to be hoped the two latter are prisoners. Major Jenkinson was, it is said, badly wounded, but of none of the party was any trace to be found after a most exhaustive search. Captain Seele, whom it was my privilege to meet at Jammersberg during the investment, is a very keen and fearless soldier, and his loss to his regiment is universally regretted, though it is hoped that it is only temporary.

A more melancholy-looking place than Lindley at present it would be difficult to imagine. It has all the appearance of a town which has undergone a long siege and heavy bombardment. Half the houses are unroofed, windowless, and doorless. The lack of firewood in the Free State is an added hardship to the usual accompaniments of campaigning, and the deserted Boer Nachtmaal houses were a temptation too great for the shivering fireless Tommy. However, the destruction of these houses is but a small item to be set against the havoc wrought by the enemy in the Cape Colony and Natal.

On the 2nd a start for Bethlehem was made, while General Paget moved in the same direction along a parallel road from six to ten miles on left flank. Small parties of the enemy were almost at once encountered, but they abandoned a series of enormously strong positions without fighting. They had for once determined to play the bold game, and with a strong force they occupied a long ridge with numerous spurs and terminating in a lofty hill on Paget's side, lying between the roads on which Clements's and Paget's forces were moving. The fighting on Paget's side seems to have been more obstinate than against Clements. With the latter the mounted men advanced under shell fire, and two Boer guns in the open were at once retired to safer quarters. All our artillery was speedily engaged against the numerous Boer guns. The infantry was pushed forward to hold and cover the proposed camp, and the mounted men scouted still further forward, saluted from time to time by shrapnel from well-concealed guns. A deep valley fronting the main Boer position was the scene of several skirmishes, during one of which Captain Brooke, of the Yorkshire Yeomanry, behaved with great bravery. His company rode all too fearlessly into the valley, and was received with very hot fire from a hidden enemy. Scattering, they rode back with some men wounded, while one horse was killed, bringing his rider down with a dreadful crash. Captain Brooke rode back to the dismounted man, and after some delay got the man up behind him. During this time they attracted the concentrated fire of the Boers, but escaped unhurt though they had to ride slowly for over 800 yards within the dangerous zone of rifle fire. Dr. Reynolds, attached to the company, shortly afterwards rode out to attend to the wounded men. He announced his character in the most pronounced fashion. Fixing a rifle up, he attached to it a Red Cross flag, subsequently adding a white towel, as the Red Cross was ineffective to stop the rifle fire. One Boer, however, was not satisfied, but crept up in good cover to within a very short distance, where he must have absolutely satisfied himself as to the doctor's character, and then fired, killing the doctor's horse. He subsequently bolted, as the guns again opened fire with shrapnel on the valley. There are many apologists for the Boer disregard of the Red Cross flag, who allege the difficulty with modern long-range rifles of seeing stretcher bearers and the small Geneva cross; but Dr. Reynolds reports that his assailant crept within 40 yards of him, and that, seeing the Boer about to shoot, he disconcerted the man's aim by shouting to him, with the result that his horse instead of himself was killed. There can, however, be little doubt that some more distinctive uniform and colour are required to protect ambulance people at a distance of, say, 1,400 yards. A white uniform would certainly be more easily distinguished, while the stretchers might also with advantage be painted white instead of brown, as at present. Colonel Grenfell, moving on the right front, saw a dense mass of the enemy from 500 to 700 in number moving off into the hills, but the guns which opened on them did little, if any, harm.

Meanwhile General Paget was more heavily engaged, and apparently against a more adventurous leader. Four of the 38th Battery guns were engaged against those of the enemy on the lofty hill mentioned, with an escort some little distance in the rear. A party of about 200 Boers, creeping up a convenient depression and through a mealie field, rushed the guns, overpowered all resistance, killing and wounding 16 of the gunners, and for a few moments had possession of the guns. Lieutenant Belcher was killed, Major Oldfield, Captain Fitzgerald, and 13 of the gunners wounded. From the accounts received it appears that the Boers devoted their attention to plundering the wounded officers and men, during which interval a squadron of Australian Bushmen approached and charged with great gallantry, driving the Boers off with considerable loss.

At 6 o'clock the following morning Colonel Grenfell advanced about four miles with about 600 mounted men, when from the right front three guns, one a Creusot, opened a very hot shell fire on them. Deploying in open order, he moved his men off to the left, only to receive the attentions of two more guns from the hills on the left. Enormous lines of wagons were seen

retiring on the Bethlehem roads, and it was evident that the enemy was merely engaging to protect their retreat.

General Clements then ordered a reconnaissance of his right flank, which Colonel Grenfell also conducted, with the result that two more long-range guns were disclosed. Covered by the fire of two of our guns, Captain Ogilvy's squadron of Brabant's was ordered to take a hill occupied by a large party of the enemy. It was followed and supported by F Squad Brabant's and the Middlesex Yeomanry, and the hill was gallantly charged to the base,where, dismounting, the men rushed the position splendidly. Adjutant Williams, severely wounded, and one man also wounded, were the only casualties. The casualties for the day were about half-a-dozen.

As it was obvious that no move could be made till his right flank was cleared General Clements organized an attack on the morning of the 4th in which the infantry, which had hitherto been able to do nothing but guard the convoy, should have a chance. With Colonel Grenfell and the mounted men on the extreme right, Worcesters on the right, and Wilts on the left a move was made. The object was to move out about six miles on his right ; that cleared, infantry to swing round, followed by mounted men as rearguard. The desired result was fully achieved with trifling loss. The enemy retired after the weakest possible resistance. From one farm-house a decrepit old man, apparently about 80 years old, fired on the Worcesters from 50 yards distance out of the window. The officers rushed the house and were at once overpowered with entreaties not to burn the house, and when the request was granted the women kissed the hands of the officers. The old man had been clearly seen to fire two shots out of the window, but he and the women protested that nothing of the kind had occurred. Two rifles were found by the old scamp's chair, but still innocence was protested. As no one was hit clemency was not so difficult, but as some slight punishment all the live stock was taken by the men, and pigs, fowls, ducks, and geese speedily adorned the gallant Worcesters.

WELGEVONDEN, JULY 19.

The work of the Eighth Division during the past 14 days has been extremely arduous alike for officers, men, horses, and transport animals. Two results have, however, been achieved which more than compensate for this. The enemy has not only not broken out, but our line of posts has been pushed in considerably, much curtailing the hostile sphere of operations, while a third result, equally important—the "rounding up" and heading in to the hills of a commando several hundreds strong which evaded Generals Clements and Paget, breaking back from them to Doornberg (between Senekal and Winburg)—has been successfully accomplished. There has been no great fighting, but there has been a succession of skirmishes, which have cost a few valuable lives and a considerable number of casualties, also a few men missing, probably prisoners. There may, indeed, still be a few hostile Boers between Senekal and Winburg, who lose no chance of indulging in their favourite occupation of sniping small bodies of our men travelling between the two places, but they are most probably individuals with passes, who like to vary the monotony of existence on their farms with a little safe shooting. There is at present no organized body of the enemy save in the mountains and in the Brandwater Basin. General Rundle now has posts at or near Zuring Kraus, Witkop, the hills overlooking the Witnek, a number of commanding points close to Roode Krans, Welgevonden, Hammonia, the Willows, and Ficksburg. General Clements for the moment is camped near Biddulphsberg waiting for supplies and horses and safeguarding Senekal, so that, roughly speaking, General Rundle has deprived the enemy of a strip of country from 12 to 15 miles broad and has in addition secured a series of easily defensible posts close to, in some cases overlooking, what will probably prove to be the penultimate line of Boer defences. Meanwhile, all the details of a great joint movement into the hills from half-a-dozen points are being concerted, which ought finally to convince even the most stubborn of the Boer leaders of the futility of further opposition.

On the news of the arrival at Doornberg of a force of the enemy, the Kaffrarians were sent there on reconnaissance, while the remainder of the Colonial Division under Colonel Dalgety, during the absence at Cape Town of General Brabant, moved near there. The Kaffrarians exchanged shots with a body of Boers, but a strong force under Colonel C. Maxwell, R.E., despatched the following day found the country quite clear. Later reports were received that the commando had hurriedly retired back to Biddulphsberg. The Colonial Division followed, returning to Senekal, and soon after were sent to occupy Biddulphsberg, which was accomplished without opposition. General Rundle sent on his infantry, whereupon Colonel Maxwell prospected and seized with a strong mounted force and a couple of guns the lofty three-headed hill known as Witkop, again followed by an occupying force of infantry under General Campbell. In exactly similar manner the series of positions now occupied were first snatched by the mounted men of the Colonial Division, after more or less dispute, from the enemy. The Gibraltar-like Witnek was practically at Colonel Maxwell's mercy on the 13th, but the roads thither, being of even more than usual breakneck character, General Rundle ultimately decided against its occupation, even though it commanded a very important exit from the Brandwater basin.

On the 15th a move towards Roode Krans was

made, and an attempt to seize one of its outlying spurs, made on General Rundle's orders, led to some very spirited fighting. The position was a strong and difficult one, and ultimately the force was found to be inadequate for a successful assault, the strength of the enemy having been quite under-estimated. Captain Cholmondeley with his squadron of 2nd Brabants was ordered to try and take the hill, and advancing at a gallop under considerable fire for the last 500 yards he dismounted his men at a donga which afforded horses and holders some shelter. Proceeding on foot he occupied some Kaffir kraals, but could not get further, the fire being too hot. Guns were meanwhile got out to cover the advance, but arrived too late for that purpose. The General, recognizing the force of the enemy, sent orders to retire, opening with the guns to cover the withdrawal ; but even that was now found impossible without heavy loss, and Captain Cholmondeley waited with his men till dark before moving. The horses and their holders had very soon drawn a very heavy fire, which resulted in 11 of the horses being killed and several of the men holding them wounded. One of these, a recruit, his first time under fire, got a bullet through the hand, but still held on to his horses, a few moments later receiving a second bullet through the same hand. Resolution could do no more, and, he let go. His charges stampeded towards the enemy, gallantly followed for several hundreds of yards under very warm fire by Cholmondeley's bugler boy, who bravely but vainly tried to head off the frightened horses from the Boer lines. Two fresh squadrons of Brabant's were meantime sent out and dismounted to try and cover Cholmondeley's retirement, and their horses also came in for attention, three being killed. The withdrawal after dark was, however, alike the best and safest course, and was duly accomplished without much loss. Dr. Knapp, who previously had been very apologetic for the Boers, states that on this occasion the enemy did undoubtedly appear to pay no attention to the red flag on his ambulance cart, which was well out of the line of fire, and that a deliberate fire was opened on him and it at such a close range as to make mistakes impossible.

On the 16th a reconnaissance past the front of Roode Krans was made, attracting a considerable fire at long range. During the previous day, however, a very large number of the enemy was observed coming down Bamboes Hoek, and information received to-day states that it was for the purpose of reinforcing Commandant Hassenbröek, who, with two guns and several hundred men was at Witnall. The junction accomplished, a determined attempt to break back past General Campbell was to be made towards Senekal. The men, however, at the last moment are reported to have refused and nothing came of the projected move, but the commandos at Roode Krans were so much strengthened.

The following day a move here was determined on and, partly to occupy the enemy and partly to see their strength at Roode Krans, Major King King was sent in charge of about 300 mounted men and two guns to examine that position. This was done, and the mountain, a particularly ugly one to assault, was carefully prospected. The Boers were drawn towards us in great numbers, and the opportunity was seized by General Rundle to storm the position to the north which had been assaulted on the 13th by Captain Cholmondeley. This was accomplished with 23 casualties, while Major King King's operations cost about half-a-dozen men and horses wounded. Among these latter was that of General Rundle, which, galloping along to inspect matters, arrived, just as a party of Boers in a house were sniping our retiring men. The house was promptly shelled, and it is hoped with effect, as two shells went into the house, and the firing ceased.

4th September 1900.

THE CAPTURE OF PRINSLOO.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

CAPE TOWN, Aug. 16.

The capture of Prinsloo was the result of a most elaborate piece of military strategy, well thought out and well carried out. It will be remembered that after Lord Roberts forced his way to Pretoria the whole of the Eastern Free State was thrown into a ferment by the raids of a strong body of Boers led by De Wet. Our troops under Methuen, Clements and Rundle had at various times met these Free State Boers, and had always " driven them off," " dispersed them," or " utterly routed them " ; but no amount of dispersing and routing had any lasting effect on the mercurial spirits of De Wet and his following, and it became clear that nothing short of absolutely surrounding them would bring their career to an end. People at a distance are always unable to understand why our troops cannot overtake and destroy these Boer commandos, but South Africa is thickly sprinkled with natural fortresses in the shape of kopjes, and all that a Boer leader has to do when hard pressed is to throw a strong rearguard into some suitable kopjes and let them hold the position all day, while he marches his guns and wagons off out of danger. At this kind of fighting De Wet was an absolute genius. Given half an hour's start and a few kopjes to go

through, he would protect his rear all day long, retreating from kopje to kopje as occasion required, moving his transport all the time, and finally escaping at night. In the open country of the Free State it was impossible to surround him, as he could march north, south, east, or west at pleasure; and the only country that held out any hope was down on the Basuto border. Here there was a chance to get him into a net, because the Caledon River formed a boundary which the Boers dared not cross, and the surrounding mountains had only a few roads by which wheeled transport could move. When once he was driven in among these mountains it would be a fairly easy matter to watch all the passes and prevent him from getting his wagons and guns out again. The Boers dared not cross into Basutoland for fear that the natives would in return come into the Free State and ravage the farms; so Lord Roberts's tactics were to drive the Boers in among these hills and close in on them, and these tactics were more likely to succeed, because the Boers were quite willing to go into the hills, looking upon them as a stronghold and not as a trap.

On June 19, Ian Hamilton's force left Pretoria to co-operate with the troops then in the Free State in this closing-in movement, but an accident to Hamilton left Sir Archibald Hunter in command. Nearing Lindley, the force heard the guns firing where Paget and Clements were engaging De Wet, but Hunter's force did not turn off to Lindley to join in the fighting, but marched steadily along on Bethlehem, thus blocking De Wet from darting over to Harrismith. On arrival at Bethlehem it was found that Clements and Paget had driven the enemy down through Bethlehem and the Boers had gone into the hills, and matters now became exciting. A huge semi-circular range of hills runs round Fouriesburg, and once inside those hills it should have been impossible for them to get their wagons out, as the Caledon River was at the back of them, and the only passes in the hills were Commando Nek, down below Fouriesburg, Slabberts Nek, and Retiefs Nek, near Bethlehem, and Naauwpoort Nek and Golden Gate at the head of the Caledon Valley. Hunter sent Bruce Hamilton to Naauwpoort Nek and Golden Gate, and watched Retiefs Nek himself; Paget was at Slabberts Nek and Rundle was holding Commando Nek; so it really looked as though the Boers were fairly trapped. Then it was that the genius of De Wet showed itself. He must have realized at once that he had got himself into a trap, and he swiftly set about getting clear again. He took 1,500 picked men and five guns; each man was well mounted and had a led horse to carry all his gear, and the supplies of ammunition were carried on light carts, well horsed. It unfortunately happened that Paget was not camped quite close enough to Slabberts Nek, and De Wet seized the opportunity to slip through in the night. He got his force clear out of the hills, and as soon as he was clear he set off across country at a great pace, leaving a rearguard as usual to engage Paget's force. The first news that Hunter had of his escape was the sound of the C.I.V. battery engaging De Wet's rearguard. Hunter sent his cavalry under Broadwood and his mounted infantry under Ridley to assist Paget's force, and, if possible, bring De Wet to a standstill. How De Wet got away in spite of their pursuit is now well known, and we must return to the Boers who did not accompany De Wet.

