

warrants for the apprehension of Abel Erasmus and the Native messengers. The latter were arrested and brought to Pretoria for trial, while Erasmus surrendered after a time, but every charge against him fell to the ground. Sir Garnet, however, had meanwhile somewhat unwisely denounced him as a traitor at a Pretoria banquet, causing great excitement.

In the face of these serious disturbances (though as yet no overt act of rebellion had occurred, and the people paid their taxes in most cases under protest), and of the active sympathy shown by the Cape and Orange Free State to their Dutch brethren in the Transvaal, by meetings and the getting up of memorials to the Queen, numerous signed and sent to England, Sir Garnet published his scheme for a Transvaal Government. This, however, he stated, was not to be considered as a final one, but only to last until such time as the Boers desisted from seditious practices, when a just system would be granted to them. Sir Garnet's scheme was that of an Executive Council, to consist of five official and three non-official members, and a Legislative Council, consisting of the members of the Executive Council, the Chief Justice and six non-official members. This was by no means well received or held in favourable estimation by the Boers. Moreover, the general discontent was enhanced by the arrival of intelligence from England of the positive statement made by the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, in answer to repeated applications from the Liberal opposition members and deputations from members of societies, &c., that "under no circumstances whatever would the Transvaal independence be restored to the Boers." An equally positive but more poetic declaration of the same sentiment was made by Sir Garnet himself, to the effect "that as long as the sun shone the Transvaal would remain British territory." Every one then felt that things must speedily come to a crisis. Thereafter followed in quick succession alleged illegalities and irregularities in connection with the ill-chosen appointments of outsiders to the various public appointments, from the judicial bench—when a Cape Colony judge, De Wet, for personal reasons best known to Sir O. Lanyon, was brought in and made Chief Justice over the

head of Judge Kotze, who had honestly served the British Government under Sir T. Shepstone's Administration—down to the minor offices. Furthermore, the imposition of railway and other taxes, ill-advised imprisonments, and high-handed proceedings in connection with the collection of taxes and other matters, all tended to increase the exasperation of the recalcitrant Boers. Then, again, the prevention of public meetings (attempted so fatally by Lord E. Somerset at the Cape in 1822) had the effect of preventing that free discussion of their grievances, so necessary to the Boers; allowing the underhand and silent workings of demagogues to assume a prominence otherwise impossible, and throwing the people blindly into the hands of a few irresponsible and rash leaders.

I may here mention that the telegraph cable was finished late in the year 1879, and on December 25th Sir Garnet telegraphed his congratulation through to Her Majesty the Queen, and received back an answer in two days, thus establishing the much-needed through communication between Great Britain and South Africa. On the 11th of January, Mr. Osborne, the Colonial Secretary, left Pretoria to take up his post as British Resident in Zululand, and was succeeded on February 17th by Mr. George Hudson, from King Williams Town, Cape Colony (the present British Resident in the Transvaal). On the 13th, an important appeal case, of Messrs. Jorissen and Celliers, against the enforced payment of taxes, was decided by Judge Kotze, who dismissed the appeal; stating that the Act of Annexation did away with the old Volksraad, and Burgers Government, and brought the Transvaal under Imperial Legislation, and that until the laws then existing were altered by competent authority the Government was acting legally in collecting the overdue and other taxes.

As the first meeting of the New Councils was to take place in March, and as his presence was required in Natal, Sir Garnet Wolseley left Pretoria on the 22nd of January for Pietermaritzburg where he remained until February 24th, when he left again for the Transvaal—after hearing of a large Boer meeting being held near Heidelberg on February 14th and following days to consider the arrest of Bok and Pretorius and other important

matters—arriving at Pretoria four days later. During March it was decided to send out Sir G. Pomeroy Colley as Governor of and High Commissioner for S.E. Africa ; and Sir Garnet Wolseley was to return home to occupy an important post at the War Office. Sir Garnet awaited the opening of his newly-created Councils, which occurred on March 10th, and on April 4th he left again on horseback, attended only by Major Stewart, the rest of the Staff coming down by the Post-cart to Natal. His official connection with the Transvaal ceased after Sir George Pomeroy Colley's arrival at Natal in July. Sir Garnet, however, did not remain in South Africa long enough to see the working of his unfortunate, but, from his point of view, well-intentioned scheme.

After the departure of Messrs. Kruger and Joubert as a deputation to the Cape, and the apparently voluntary payment of the taxes by the people, who were only thus acting under the advice of their leaders, even Sir Owen Lanyon seemed to be lulled into a sense of security, and reported monthly, both to Sir G. P. Colley, the High Commissioner, and the Home Government, the apparent subsidence of the Boer agitation, improved regard for law and order, and better payment of taxes by both black and white alike. As showing how sparsely our Natal authorities were informed as to what was going on in the Transvaal previous to the outbreak, the following remarks in a despatch from Sir George Pomeroy Colley to the Secretary of State, founded upon his reports from Sir Owen Lanyon, are significant. He wrote on the 13th of December :—“ There is little news from the Transvaal. The present agitation seems principally connected with the annual tax notices. Protests have been made by armed deputations of Boers at various points against the payment of taxes, but no overt act of resistance to the law appears to have occurred except at Potchefstrom. The great meeting originally fixed for the 8th of January was suddenly and for no explained reason summoned for the 8th of December instead ; but the notice was too short to allow of many attending, and I understand it has now been postponed to the 15th instant. Although large armed gatherings have taken place, and a good deal of violent

language has been used by the Boers, I still trust that we shall be able to avoid any collision ; and that a patient but firm enforcement of the law will ultimately tire out these spasmodic efforts of disaffection. A wing of the 58th Regiment is now on its march to reinforce the garrison of the Transvaal ; and the loyal inhabitants of Pretoria are taking measures for their own protection, and have formed a volunteer corps, 200 strong." Sir George Colley had also himself taken a tour through the Transvaal in August, 1880, accompanied by his aide-de-camp, the late Lieutenant Wilkinson, 3-60th Rifles, within a month of his appointment as Governor of Natal and High Commissioner for South-Eastern Africa. So that he had every opportunity of becoming acquainted with the real state of affairs and the true condition of the country.