About 6,000 of these remained in the hills from choice, thinking they were safe there, and as they were all local men they did not wish to leave their own district and go away to the Transvaal. They were led by Roux and Prinsloo, the former being a clergyman who had taken up the cause of his flock, and the latter an old farmer who was elected to the position on account of his having had experience in the native wars. Our troops made simultaneous attacks on all the passes; at Retiefs Nek the Boers fought desperately, and their position was only carried by a daring rush of the Seaforth Highlanders. One company of this regiment, headed by a subaltern, crept up to within a few hundred yards of a ravine held by the Boers, and then charged across the open at the run, the Boers fleeing down the sides of the ravine. This gave us the nek, and it was well to get it with so little loss—100 casualties—as the position is beyond all comparison stronger than that held by Cronje at Magersfontein. Rundle and Paget—or rather Clements, as he had come to join Paget—forced their way in at Commando Nek and Slabberts Nek respectively, but Bruce Hamilton could make no headway at Naauwpoort Nek. Hector MacDonald was therefore sent round to reinforce him and also to see that the pass known as Golden Gate was securely blocked; and here occurred another leakage which might have been prevented. No one appeared to know exactly where Golden Gate was, and whether it was a pass through which vehicles could be brought. Such local people as were forthcoming differed very much in their stories. Some said Golden Gate was quite impassable; others that it was a fairly easy road; it was thought better to occupy it, but it could only be reached from where our troops were by going through Naauwpoort Nek, and the delay in carrying this nek gave the more astute of the Boers a chance to get out at Golden Gate. Of this they were not slow to avail themselves. Olivier got out and took about 1,000 men with him; and even when our troops closed in the valley at all ends there was nothing to prevent the Boers from riding over the mountains at night. It must be understood that these operations were not conducted in a small area. It was nearly 20 miles by the track from where Hunter and Rundle were, at the southern end of

the valley, to where MacDonald was, at the other end of the Golden Gate ; it was impossible to surround 20 miles of mountain road, and all that Hunter could do was to block the passes and make sure of the wagons and carts. This plan resulted in a large haul of prisoners. They sent in to say that they would surrender if they were allowed to keep their carts, and these terms Hunter conceded. The result was that men who had actually gone out of the valley at night came back to surrender. As Roux, the fighting preacher, put it, " the Boers love their carts more than their Fatherland." And thus, with a few casualties, the bulk of the Free State forces were gathered in like so many sheep. They came in for hour after hour with wagons, carts, oxen, and horses, all heartily sick of the war, but all more or less puzzled as to how they had got trapped. They would not have surrendered but for the hopelessness of fighting where they were, and the prospect of leaving all their transport and going out into the snow-clad mountains without any gear whatever quite cowed them and made them surrender with little reluctance. Hunter has been blamed for giving them their wagons and gear, but if it had not been for this thousands would have got away at night, and in these gorges and ravines no human skill could have prevented their doing so.

4th September 1900.

THE ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE ELANDS RIVER.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MARICO RIVER, Aug. 6.

On Wednesday afternoon General Carrington left Mafeking with all his available troops to make a forced march to relieve Colonel Hoare who, with 350 Protectorate Regiment and 150 Imperial Bushmen, was guarding a convoy of 80 wagons at Elands River which were intended for Rustenburg as soon as it was relieved. The relieving force consisted of the following troops :— Four and a half squadrons New South Wales Imperial Bushmen under Colonel Kenneth McKaye ; four squadrons Paget's Horse under Lieutenant-Colonel Paget ; one squadron R.F.F., details of other brigades, under Captain Baker, 1st New South Wales Bushmen ; one squadron Kimberley Mounted Corps under Captain Peakman ; 40 Imperial Yeomanry scouts ; one battery (New Zealand) 15-pounders under Major Powell, and four " Pom Poms " under Major Gosling. They reached Vaalkop the same evening, where they encamped. At 2 a.m. two " Pom Poms " were sent on under escort to hold Marico River, which was to be our next camp, the main body moving off at 6 30. The road for a couple of miles on each flank was admirably scouted by picked men from the Bushmen, and the camp was reached at 11 a.m. Heavy firing was heard towards Elands River, so " C " Squadron Imperial Bushmen were sent off with the " Pom Poms " at 1 30 under Colonel Grey to try and locate the enemy. Lieutenant Doyle with 20 men scouted the country on the left front, and towards evening encountered the enemy numbering about 100. A few volleys were fired and the scouts retired without loss, one man having had his field glasses shot out of his hand, and a bullet passing through the haversack filled with ammunition of another. A halt was made at Doordrift, which the main body reached about 8 p.m. Signal fires were lit by the enemy on our right all along the line of march, and two bodies of the enemy were in communication for a short time after dark by means of the heliograph. No fires were allowed, and the men lay down in front of their horses, ready at a moment's notice in case of alarm.

Everything was ready next morning at 5 15 a.m., and scouts were sent out on both flanks. One of the enemy's outposts was seen on our right, but cleared out of sight immediately. The general considered it advisable to leave a small force on a semi-fortified kopje, so one " Pom Pom " with 80 officers and men of the Kimberley Mounted Corps under Colonel Peakman were left behind. The column then advanced, having out three lines of scouts. At 10 45 the Imperial Yeomanry scouts rounded a kopje on the left and came under a heavy rifle fire from a small lightly-wooded kopje about 1,500 yards distant on the right flank. No smoke was visible, and, as the wind was blowing right across the road, the line of scouts coming up did not hear the firing, which stopped after two or three minutes. Two of the Bushmen who were scouting rode up to investigate, and were fired on from the bushes at close range, and escaped with the loss of one horse ; one of the men returned under a heavy fire and took up the dismounted man behind him and brought him out of danger. A squadron under Captain Riory were then ordered to take the kopje on the left of the road, which they did, being exposed all the time to a heavy rifle fire from a fortified kopje higher up on their immediate left and about 1,800 yards distant. On reaching the top, which was in the form of a basin, they were exposed to a shell fire from a masked gun about 4,000 yards away. The enemy found their range at once, and all five shells were landed amongst or near the men, but without doing any damage. Our guns now came up and shelled the wooded kopje on the right, making excellent practice,

and after four shots the Boers were seen to be retreating in all directions ; three more shells were fired, which landed amongst the retreating enemy and scattered them in all directions.

The enemy all through the engagement were especially accurate with their big guns ; their rifle fire was not good, as, although it was very heavy at times, our casualties were extremely light. On one or two occasions it seemed as if nothing could possibly escape, and yet our men got out with the loss of a horse or two. They found the range of our guns at once and placed two shells before Major Powell, O.C. Battery, located them and silenced them. Elands River could be plainly seen, but could not be got at except by passing through a broad plain which was exposed to the enemy's cross-fire. However, after having silenced their guns a " Pom Pom " was brought up, and the mixed Australian squadron under Captain Baker were ordered to extend across the valley and move on Elands River in order that we might discover the enemy's position and shell it. They were allowed to advance about 200 yards, when a most terrific rifle fire was opened on them from the left flank, and they were ordered to retire. Captain Baker brought them safely out with the loss of one horse and one man wounded slightly. This man's horse was shot just as they began to retire and he was left on foot in the open. Lieutenant Moore, seeing this, rode back and took him up on his horse, but, owing to a slip on the stony ground, the horse fell. All this time they were exposed to fire, but Lieutenant Moore again went back and picked up his man and brought him safely out of danger. The enemy then opened a heavy shell and " Pom Pom " fire on us from the front, their chief object seeming to be the artillery horses. Our 15-pounders replied, and later on two of our " Pom Poms," but it was some time before their guns could be properly located, and for a few minutes a terrific shell fire swept our front. General Carrington had a very narrow escape, as a 9lb. segment shell burst close to his feet and exploded, fortunately without killing any one.

At last the enemy's guns were silenced, and they contented themselves with sniping at the gunners and ambulance from our right flank. As the general had had to leave 350 men behind to guard his baggage at Marico River, his total efficient force, excluding the guns, was not more than 450 rifles, and it was finally decided that as it was getting late it would be advisable to retire in order to save the guns. The relief of Elands River was quite impossible with such a very small force, as the Boers had at least seven or eight big guns and some " Pom Poms," which clearly proved that they were very strong and their fortified positions had been chosen with great judgment. Had we pressed matters and gone on to Elands River nothing could have saved the whole column from being taken prisoners. Everything was clearly prepared by the Boers for such an event, as we were flanked with guns which never opened fire, but were simply in readiness in case the column pushed the attack. The men without exception behaved with admirable coolness and courage, and never lost their heads. None of them had ever been in action before, but their behaviour was beyond praise. The column retired on Marico River, 17 miles, which they reached at 11 15 p.m., with all their transport complete ; and this will be better appreciated when it is known that they were fighting a steady rear-guard action for several miles and were exposed to a heavy cross fire from the line of kopjes which run along each side of the road. The enemy were under General Delarey, and information has since come to hand proving them to have been in great force. The column having reached Marico River encamped until the following morning.

MAFEKING, Aug. 8.

As the troops had only arrived at Marico River at midnight, August 6, the General wisely decided to give men and horses a good rest before commencing to retire on Zeerust. Accordingly no movement was made with the exception of sending out relief pickets to the surrounding kopjes. Firing was heard at about 10 a.m. in the Zeerust direction, and a small patrol was sent out to reconnoitre. These returned and reported the enemy in force about two miles distant, where they were holding kopjes on each side of the road. Orders were given to be ready to start immediately, and at 12 45, after 20 minutes' notice, the scouts moved off. Lieutenant-Colonel Grey took a squadron of Australian Bushmen (N.S.W.), which were supported by some of Paget's Horse, and commenced the attack on the left flank, being exposed to a desultory fire from both flanks, which, however, became steady and continuous as the troops advanced. One " Pom Pom " was brought up and commenced shelling the kopjes on the left, but as their fire was at greater range than was at first anticipated it soon turned its attention to the right flank, where some of the enemy were evidently hidden in the undergrowth and were sniping our advance party without, however, doing much harm beyond killing a few horses. Having covered Colonel Grey's advance, the New Zealand Battery came into position on the right and joined the " Pom Pom " in shelling the kopje but, although the whole kopje was excellently shelled from crest to base, it was found impossible to locate the enemy ; and this goes to prove the great craft used by the Boer in taking up his positions, for, when compelled to retreat, owing to the advance of our skirmishers, several hundred empty cartridge cases were found along the ground-line while we had been shelling the bushes on the face of the kopje which would have afforded excellent cover to them. Had they used this cover they could not possibly have stood our shell-fire, which searched every possible

spot which might have held an enemy ; but by lying at the base they were able to snipe at our advance party for at least 15 minutes longer than would have been otherwise possible. Soon after the guns came into position some heavy firing was heard in the rear, and it was reported that the enemy were sniping at our transport ; it was accordingly decided that at all costs a movement must be made immediately. Major Peach, D.A.G., took command of all the transport and is greatly to be congratulated on his mode of handling it. He recognized the fact that with a small force and a large transport his best chance of a successful retirement lay in compressing the length of his convoy, which he did by bringing the wagons up in sections of fours, thereby reducing his column to one quarter of its ordinary length. Soon after 2 o'clock the enemy ceased firing and dispersed, and all possible despatch was made to get the wagons along. On reaching a farmhouse about seven miles along the road we found that a convoy of six wagons of supplies sent out from Zeerust had been attacked at 10 a.m. that morning and five wagons captured, the oxen in the remaining wagon having bolted towards Zeerust and saved it. As the force in charge of the convoy was small they had soon to retire, leaving three wounded. The enemy were in strength and had a "Pom Pom," which they brought up and used on the retreating men. General Carrington halted for a short spell at Vaalkop, and reached Zeerust at 2 a.m. without the loss of a single wagon, having retired 41 miles in 31 hours after seven hours' fighting, to say nothing of having fought a rearguard action for five miles, from the first camping place on Sunday afternoon, and a front and rearguard action for three miles on Monday morning.

A halt was made at Zeerust for one day, and at daylight next morning orders were given to march at once, as Zeerust was to be evacuated, owing, first, to the inadvisability of having a force of men besieged, as the Boers were reported in great strength in the surrounding districts, and secondly, to the fact that the town was an exceedingly difficult one to hold owing to its situation in a valley commanded by high kopjes. All the stores which it was found impossible to remove were accordingly burnt. The march of the convoy was further hampered by the large number of people who elected to leave Zeerust, and who brought all their most valuable goods away on ox wagons. The enemy were seen on our left flank, but made no demonstration of any kind, and the column entered Ottoshoop safely at 4 30 p.m., having come 16 miles. Pickets and outposts were stationed all round the town and a move was made for Mafeking the following morning, which was safely reached early the next day. The retirement all through was effected in perfect order and without confusion of any kind. The road was well scouted on each flank, in which work the Imperial Yeomanry scouts and Cameron's scouts from Australia took a prominent part. About 40 prisoners were taken *en route*, and these were brought in on wagons by the steam transport. The troops in and around Mafeking now number something over 4,000 men, and orders are anxiously awaited. No reliable information is at present to hand, but it is believed that a strong commando is somewhere in the neighbourhood under General Delarey. It is also officially reported that Colonel Hoare surrendered on Monday afternoon, but nothing is known as to where they have been taken to.

14th Sept. 1900.

OPERATIONS ROUND RUSTENBURG.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT WITH PLUMER'S FORCE.)

RUSTENBURG, AUGUST.

During the first days of July, we, the garrison of Rustenburg—80 of us with a gun—found ourselves in a trap. With a certain amount of recklessness, patrols of inadequate strength had been allowed to scour the country collecting surrendered arms, gathering too much confidence as day after day went by without their experiencing any opposition. Arms they collected by the score, but such arms!—blunderbusses, elephant guns, muzzle-loaders and flintlocks of every description, but few Mausers or Martinis. And so it was that, after General Baden-Powell with his column had marched on towards Pretoria, we, a mere post, holding the important town of Rustenburg on the line of communications, suddenly found ourselves threatened by armed Boers, who, like Roderick Dhu's warriors, seemed to spring from the rocks. On the night of July 4, a somewhat alarming despatch ordered the evacuation of Rustenburg—all stores to be abandoned if necessary. As soon as darkness set in, confusion reigned ; ox-wagon succeeding ox-wagon, half-laden, crowded the roads to the westward, hastening as fast as patient oxen could crawl back towards Zeerust, 70 miles away. Throughout the night of the 4th, on the 5th, and for half of the 6th, we marched, while oxen fell dead in their yokes ; then we received a fresh despatch ; it appears that there had been a false alarm, and so we countermarched ; on the 6th, two squadrons of Australians, which we had met and swept back in the ebb-tide of our retreat, were ordered to press on, in the hope of their being able to regain the precious ground, and, above all Rustenburg.

In the meanwhile, 120 men, under Major Hanbury-Tracy, a young officer of the Blues, had

been sent back by Baden-Powell to Rustenburg, and the general was himself hastening to his support. It appears that the most conflicting reports had been furnished by our intelligence department. The British troops at Pretoria had lost all touch with the enemy ; the most alarming information continued to reach General Baden-Powell during July 4 and 5. Contradictory orders followed one another in rapid succession and, on the 7th, between dawn and sunset, Colonel Plumer's brigade received eight distinctly conflicting commands. The responsibility for this mismanagement must rest to a great extent with the headquarter staff at Pretoria. It certainly is difficult to understand why it should have been necessary to withdraw all protection from the western line of communications. A promised reinforcement of 2,000 men had not left Mafeking by the second week of July.

Though two squadrons of Australians were hastening from the westward and General Baden-Powell, with his entire force, was returning from Commando Nek, a position some 18 miles from Pretoria, to which he had penetrated by July 4, the position of Major Hanbury-Tracy was decidedly precarious. By the 6th 300 of the enemy had surrounded the gaol and adjacent heights occupied by his 120 men and demanded his surrender. To an order from Lord Roberts directing him to evacuate Rustenburg, Major Hanbury-Tracy had replied :—" I consider a retirement would be most impolitic and I purpose holding out." It is unnecessary to say that his reply to the enemy was of no less determined a character. On the 7th, in the early morning, the Dutch opened fire upon the British force, and a 37 millimètre Maxim gun was also brought to bear upon the garrison of the gaol. Fifteen men of the British South Africa Police, under Lieutenant Bateson, held a kopje in the vicinity, though for some hours they were subjected to an exceedingly hot fire. By 11 a.m. the two squadrons of Australians with a 12-pounder had approached to within a mile or two of the town, and, hearing firing, immediately dashed forward. While one squadron streamed across the open plain to the south of Rustenburg, the other clattered through the town, and, working to the eastward, enveloped the Boer right flank. At 400 yards the Bushmen dismounted and poured in their fire upon the now retreating enemy, and by the time that their field-piece had come into action and had sent one screaming shell after the flying Dutchmen Rustenburg was saved. Many Boers in the town who had already made submission had rearmed themselves to fight Hanbury-Tracy ; on the approach of the Bushmen these quickly disappeared, juggling their rifles out of sight. A few, however, were taken. The losses of the Australians were insignificant, more especially, strange to say, in the squadron which galloped across the open plain ; several of their horses were shot, two men were killed, and an officer and two men were wounded. Though wounded in two places, Captain McKattie led his men, who followed up the retreating Boers, of whom he himself captured two with his own hand. On July 9 the general re-entered Rustenburg, and during the next week or so this important position was strongly reinforced.

The mountains around Rustenburg form a part of the Magaliesberg range. To approach the town from the westward either Magato's or Oliphant's Nek must be crossed. By the 10th the Boers had seized Oliphant's Nek, but, racing for Magato's Pass, we arrived there first on the 11th. East of Rustenburg the Magaliesberg sweeps round to the northward and again crosses the Pretoria road. Some passes in that neighbourhood, the best known of which is Commando Nek, fell into the enemy's hands on the 11th ; thus, by the 12th, General Baden-Powell was completely cut off from Pretoria, this success of the enemy being emphasized by another of the many humiliating surrenders of our troops which have periodically occurred during this campaign. In the meantime our western line of communications was by no means free from menace ; nor did it appear improbable by the third week in July that the defender of Mafeking might have to submit to a second siege —this time with worthier opponents, men who had fought at Spion Kop and Wagon Hill.

If, in his first occupation of Rustenburg, General Baden-Powell had appeared to ignore the possibilities of an attack, he made up for his previous carelessness when, in the second week of July, he found himself confronted with the possibility of an investment ; the 75 millimètre gun, a piece of artillery whose cumbersome mounting places it in the category of guns of position, was hauled to the top of a precipitous kopje. The Boers have taught us during this campaign that where there's a will there's a way to move heavy ordnance ; in this instance, 20 mules and many men made a way. From this lofty site our gun frowned circumspectly upon Rustenburg plain, stretching to the eastward and northward in smiling contrast to the sombre heights of the Magaliesberg. Besides placing the 75 millimètre gun in position, bombproofs were constructed, troops were disposed for the defence of the town, and arrangements were made for the rationing of the forces. General Baden-Powell well maintained his reputation for forgetting nothing.

The rapid evacuation of Rustenburg on July 4 had not been without its effects, and the 300 Boers established at Oliphant's Nek, during the first week of July, had increased to over 1,000 by the 15th, while the Boer general was putting forth all his energies to render his position impregnable. During the latter part of the month the enemy continually showed himself upon our line of communications to the westward, and

skirmishes took place between our patrols and the Boers.

On July 20 the General received information that Lord Methuen, with 6,000 troops working from Krugersdorp, had succeeded in occupying Hekpoort and that it was his intention to attack the enemy at Oliphant's Nek from the south-west. General Baden-Powell was directed to move on the 21st to positions commanding the north-eastern exit of the pass and so to bar the escape of the Boers. Colonel Plumer, in furtherance of this plan, held a force of 300 men with four guns in readiness to move out at dawn at the first sound of Lord Methuen's cannon. It has been explained that, to the eastward, the country was open, hence any concealment of Colonel Plumer's operations was an impossibility ; added to this, our intelligence department had given information, on the previous day, of commandos threatening our front and flank from the east and north-west. The General, in consequence, apprehensive of the safety of Rustenburg, insisted on a considerable force being retained in position to guard the town ; and, as a result of this, one of our most mobile corps in South Africa was debarred from assisting Colonel Plumer in his attempt to perform the office of terrier to Lord Methuen as ferret. Owing to contrary winds and intervening features of ground the action fought by Lord Methuen, which had been commenced at 8 a.m. to the westward of the pass, was not announced by the sound of his cannon to the officers at Rustenburg until 11 25, by which time the force from Krugersdorp had succeeded in working its way into the nek.

Previous to this the main body of the enemy, estimated at 1,000, had contrived to slip round Lord Methuen's left and was well on its way to Potchefstroom. To catch the remaining 400 Dutchmen, Colonel Plumer should have been already in position at 11 a.m. ; but, unfortunately, owing to the causes referred to above, he was still at Rustenburg and had some seven miles to march. The Protectorate and Rhodesia regiments started at once, but they reached the outlet to the pass only in time to see the enemy streaming away to the south-east ; fire was opened upon the retiring columns by the Canadian Artillery, but the range was too great for it to be effective. The failure of this scheme was a great disappointment to Baden-Powell's force, but worse was to follow. At 5 p.m., after Colonel Plumer had returned to camp, the officer on the look-out observed a string of wagons moving eastwards—the Boers had again tricked the British. On their retirement in the morning they had left, concealed in a kloof, some 90 wagons, hoping that they might escape observation ; their hopes were realized, and the whole convoy was saved to the enemy, who succeeded, during the night of the 21st, in joining hands with the commandos holding Wolhuter's Kop and Commando Nek.

During the night of the 22nd Lord Methuen, who was encamped at Oliphant's Pass with some 7,000 men, received information that General Delarey was actively employed in the south and had succeeded in destroying the railway line between Krugersdorp and Potchefstroom. At 4 a.m. on the 23rd, accordingly, Lord Methuen struck his camp and moved back to Krugersdorp; thus all his plans for the following up of the enemy and for the clearing of General Baden-Powell's lines of communications had to be post-poned. In the meantime a fresh misfortune had overtaken our column. Lord Methuen's des-patches, received by General Baden-Powell on the 20th, were brought in by two cyclists, who reported that on their way from the westward a Boer laager had been seen by them some 25 miles away on the Zeerust road. As the General was expecting a convoy of wagons from Mafeking, he directed a patrol of between 200 and 300 men to leave Magato's Nek on the afternoon of the 21st to reconnoitre and, if possible, capture the Boers, whose laager had so nearly proved a pitfall to the cyclists. During the morning of Sunday, the 22nd, a succession of messages reached Rusten-burg from Colonel Airey, who commanded the patrol in question. These messages conveyed the impression that, with reinforcements, the capture of the Boers who were threatening our convoy could be effected. A section of the Canadian Artillery, two squadrons of police, and two squadrons of the Protectorate Regiment were accordingly despatched forthwith ; while from Magato's Pass 200 more Australians, under Colonel Sir A. Lushington, moved at a trot to join Colonel Airey's Bushmen and Queens-landers. Unfortunately, Colonel Airey's messages were quite misleading, and the facts were as follows :—On Saturday night, the cyclists, acting as guides to Colonel Airey's patrol, were fired upon by a Boer picket ; they succeeded, how-ever, in regaining the main party uninjured. In consequence of this occurrence the Austra-lians were extended across the road, and so they camped for the night. Before dawn on Sunday Colonel Airey, having made a detour to the northward, again struck the Zeerust road at that point where it dips into the hollow formed by the Koester river. The enemy, who occupied the high ground on either flank, after allowing the advance guard to cross the river, opened fire upon the patrol. The Australians, dismounting, sought such cover as was available ; but so exposed were their horses to the murderous volleys of the Boers that in a short time more than 200 were lost. The first reinforcement to arrive on the scene was the party from Magato's Nek under Colonel Lushington. That officer, either ignorant of the true state of affairs or anticipating from Colonel Airey's morning des-patch an easy capture of the Boers, did not at first appear to grasp the nature of the action required of him. It was Father Hartmann, the

Roman Catholic pastor to the forces, who first discovered the misfortune which had overtaken the patrol. In riding towards the sound of firing he first came upon dead horses in great numbers ; he then saw the Australians huddled together in a hut, from the roof of which a white flag, composed of five handkerchiefs knotted together, was flying. Finding his party completely surrounded, Colonel Airey, after consulting with his second-in-command, had decided to surrender. A message was, accordingly, sent to some men, who, under Major Vial, had become separated from the patrol, but that officer flatly refused to lay down his arms. In the meantime the Boers made no attempt to take over prisoners ; whether they recoiled from the awkward task of disarming the Australians while a certain portion of the force was still showing fight, or whether the handkerchiefs doing duty as a white flag were too soiled for their colour to be recognized, will never be known, for, before the enemy could make up his mind to consummate his success, the Protectorate Regiment, under Captain FitzClarence, had galloped to the spot. Captain FitzClarence, taking in the situation at a glance, after ordering a detachment to move to the southward, so menacing the rear of the Boers, opened fire upon their flanks, causing them to retire at once.

The sun went down that night upon the forgotten five handkerchiefs, and the first glance of dawn embraced this symbol of surrender. Father Hartmann, for whose valour throughout the campaign with the Rhodesian Field Force no praise can be too high, was the first to observe that the shameful flag was still fluttering aloft. With the intention of tearing it down he climbed to the roof, only to be beaten in the race for a memento by the native servant of an officer.

Our loss in this unfortunate affair was one officer and five men killed and 19 wounded, while quite 200 horses were killed or captured. The Boers left two dead upon the field.

The story of a bayonet charge in connexion with the surrender, which went the round of camp and which even appeared in the newspapers, was the product of some imaginative brain ; bayonets appear to serve as pinions on which imagination soars, for in this campaign they have led to many extraordinary fictions ; a not less remarkable instance than the above being the night sortie from Mafeking, in which no single Boer was killed, though the most blood-curdling details of hand-to-hand slaughter were vouched for by the garrison.

By the 23rd General Baden-Powell's position at Rustenburg was, if anything, worse than before the arrival of Lord Methuen. He had certainly gained possession of Oliphant's Nek, but his western line of communications was effectually cut, his scanty supply of rations was still further reduced by the transfer of five wagon-loads of provisions to Lord Methuen, and the enemy had been encouraged by his successes. For most of our reverses the blame must rest with our Intelligence Department, whose information was throughout defective. Had it not been for Miss Back, a young lady residing at Woodstock, who most gallantly rode through the Boer lines at considerable risk to herself to give warning to our officers, there is little doubt but that the disaster of Sunday, the 22nd, would have had more far-reaching results. As an instance of the blunders into which the department fell it may be remarked that, while Delarey was destroying the line between Potchefstroom and Krugersdorp, he was emphatically declared to be 20 miles to the north-west of Rustenburg. From the 23rd Rustenburg remained in a state of siege, all communications with the outside world being effectually severed. No incident is worth recording until the month of August.

The approach of General Carrington from the west and of General Ian Hamilton from the east now threaten to extinguish the individuality of the little column which, under Colonel Plumer, has penetrated to the interior of the Transvaal, after suffering hardships to which those of other troops in this campaign must be reckoned insignificant. Fights have been fought and reverses sustained, but the existence of the force has been more than justified. That the foes encountered by it were throughout of the same quality as those who for so long held in check the British Army it would be unseemly to maintain ; yet certain correspondents have, without sufficient reason, accused the Boers of cowardice, forgetful that, in degrading the enemies of Great Britain, they have hardly exalted the prowess of her arms.

When Colonel Plumer's column was brigaded with that of General Baden-Powell after Mafeking's relief it was already cast into the outskirts of the penumbra. Now that heavy divisions of the vast British army of occupation are approaching, it becomes finally veiled in the deeper shadows of the eclipse.

14th Sept. 1900.

WITH GENERAL CARRINGTON'S FORCE.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

OTTOSHOOP.

General Carrington left Mafeking at 2 30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 14, with 2,500 men and a large convoy of provisions, in all about 310 wagons. The column reached the frontier the same evening. An early start was made next morning, and, as the Boers were supposed to be in force in the neighbourhood, the road was well scouted on both flanks by the N. S. W. Bushmen. Nothing, however, was seen

of the enemy until the advance guard came within a mile and a half of Ottoshoop, when a few of their outposts opened fire; this was replied to, and after ten minutes the Boers were seen in full retreat on the Zeerust road. They were followed up by a squadron of Bushmen for three miles, when they came upon them again holding strong positions on each flank. After a couple of hours' sniping our men retired on Ottoshoop, where the General had made his camp. The town was occupied at 3 15 p.m., and was immediately searched, but only a couple of suspects were found, who were made prisoners, the majority of Boers having passes given from the captain who was left in command of the town when first occupied after the relief of Mafeking.

On the following day our scouts were sent out early, and at 6 45 we discovered the enemy holding the same kopjes as the night before. On receiving information from the scouts, General Lord Erroll brought up the first brigade, and the 88th Battery R.A. immediately shelled a kopje on the left which was held by the enemy and drove them out at 8 45 a.m. ; but it was not considered advisable to send men to hold the position, which would have been somewhat difficult to support, as the enemy held a high kopje in front which commanded the only approach to it. Two guns were now despatched to shell a kopje on the right where the enemy could be seen, and on their evacuation the position was taken and held by Paget's Horse. Soon after this the enemy opened a heavy fire from a small bushy kopje on the right of the road, and the details under Captain Baker extended down the face of the hill and opened a steady fire on them. Two guns were brought up and soon silenced the fire, the enemy retreating to a kopje immediately behind, leaving one dead man and three loose horses, which were taken later. Captain Baker then ordered Captain Rigall to mount one troop and send them across to hold the position. In order to do this the men had to gallop over a long valley, and were exposed to a heavy fire from the second kopje. During this charge Trooper Gibson, N.S.W. Bushmen, was killed and one horse wounded. On taking the kopje the Bushmen opened a heavy fire on the next ridge, which was returned by the enemy, most of whose bullets, however, went high. This rifle duel went on for about three hours, until 2 30 p.m., when Colonel Grey came up with the Second Brigade and a battery of Pom-Poms, and the kopje was heavily shelled for a quarter of an hour, when the enemy evacuated it and took up a fresh position further on, holding two kopjes, one on each side of the road. The New Zealand Battery then came up and placed two guns on the second kopje, and shelled the left-hand kopje, clearing out the enemy in a very short time. They were seen retreating to a large farmhouse close by, from which it was found impossible to dislodge them, as it was known to contain women and children, and they had also taken the precaution of hoisting a Red Cross flag. In the meantime a dismounted troop of New Zealanders were sent to take the kopje on the right. The ascent was very difficult, owing to the rocky nature of the ground, and the enemy were evidently in force on the top, and kept up a very heavy fire on the advancing troops. The kopje was, however, successfully carried and held by our men, the enemy taking to the bush, but leaving 18 horses and three dead behind, while we lost Captain Hardy and two men killed and one officer and seven men wounded.

Meanwhile, things had been lively on the left flank, where the Boers had taken up a rather strong position amongst some trees, and Lieutenant-Colonel Peakman, commanding the Kimberley Mounted Corps, was sent with a squadron of men to dislodge them. He rode up rather too close to their intrenchments, and a brisk fire was opened on him, compelling him to retire. Just after starting his horse was shot through the spine, and fell on the Colonel, breaking his collar-bone. The men then took up a position behind some stones and opened on the enemy, who retired shortly after, our men getting out with one man slightly wounded. The next thing that attracted the notice of the General was three Boers, who disappeared behind a kopje on the left front close to a small farmhouse, and Cameron's scouts were sent out to reconnoitre in that direction. They advanced across an open plain for over 1,000 yards and dismounted behind a small rise, and took up their position on the summit. Immediately a heavy rifle fire opened on them from the farmhouse and kopje, to which they replied, but soon after a heavy volley poured into them from their left flank and they were forced to retire, which they did in splendid order, crossing the open plain under a heavy cross fire, without losing a man. Firing ceased as the sun went down and pickets were stationed on the kopjes we had taken from the enemy. They were seen in full retreat the same evening, but, as darkness soon set in, it was impossible to ascertain how far they were from our outposts. The losses on our side were Captain Hardy, N. Z. Regiment, Trooper Gibson, N. S. W. Bushmen, two troopers N. Z. Regiment killed ; ten men wounded ; also seriously wounded, Captain Fulton, N. Z. Regiment. The Boers lost six men killed and probably many wounded, while they also acknowledge that there are 15 missing. Amongst the wounded is Commandant Schwartz, who has had his jaw shot away and is not expected to live.