It is to be noted that events occurring in England had their influence on the course of events. A number of Members of Parliament had formed themselves into a committee, together with many other gentlemen, and were trying to secure the independence of the Transvaal, or, at any rate, better terms for the Boers. The agitation thus kept up in Great Britain, parts of Europe, America, and South Africa, received great assistance from the position taken up, and the statements made by the Liberal party in England, then out of office, but still commanding a powerful Opposition. So far back as 1878, Mr. Gladstone had questioned both the policy and the right of the Conservative Government, first, in annexing the Transvaal, and then in retaining it by force ; when it had been clearly proved that however much the act might have been a political necessity, or to whatever extent the Government had been misinformed at the time about a majority of the inhabitants being in favour of annexation, no such majority ever did desire annexation ; but that, as the real facts of the case afterwards showed, out of about 8,000 qualified Burghers, more than three-fourths were bitterly against it, and had remained so ever since.

But the Home Government remained unmoved ; and, again misled by their officials in the Transvaal, they approved of all that was done, regardless of consequences.

When the people of the Transvaal, however, began to realize how their passive resistance was misunderstood and their actions misrepresented, they again met together and signed declarations that they would no longer pay taxes, either under protest or otherwise, except to the lawfully constituted Government of the South African Republic, but would exercise their rights as an independent people, and defend them with their lives; and also forbidding all Englishmen or English partisans to come upon their farms or into their houses for any reasons whatever. These resolutions, principally from the Wakkerstrom District, were published in the newspapers, one of which, *The Volkstem*, is the principal organ of the Dutch party published in Pretoria, and edited by a Mr. J. F. Celliers. This led to a criminal prosecution against the editor and proprietor for the publication of seditious writing, the Government doubtless regarding the issuing of such notices to be a rebellious and a dangerous symptom. Sir O. Lanyon, after consulting with his Attorney-General, Mr. Morcom, thought the adoption of a strong course the best; for he stated in a Proclamation issued at that time: "that under the guidance of Mr. Celliers that paper had been productive of much agitation for the reversal of the Annexation, and had kept alive the spirit of antagonism which had been existent since the assumption of Her Majesty's rule over the Transvaal." But, in the reality and widespread exhibition of this spirit of antagonism he did not apparently believe, for he further added, on the 19th of November: "Had the people been left alone, or had they been accessible to those means and sources which govern public opinion elsewhere, their own good sense and feelings of right and wrong would have prompted them to accept the change as one which has brought increased security and prosperity to their homes and country." This prosecution of Mr. Celliers was, moreover, specially insisted upon at the time as being of value—in view of the great Boer meeting to be held in December, 1879—as showing the disaffected Boers the determination and power of the new Government in putting down all such attempts now and for ever. What an ephemeral assumption of dignity and power this was has since been proved. We now know more fully and truthfully that, had it

not been for the earnest and constant endeavours of the few more moderate leaders among the Boers, an appeal would previously have been made to arms; and the allegation that there was in reality no *vox populi*, nor any general spirit of antagonism among them, has since been painfully and bitterly refuted.

The events which followed in quick succession, during the latter end of November and the beginning of December, 1879, deserve and require a chapter to themselves; but in concluding this one, I cannot do better, in justification of my own views on the subject, than give a curious extract from "The Transvaal Book Almanack and Official Directory for 1881," published in the latter end of November, 1880, in Pretoria, by Frederick Jeppe, "Government Translator and Compiler of Statistics to the Colonial Office of the Transvaal," a Government official and confidential friend of the Administrator; and one who, from his long residence in and knowledge of the Transvaal, ought assuredly to have been better informed:—"The wish for independence and self-government, encouraged and supported by designing agitators, is, however, gradually subsiding. The taxes are paid better than they were under the old Government, as will be seen by our financial statistics, published elsewhere. The Secocoeni rebellion has been quelled, the natives are made to pay taxes, labour is more plentiful, and now that all former obstacles are removed, the Transvaal enters upon a career of prosperity it has never before known, and which it never could have attained under the old *régime*. As part of the future South African Confederation, it must prosper and flourish. Great postal facilities have been instituted, and the telegraph connects us with the outer world. The railway from Delagoa Bay will soon be commenced, and its completion is only a question of time. With peace and security on our borders, a strong, liberal, and enlightened Government and Legislature to guide and rule this infant State, confidence will at once be originated, and enterprise will launch its capital, where so large and varied a field offers itself for yielding highly remunerative returns, either in mining operations for the precious metals, with which this country abounds, or in

agricultural or stock-breeding pursuits, for which this highly-favoured country is so eminently suitable." How far this sanguine vaticination has been verified or falsified has long since been shown by the subsequent course of events, now to be recorded. In other statements in this official volume the same inaccuracy or ignorance is visible in regard to historical facts. But his statistics as to the revenue, expenditure, and debt are reliable, and show clearly that, far from having progressed in a monetary sense, the Transvaal caused Great Britain a military expenditure of over two millions even up to 1880, while her own debt had increased from £295,071 at the time of annexation to £704,064 on December 31st, 1879.

CHAPTER XI.

THE OUTBREAK.

Reasons of the Great Mass Meeting—Mr. Gladstone's Speeches—The Bezuidenhout Tax Defiance Affair—Rising of Schoons Spruit Burghers—Steps of Pretoria Government—Declaration of Independence—South African Republican Flag hoisted at Heidelberg—Patrol to Potchefstroom for Issue of Proclamation—Envoy sent to Sir O. Lanyon—Letter to Commander of British Troops—Boer Proclamation and Details—Letter to Sir G. Colley—Proclamations by Sir O. Lanyon—Declaration of Martial Law—Potchefstroom Defence—General Commencement of Hostilities.

WE now come to the actual cause of the outbreak in December, which otherwise would most probably not have taken place until much later, and with more and clearer warning to the Government, if we can consider, after reading the occurrences detailed in the previous chapters, that they wanted any clearer or stronger warning. After the return of Messrs. Kruger and Joubert from the Cape in November, a mass meeting of the Boers had been convened by their leaders for the 8th of January, 1881, to consider a letter addressed to them by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, immediately after the accession to power of the Liberal party, and other matters in connection with the recovery of their independence. The Boers had every reason to hope for better consideration and milder treatment from the Liberal Government than they had received from that of the Conservative party under Lord Beaconsfield, because throughout the political campaign Mr. Gladstone had repeatedly made a strong point of the conduct of South African affairs by the Conservatives.

In his first Midlothian speech, on November 25th, 1879, Mr. Gladstone said :—

“ They (the Conservatives) have annexed in Africa the Transvaal territory, inhabited by a free European Christian Republican community, which they have thought proper to bring within the limits of a Monarchy, although out of 8,000 persons in that Republic qualified to vote on the subject we are told, and I have never seen the statement officially contradicted, that 6,500 protested against it. These are the circumstances under which we undertake to transform Republicans into subjects of a Monarchy.”

On the next day Mr. Gladstone again declared that—

“There is no strength to be added to your country by governing the Transvaal. The Transvaal is a country where we have chosen, most unwisely, I am tempted to say insanelly, to place ourselves in the strange predicament of the free subjects of a monarchy going to coerce the free subjects of a republic, and to compel them to accept a citizenship which they decline and refuse. But if that is to be done it must be done by force.”

A week later he declared that the annexation of the Transvaal was the invasion of a free people. Again, on the 29th December, 1879:—

“We have undertaken to govern despotically two bodies of human beings who were never under our despotic power before, and one of them who was in the enjoyment of freedom before. We have gone into the Transvaal territory, where it appears—the statement has not been contradicted—that there were 8,000 persons in a condition of self-government, under a Republican form. Lord Carnarvon announced, as Secretary of State, that he was desirous of annexing their own territory if they were willing. They replied by signing to the number of 6,500 out of 8,000 a protest against the assumption of sovereignty over them. We have what you call ‘annexed’ that territory. I need not tell you there are and can be no free institutions in such a country as that. The utmost, I suppose, that could be done was to name three or four or half a dozen persons to assist the Governor. But how are they chosen? I apprehend not out of the 6,500, but they are chosen out of the small minority who were not opposed to being annexed. Is it not wonderful to those who are freemen, and whose fathers had been freemen, and who hope that their children will be freemen, and who consider that freedom is an essential condition of civil life, and that without it you can have nothing great and nothing noble in political society, that we are led by an Administration, and led, I admit, by Parliament, to find ourselves in this position, that we are to march upon another body of freemen, and against their will to subject them to despotic government?”—*Birthday Speech, 29th December, 1879.*

And lastly, on the 18th of March, 1880, when the elections were already beginning to turn against the Conservatives, and his own return to office was probable, he spoke as follows:—

“Lord Beaconsfield omitted Africa, and did not say the Radicals had created any difficulties for him there. But there he has contrived, without, so far as I am able to judge, the smallest necessity or excuse, to spend five millions of your money in invading a people (the Zulus) who had done him no wrong; and now he is obliged to spend more of your money in establishing the supremacy of the Queen over a community Protestant in religion, Hollanders in origin, vigorous, obstinate, and tenacious in character, even as we are ourselves—namely, the Dutchmen of the Transvaal.”

It may be perfectly true that there is an important distinction to be drawn between the condemnation of a particular policy and course of action adopted by one Government, and the official reversal of that policy by a succeeding Government

after it has been adopted, but surely the Boers are not very much to be blamed because they failed to recognize that difference. But, from their point of view, it is not to be wondered at, if they consider that subsequent events gave them a severe though much needed lesson, which would in the future make them chary of believing in the statements or promises of any English Government whatever, and one which had done more than any other acts of any British Government of this century to lessen the belief in the will and power of a great nation, hitherto noted for its true and honourable policy, and regarded as a pattern of justice and national morality in its dealings with weaker nations.

Be this as it may, the consequence of these openly expressed views of one of England's greatest Ministers, of the encouraging sympathy shown to the Boer cause by many other nations, and of the events detailed previously in this work, was that a determined stand was made, and throughout November the people banded together to oppose the execution of the laws, and to refuse to pay the taxes. The history of the discontented Boers in the Wakkerstrom District was given in the last chapter; but we have now to deal with those of the District of Potchefstrom, among whom were a number of inhabitants of Schoons Spruit and Mooi River, who notified to their Landdrost their refusal to pay taxes or permit the processes of law then instituted for the forcible recovery thereof. In one case out of many, proceedings were taken against a Boer named Piet Bezuidenhout for overdue taxes. Judgment was given against him, and execution issued, and a waggon was attached by the sheriff's officers for sale in liquidation of the judgment and costs. The sale was fixed for a certain day in November at Potchefstrom, having been duly notified in all the papers. On that day a number of Boers (about one hundred), attended the sale, armed, under the orders of certain leaders, the principal of whom was P. A. Cronje, afterwards Commandant at Potchefstrom. They removed the waggon by force from the custody of the sheriff's officers; and after much speechifying they took the waggon away from the town and then dispersed. On the report of this occurrence to the Government at Pretoria, a re-

inforcement of troops was sent to Potchefstrom, a number of special police were enrolled, and other steps taken to ensure the arrest and trial of the leaders of the recent *éméute*. The men concerned, however, again banded themselves together, and prevented the arrest of the leaders, and defied the authority of the British Government.

These tidings spread so rapidly, and matters became so serious, that Mr. Kruger and the other members of the Boer Committee found themselves carried along with the stream and unable to stem the tide of active and armed resistance. They therefore made a virtue of necessity, and summoned a mass meeting of the Boers, including the members of the old Volksraad of 1877, for the 15th of December instead of the 8th of January, as previously agreed. But, in view of the measures being taken by the Administrator and the Military authorities, of whom at that time Colonel Bellairs, the Deputy Adjutant-General in South Africa, was the head, they altered the date of the meeting to the 8th. The object was the immediate consideration of the question as to whether the leaders of the Schoons Spruit affair should be encouraged, and protected from arrest, or whether a temporizing policy would be best, in order to give the Government another chance of meeting their views peaceably. The meeting was held at Paarde Kraal, a farm situated on the eastern side of the road from Pretoria to Potchefstrom, and Mr. Hudson, the Colonial Secretary, went there to meet and confer with Kruger, who told him that it was no longer an affair of individuals but of the nation. On Monday, the 18th of December, it was definitely decided to restore the South African Republic, by force of arms if necessary; and a Triumvirate, consisting of Messrs. Paul Kruger, P. Joubert, and M. W. Pretorius, with Mr. E. Bok as Secretary, was appointed to carry on and organize a Government under the new order of things. This decision was proclaimed at Heidelberg, whither the Triumvirate and the armed Boers proceeded, on the 16th or three days afterwards. That town was made the head-quarters of the new Government and steps were immediately taken to carry out their schemes. The notices, calling the Boers together for the great meeting on the 8th, had

desired them all to come armed and provisioned ; and the lukewarm and half-doubtful Boers were distinctly warned that they must either be for or against the movement for liberty, and that no one would be allowed to remain or be treated as neutral.