It is worth while noting that all the Boers

who were killed had passes on them. This again goes to prove the utter absurdity of this system at present in vogue of giving indiscriminate permits to all men who give up their arms. Permits were granted by the chief staff officer at Ottoshoop to men who gave up absolutely obsolete rifles, which it was quite clear had not been used for some time. Surely it must appear perfectly clear to every one that, when Lord Roberts gave the order that "all Boers delivering up their arms and wishing to return to their farms should be granted a permit of protection from the English Government, he meant that the Boer who wished to secure such permit was bound to give up a weapon which satisfied the officer detailed to give these permits that the arm was one which corresponded with the class of weapon which the wounds on our men showed had been used in warfare, and not an antiquated blunderbuss or 10 bore duck gun which had been brought to the country by the early settlers. One man who was killed was recognized by many of the troopers as a so-called refugee who had left Zeerust with General Carrington a week before and gone to Mafeking, returning with the column as far as Ottoshoop, and deserting from there to fight against us the following morning, having doubtless informed his general of the strength of the force and given full details of our strength and fortifications in Mafeking, &c.

Many of the Boers, it is known, were armed with Martini-Henry rifles. It is quite possible that they have been armed for some time with this weapon, but, at the same time, information has come to hand from trustworthy sources that, on the evacuation of Zeerust on August 8, a large number of Martini-Henri rifles and ammunition were, owing to carelessness on the part of the commissioners or whoever was responsible for them, left behind in the landorst's office, where they had been stored.

19th Sept. 1900.

COLONEL HORE AT ELANDS RIVER.

The following extract from a letter received from an officer in General Broadwood's Cavalry Division describes the defence by Colonel Hore and his colonials at Elands River. The date of the letter is August 17. After giving some details of the pursuit of De Wet, the writer says:—

"My squadron did not get into camp until 8 at night and then heard the order '*reveille* at 12, march at 1 o'clock,' but later this was changed, and we were told to go to the relief of Hore. We went 25 miles on the 15th towards Zeerust and then six miles to this place, Brakfontein, on the Elands River, 30 miles east of Zeerust. Now I must tell you about what I think is the most gallant performance in the whole war. There are no reporters here to write it up and to see the place, and I do not suppose that the newspapers will do the performance half justice. We arrived here at 1 o'clock yesterday and in the afternoon I went round the laager and collected what details I could. Hore arrived here with 400 Australians, Bushmen's Corps chiefly, on August 3. On arrival they had a smoking concert and a bonfire. They were on a small stony rise, half a mile from water, and hills practically all round. On the morning of the 4th the Boers opened on them with a gun, or rather six guns, and during that day fired 360 shells into them as well as rifle fire. The Australians had only one gun, a muzzle-loader, and the fourth shell jammed, and the fire was too hot to get it out. That night the guns still played on them, but they dug for all they were worth, and in the morning, though in many places it was solid rock, they had tunnels, shelters, and splinter proofs, and the place was fairly strong. That morning the Boers got a Pom-pom on to them at about 1,500 yards range, which fired one shot, and then 25 of them, under Lieutenant Arnet, who seems to have been a most gallant fellow, crept into the bushes, and the Pom-pom never fired another shot that day. The Boers dared not go near to serve it. That night Arnet was killed; he was walking in the dark and a shell struck him. One of his men said, 'I reckon Lieutenant Arnet defended this camp for the first two days.' Next day Delarey sent in to say the Boers had occupied Rustenburg and Zeerust, and the whole country was in their hands. He told them that he had got up his 94-pounder and if they did not surrender he would blow them off the face of the earth. Colonel Hore answered that he was in command of Imperial troops, who did not surrender. All that day they were shelled. At last they saw Carrington coming to their relief. He got one gun in action between two hills, but had all the mules shot, and was obliged to take mules from his two carts to get the gun away, but had to leave the carts. He then went away, having been told, I suppose, the garrison had surrendered. Then the Boers began to loot, but suddenly getting scared, set fire to them and burnt all the stores they wanted so badly. Next day Delarey sent in to say that, in consideration of the gallant defence, he would allow the garrison to take three days' rations and escort them to the nearest British troops, allowing the officers to retain their arms provided they would give up their stores. The Australians said, to one man, I believe, they would rather die than give in, and if the white flag was put up over the laager they would go on shooting just the same. Well, this continued until we hove in sight of the Boers' lookers out, when they cleared out. There were 2,800 of them and they had six guns. The Australians were 400 strong, with one gun and a Maxim. Of these 75 were killed or wounded, and out of 500 horses they only had 60 left alive. Cronje's laager was a perfect fool to it. I went into one of the holes; two men could live absolutely underground, and it was all done in one night. The Boers in the 11 days they were besieging them fired 1,800 shells into them, and then every night, remember, they had to get water for themselves and water their horses half a mile across the open. Of course they did it in the dark, but the Boers used to lie in wait for them and trained their guns on to the spot where they had to water. This was stopped by the besieged sending out a party of 50 to stop them as they went into the bushes, but of course the guns fired all the same. I think these fellows deserve anything."

26th September 1900

LORD METHUEN'S CHASE AFTER DE WET.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MAFEKING, Aug. 31.

Lord Methuen arrived here on the 27th inst. in order to give his men a well-earned rest, and to rehorse and equip them before commencing operations in the northern districts. He has been practically always marching and fighting since he left Bosbof on May 14, and he chased and cornered that very "slippery customer" De Wet, who at the last moment escaped, owing to the evacuation of Oliphant's Nek by General Baden-Powell. On August 5 Lord Methuen occupied Potchefstroom in order to watch Mooi River, so as to give information of De Wet's movements, should he attempt a westward movement after crossing the Vaal, but with orders not to oppose his crossing should he attempt to do so. On the 5th orders arrived from Lord Kitchener asking Lord Methuen to occupy Scandinavia Drift, and, if possible, to block Winkel Drift, on the Rhenoster River. He accordingly concentrated his forces there on the 6th, it being known that De Wet held a position at Schoeman's Drift. The Colonial Division, 1,500 men under General Knox, was on the Rhenoster, the infantry being to the east of it, the cavalry and mounted infantry brigades, under Generals Broadwood, Ridley, and Little, holding positions east and south-east of De Wet, leaving only the north side open. News was brought in that De Wet was crossing into the Transvaal by Schoeman's Drift; Lord Methuen at once started with mounted men and guns across country to effect a flanking movement, sending for four companies of infantry, two guns, and 15 squadrons to join him at once from Rockraal. As it was imperative that no unnecessary delay should give the enemy any additional chance of escape, as little baggage as possible was taken, the troops slept without blankets, and an advance was made at daybreak. The enemy were found to be holding some kopjes west of Tygerfontein, but were soon driven out, and Methuen thus gained possession of the road north from Schoeman's Drift. The enemy also held a stronger position to the east, and the Imperial Yeomanry were sent to outflank them. After two attempts the latter were forced to retire, owing to the impossibility of moving quickly over the rough, rocky ground, and at the same time being under a heavy rifle fire from the adjacent hills. This was the signal for a regular bombardment, and the infantry prepared to advance against the position. The Boers now brought up some guns, but removed them without firing a shot, as the Yeomanry opened a heavy rifle fire as soon as they made their appearance. So hasty was the enemy's retreat that they left one ammunition wagon behind, and it is believed that their guns were broken down, owing to the awful ground they had to get over. The position was eventually taken by the infantry, but the enemy offered a very determined resistance, and retired only at the last moment. The whole convoy and army were next seen retreating north-east on the north side of the Vaal, along a road not marked on the map. Lord Methuen decided to camp at Tygerfontein, as his men had had a hard day's fighting, losing six officers and nine men killed and wounded. The following day was spent at Tygerfontein, as news was brought in that De Wet contemplated doubling back to the Free State, and the general decided to rest his men and await developments. The same night Captain Cheyne arrived on foot, having come through the Boer lines in order to give Lord Methuen general dispositions of our other columns. An order also arrived from Lord Roberts saying that Potchefstroom was to be evacuated. Orders were therefore sent to the garrison to destroy all stores which they were unable to carry away, and to join the main body as soon as possible.

A start was made at 7 a.m. on the 9th inst., and the enemy were located in the Buffleshoek Mountains. Some guns and a large body of Yeomanry were at once ordered to advance, and before long the Boer convoy was seen in front, heading north-east. A heavy fire was opened on it, and stopped some of the wagons. The enemy then made a rush to the flanks to occupy kopjes and so protect their wagons, but, after having been well shelled by "Pom Poms," the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry bravely rushed the position, thus commanding the pass from the right, whilst the 5th Imperial Yeomanry took some small hills commanding it on the left, affording protection to our guns, which were exposed to a heavy rifle fire. Lord Chesham was on the extreme left with the 10th Imperial Yeomanry, to frustrate any outflanking movements the enemy might contemplate making in that quarter. The enemy, however, still held a kopje east of that taken by the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, and were eventually shelled out of it, but not until they had wounded Colonel Younghusband and killed Lieutenant Knowles and some men. A further advance was then made, some dead and wounded Boers being

found *en route*, and a few wagons were shelled, but most of the convoy had gone; some of the enemy were seen retiring across our front, but were not shelled, as some men were seen amongst them who looked like English prisoners. The enemy were followed up and shelled until late, when it was decided to occupy the newly-gained positions and camp for the night. Towards the close of the fight Lord Kitchener's guns were heard on the right, and signalling communication was established between the two columns. He had seen the Boer convoy trekking north-east, but it appears that De Wet had collected his scattered forces and marched in a north-westerly direction.

Early next morning a move was made due north, and a runner sent through to Smith-Dorrien, who held the railway, telling him to try and head De Wet on the Gatsrand; but his force was chiefly infantry, and therefore not equal to the task. A large cloud of dust was seen ascending the pass from Bufflesdorn, but too far to be reached, and next morning De Wet had once more disappeared. It was then decided to march on Fredrickstad, so as to keep to the left of De Wet, thus heading him off from the west, where he seemed anxious to go, Lord Kitchener being relied on to hem him in on the east, as the latter was marching on our right about eight miles distant. A cloud of dust in the distance looked like De Wet's rear guard, but turned out to be Smith-Dorrien's men, who were sent out under Colonel Spens to open the pass from his side. Fredrickstad was reached the same afternoon, and a few Boer patrols were seen moving northwards. Smith-Dorrien reported that De Wet had passed close to Welvidiend Station the night before, but his movements were so very rapid that it was impossible to locate him or to have the faintest idea as to when he would make his next appearance. Information came to hand that some of the Transvaal commandos were assembling at Cyferbult in order to join De Wet there or at Mooi River. Lord Methuen therefore arranged a joint attack with Lord Kitchener and left camp the following morning with 1,100 mounted men and ten guns, taking the Ventersdoorp road. The supply question was a serious one, the Colonial Division having neither rations nor forage and the remainder of the troops being very short of both; but everything was loaded on light wagons during the night, and Lord Methuen started off, as lightly equipped as possible, determined to have a really good attempt at capturing the wily Boer general. Beyond Cyferbult, where news of the convoy was heard, some Boer patrols were encountered. About 1 p.m. some of the advance guard opened on a fairly large body of the enemy, when suddenly the whole Boer convoy came into view crossing our front, distant about four miles and moving north-west. A position was selected as probably commanding the road, and some of the Yeomanry were sent to take it, but on their getting close it was found that the enemy had forestalled them. A very heavy fire was opened on the troops, who had to take shelter until the arrival of the guns. These, owing to the heavy ground, were a considerable time in coming into action, and a large portion of the convoy disappeared, but by a flank movement they managed to surprise the enemy and poured a heavy shell fire into them at about 1,500 yards range, scattering them in all directions, one shrapnel shell killing five of the gun horses. This gun, on being taken, turned out to be one lost by Gatacre at Stormberg. On went the column, 5th Imperial Yeomanry and 3rd Imperial Yeomanry on the left, with "Pom Poms" and 4th Battery R.A., 10th Imperial Yeomanry and Major Powell's Battery in the centre, whilst the Colonial Division brought up the right flank. The horses were dead beat, but the column still kept on, and after four miles had the satisfaction of catching up some wagons. Thereupon the Boers fired them and retreated, leaving behind the prisoners, who numbered about 60 men. The wagons chiefly contained ammunition, and the explosions continued far into the night; rifle and gun ammunition was also scattered all over the veldt. Five wagons were burnt, and two were abandoned a little further on; these, with nine others captured earlier in the day, made 16 wagons and one gun captured, 60 prisoners released, and about a dozen Boers taken, while the troops had done over 32 miles' marching.

It was thought that by keeping on De Wet's track we might further increase his demoralization, and, as the North Lancasters had been left with General Baden-Powell to occupy Oliphant's Nek, his capture was considered a certainty, should Lord Methuen be able to turn him in that direction. Oliphant's Nek is one of the most important strategical positions in the Transvaal, as there is no road over the Magaliesberg Mountains for 40 miles eastward, and was held by our troops; while the Magato Pass, 12 miles westward, was commanded by the troops at Rustenburg and had been fortified by Baden-Powell. At 3 a.m. on the 13th a move was made, the first object being to find water, which had been unobtainable the night before, and a short halt was made at Kranskop to water horses and fill water-bottles. Soon after starting again we came in touch with the rear guard, without, however, coming into action, as they beat a hasty retreat. Following hard on their tracks, we reached Rietfontein and saw the last of the Boers disappearing in the distance, taking the most easterly road leading to Oliphant's Nek.

News now came in from Lord Kitchener to say that General Baden-Powell had been ordered to leave Oliphant's Nek with all his troops, but he assured Lord Methuen that General Ian Hamilton was sure to be there before the 13th, so that we could reasonably look upon De Wet's capture as a certainty, as there was

only one loophole of escape—namely, along the road leading west towards Zeerust. Lord Methuen, believing in making everything secure, left at 1 30 a.m. without baggage and with only half a day's rations, to cut off this one point of egress. The road was very heavy and the night dark, so that progress was of necessity very slow, and at 5 a.m. he found that the road he intended to follow was occupied by Boers. It was then also that he heard that De Wet had made a movement to the west, apparently not liking to risk Oliphant's Nek. We therefore started at 8 a.m. to make a long detour in order to enclose him. Signalling communication was opened with General Broadwood, who was engaging the enemy's rear-guard and reported De Wet's convoy to be moving ahead and only a few miles west of Oliphant's Nek. We still kept on and soon saw dust away to the east, and came upon a few Boer patrols all heading in the same direction.

It seemed now as if nothing could save the Boer convoy, English generals being on all sides, and the only road of escape being held by General Baden-Powell. At 2 30 came the awful news. De Wet had found Oliphant's Nek open and was now marching out. No one can describe the feelings of both officers and men. Here we had been enduring forced marches, heavy days of fighting, privations of all sorts, including want of food and blankets, but of these we had thought nothing when we believed that at last we had our man. And then to find that the bird had flown! Never during the whole war have we encountered a man of such vital importance as De Wet is to-day and never has there been such a flagrant piece of mismanagement as the evacuation of this all-important position. Why is it that even to-day these mistakes are made? Another question suggests itself—viz., why was Potchefstroom evacuated? The infantry garrison were of no possible use to Lord Methuen for the class of work he had undertaken, and two train-loads of stores were burnt which would have been a great boon to the troops on their occupation of Fredrickstad. Moreover, the moral effect of having to pull down the British flag is always bad, and should never be incurred except in cases of the direst necessity. Every column in the district which knew of Lord Methuen's pursuit was loud in its praises of him. And it is not too much to say that nothing could have exceeded his zeal and generalship. He was untiring in his efforts. Shortness of food and forced marches both by night and by day were counted as nothing. No movement of De Wet's was left unchecked, and to Lord Methuen alone belongs the credit of having got the Boer army, a force far exceeding his own, into a corner from which, save through the mistake of others, there was no escape.