The Administrator, on his side, had just issued a notice that as the arrival of any number of armed men in the villages of the province for many reasons might prove dangerous and entirely unlawful and might endanger the public peace, and bearing in mind the difficulty to control such armed gatherings of people, all armed parties of people should be forbidden to approach any village in the province within a mile, or to enter the same. And on the same day that the Boers proclaimed their independence at Heidelberg, a District order was published and issued to the various garrisons at Potchefstroom and other towns in the Transvaal, by Captain Churchill, 58th Regiment, D.A.A. and Quartermaster-General, calling attention to the notice forbidding the approach of any armed body of men within a mile of any town in the province. Officers commanding stations were instructed to be guided accordingly, and having due regard to their order, never to endanger the safety of their posts through overweakening their garrison, they should endeavour to carry out the spirit of the instructions conveyed in the notice, and prevent such approach of any unauthorized hostile armed body of men. Another order provided that "During the present disturbed state of the country, seventy rounds of ammunition will be carried by each soldier, and whenever likely to become hotly engaged, and conveyance for the regimental reserve not to be at hand, thirty rounds extra will be issued and carried on the person of each man."

Two days previously to the arrival of the Triumvirate in Heidelberg, they had sent a strong patrol under Commandant P. A. Cronje, to Potchefstroom, in order to get their Proclamation printed ; with distinct orders not to fire unless attacked ; and with the following letter to Major Clarke, just appointed Special Commissioner at that town :—"We have the honour to inform you that the Government of the South African Republic, hereby restored, wants a certain document to be printed at once. We trust that from your side no measures

will be ordered or taken to hinder us, as it is pressing, and of the most serious importance to both parties. The publishing of this document all over the world is very likely to prevent bloodshed—at least so is our intention. Therefore it must be done, and it shall be done. We take it that, considering the seriousness of this matter, you will not make this a *casus belli*. If so, we throw the responsibility of this step on your shoulders, and take the liberty to remind you that in a very same state of affairs three years ago, when Sir Theophilus Shepstone wanted the Annexation Proclamation to be printed, the then Government of the Republic was generous enough to allow the Government printer to print the same. We are of opinion that the representative of Her Majesty the Queen will, in generosity, not be behind the President of a small Republic. At all events, we know that the civilized world, and the people of England, in this matter, will be on our side." At the same time the Triumvirate sent the following characteristic letter to the Administrator, Sir Owen Lanyon, by the hands of their appointed Diplomatic Envoy, Mr. H. Schoemann :—

"YOUR EXCELLENCY,—In the name of the people of the South African Republic we address ourselves to you for the performance of an earnest but imperative duty. We have the honour to enclose copy of a Proclamation, decided upon by the Government and Volksraad, and published for general notice. The will of the people is therefore clear, and requires no further explanation at our hands. We declare in the most earnest manner that we have no desire to shed blood, and that we will have no war on our part. With you therefore it rests, to necessitate us to take resource to arms in self-defence. If, which may God forbid, it should ever come so far, we shall do so with the most profound respect for Her Majesty the Queen of England, and for her flag. If it should ever come so far, we shall defend ourselves with the knowledge that we fight for the honour of Her Majesty, fighting as we do for the sanctity of treaties, sworn to by her, but violated through her servants. But the time for complaining is past, and we desire only your Excellency's co-operation to arrive at a peaceful solution of the difficulty in question. From the last paragraphs

of our Proclamation, your Excellency will observe the unalterable and determined intention of the people to co-operate with the English Government in all concerning the progress of South Africa. But the only condition to arrive hereat is also comprised in the same Proclamation, clearly and explicitly explained, and provided with good reasons. In 1877 our Government handed over the keys of the Government offices without causing bloodshed; we trust that your Excellency, as representative of the noble British nation, will, in magnanimity, not be second to us, and in an equal manner enable our Government to resume its functions. We expect an answer within twice twenty-four hours.—SIGNED BY THE TRIUMVIRATE AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL."

At the same time they took steps in order to prevent, as they thought, the concentration of troops, while awaiting the decision of Sir Owen Lanyon, on the question of peace or war. And, as they had heard of the 94th Regiment being ordered down from Leydenberg to Pretoria, the following letter was forwarded to Colonel Anstruther, as well as similar ones to other commanding officers:—

"South African Republic, Heidelberg, Dec. 17, 1880.—To the Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's troops on the road between Heidelberg and Pretoria.—SIR,—We have the honour to inform you that the Government of the South African Republic has taken up their residence at Heidelberg; that a diplomatic Commissioner has been sent by them with despatches to His Excellency Sir W. Owen Lanyon; that until the arrival of His Excellency's answer we don't know whether we are in a state of war or not; that consequently we cannot allow any movement of troops from your side, and wish you to stop where you are. We not being at war with Her Majesty the Queen, nor with the people of England (who we are sure would be on our side if they were acquainted with the position), but only recovering the independence of our country, we do not wish to take up arms, and therefore inform you that any movements of troops from your side will be taken by us as a declaration of war, the responsibility whereof we put upon your shoulders, as we know what we will have to do in self-defence."

The Proclamation issued by the Boer Triumvirate and printed in Potchefstroom is too lengthy a document to be inserted here and will therefore be found in Appendix E. It consists of statements of the facts in reference to 1, The occasion of its issue; 2, Copy of the Sand River Treaty; 3, The Boer rights therein given; 4, The annexation; 5, The Protests of the Executive Council and President Burgers; and 6, A lengthy recital in justification of their own subsequent acts, and their propositions for a mutual and peaceful satisfactory settlement, consisting of twenty-seven paragraphs. Copies of this Proclamation were sent off at once to Sir Owen Lanyon and Sir George Colley.

Letters explanatory of these actions and intentions were also forwarded to President Brand of the Orange Free State (on December 17th), the Hon. Mr. Sprigg, Colonial Secretary of the Cape Colony, on the same date; and also to Governor and High Commissioner Sir G. Colley in Natal, under date December 20th.