Lord Methuen speaks very highly of the behaviour of the Yeomanry, whose courage and determination have given them a place amongst the best and bravest. In all, Lord Methuen marched 84 miles in three days, besides fighting on the 12th, and having already marched and fought on the 7th, 9th, and 10th; in all 160 miles and four fights in eight days. General Douglas also did a fine infantry march, covering 68 miles in 76 hours, and joining Lord Methuen on the evening of the 15th.

9th October 1900.

THE ADVANCE TO LYDENBURG.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MACHADODORP, SEPT. 12.

The three days of fighting around Belfast, culminating in General Buller's successful attack on the strongly-intrenched position of Bergendal, resulted in the complete discomfiture of the enemy's forces. Retreating in dire confusion to Machadodorp, some of the Boers, striking south from there, found their way back to the fertile uplands of Ermelo and Carolina, others hurried eastward by road and rail through the valley of the Elands River towards Nelspruit, while the bulk of the forces, comprising the remnants of the Crocodile River, Ohrigstadt, and Lydenburg commandos, sought shelter in the mountain fastnesses of their country homes. The last circumstance, taken in conjunction with the knowledge that Louis Botha and all the heavy guns had followed in the same direction, rendered the invasion of the Lydenburg district inevitable, and to General Buller and his force was allotted the task of carrying this into effect.

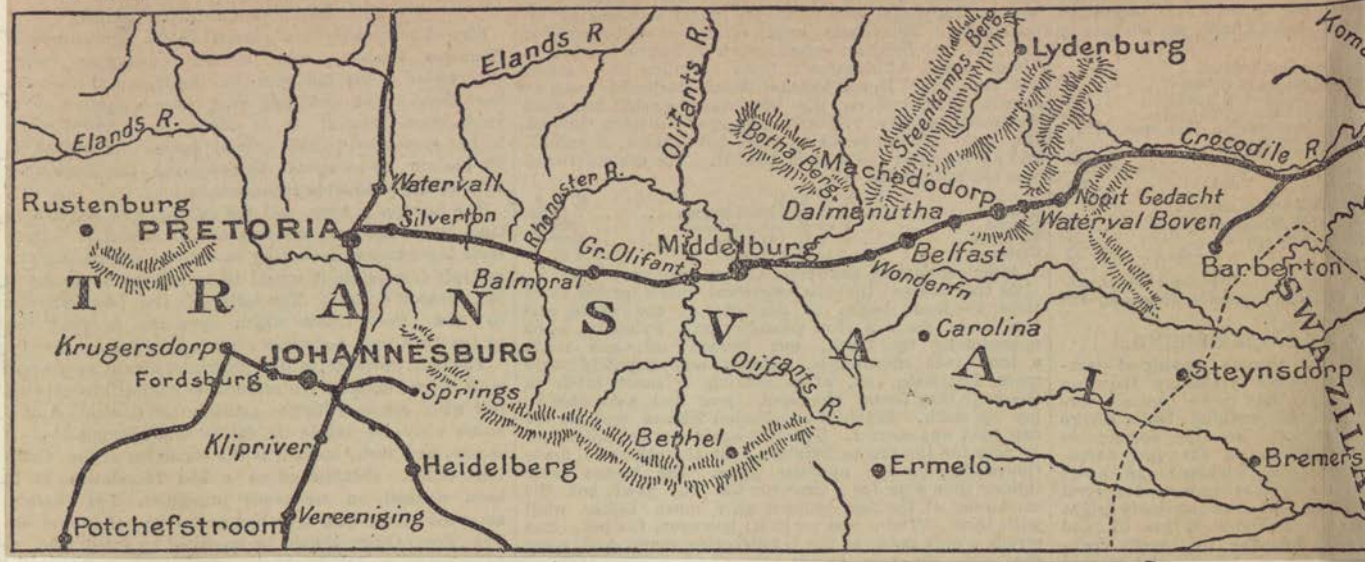
Returning to Helvetia from the vicinity of Nooitgedacht, where his presence had been instrumental in obtaining the release of 1,800 of our prisoners of war, General Buller started from there on the morning of September 1, the main road from Machadodorp to Lydenburg having been selected as the route of advance.

The expeditionary force was composed of General Lyttelton's Division, comprising six battalions of infantry under Brigadiers Kitchener and Howard, the Second Cavalry Brigade under General Brocklehurst, a Mounted Infantry Brigade under Lord Dundonald, and 40 guns, which, besides R.F.A., included two 5in. and two 4·7in. naval guns and one howitzer battery.

The road from Helvetia rises steadily for a distance of about ten miles, climbing moderate ridges and skirting high plateaux, until at Schoeman's Nek it reaches its highest altitude. At this point the valley of the Crocodile River suddenly bursts full into view—"a vast amphitheatre of bold mountains, outlined in fantastic shapes, crested by precipitous cliffs, intersected by dark and forbidding ravines, looking down on a smiling plain dotted all over with picturesque homesteads and cultivated lands, traversed from

24th Aug 1900.

MAP OF THE COUNTRY BETWEEN PRETORIA AND KOMATI P



west to east by the swift Crocodile and numerous other clear mountain streams—in the light of the setting sun a picture of rare beauty, rich in colour and grand in effect."

From the strategical point of view the aspect is less inspiriting and pleasing, nothing more nor less than an impenetrable barrier of rocks rising from all points of the compass to block the progress of the column on the selected line of advance. A dusty, steep descent, winding for eight miles through cuttings in the mountain sides, leads to the level of the valley, and by nightfall the column had reached the bridge which spans the Crocodile River at Badfontein. So far no resistance had been encountered, and no sign of the enemy had been observed along the line. On Sunday, September 2, camp was struck at an early hour, and, the mounted infantry leading the advance, the force headed for a small elevation traversed by the road, before the main ascent at the north end of the valley begins. The shelter of this kopje had hardly been reached when the air suddenly became alive with the roar of heavy guns, and a hail of shrapnel and common shell descended on the road below.

Two 6in. guns, mounted like watchdogs on either side of the road where it crests the summits ahead, made further advance impossible, whilst a third 6in. gun well on the right flank enfiladed the advance already made. Simultaneously 4·7in. howitzers and high velocity guns, cunningly concealed in wooded dongas, came into action and joined in the bombardment. A position of vast natural strength, it had been well-nigh rendered impregnable by the defences of the foe. There was nothing to be done but to retire to the camping ground of the previous night and patiently await the result of a flanking movement from Belfast towards Lydenburg, *via* Dullstrom, which had originally been suggested by General Buller and which had now become imperative.

Though only a part of his division had reached Belfast, General Ian Hamilton, to whom the flanking operations were entrusted, decided to start without delay with such part of his force as could at once be mustered. Three battalions in all—Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Gordons, and Royal Scots—30 mounted C.I.V.'s, accompanied by a section of A Battery R.H.A., 20th Battery of R.F.A., two 5in. guns, and two pom-poms, represented the strength with which he left Belfast, with a difficult country before him. At the same time General Brocklehurst, with his brigade of 5th Lancers and 18th and 19th Hussars, was detached from Buller's force to work round by Helvetia, and then, steering a north-westerly course, to join hands with Hamilton's column and assist him in his operations. On Wednesday afternoon the flanking column, which had swept aside some half-hearted resistance offered by small bodies of the enemy and pushed ahead most vigorously notwithstanding the difficulties of the route, was joined near Wemmershoek by the cavalry brigade. The same afternoon helio communication with the main column was established and the tell-tale appearance of a derrick over the 6in. gun on the right flank made it clear that the movement had not remained unobserved and that the enemy was preparing for a speedy retreat. General Howard,

MAP OF THE COUNTRY BETWEEN PRETORIA AND KOMATI POORT.

with two battalions of infantry and three batteries, immediately proceeded to attack the mountain on the right and succeeded in reaching the summit without opposition, but the gun had already disappeared. With the right thus firmly established and General Hamilton well ahead on the left front, the way was clear for the main advance on the following morning. At 8 a.m. Lord Dundonald's mounted infantry, followed by General Kitchener's brigade, led the way, and soon advanced scouting parties were searching the country ahead, whilst others, boldly following the track of the road, dared the foe in full front of his stronghold. It was all the work of a short hour, and in that time it became evident that the enemy's resistance had vanished into thin air ; the position was evacuated, and the road to Lydenburg some ten miles distant was clear of the foe.

A long plateau stretches from the summit of the pass towards the town of Lydenburg, giving a clear view across the country. Away to the left a long line of dust clouds circling round the base of a high conical mountain indicated the approach of Hamilton's force ; a few miles ahead, from the top of a kopje, the spire of the Lydenburg church emerging from a dense cluster of foliage loomed into sight. In the immediate foreground a squadron of 19th Hussars swept over the veldt, steering straight for the town, while on the right, where the Spitz Kop road struggles in serpentine windings to gain the heights overlooking the town, a 6in. gun brought into action ineffectually attempted to stop their progress. Within a quarter of an hour the Hussars, returning from the town, rode back to General Brocklehurst's camp with the keys of surrendered Lydenburg in their possession. The flanking operations had been entirely successful, and with practically no casualties the goal had been reached. The marching of the troops, particularly that of Ian Hamilton's force, which traversed a country described as a second Khaibar Pass, and General Brocklehurst's cavalry, which covered 80 miles in four days over precipitous mountain paths and deep defiles, is deserving of great credit and praise. On Friday, the 7th of September, the troops entered Lydenburg, and at noon the Union Jack floated over the captured town.

9th October 1900.

THE NATAL VOLUNTEERS.

With the return of the Natal Volunteers to their respective centres in the colony, which is reported from Pietermaritzburg this morning, the tangible evidence of the breaking up of the Army in the field in South Africa is apparent. During the last fortnight other of the Volunteer contingents have been released from their military obligations. Already the Canadian infantry battalion and the City Imperial Volunteers have started on their homeward journey. The Natal Volunteer force has now been in the field over a year. It was on September 25, 1899, that the Natal Government considered the menace to its frontiers of sufficient gravity to warrant the mobilization of the Volunteer force. The Natal Volunteers must not be confused with the various irregular Volunteer corps which found birth in Natal during the closing months of last year. Such corps as the Imperial Light Horse, Bethune's Mounted Infantry, and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, though their depôts and regimental centres were in Natal, were in no wise corps representative of the colony. Although some of them contained a small proportion of Natal colonists, yet for the most part the corps named were recruited from Englishmen who had been resident in the Transvaal prior to the general exodus of British-born subjects, or immigrants of all classes and denominations from England and the various British colonies. A large number of Australian, New Zealand, and Indian settlers, who had been unable to enrol themselves in the first contingents which left the colonies, made their way to the South African ports at their own expense and enlisted in the corps which were being raised locally. The Natal Volunteer corps are of a class apart. They consist entirely of Natal colonists, for the most part born and bred in the colony. The majority are seasoned men of many years' training, and a high percentage have already seen service in Kaffir and other local wars.

Under normal conditions the Volunteer force in the colony consists of 1,500 men, divided into seven corps—namely, Border Mounted Rifles, Natal Mounted Rifles, Natal Carbineers, Umvoti Rifles, Durban Naval Volunteers, Natal Volunteer Field Artillery, and the Durban Light Infantry. But in the abnormal circumstances of a threatened invasion by a civilized Power extraordinary recruiting took place, and when the Natal field force took the field the Volunteer force was over 2,000 strong. Throughout the campaign, which has sadly thinned the ranks of those who originally marched to stay the invasion, recruits have been plentiful, though in some cases those volunteering their services were not *bonâ fide* colonists.

But, although the names of the several Natal corps have not been conspicuous in many of the "dramatic" incidents of the campaign, the Natal Volunteers have done yeoman service, and have steadily borne, in common with the Ladysmith

16th October 1900.

relief force and the Natal field force, the main stress of the war which had to be met in Natal. The bulk of the mounted Volunteers, the naval gunners, and the field battery were part of the Ladysmith garrison, and it will be remembered that, when the siege was raised, General Sir A. Hunter's first act as chief of Sir George White's staff was to wire to the Governor of Natal, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, an appreciation of the loyal support which had been given by the Volunteers. Referring to the men, the telegram said, "I never want to serve with better."

Many of these Volunteers were Dutchmen, of Dutch descent or related by close family ties with the enemy, whom they confronted at the Imperial call. This was especially the case with the Umvoti Mounted Rifles. This corps was almost exclusively enlisted from the Natal Dutch, and its headquarters were in the so-called disloyal districts of Natal.

The chief incidents in which the Natal Volunteers divide honours with other corps are the sortie from Ladysmith under Sir A. Hunter, when the "Gun Hill" battery was destroyed, and the attack upon Wagon Hill and Cæsar's Camp on January 6, when at daybreak the Natal Mounted Rifles supported the company of Gordon Highlanders which cleared the northern plateau of Cæsar's Camp, while, on the same day, the skilful handling of the Natal Volunteers in the great plain of Ladysmith by the late Colonel Royston made it possible for the 53rd Battery Royal Field Artillery to come into action with devastating effect. But these are only incidents. Throughout General Sir Redvers Buller's operations the Natal Volunteers played their part in the general operations bravely and loyally.

Nor, while mentioning the Natal Volunteer force, would it be fair to leave unnoticed the Natal Mounted Police, a force which, in proportion to its small numbers, has more than done its share. This force was the first to shed its blood in Natal in the defence of the Empire, and, as the recent affair at De Jagers Drift goes far to prove, it will probably continue to suffer the stress of war long after the other Volunteer corps have dispersed to their homes.

The Natal Volunteers took the field under the command of Colonel Royston. This capable and popular officer unfortunately succumbed after the relief of Ladysmith to enteric fever, which he had contracted during the siege. Colonel Royston had seen much frontier fighting, and accompanied the late Archibald Forbes, if not through the whole, yet certainly through a part, of his famous ride after the battle of Ulundi.

THE SURPRISE OF POTCHEFSTROOM.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

POTCHEFSTROOM, SEPT. 12.

On September 8 General Hart's force, consisting of 42nd, 44th, 56th, and 59th Companies Imperial Yeomanry and Marshall's Horse, the whole under Colonel Wilson, 27th Field Battery R.A., under Major Stokes, one 4·7in. naval gun, under Commander Grant, R.N., and one "Pom Pom." the 2nd South Wales Borderers, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and wing of 2nd Somersetshire Light Infantry, left Welverdiend Station, midway between Krugersdorp and Frederickstadt, at 9 p.m. and marched northwards towards the upper waters of the Mooi, or Marsh River. Three miles short of the river a halt and bivouac was ordered, as we were approaching some dangerous kopjes. At 6 a.m. the march was continued; arriving at the river at 9 a.m., we crossed, and camped on the north bank, making a few prisoners. Orders were then given to send out foraging parties to visit all the farms with parties consisting of some mounted men, one or two companies of infantry, and to clear all the farms of forage, carts, and horses. This was done. Small parties of Boers were seen, but no firing was reported, and they all returned safely to camp. On the 10th this same work was carried on, and a great deal of forage, carts, wagons, &c., was brought in, receipts for which were given in all cases. About midday a good deal of firing was heard from an outpost line to our left and westward, so a squadron and two guns were ordered out, and soon after some 20 rounds had been fired drove the Boers back, who, it was said, consisted of 150 men.