After a collision had occurred between the Boers and British at Pretoria and Potchefstroom, they wrote again as follows:—

“South African Republic, Heidelberg, 20th of Dec., 1880. To His Excellency Sir Pomeroy Colley, Her Majesty's High Commissioner and Governor of Natal.—SIR,—As we had the honour to inform you, the Government of the South African Republic is restored and established at Heidelberg, the Proclamation setting forth our legal grounds, fully explaining the facts that we never have been British subjects, and a conducting letter asking Sir W. Owen Lanyon for a peaceful surrender of our State to its legitimate founders and owners, was sent to His Excellency by our diplomatic envoy on Friday the 17th. The only answer that it pleased His Excellency to our legitimate demand was the sending of attached printed Proclamation already drawn up before the arrival of our envoy. We are very sorry that neither His Excellency nor his legal advisers seem to be able to understand the real state of affairs, and still endeavour to involve the respected name of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen of England and the proud name of the people of England in acts of wanton cruelty and bad politics, which can only lead to a most cruel

and destructive war between fellow-colonists—a war not brought on by us, but by the sole acts of the Government in Pretoria. We beg to draw your Excellency's attention to a deliberate falsehood advanced by Sir Owen Lanyon, namely, where he is accusing us of inciting the natives of our country against Her Majesty. Your Excellency, we challenge Sir Owen Lanyon to prove this very unfair assertion, and we state as plainly as possible that the contrary is the truth. No gentleman can for a moment entertain these opinions of a people who, during the disastrous Zulu war, never for a moment flinched from the high road to neutrality, never availing themselves of the opportunity of taking their country back, because they were unwilling to spoil their good cause by using the brutal forces of uncivilized brutes. It is our firm conviction that Sir W. Owen Lanyon advances this assertion merely for the purpose of blinding the eyes of the civilized world to his own acts, as it is a fact that in the last weeks he armed Kaffirs and Hottentots to fight against the Boers. Whereas Sir W. Owen Lanyon seems now to incite to war, we appeal to you. The Lord be the judge between us and those who force us to take to arms. Already the first shot has been fired, not by us, but by some of Her Majesty's troops in Potchefstroom, and on the public road a few miles from Pretoria, we suppose by order of Sir W. Owen Lanyon."

In reply to the Proclamations and acts of the Boers, the Administrator issued a Proclamation on the 28th of December, declaring the Boers so assembled in arms to be rebels, and ordering the military to take immediate steps to put the rebellion down *vi et armis*. On the 21st he proclaimed martial law throughout the Province of the Transvaal, on receipt of the news of the Bronkhorst Spruit disaster. In Potchefstroom itself the strong garrison made every preparation in the Fort, under Colonel Winsloe, 21st Regiment; and Major Clark, with Commandant Raaff, the Landdrost Goetz, and a few soldiers and volunteers, defended themselves for two days in the Court House, but were then obliged to surrender, after the loss of one officer and some men. The town was then occupied by a large Boer force under Commandant Cronje. The details of this, the first real action in the war, and the subsequent siege

of the Fort, will be found *in extenso* in a later chapter. The second action at Bronkhorst Spruit, which occurred on the 20th of December, or four days after the declaration of Independence, and the next important event, viz., the murder of Captain Elliott, shortly afterwards, merit and need a fuller description.

Of course it will easily be understood by every one now, and doubtless admitted by the officials themselves, that if the Government was powerless to prevent the large meeting of armed men on the 8th of December, they would be equally powerless to take any active steps to quell the rebellion, but would simply have to remain on the defensive until reinforcements arrived; while the Boers would become masters of the whole country, except the few garrison towns, and thus be enabled to obtain the prestige of victors to start with, as well as the power of taking the initiative in attacking, instead of having to act purely on the defence. However, in any event, the military then in the Transvaal can neither be blamed for the course taken, nor for the part they afterwards played in the struggle. They did the best under the circumstances with the limited means at their disposal. As will be seen, in the various accounts of the sieges of Pretoria, Potchefstrom, Standerton, Wakkerstrom and Leydenberg, they fought well and gallantly against heavy odds, and added the lustre of many a brave and noble deed to their reputation as soldiers of Great Britain.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIRST ACTION.

Bronkhorst Vlei Disaster—94th leave Leydenberg—Journey to Middelberg—Detention at Oliphants River—Warnings of Boer Rising—Arrival at Bronkhorst Vlei—Narrative of Conductor (now Lieutenant) Egerton—Disaster not a Massacre—Details of Fight and Prisoners' Treatment—Sir Bartle Frere's Opinion of Prinsloo and Joubert—The Messenger's (Paul de Beer) Story—List of British Casualties—Details of Boer Force and Losses.

THE news of the disaster at Bronkhorst Vlei or Spruit (Water Cress Pond), on the 20th of December, reached Pretoria on the day after; whence telegrams were sent to Natal, the Cape, and England, detailing the particulars, which, however, were hardly believed at first. Of course most exaggerated reports were quickly spread about, but the truth in all its bare entirety was soon officially made known. Then, and then only, people at length began to realize the unity, earnestness, and desperation of the Boers, instead of undervaluing the former and doubting the latter, as was done by those even high in authority. It appears that the headquarters of the 94th Regiment, which had been stationed at Leydenberg for some time, left that town in order to reinforce the garrison at Pretoria, on Sunday, December 5th, with their band, &c.; leaving Lieutenant Long to garrison the place with about fifty men. The force was composed as follows:—246 officers, non-commissioned officers and men, three women, and two children. Army Service Corps: two officers, five non-commissioned officers and men. Army Hospital Corps: three non-commissioned officers and men. Army Medical Department: one surgeon. Total, nine officers and 248 men, with thirty-four waggons. The officers accompanying were Colonel Anstruther, in command, Captains Elliott (paymaster) and

Nairne, and Lieutenants Swiney (adjutant), Harrison, and Hume, Dr. Ward, D.A.C.G. Carter, and Chief Conductor Egerton. Previous to their departure they had heard rumours of the Boers fighting, but did not believe them. The force reached Middelberg about a week after, without anything occurring *en route* worthy of notice, except that before entering the town thirty rounds of ammunition were issued to every man in the ranks. The Regiment stayed only one day in Middelberg, the band playing on the square, much to the enjoyment of the people. In consequence of the alarming rumours which were prevalent, many of the residents did not wish the Regiment to proceed, but it was not until the detachment reached the Oliphants River that any real credence was placed in those reports. While encamped on that river, which was so high as to prevent them crossing for a day, three gentlemen rode after them from Middelberg, and made a communication to Colonel Anstruther, resulting in a laager being formed with the waggons every night afterwards, and orders being issued for all the men to sleep with their arms beside them. Two days after crossing the river, a Kaffir came up to the Adjutant and told him there were Boers about, and in consequence of this orders were given that at the close of the day's march the bandsmen were to give in their instruments that night, and to take their places in the ranks, distributed between the two companies. But about one o'clock, as the band was still playing, and the Colonel and Conductor Egerton were riding a little way ahead to select a camping ground, the Boers were perceived. What occurred is best given in Conductor Egerton's own words:—

“ On Sunday, the 20th of December, 1880, about 1.20 P.M., when about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Bronkhorst or Modder Spruit (about 38 miles from Pretoria), the band suddenly ceased playing, and on turning round to ascertain the reason, we saw about 150 Boers on the left of the road in formation, about 10 paces between each horseman, all mounted. The Boers were about 300 yards from the column, on the left flank. The Colonel galloped back, and gave the word to halt and for the rear waggons and men to close up. While he was giving these orders I saw a flag of truce approaching, and rode out to meet it, and the messenger (Paul de Beer) gave me a sealed despatch, which I handed to the Colonel. There was only one man with it and he was unarmed. The letter was in English. The Colonel read it out to me, and the purport of it was—‘The

Republic having been proclaimed at Heidelberg, and the Dutch people being determined to maintain it, any movements of English troops were prejudicial to their interests, and if the Colonel advanced beyond the Spruit, they should consider it a declaration of war, and he must be responsible for the consequences.' The messenger said verbally that two minutes were allowed for the Colonel's decision. The Colonel replied his orders were to march to Pretoria, and he should go there. Each party galloped back to his own force, and no sooner had he reached than the Boers commenced firing. The men were extended in skirmishing order in front of the waggons at about four paces interval. The firing lasted about twenty minutes. The officers all fell in the first ten minutes. The Boers were standing and kneeling behind trees on some rising ground above our men. Our men were lying down on the grass. The fire of the Boers seemed to be directed on the officers, the oxen and the ammunition waggons, which were denoted by the red flag. The ammunition was in the first two waggons, and the band and the prisoners were getting out the reserve ammunition. All the officers were wounded, and I should think that between thirty and forty men were killed, and about seventy or eighty wounded. The doctor told me that in killed and wounded he had about 120. Dr. Ward was the doctor; he was not hurt. When Colonel Anstruther saw that all the officers were shot, and the men falling fast, and that there was no chance, he told them to throw up their hats and wave handkerchiefs as a signal to surrender. There were thirty-four waggons and carts in all, and the men with the waggons had not time to get up to join the main body. I heard from some ox drivers that the rear guard were taken prisoners at the commencement. They said that hundreds of Boers galloped up and took them prisoners. The convoy extended about half a mile, and the rear guard was in rear of all. They were about twenty strong. Mr. Carter, Commissariat and Transport Staff, supposed to be with the rear guard, was missing when I left. The band were, at the time of the attack, playing the last piece they were to play on the march, as they were to join the ranks on getting to camp. The Boers took off the arms and ammunition at once—three waggons—and the remainder were standing there when I left, and the Boers formed a circle round the Regiment, and Commandant Franz Joubert gave leave for the men to take what rations they pleased, and to pitch tents for the wounded, and to work the water carts. Joubert gave me permission, on the Colonel's request, to come into Pretoria for doctors and ambulances. I was to carry no weapon, and he would not give me a horse, but allowed Sergeant Bradley to accompany me. I took the colours of the 94th Regiment with me, which some of the men tore off the poles and gave to me, and I held them round my waist, under my coat. Joubert asked for the guns and colours, and I told them there were no guns, and not being in the 94th I did not know where the colours were. I believe the colours were secreted under Mrs. Fox (the wife of the sergeant-major), who was wounded. I had ridden through the bush from where the attack was made about ten minutes before the column reached the spot and saw nothing. A mounted infantry man pointed out to the Colonel what he considered to be mounted men, near the Bronkhorst Spruit, and after looking at them through the glass, the Colonel saw they were cattle, and handed the glass to me, and I looked, and am sure they were cattle. This report was made about 500 yards before the attack. The supposed mounted men reported were about twelve miles distant. The Boers were concealed in a valley on the distant side of the rising ground from which

they fired, and when I first saw them were galloping at full speed at the crest of the rising ground. I estimate that about 300 Boers attacked the head of the column. I only saw one dead and five wounded on their side, and I don't think there were any more. I believe the Boers were concealed in a farm house (Solomon Prinsloo's) behind trees (willows and poplars), and when they saw the mounted infantry returning from their reconnoitring, they galloped on up the valley before mentioned. The 94th fought remarkably well, but their fire did not seem to take effect—they did not seem to find the range, and all the officers were down. On my way in I was challenged several times, but they let me go on hearing I had a pass. The reason I was so long on the road was, I was wounded and kept off the road, so that I might not be taken with the colours."

The gallant action of Mr. Ralph Egerton, in saving the colours of the Regiment, has been since rewarded by a commission in the 94th, and his account, given immediately after the event, has proved substantially correct; and it does him credit, as well as effectually disposes of the statements and accusations made against the Boers for murder and massacre. No doubt they took every advantage that their knowledge of the ground and intention to surprise gave them; but considering that they are not regular armed soldiers, and are certainly ignorant of European methods of fighting, I think all uninterested and unprejudiced people will give them credit for their honesty of purpose, although, perhaps, disapproving of the manner of carrying out their purposes.

Some further details of the fight and after occurrences are thus described by one of the prisoners, a bandsman, who was sent through the Orange Free State to Natal with the rest of the captured. After detailing the march from Leydenberg and the events up to the commencement of the attack, he proceeds:—

"Orders were issued for the 'band waggon' to draw up, and the bandsmen got their rifles. The Boers had now got within 200 yards, and were to be seen in flank and rear, cutting off the rear guard before anybody was aware of it; the advance guard had fallen back on the main body. The next thing I saw was a white flag, as near as possible 200 yards away, and, when this was noticed, we hoisted a signal also. The Boer with his flag and our man (Egerton) advanced, meeting about half way, but the letter he received he brought to the Colonel. The letter I heard stated 'The Boers did not know whether they were on a war footing or not, and, if we advanced further, we should have to fight for it, asking that we lay down our arms at once.' I heard the Colonel say, 'I have got my orders for Pretoria, and to Pretoria I'll go.' The Colonel then gave the order 'to extend in skirmishing order;' indeed he had hardly