At 4 30 p.m. orders were given to march on Potchefstroom. At 6 p.m. the column was divided into three sections—A, B, and C. A section consisted of G.O.C. and staff, the mounted troops, four guns and the "Pom Pom," and two companies of the Dublin Fusiliers in mule wagons. This section was to march at the rate of five miles an hour. Section B, under Colonel the Hon. W. Roche, 2nd South Wales Borderers and half of the South Wales Borderers and the naval gun, were to come on as fast as they could, subject to the pace which the oxen drawing the naval gun could travel. Section C consisted of two guns, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, half of South Wales Borderers, and wing of 2nd Somersetshire Light Infantry, with the whole of the baggage and transport, travelling at the rate of 2½ miles an hour, and starting an hour after Section A. These orders were carried out, and all through the night the whole column was on the move. The road was good, but in places very rough and

stony, and clouds of dust rose up now and again from the cavalry and guns, and almost hid them from any one out on the flank 50 yards away. The thick reddish dust which rises seems almost to suffocate one. No lights and no smoking were allowed. Everything went well. Not a shot was fired at us, although occasionally we thought we were being watched by seeing signals—such as fires lit on the veldt and a lamp shown at a farm—here and there, as we passed on, mile after mile, under a bright moon and a cool, cloudless sky. We passed to the north and westwards of Frederickstadt about 12 midnight, 1 a.m., and 2 a.m. respectively, and on the way passed many farmsteads and one Jew's store, outside of which were two Jews, who were made prisoners and taken on with us, for fear that any information should be carried to the Boers. Unfortunately this store was not searched, as we heard afterwards that eight Boers were sleeping inside. We passed on and crossed the Mooi River by a ford and a rickety wooden bridge, and on to a fine, broad road. Just before reaching this road, and close to where we first struck the railway west of Frederickstadt, we came on to a nasty muddy drift. This caused almost an hour's delay in getting the guns over and the mule wagons, the men in which were sound asleep and had to tumble out at a moment's notice ; but all were got over without any accident, and on we went. Sections B and C, instead of turning to the left just west of Frederickstadt, kept straight on, in order to avoid this bad drift. In so doing they made the march three miles longer, but avoided any delay or breakdown. We—that is, Section A—travelled on and arrived within a mile of Potchefstroom at about 3 30 a.m. We placed the guns in position, sent the two companies of infantry in different detachments, stopping the exits of the town by the Yeomanry and Marshall's Horse as well as was possible with the force at command.

By the time this was all done day had just begun to break. Then we sat down and awaited events. The first prisoner who fell into our hands was a young man riding one horse and leading another, carrying a carbine Mauser, coming out of the town and going in the direction we had come from. He was promptly bagged and looked very foolish. Firing was beginning to the east and south of the town, and a few Boers were seen riding out and breaking away, heavily fired at, five escaping away to the north. A party of nine who came riding towards our guns were heavily fired at ; one was seen to go down, and the others escaped. Firing was still going on in the town, but by 9 a.m. this had almost entirely ceased ; the town was in our hands. By 9 a.m. the South Wales Borderers and 4·7in. gun arrived. The latter was placed in position and the Borderers advanced through the town to the old fort on the west side. Posts were kept out round the town watching all approaches and exits. By 10 a.m. Section B began to arrive, and by 12 noon the whole force was encamped on the north side of the town, with the Borderers on the west. So ended a march of between 36 and 38 miles in 15 hours for the infantry and 44 for the cavalry, who had further to go in order to get round the town and on to the south and west sides of it. To show how complete was the surprise of the Boers, we captured between 60 and 80 prisoners, and eight wounded ones have been found since. They are all lodged in the prison. There are still some left who have hidden away in the thick high rushes along the river bank ; and to-day we are burning the rushes to get them out, also to discover any hidden ammunition and rifles. As these rushes are said to cover their secret hiding places, it is also being beaten through by a number of Kaffirs, who delight in the job. The success of the operations was marred by the sad death of Lieutenant Maddocks, our Brigade Signalling officer, an excellent and charming young fellow attached to the Headquarters Staff. He was a very promising officer, belonging to the 2nd Somersetshire Light Infantry, and had been all through the war. His funeral took place this morning in the cemetery on the west of the town. The General and his Staff were present.

Potchefstroom is a large place, not so much on account of the number of houses, but because of the large compounds and gardens where the inhabitants keep their cattle, horses, and goods. It has a nice club, containing cricket ground, lawn tennis courts, and bicycle track, close to the station ; quantities of trees, of blue gum, fir, and mimosa, which is refreshing after the burnt veldts. The town is about four miles long by three broad, and is well watered by the Mooi River, which is a deep, clear, fast running stream. Many of the inhabitants are in a very bad way for food. Such things as coffee, tea, sugar, &c., are impossible to get, and many of the English children in the convent have not seen their parents since the war began or even heard of them. Most of them were refugees and had to leave the country as best they could in the early stages, or else stand their chance of being commandeered. The town numbers among its residents many Griqualand West Boer women, who are a very rabid set and violent, and looted the stores, knocking over the police placed by the Boers after our last evacuation by General Smith-Dorrien a month back.

20th October 1900.

CAPTURE OF A BOER CONVOY.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

OTTOSHOOP, SEPT. 10.

On the 8th inst. Lord Methuen's column left camp at Mafeking, re-horsed and equipped, the first day's march being Grootfontein, situated about ten miles out and about four miles south of Lowe's Farm, which has been the Boer laager in these parts for some time. The column consisted of the following troops :—1st Brigade Imperial Yeomanry, 3rd, 5th, 10th Regiments, section Mountain Infantry of 1st Royal Munster Fusiliers, 4th Battery R.F.A., one section 2nd Battery R.F.F. with two "Pom Poms," 1st Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, half battalion Northamptonshire Regiment, and details of R.E. and R.A.M.C., with ambulance and supply columns. Lord Chesham (Brigadier-General) commanded the Yeomanry, and Colonel Kekewich the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. Soon after crossing the boundary into the Transvaal some of the enemy's snipers opened on the advance guard, which was composed of the Yeomanry, but the "Pom Poms" came up and shelled some farmhouses in front, and a few of the enemy were seen to mount their horses and clear away. A body of Yeomanry with a "Pom Pom" were now sent out on the left while the main body advanced slowly. A few shots were fired from another farm on our left flank, but again the "Pom Poms" came into action with the same results as before, and after crossing what might have been, in wet weather, a very nasty swamp, the column encamped on top of a small hill close to a farmhouse inhabited by friendly Boers. Just before arriving a large convoy was seen away on our left, heading for Molopo Oog, where Commandant Vermaas was supposed to be in laager with three or four hundred Boers. As a joint attack had been arranged for the following morning, the convoy was allowed to proceed unmolested, and outposts were placed on the surrounding kopjes, who exchanged shots with the enemy's snipers until sundown. We had one man wounded, but not very seriously.

On the following day, 9th, we made an early start, leaving Grootfontein at 5 30 a.m., our line being Molopo. It had been formerly arranged that Major-General Douglas, who took over General Carrington's command at Ottoshoop, was to come down the Lichtenberg Road, and Lord Errol to head for Kliplaat's Farm, a little more to the right, so that the three columns would all work to Molopo from different angles, thus cutting off as much as possible the main roads which the enemy might use as a means of escape. The 3rd Yeomanry were sent on in skirmishing order and opened out, covering a large front; while the main body, consisting of the 4th Battery R.A., 2nd Battery R.F.F., infantry, details and convoy, came along the road in the immediate centre. At 6 15 we heard heavy gun fire on our left flank and knew that Douglas had started, and before long our advance guard were fired on from some trees on the right. After a few shots were exchanged the enemy hastily retreated, as the country in front and on both flanks was very open and offered little or no cover, and took up their next position directly in front of the advancing column, opening fire at long range. Again they were shelled out by the "Pom Poms," and on gaining the ridge we could see several of them entering the bush a mile and a half off and bearing to the right. The 3rd Yeomanry were now reinforced by the 10th, the 5th remaining with the main body, and Brigadier-General Lord Chesham was told to move to the right, whilst the main body pushed on direct to Molopo, which they reached with slight opposition at 10 30 and encamped. The country on our right was comparatively free of trees, and composed of long sweeping valleys, with every now and then a low stone-crowned kopje, while on our left were some high thickly-wooded kopjes and valleys. On gaining a small ridge from which we had driven the enemy, we saw a long line of red dust running through the wooded valley on our left, and going parallel to our line of advance, and soon we were able to make out the Boer convoy, which was going along the Lichtenberg road. A little further on we found the enemy holding a rather strong position, which was not evacuated until we had fired several "Pom Pom" shells into it and several volleys from the advancing Yeomanry who eventually gained the ridge, and there before us stretched a large plain, showing the last few wagons of the convoy disappearing round a kopje on the left flank and numerous Boers galloping off to take up new positions on our right and left fronts. The game was now becoming fast and Lord Chesham handled his men with excellent judgment, spreading out his line of advance until it covered something over two miles. Whenever the enemy opened on a troop of advancing men they dismounted and returned the fire, covering at the same time the advance of the remainder, who, on gaining a good position, opened on the enemy, thereby allowing the others to come up. In this manner such a thing as a halt was impossible, as the enemy could never get advantageous positions from which it was possible to check our advance, and were constantly kept on the run. About two miles further on we came on the first wagon. It flew the Red Cross flag, and contained several of our field hospital cases. From here on for three miles more the road was strewn with all sorts of *impedimenta* thrown out to lighten the wagons, and every now and again we would find an abandoned wagon with its tired oxen lying down close by. Still we pressed on, capturing wagons at every turn, the enemy being totally demoralized, and running before us like deer. But at 3 o'clock the pursuit had to be abandoned, and we had to allow the enemy to get away with the rest of their convoy, which it is believed numbered just over 80 wagons. General Douglas, whose force consisted of about 900 bushmen from the R.F.F., two sections 88th Battery, R.F.A., one section 2nd Batt., R.F.F., and one section 37th Battery, R.F.A. (howitzer), two "Pom Poms," 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, half battalion 2nd Northampton Regiment, with details, R.E., R.A.M.C., met with considerable opposition on the left flank, the enemy holding some very strong positions, but he opened on them with the 50lb. howitzers, which soon scattered them, and eventually came up on our left flank, his mounted troops assisting in the pursuit in conjunction with the Yeomanry, but always keeping well upon the left flank, so as to hold the enemy in check, should they contemplate moving in that direction.

Lord Erroll also met the enemy in force, and after some severe fighting succeeded in capturing 16 prisoners with some rifles and horses. The total captures of the day were as follows :—Thirty prisoners, 22 wagons, three bicycles, two heliographs, 40,000 rounds of Mauser ammunition, and a large number of oxen, sheep, and goats, &c. Lord Erroll returned to Ottoshoop the same evening, whilst General Douglas encamped on a kopje about two miles distant from Molopo Oog in the Lichtenberg direction. Our casualties were 13 wounded.

24th October 1900.

THE ATTACK ON PAARDEPLAATS.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MACHADODORP, SEPT. 17.

Lydenburg lies in the hollow of a horseshoe range of mountains rising 1,500 feet above the plateau of the town. The Spitzkop road, aptly described by General Ian Hamilton as the "frog" of the shoe, crossing the townlands and the farm Paardeplaats, is the only artificial causeway which leads from the town towards the east. Up this steep causeway Louis Botha had dragged his heavy guns to the crest of the range, and from the summit of the pass he commanded the country below. Conscious of the difficulties which would confront an advancing foe, capable of gauging to a nicety the amount of resistance he might offer without incurring any risk of losing his guns or unduly straining the questionable valour of his demoralized men, he decided to essay another stand. On the afternoon of September 7 three 6in. Creuzot guns commenced to play shrapnel on the town and surrounding camps. The situation was intolerable, and, accordingly, it was decided that the position should be attacked on the following morning by the combined forces of Generals Buller and Ian Hamilton.

The plan of attack was as follows :—General Lyttelton, resting his right on the Spitzkop road, should make the ascent with General Kitchener's brigade on the north of the road ; General Ian Hamilton, with his left on the same road, should simultaneously attack with General Smith-Dorrien's brigade on the south. The country to be traversed by General Lyttelton is a quick succession of high rugged ridges yielding a fair amount of dead ground, while to the right of the road a gradual slope to the crest-line is interrupted by a transverse deep cañon flanked on all sides by nearly perpendicular cliffs, accessible only by the trunks of trees which have found root in the rocky crevices. Active preparations for the attack had hardly started when Louis Botha resumed the bombardment of the previous afternoon, his guns, favoured by the altitude and a strong east wind, raking a semi-circle seven miles in radius. General Smith-Dorrien's brigade was ready at an early hour, and his battalions, sheltered behind a protecting ridge, awaited the signal to advance. At 10 a.m. General Kitchener's brigade—Devons, Leicesters, and 2nd Gordons—was seen to emerge from its camp to the north of the town. The movement did not escape the vigilance of the enemy, and in a trice all guns were trained on the advancing bodies of men. Bursting high in the air, shrapnel dropped harmlessly to earth, and the concentrated fire proved all but ineffective. To the south no time had been lost ; taking advantage of every bit of cover, long and parallel lines of Royal Scots, 1st Gordons, and Royal Irish, in extended formation, showed that Ian Hamilton's force had joined the general advance. For a time from a central coign of vantage the movements could be distinctly followed, then, as if swallowed up by magic, the advancing force disappeared from view. A weary turn of waiting elapsed before some figures appearing on the skyline indicated that General Kitchener was in possession of the first ridge of hills. At this signal three batteries of artillery shot to the front, hugging as much as possible the undulating folds in the ground, which concealed their approach to the road. The base of the road had barely been reached when the quick eye of a staff officer detected tackle rising above one of the gun-parapets on the mountain crest ahead. Once more our generals were face to face with tactics with which frequent repetitions had made them most familiar. The shout of "They are off with their guns" was heard on all sides, and simultaneously all energies were doubled in a vain attempt to frustrate the manœuvre ; 5in. guns which had ineffectually battled against long range and strong head wind moved nearer to their target, and the 20th Battery, dashing up the road, unlimbered quickly, half way up the slope. Galloping in its wake General Hamilton and his staff pulled up in time to see it go in action. Then the enemy, who had carefully reserved their fire, vigorously opened on the guns with two Pom Poms cleverly hidden in clefts of rock, and the 1lb. shells bursting in quick succession, shattering into small fragments on impact with the stones around, threatened disaster to gunners and the general and his staff alike. It was a critical time, but the battery, searching the crest line with deadly accuracy, soon silenced the fire of the foe. Within a short time the 53rd Battery, travelling over rough ground on the right of the road, had likewise come up, while far away on the left the roar of artillery indicated that General Kitchener's guns were at work. Two hundred yards behind them a 5in. howitzer battery had come into action, while still further back 5in. siege guns pounded away. Here, there, and wherever wooded crevices had promised shelter scared Boers were scuttling away seeking new cover from our deadly shrapnel. Meanwhile both to right and left infantry battalions streaming up hills, emerging from their temporary interment, quickly forged ahead. General Buller, who had been watching the operations from below, now rode up evidently pleased with the result of the work. Losing no time the batteries again advanced still further up the road, and before another half hour had elapsed General Hamilton and his staff, preceded by only 12 scouts, had crested the summit of the pass. Simultaneously, as if moved by clockwork, Leicesters, Devons, and Gordons, pouring in from the left, mingled with Royal Irish and Royal Scots, who had worked up on the right. Once again luck was against us. Dense clouds of mist sweeping over the mountains in a driving wind had enveloped the landscape as in a shroud. Here and there small rifts in the cloud made possible a glimpse into the country beyond. A natural causeway flanked on either side by precipitous ravines and a few scattered Boers hurrying away was all that was revealed. The pass was ours, but the Boers and their guns had gone. The troops, which had marched splendidly to take a position described by General Ian Hamilton as the strongest he had ever seen, dropped down weary and fatigued. Our casualties for the day were small.

3rd Nov. 1900.

THE ADVANCE TO KOMATI POORT.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

MARITZBURG, OCT. 3.

Having achieved the object of his mission to Lydenburg, General Ian Hamilton parted from Sir Redvers Buller on September 9, and, covering the intervening distance of 40 miles in two days, reached Helvetia on the morning of the 11th.

The advance on Komati Poort, which had been delayed pending his return, was now resumed, the 11th Division, which had meanwhile remained stationary at Waterval Onder and Helvetia, leading the way. Evacuating the Elands valley the enemy had fallen back on Nelspruit, and thus General Pole-Carew was enabled to effect the ascent of the redoubtable Devil's Kantoor at Kaapsche Hoek without encountering any opposition. Quickly replenishing his empty convoys, General Ian Hamilton was soon on the move again, and on the evening of the 13th, when the last wagons of the Guards' Brigade were disappearing over Kaapsche Hoek, he went into camp at Nooitgedacht, only eight miles behind General Stephenson and the 18th Brigade.