Details of Fight and Prisoners' Treatment. 121

time to give it before a volley was poured into us, and my comrades fell all around. We were enclosed; the Boers had cover, a sort of 'little bush' and an incline in their favour. The Boers themselves told us afterwards that they had everything arranged beforehand, the distance having been ascertained exactly. During the time the flag of truce was flying the Boers continued advancing, and had the officers and non-commissioned officers all spotted; they all fell at once. While the firing was going on, and about ten minutes from the commencement, Adjutant Harrison got up and shouted 'Fire, men, keep it up,' when a bullet struck him on the forehead dead. We kept firing for about ten minutes or so after this, but our ammunition getting short, and the Boers in front, rear, and all round at the same time, picked off our men. We knew not how, but they outnumbered us altogether. We got no time to extend, and that was the reason our men fell so quickly. The bugle sounded 'Cease firing' three times before the men heeded it, or in fact heard it. The Boers disappeared directly the flag dropped. Their fire lasted about twenty minutes, and the Colonel, who was wounded, said 'he had better leave a few men to tell the story.' The bullocks in the waggons were all over the place, dragging waggons, &c., among the wounded, dead, and dying. The Boers' fire now slackened, and they came in among us and ordered those still standing to put down their arms, pulled our helmets off, and made us 'squat down' like Kaffirs. While this was going on, I think they took away their own dead and wounded; they then made us pitch tents for the wounded. The men that were not wounded were collected, and thirty of the best were picked out by Sergeant-Major Fox to stay and look after the wounded and bury the dead, myself being one of those left behind for that purpose. Another man and Sergeant Bradley were sent off (on their asking to be allowed to proceed) to Pretoria for aid, &c. The Boers left Dr. Ward with us, who worked hard and did all he could for the sufferers. All the other prisoners were marched off to Heidelberg. The Boers searched the pockets of the dead and wounded, taking rings, watches, and everything worth taking they could lay their hands on. I saw one Boer search Mr. Carter's pockets and take his watch. All our waggons were taken away, ambulance waggons as well: only leaving us with tents, but no provisions; we only had what we managed to take out of the officers' mess and canteen after the departure of the Boers and prisoners for Heidelberg. Our party set about carrying in the wounded to the tents up to four o'clock the next morning. Adjutant Harrison was dead and Lieutenant McSwiney; Captain Nairne died during the night; Colonel Anstruther and Lieutenant Hume were wounded, and still living when I left. Mrs. Fox was wounded through the lower part of her body, and was then living. Two doctors, Surgeon-Major Comerford and Civil Surgeon Crow, and two ambulances had arrived at the scene of the disaster before I left, and a few A.H.C. men. Sergeant-Major Fox, the lady's husband, was shot through the arm. I was detained four days on the spot, when I was ordered along with twenty others (leaving ten men then) off to Heidelberg. We were marched to Prinsloo's house, over the veldt, which is about two miles distance. Here we stayed a night. Next morning Commandant Prinsloo ordered us to Heidelberg, inspanned sixteen of us like bullocks to a waggon, holding the yokes, etc., the other five of us pushing the waggons; this work we were kept at for about an hour, and they cracked their whips over us and drove us like a lot of oxen. It took us three days to get to Heidelberg. On arrival there we were marched through the town and sent to the head-quarters of their Com-

mandant. The Commandant came to us and said it was 'the d—d humbugs of English Government that was trying to impose upon them.' This man wore double-glassed spectacles—blue, I think—and he spoke English like an Englishman. The first lot of prisoners that left I did not see anything of at Heidelberg—they had left before our party of twenty-one men arrived there. The Commandant said we could get away if we deserted our regiment; or would we go to Pretoria to take up arms against them? We replied we preferred going to the Free State. We were sent to the Vaal River and crossed into the Free State, and left to our fate on the veldt—they gave us nothing. We all agreed to separate and choose our own way. I managed to walk 100 miles as well as I could in my shirt-sleeves, and arrived at Harrismith, where I came across a man with a lot of horses coming to Pietermaritzburg for Government sale, and I offered my services to assist him. He accepted them, and treated me well, and we got to Pietermaritzburg Saturday morning about twelve o'clock. I overtook the first party of prisoners at Harrismith, and left them at Eistcourt."

With reference to the man, S. Prinsloo, mentioned in the above extract, Sir Bartle Frere, in a letter to the *Times*, said *inter alia* :—"As far as we have yet seen, the massacre of the 94th Regiment was committed near the farm of Solomon Prinsloo and under the command of Joubert. These two were always the leaders of the violent party. Prinsloo was said to have been by his turbulence and insubordination the principal cause of Mr. Burgers' repulse from Sekukuni's stronghold in 1876. When I visited the Boer camp S. Prinsloo was said to be the leader of the party which urged the remonstrants to 'shoot or put over the border' the High Commissioner (myself) and the Administrator (Colonel Lanyon), and to haul down the British flag. Once we were assured that a party of hot-headed young men, urged by Prinsloo, had started from the camp at night with the purpose of carrying out this threat before daybreak by surprising us in the house where we slept at Pretoria. These attempts, we were told, were always overruled by the good sense and authority of Pretorius and Kruger, and by a majority of the Boer Committee. I should be slow to believe that either Pretorius or Kruger, or any but a very small minority of that Committee, would have consented to the treacherous surprise of the 94th or the murder of Captain Elliott; but it is quite possible that when blood had once been shed and the insurrection had broken out they did not see their way to repudiate the violent acts of a few of their

colleagues. I have always believed the outbreak to be principally instigated by adventurers of other than Boer descent, and to be more nearly connected than people supposed with troubles nearer home."

As a great many contradictory statements have from time to time been published about this disaster, it is only fair to give insertion to the sworn statement of the Boer bearer of the flag of truce, which shows conclusively that the above accounts are substantially the truth; and that massacre is hardly the word for the action that ensued. Other statements, made by Commandant Prinsloo and Feldt-Cornet J. M. Engelbrecht, are also corroborative of the three statements. The following is the sworn declaration:—

"I, the undersigned, Paul de Beer, hereby declare:—That on Monday, the 20th December, between the farms of Solomon Prinsloo and Vermaak, I was appointed by Commandant Joubert to act as report-carrier and interpreter between the citizens of the South African Republic and the troops of the British Government which were there. I received from said Commandant a sealed letter, the contents of which were unknown to me, to take to the Colonel in command of the troops. I also had the verbal message: That the burghers had come to prevent them from going to Pretoria, and see that they remained where they were. I carried a white flag in my hand. I rode within 100 yards. The troops stood then in rank and file, with their weapons in their hands; the drums and music ceased playing, and the bugle had been sounded to call the troops from the waggons. Within 100 yards I halted about two minutes, calling out loudly, thrice in Dutch, and thrice in English, that if there was anybody to speak to me he should come forward. Then a corporal came out towards me. I asked whether the General was there. He said yes; whereupon I told him I had a letter for the General, and desired to see him. The corporal said, 'Come to the troops, there you can speak to the General.' I replied that this was against my order, and that I was not allowed to near the troops. He rode back to the troops, returning with the Colonel and two other officers. They were on foot, and I rode fully fifty yards to meet them. I said to the Colonel, 'I have a sealed letter to hand to you,' whereupon he took it out of my hand. He asked me, 'What does this letter contain?' I answered, 'That is more than I can say; open it and read.' We spoke in English. Then I gave him my verbal message, and said that I had to take back an answer. He opened the letter. He said, 'I go to Pretoria.' I said, 'My General gives you five minutes' time to consider over the matter, and what your plan will be;' whereupon he again replied, 'I go to Pretoria, do as you like!' He seemed angry, for I greeted him friendly and he did not return it; only Captain Elliott returned the greeting. I then said, 'Do you mean war or peace?' He answered a second time, 'I go to Pretoria, do as you like.' During all this time the music played 'God Save the Queen.' Then the Colonel turned round, and I asked the third time, 'War or peace?' He gave no answer. I remained standing on the spot, and as