Important news had meanwhile reached railhead at Godwaan Station. First and foremost ex-President Kruger had left the Transvaal for Lorenzo Marques, the greatest secrecy about his movements having been maintained. In the north Sir Redvers Buller, steadily pushing back the enemy before him and overcoming the formidable mountain barriers of the Mauchsberg and Devil's Knuckles, had safely reached Spitzkop. In the south General French, travelling with great rapidity and brushing aside the enemy's resistance on the heights above the Komati River, had taken the main body of the foe totally unawares and made his entry into Barberton. No surprise was therefore manifested when Boer prisoners coming into camp reported the country to Kaapmuiden clear of the enemy. It was evident that the frontier would be reached without serious opposition; still 90 miles of solid marching remained to be done and the natural difficulties ahead were great indeed. A country full of natural beauty—rock-crowned ranges of mountains, wooded with weird and strange looking trees, enchanting valleys clothed with bright-hued and variegated vegetation, clear mountain streams breaking through wild ravines to join the swift-flowing Crocodile, alive with the rustling flight of antelopes and the noisy music of brilliantly coloured birds—it is as treacherous as it is seductive. A secure haven for cattle and stock during the winter months against the cold blasts of the high veldt, it is a seething hotbed of malarial fever during the summer, peopled only by a scanty few whom sheer necessity forces to remain. Already we were within measurable distance of the dreaded fever season, and our troops, who but three weeks before had frozen on the high veldt at Belfast with a temperature of 15deg. of frost, were trudging along under the scorching rays of a pitiless sun, the glass registering 125deg. in the sun. Climbing one hill but to descend again, with another ascent ahead, one deep donga following another in monotonous regularity, our men marched stolidly on without flinching, whilst the jaded transport cattle, dying in scores on the way, groaning under the incessant lash of the drivers' whips, struggled stubbornly along to reach the goal.

Descending from Kaapsche Hoek, General Pole-Carew, followed by the force under General Ian Hamilton, struck out in the direction of Kaapmuiden, while General Stephenson, keeping to the railway, secured the line of communication, and, reaching Nelspruit, effectually held the southern approach to the Spitzkop road. On Tuesday, September 18, Lord Roberts and his staff left Machadodorp, and, travelling by rail, reached Nelspruit the same afternoon. Here ample proof was forthcoming of the enemy's dissolution and discomfiture. A jumbled mass of twisted ironwork amid smoking remnants of charred spokes and wheels was all that was left of what were once gun-carriages and limbers. Krupps and Creuzots, Armstrongs and Maxim-Vickers had all added their contribution to this curious medley. Further down, on a loop line, some 50 carriages sent down a steep incline stood piled above one another in shapeless confusion, the contorted iron frames peering like gaunt skeletons through the shattered woodwork below. The *débâcle* had begun in earnest. The President fled his country, Louis Botha ill, the true Boer despondent, and all controlling influence gone, the foreign brigade—Irish, Germans, Italians, Hollanders, and French—a heterogeneous rabble, had got the opportunity it long had hoped for. Henceforth wanton destruction of property, regardless of friend or foe, was the sole watchword. Culverts, bridges, supplies, engines, buildings, rolling-stock, guns and ammunition—all were sacrificed to their rage for destruction. By a curious irony of fate the Netherlands Railway Company, which had proved so stanch a friend to the late Republic during the campaign, seemed specially singled out for damage.

Steadily, in face of the many obstacles which broken bridges and other untoward occurrences presented, the forward march continued. Majors Ford and Tack, of the Army Service Corps, and Captain Leggett on the railway were indefatigable in their endeavours to prevent any serious breakdown in bringing forward supplies for the troops; and it would be difficult to over-estimate the sterling work which was accomplished by these men during one of the most trying times in the whole campaign. The fine bridge over the Kaap River was found a total wreck and, pending the construction of a deviation, all goods had to be carried across the river before they could proceed to Kaapmuiden. Here further proof of the enemy's destructive activity was forthcoming. Derailed engines and shattered trucks, huge heaps of smouldering sugar, rice, and coffee met the eye, and it was only owing to the enterprise of a storekeeper that 3,000 bags of flour escaped the fury of the wrecker. General Pole-Carew left Kaapmuiden on the 22nd, and, covering 23 miles, reached

Hectorspruit on the 23rd. From here to Komati Poort a distance of 20 miles through the waterless Lebombo Flats remained to be done. After a most fatiguing march this was successfully accomplished, and our troops were in possession on Monday, the 24th. Continuing his march General Ian Hamilton reached Hectorspruit on the 23rd, and here one of the officers of his staff discovered 11 of the enemy's guns blown to pieces in the stony bed of the Crocodile River. Resting his men during the day he resumed his march on the afternoon of the 24th, and, covering the waterless waste during the night, the whole of the advance force reached its destination without once encountering the foe. The rest of the story was soon told. Part of the force with Botha and Ben Viljoen, some 1,500 strong, selecting the Selati-road, was making for Pietersburg in the hopes of effecting a junction with Delarey. The foreigners, who had intended some resistance on the Lebombo mountains, had been persuaded to a different course, and, destroying all they could before their departure, had peacefully crossed into Portuguese territory. The Komati bridge, which had been undermined with dynamite, was saved at the last moment. The station of Komati Poort itself was a mass of flames—trucks, stores, station buildings all ablaze—the work of Captain King, of the Irish Brigade. Near the bridge one-half of a 6in. Creuzot gun still resting on the carriage was all that was left of a once-dreaded Long Tom, and the railway to the frontier was littered with the remains of gun ammunition, broken Mausers, and a shameful waste of useful supplies.

5th Nov. 00. - Written in London. -

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

A RETROSPECT.

The operations in South Africa no longer involve military problems of special interest. From the time when Lord Roberts, having accomplished his fine movement upon Pretoria, and having drawn forces from the western frontier and from Natal to the heart of the Transvaal, secured a firm grip upon the railway system the war changed its character. Large movements on the part of the Boer leaders could not be carried out, and they were thrown back upon irregular methods, troublesome and prolonged, but necessarily incapable of producing any permanent military results. Utilizing their individual mobility, their knowledge of the country, and the advantages which could be derived from a whole countryside in sympathy with them, the Boers devoted their energies to raids upon the railways, and to attacks upon any small bodies of British troops which, either occupying isolated posts or employed in protecting convoys, seemed to offer tempting objectives. By moving about the country even in small force, it was sought to keep up a general sense of insecurity and to prevent the pacification, which was at heart desired by a large portion of the farming population. The raiding commandos subsisted mainly upon local resources, and wherever they passed, by example or by threats, burghers were induced to take up arms and to swell their ranks. It was thus always difficult for the British commanders to gauge the strength of the forces by which they might be opposed, and districts assumed to be pacific suddenly became actively hostile. For various reasons these tactics led to many minor successes, which, being grossly exaggerated, were turned to account to encourage further resistance. At the same time, reports were spread of great preparations in the difficult country between Machadodorp and the eastern frontier, where Mr. Kruger and a remnant of his officials, with a considerable force, were believed to be organizing the defence of a series of impregnable positions. So long as this force could defy Lord Roberts the Boer leaders in other parts of the theatre of war were able to represent to their followers that hope still remained. Foreign intervention, though long delayed, would assuredly take practical form as soon as it was realized that Mr. Kruger was making an heroic stand near the Portuguese border. This view was doubtless widely promulgated, and it would naturally carry weight with an unimaginative people, cut off from all sources of accurate information and always completely ignorant of external affairs. In expecting an earlier military collapse, which would certainly have occurred in the case of a State more highly organized than the Dutch Republics, we did not sufficiently reckon with the effect upon their fighting men of the stream of misrepresentations, which, after the fall of Pretoria, emanated from Mr. Kruger's temporary seat of Government.

In looking back through the chequered phases of this one year's war, it is necessary to admit that on our side also there were many illusions which have been rudely dispelled. On September 11, 1899, when a campaign in South Africa appeared imminent, we pointed out some of the difficulties and uncertainties of the situation. It was then clear that Natal was in danger of being invaded, that it " would have to be occupied by troops transported by sea from great distances, and that the step would necessarily be taken with reluctance as tending to precipitate a crisis.

While, therefore, Russia or Germany could practically strengthen their frontier garrisons without sensibly disturbing the political *status quo*, we are impelled to proceed with a deliberation which is not in full accord with purely military considerations." If we had mobilized early in July, or if the organization of the British Army had permitted the despatch at short notice of 30,000 troops from Great Britain, the whole course of the war would have been different. It was a prevailing illusion that Mr. Kruger would yield to diplomatic pressure not backed by available force, and political expediency, over-riding military considerations, led to a compromise. It was tardily decided to bring the forces in South Africa up to a total of about 22,000 by drawing on India and the colonial garrisons; mobilization was deferred till October 7. Thus the first reinforcements arrived barely in time to prevent Natal from being overrun by the Boers, and the expeditionary force did not begin to reach Durban till after Ladysmith had been closely invested. "I do not feel anxious," wrote Sir O. Lanyon to Sir G. Colley, in December, 1880, "for I know that these people cannot be united, nor can they stay in the field." A similar illusion was prevalent, with much less excuse, last year, and there were advisers of the Cabinet who held that the military strength of the Boers was a bubble easily pricked. Thus it was widely believed that a severe repulse in Northern Natal would suffice to break up the Boer forces, and, knowing only that a body of 4,000 British troops was assembled at Dundee and another somewhat larger at Ladysmith, we hastily assumed that these places were naturally well suited and had been specially prepared for defence. The action of October 20 revealed the fact that Dundee was an impossible position, and, but for the failure of the combined attack contemplated by the Boers, the whole force would have been lost. When, on the 26th, the concentration at Ladysmith was accomplished, after a painful and a hazardous march, it was imagined that our forces occupied an intrenched camp, which, if necessary, could be held with ease. Later it became clear that Ladysmith was exceedingly ill-adapted for defence, that it was practically unfortified when invested, and finally that, if the attacking force had been composed of trained troops, it must have fallen, in spite of every effort on the part of the garrison. The occupation of Dundee, it was discovered, was maintained against the military judgment of Sir G. White.

In regard to the probable requirements of the impending war, we pointed out, a month before its outbreak, that "the *crux* of the matter is a full realization of the new power"—mounted infantry. "To oppose that power successfully," we added, "it is essential to suit the means to the end and to modify in certain respects the methods of the schools." Some weeks later the War Office telegraphed to the finest source of mounted infantry in the world, "Unmounted men preferred." Illusion could not have been more strikingly manifested. When at length the army corps and the cavalry division began, early in November, to arrive in South Africa, we believed that the bulk of this large force, which was apparently ready to take the field, would invade the Orange Free State and strike for Bloemfontein, clearing Cape Colony and inevitably drawing Boer forces away from the investments of Kimberley and of Ladysmith. This was another illusion. At least one-half of the expeditionary force was despatched to Durban and the rest was frittered away between three separate lines of advance. There were thus four separate groupings of British troops, spread over an immense front, and incapable of affording each other mutual support. Moreover, the Commander-in-Chief being involved in a difficult campaign in Natal, there was no responsible head in Cape Colony, where partial chaos soon supervened. A black week of disaster occurred in December, followed by a deadlock at every point except Colesberg, where Lieutenant-General French, adapting his methods to the circumstances, succeeded, with a small force, in holding his own and harassing the enemy. Faulty as was the strategy which substituted scattered efforts with insufficient force for a primary object, that of the Boers was happily even more ill-conceived. In place of attempting to occupy our troops in Natal and throwing their main strength into Cape Colony, where a Dutch rising on a large scale would inevitably have occurred, they also preferred to fritter away their strength, devoting their main efforts against Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking, and contenting themselves with the occupation of Colesberg and Stormberg in small force, which, however, was quickly swelled by local rebels.

The week of disaster may have been a blessing in disguise. It is probable that nothing else would have produced the strong measures, failing which the whole campaign would have been compromised. When Lord Roberts, like Todleben, was called upon to take up the tangled threads of a mismanaged war, there were more than 70,000 British troops, with 170 guns, in South Africa, held in check at all points by a far smaller aggregate force, and in every case the check was on British soil. There was, as we wrote on Christmas Day, "a large force in the field, but no field army." One month after the arrival of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener at Cape Town this vital need had been supplied, and about 40,000 men, equipped for a long march across country, had been concentrated upon the frontier. The work carried on during this month was less showy than that which followed; but it was vital to success, and it proved that the British Army does not lack organizing power of a high order.

As in Egypt, however, that power was manifested on the spot, by soldiers untrammelled by the clerical branches of the War Office. The army corps of German pattern had disappeared before Lord Roberts and his chief of the staff arrived, and its elaborate attached details were scattered broadcast over South Africa. The army which revolutionized the whole aspect of the war as if by magic, and which in three and a half months raised the British flag at Pretoria, more than 1,000 miles from Cape Town, was organized and equipped with transport in the field. Failing such organization, carefully worked out on the spot, the large forces and the masses of stores and animals disembarked in South Africa would have been helpless for the purposes of an offensive campaign.

The first stage of the invasion occupied just one month and produced the relief of Kimberley and indirectly that of Ladysmith, the capture of 4,000 Boers, the occupation of the Free State capital, and the clearing of Cape Colony south of the Orange River. But for two incidents, the success would have been absolutely unqualified. The loss of a valuable convoy on the Riet entailed some disorganization of the transport, with consequent hardship on the troops, and the action at Paardeberg, which has never been satisfactorily justified, encumbered the army with many wounded, for whom adequate provision could not be made. The strain thrown upon the horses of the mounted troops and the transport animals had been so great as to render the army again immobile, and during the prolonged halt at Bloemfontein, necessary in order to reorganize and to re-equip the transport and to bring up stores of every kind, the Boers took advantage of their opportunities. The railway was securely held; the process of re-equipment went forward without great hindrance; but the reverses at Reddersburg and Sanna's Post created a painful impression, while the escape northwards of a long convoy of Boer wagons was peculiarly unfortunate. A weak general would have waited at Bloemfontein until he had cleared his flank and rear. In deciding to advance upon Pretoria Lord Roberts accepted certain risks. He well knew that his communications would be attacked; he could not accurately gauge the measure of the resistance to be expected. Neglecting for the moment all minor issues, he struck boldly forward, making skilful use of large mounted forces, at first on both flanks, afterwards transferring the bulk to his left when nearing the Vaal River. The opposition was nowhere serious, the Boers abandoning one position after another when their flanks were threatened. In 33 days the infantry covered the distance of 250 miles between Brandfort and Pretoria, including a halt of 11 days at Kroonstad and three days at Johannesburg. An average rate exceeding 13 miles a day, maintained in spite of several engagements which, though not strongly contested, must have sufficed to cause much delay to the columns of march, is a notable performance. The decision of Lord Roberts was justified by the most complete success, obtained at small cost, and, although the occupation of Johannesburg and Pretoria did not end the war, as was hoped, it effectually broke the back of the Boer resistance. The baseless illusion that a new era had been inaugurated in which the defence of positions would dominate warfare was effectually dispelled, and the want of mobility in the broad sense, from which we predicted that the Boers would suffer, was practically illustrated. Their leaders were not prepared for the rapid advance of Lord Roberts, and they were quite unable to concentrate an adequate force to oppose that advance. Between such mobility as was shown by De Wet in July and August and the strategic mobility which enables well-organized armies to conform to unexpected developments there is a wide difference. The occupation of Johannesburg and Pretoria, though it entailed little loss on either side, was perhaps the most important achievement of the campaign. The way was opened for an advance from Natal, opening up a new line of communications, and for a movement from the west along the Klerksdorp-Johannesburg railway. The whole manufacturing resources and the vital communications of the Transvaal fell into the hands of Lord Roberts. Pretoria supplied an advanced base, where supplies could be accumulated for flying columns to operate as required and for the subsequent movement on Komati Poort.

After the occupation of Pretoria, exhaustion of the mounted forces and of the transport again supervened and Lord Roberts was preoccupied with the double task of bringing up large numbers of horses and masses of stores by a railway exposed to attack along a distance of 290 miles, and at the same time of dealing, as best he could, with scattered bodies of the enemy, nowhere formidable in a military sense, but capable of much mischief. The period beginning with the occupation of Bloemfontein, during which the Boers developed and maintained warfare of guerilla type, imposed highly responsible duties upon British officers in charge of scattered posts and convoys. In some cases those duties were not adequately discharged, and for a time the defences of the important line of communications appeared to be somewhat imperfectly organized and supervised. There were signs of the tendency to relax precautions after a conspicuous success, which has been shown by British armies on other occasions. It was clear that the main centre of Boer activity was in the Bethlehem district, and at the end of June Lord Roberts despatched a strong column south under Lieutenant-General Hunter to co-operate with Major-Generals MacDonald, Clements, and Paget from the west. Bethlehem was captured on July 7, and by the end of the month Commandant Prinsloo,

caught in the Brandwater Basin between the forces of Lieutenant-Generals Hunter and Rundle, surrendered with more than 4,000 men and a large number of horses and wagons. This most important success, which was directly due to the excellent dispositions of Sir A. Hunter, was obtained with little sacrifice. Meanwhile, Lord Roberts, who had driven back the Boers along the Lorenzo Marques, line in two actions near Eerste Fabrieken, on June 11 and 12, began an advance eastward on July 23, and on August 7 Sir R. Buller moved northwards from Paarde Kop. On August 25 the Commander-in-Chief met Sir R. Buller and Generals French and Pole-Carew at Belfast, and after the fighting of the 27th the resistance of the Boers in this district practically collapsed. Starting from Machadodorp on September 1, Sir R. Buller moved slowly towards Spitzkop, driving the enemy before him through a difficult mountainous region, and General French pressed on to Barberton, which was occupied on the 13th without opposition. On the 24th the Guards reached Komati Poort. The rugged hill country east of Belfast offered great opportunities for the tactics in which the Boers appeared to excel; but the "natural fortress surrounded by a glacis of about 1,500 yards absolutely without cover" near Bergendal Farm was not defended with the tenacity shown on previous occasions, and the subsequent British advance led to a wholesale destruction of artillery material and to the surrender of some 3,000 men to the Portuguese. This, the third great disaster which has befallen the Boers, left them without any centre of resistance or any considerable gathering of fighting men.

Before the outbreak of war we estimated their available strength at about 45,000, to which must be added some 10,000 colonial rebels and perhaps 5,000 mercenaries. It is doubtful whether the force actually in the field at any one time reached 45,000, and the total loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners, cannot be much less than 30,000. That a force relatively so small should have been able to prolong the war for a year is easily explained. Want of preparation, combined with initial mistakes, accounts for four months. Not till the middle of February did we possess an army in the field fit for offensive operations. Three-and-a-half months later Pretoria was occupied, and up to this point the progress of the offensive campaign was more rapid than could have been expected. While the continuous advance into the heart of the Transvaal was absolutely justified, it gave to the Boers opportunities which they were well able to utilize. Their special form of mobility now had full scope, and their leaders found work exactly suited to their capacity. On the other hand, a large portion of the British forces was split up into detachments, whose commanders did not in all cases rise to the level of their responsibilities. Thus a whole series of complicated minor operations was superimposed upon the main issues, and, partly on account of tactical ineptitude, some exceedingly unfortunate reverses were experienced, which greatly hampered Lord Roberts. It is at present impossible to ascertain the cause of these reverses, or to apportion the responsibilities. Their military result was to postpone the advance to Komati Poort and to prolong the war. There seems to have been an attempt to centralize the general direction at Pretoria, and it might have been better to place large districts under competent commanders with a free hand. At first, however, it was not possible to equip the strong flying columns which the situation demanded. The Boers never succeeded in cutting the line of communications for a long period, and when, at length, mobile British forces could be employed under capable commanders they traversed the country at pleasure, driving the commandos before them and latterly capturing large quantities of cattle.

Exhaustion of supplies and of ammunition must soon begin to tell heavily upon the Boers; but it cannot be said that they have at present given evidence of personal demoralization. Comparatively small bodies, lightly equipped, still hold the field and show much activity over a wide area. It is impossible to provide British garrisons for every town and village, and wherever the roving bands of the enemy appear there is a recrudescence of local hostility, even in districts which have been apparently tranquil for months. Large mobile columns are employed in pursuit, but the Boers carefully avoid general engagements and attack only when there appears to be a chance of surprising and overpowering small detachments. There is still need for the exercise of the utmost military precaution, and the capture near Geneva of an outpost of 90 men by 150 Boers on the 28th ult. needs explanation. Mounted forces, marching as light as possible and capably commanded, are the principal requirements of the situation. It is necessary to give the roving commandos no rest and to make every effort to capture their leaders. The work is not easy, and it requires great energy and sound military judgment; but it will be successfully accomplished, and the scale of the operations will steadily dwindle into measures of police. Meanwhile a gradual withdrawal of troops from South Africa is taking place, and progress is doubtless being made with the new organization under Lieutenant-General Baden-Powell, which will be specially fitted for the work that now lies before us. It was announced from Cape Town last week that Lord Roberts, with the majority of his staff, would embark for England about the 20th inst., but his departure may be delayed owing to the illness of his elder daughter. After the Field-Marshal has left a partial decentralization of the military administration in South Africa may be effected, by the

establishment of districts under commanders subject only to general directions from the central authority. The total casualties of the war up to the 31st ult. are estimated at about 46,000, and "the reduction of the military forces" due to a campaign of more than a year is returned at 12,769, of which total 11,739 are accounted for by death, including 6,482 victims to disease.

It is impossible to rank the Boer war among the great campaigns of the British Army; but the peculiar difficulties must never be forgotten. The closest parallel is probably that of the American Civil War, in which an armed people long resisted far superior forces and carried invasion into the territory of the stronger Power. The military potentiality of the Southern States was at first as little realized in Washington as was that of the Boers in London, and disasters therefore resulted. In both cases the issue was certain as soon as adequate force in strong hands was available. The Southern leaders, like the Boers, hoped and strove for foreign intervention in vain; but the former were far less prepared for war than the latter. On the other hand, the Boers, though ably led in a limited sense, have produced no commanders with a genius for war comparable to that of Lee and of Jackson, nor have they shown the discipline and the cohesion which characterized the Southern armies when at their best. Desultory and irregular warfare may still be prolonged for a time; great activity and ample vigilance will still be required. Lord Roberts has, however, accomplished the difficult task which he undertook at a time of great national discouragement and anxiety. He has most fully justified the trust reposed in him by the nation and the Army, and he has earned the lasting gratitude and the reverence of the British people in all lands.

14th Nov. 1900.

WITH LORD METHUEN'S DIVISION.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

RUSTENBURG, Oct. 6.

On September 26 the column reached Rooirantjesfontein, a small Kaffir town situated on a hill, at the foot of which runs a stream. Here we heard that the Boers were passing in small numbers daily, seemingly *en route* for Lichtenburg, which lies due north and distant about 16 miles. It was also reported that Generals Delarey and Lemmer were in the district and that Visser was following behind us.

We started for Lilydale on the 27th, but on reaching Bronkhorstfontein we heard that the enemy in force were advancing from the left, apparently intending to cross our front, and a smart gallop for a couple of miles brought us to a long valley running due east and west, just letting us get a glimpse of Lichtenburg on our left. On crossing a small rise the line of scouts entered the valley. We then saw a force of men riding up in troops, in the same formation as our cavalry and mounted infantry move on the march. This was the line which the Boers were supposed to be taking, but, as on inspection, they nearly all seemed to be wearing khaki and helmets we supposed them to be part of General Douglas's column which we knew was moving along on our left. We were very much perplexed. It seemed after a while that they must be Boers, but we could not open fire "off hand" on men who rode in English cavalry formation and wore our uniform. We were soon enlightened as they opened a heavy fire on us from their horses. There was no cover of any sort, so the outposts galloped back 1,000 yards to the main body, the enemy firing steadily but without doing any harm. The 4th Battery R.F.A. came into action immediately, the enemy advancing to within 1,000 yards of our firing line under rifle fire, where they lay down behind some bushes and high grass opening a very heavy fire on the Yeomanry and guns. Shell after shell was fired into them, whilst the rifle fire went on steadily. Finally they could stand it no longer and retreated up a large hill in our immediate front. Meanwhile the Yeomanry, under Brigadier-General Lord Chesham, with two guns and two pom-poms, advanced on the right, and, although not exposed to a heavy rifle fire, were fired on by a 15-pounder which had been vigorously shelled while crossing our front but had got into position behind the brow of the hill on our extreme right front. We followed the enemy for some miles, but failed to come in touch with them again. As we came into camp at Lilydale we could see a few of their outposts, who apparently were studying our position.

This was made evident on the following morning. Camp was struck early, and at 5 a.m. the column marched out in semi-darkness; but with the first streak of light we heard the boom of a gun, and a shell passed over the wagons and burst about 300 yards away. This was quickly followed by two others, both of which fell wide, and we were able to locate their gun, situated on a high kopje on our right rear, and on the immediate right of and commanding our lately evacuated camp. Our guns were brought into action, but not before two more shells had been fired, one bursting almost underneath a wagon, but without doing any damage, the other landing amongst some led horses and killing one. The gun, however, was taken out of action as soon as ours opened, but a heavy rifle fire was opened on us from our right flank, which extended all along the kopjes to our left rear. The guns continued shelling wherever they could find a body of Boers, and two were sent with the Yeomanry to take the kopjes running along on our right front and work from there along the crest of the ridge towards the rear, clearing out the enemy from the positions they held whence they were pouring a heavy rifle fire on our guns. The enemy again brought their gun into action lower down in the gully and burst some well timed shrapnel close to our guns; they also

tried a pom-pom, but they found it was out of range. After firing a few shells they again moved their gun, getting it safely away, as our shrapnel burst too close to be pleasant and lately the Boers, taught by former experiences, have shown themselves very averse to our shell fire. The pom-poms again did very effective work in the way of keeping the enemy at a fairly safe distance, although their bullets were dropping amongst the guns, without, however, doing any damage beyond wounding some of the horses. As soon as the Yeomanry got within close range, they began to leave their positions, and very soon the whole Boer force was seen retiring, followed up by our guns until out of range. Our casualties during the two days' fighting were two Yeomanry killed and five other men wounded. Lord Loch was also wounded in the foot: the bullet entered near the ankle, and, turning on the bone, came out in the sole of the foot, but, luckily, without fracturing the ankle. The Boer losses are known to be six killed, amongst whom is Field Cornet Delarey, a brother of the well-known Boer general whom, we have reason to think, we shall meet in a few days. The number of their wounded is not yet known, but it is believed to be heavy. The pom-poms again did excellent work, their shooting being extremely accurate; and the shooting of the 4th Battery R.F.A. (Major Butcher) was very effective, notably their last shell at the retreating enemy, which burst amongst a small body of them at something over 5,000 yards range.

On the 29th the column, starting at 4 a.m., did a long march of 21 miles to Rietpan. Here we joined with General Douglas, who had also marched to the same place, as he found it impossible to find water in sufficient quantities along his original line of march, which was mapped out to pass about six miles north through Grootpan. Here, also, we heard particulars of a "war conference" lately held in Lichtenburg between some of the leading Boer generals presided over by General Delarey. They decided that "the cause was hopeless, but they were unanimous that the war must be fought out to the bitter end." It was also known that Delarey had passed through here, *en route* for the Rustenburg district, four days before. We therefore marched on the following morning straight on Rustenburg *via* Oliphant's Nek, passing through the Nek on October 4 and finding it held by our troops. Rustenburg we found garrisoned by General Broadwood's cavalry brigade; while General Clements had marched north on the 2nd inst., and was believed to be working south again on the opposite side of the Magaliesberg mountains, where some of the enemy have been located. General Douglas, it appears, ran into Lemmer's convoy close to Lichtenburg on the 27th, driving them off, but with a loss of eight Imperial Bushmen wounded, four, it is feared, mortally. The Boers are known to be round Rustenburg, and snipe our men on every possible occasion. Five of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders quartered here went out to cut firewood, and were fired on by a few snipers, who killed two and wounded two, the remaining man getting safely away. On the 1st inst. Broadwood encountered the enemy a few miles north of Rustenburg. They were completely surprised and made a very poor fight, losing ten prisoners, 14 wagons, and one ammunition wagon of "O" Battery. We had one man wounded (Blues); their losses are unknown.

On September 27 some of General Douglas's outposts captured a Boer despatch rider, who had been sent from Wagenpadspruit with the following letter:—

"Wagenpadspruit, Sept. 25, 1900.

"To General Delarey.

"Dear Sir,—Yesterday a strong force of the enemy appeared from Crocodile River and Sheerpoort side. They have joined a force in camp at Hartley's Poort. I had expected a forward movement this morning, and personally went to the Maauhaarrandt, but I could not trace any of their movements. I have placed our outposts on the ridges about Hartley's Poort, all in front of the English, right up to Coert-Groebler. I have also sent for two guns to Commandant Badenhorst, to place the same in Wagenpad Nek. A report has just been received that a force of the enemy is proceeding from Commando Nek; they camped last night at Wolhuterskop. That is the reason my despatch riders could not get through to Badenhorst, and a report has been received that the laager of Badenhorst has trekked and is going in the direction of Oliphants Nek. I have sent spies towards Sterkstrom. In case the enemy persist in forcing their way through, I will attack them from the side of Wagenpad Nek. You will see from this that things might become critical, and I request you to come here with all possible speed; as far as I know the way is clear.

"Your obedient servant,

"H. SMUTS, State Attorney."

Such is the literal translation of the letter, from which it appears that the Boer cause does not seem to be progressing quite so favourably as they anticipated, though it does not in any way tend to show that they contemplate putting an end to the hostilities. The fighting now has practically ceased, save in the western districts of the Transvaal; but it must not be forgotten that the enemy have chosen a very rough and difficult country wherein to make what must be their final stand, under command of that very competent man General Delarey assisted by General Limmer, whilst the whereabouts of De Wet is not absolutely known, although he is believed to be on the borders of the Free State.

From what can be gathered from interviews with prisoners, there is no doubt that the war has been greatly prolonged for three reasons—the horror of transportation, the risk of being shot, and the possibilities of a new and still more lenient proclamation. To the uneducated Boer the idea of transportation is one mixed with terrors which are incomprehensible to the educated mind. His first thought is naturally shipwreck; his second is that once in St. Helena or Ceylon he will never see his wife and family again. What can one suggest as more likely to keep the Boers under arms till the very last moment in the vain hope that something will turn up to intervene betwixt him and transportation? With regard to the second reason, in one of the later proclamations it was stated that "burghers who had broken the oath were liable to be shot." In the same proclamation it mentioned that there were also the alternatives of imprisonment for life, confiscation of farms, heavy fines, &c., but the one penalty of death was the thorn which pricked most fiercely. On this point the Boer leaders dealt with stress, and im-

pressed upon their men the uselessness of abandoning the struggle, as by doing so they made death a certainty. It is well known that the proclamations were not given to the burghers to read, but suitable parts were read to them by their generals. It is the latter's interest to prolong the war, as they were drawing a high rate of pay, whilst the burghers not only are unpaid, but also have to make provision for the maintenance of their wives and families during their absence. In the case of Cardua we are assured that he was sentenced to death only after very great pressure had been brought to bear on Lord Roberts who was inclined to impose a more lenient penalty. It stands to reason that Lord Roberts could never have contemplated shooting burghers because they had broken their oath and had been stirred up to rebellion by their own generals, who did not scruple to make use of the most flagrant lies in order to recommand an armed force against us. If we do not mean to shoot the rebels, why put it in a proclamation at all? Passing now to the third reason, we find a great many proclamations issued, each a trifle more lenient than the one before it. The Boers are undoubtedly sick and tired of the war, but they think by holding out they may surrender on more easy terms. There is no doubt whatever that we have hunted the remaining Boer forces into the western districts, and it is possible that by overrunning the country with troops we may shortly hunt them down, but should they show any spirit for fighting in this exceeding hilly and rough country the war may last for another two or three months.