he was about ten yards away he called out to me: 'Take back my answer.' I rode back 100 yards at a walk, then quicker. I came to our General and gave him the answer just as the English Colonel had told me. Our burghers were all this time within 330 yards of the troops; then the order was given to advance, and they advanced within 130 yards, whereupon firing commenced. Between the time when I was told by Commandant Joubert to bring the letter addressed to the Colonel and the time I brought back the verbal answer is, according to my calculation, about thirty or forty minutes, for I had to wait long, and had a long talk, the troops having ample time, which they used to convert at least six waggons into a sort of camp, and to let the rest of the waggons come up, so that the troops behind had at least ten minutes' time to get down. According to calculation, the fight lasted ten minutes. The conversation after the fight between Commandant Joubert and the Colonel I also interpreted. Coming there we found the Colonel wounded. I said to General Joubert, 'This is the Colonel,' and to the English Colonel, 'This is my General.' Then our General greeted the Colonel. Our General ordered me to tell the Colonel that he must not be angry, as it was not his fault but that of the English Colonel. Our General then took up the letter addressed to the Colonel, and which was lying next to him. The Colonel said to me, 'Tell your General that all he did against me was honest.' The English Colonel also said, 'Bring all wounded of the burghers nearer that the doctor may bind up their wounds, for they behaved well, and are good shots.' The Colonel said, 'God be with you!' After this I started to bring a report of the fight to the camp. This is the whole truth, and declared by me under oath."

The official report of the late Colonel Anstruther and list of the killed will be found in Appendix F. The casualties numbered six officers and sixty-eight non-commissioned officers and men. The Boer losses were one man, Kieser, killed, C. Coetzee, junior, died next day, and five wounded—P. Von Minnaar, B. Roos, W. Neethling, and Gorobbelaar; and their whole force consisted of about 200 men, under Commandant Franz Joubert and Feldt-Cornet Jan Greyling. Thus ended the first action in the Transvaal War of 1880-1.

CHAPTER XIII.

CAPTAIN ELLIOTT'S MURDER—NATAL'S NEUTRALITY.

Captains Elliott and Lambart at Heidelberg—Their Departure on Parole—Murder of Elliott and Escape of Lambart—The Survivor's Official Statement—First News of Outbreak reaches Home—Boer Advance—British Camp formed at Newcastle—Sir George Colley's General Order—Meeting of British Parliament—Queen's Speech—Sir George Colley reaches Newcastle—Arrival of Mounted Infantry—Naval Brigade—Reinforcements of Drafts—Newcastle desires Neutrality—The Resident Magistrate's Letter—Commandant-General Joubert's Answer—The Triumvirate to Sir George Colley—Sir George Colley's Repudiation—Sir George Colley to Newcastle Memorialists—Home Reinforcements offered in Strength—Resolve to advance.

THE excitement consequent upon the receipt of the news of the Bronkhorst Spruit disaster had hardly subsided when it was followed by the report of the murder of Captain Elliott, Paymaster of the 94th Regiment, while crossing the Orange River from the Transvaal to the Orange Free State Territory, accompanied by Captain Lambart, of the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers. These officers had both been released upon parole not to take up arms against the Boers again during the war. Captain Elliott, who was the only officer that was not wounded at Bronkhorst Spruit, had been brought a prisoner to Heidelberg, the Boer head-quarters, along with a detachment, about forty in number, of the unfortunate 94th men. He arrived there on the 23rd, and found Captain Lambart also under detention. Captain Lambart, with Mr. McHattie, had been purchasing horses in the Orange Free State for the use of the troops at Pretoria, and was returning to Pretoria with a troop of horses by the high veldt road, so as to leave Heidelberg on one side. On the 18th of December, two days after the outbreak, they were seen by a small patrol party, and upon it being reported at head-quarters a larger detachment went off in

pursuit and came up with them. Captain Lambart and the horses were all captured and taken back to Heidelberg, while McHattie managed to escape after being fired at repeatedly.

The following official report of Captain Lambart gives the details of the murder and other particulars after that time:—

“After being there (Heidelberg) some six or seven days, I was joined by Captain and Paymaster Elliott, 94th Regiment. On the following day (the 24th of December) we received a written communication from the Secretary to the Republican Government, to the effect ‘that the members of the said Government would call on us at 3.30 that day,’ which they did. The purport of their interview being—‘That at a meeting of Council they had decided to give us one of two alternatives: 1. To remain prisoners of war during hostilities in the Transvaal; 2. To be released on *parole d’honneur*, that we would leave the Transvaal at once, cross into the Free State under escort, and not bear arms against the Republican Government during the war.’ Time being given us for deliberation, Captain Elliott and myself decided to accept No. 2 alternative, and communicated the same to the Secretary of the South African Republic, who informed us in the presence of the Commandant-General P. Joubert, that we could leave next day, taking with us all our private property. The following days being respectively Christmas Day and Sunday, we were informed that we could not start till Monday, on which day, having signed our *parole d’honneur*, my horses were harnessed and we were provided with a duplicate of our parole, or free pass, signed by Commandant-General, and escort of two men to show us the road to the nearest drift over the Vaal River, distant twenty-five (25) miles, and by which P. Joubert personally told us both we should cross, as there was a punt there. We started about 1 p.m. from the Boer camp, passing through the town of Heidelberg. After going about six to eight miles I noticed we were not going the right road, and mentioned the fact to the escort, who said it was all right. Having been ‘look-out’ officer in the Transvaal, I knew the district well. I was certain we were going wrong, but we had to obey orders. At nightfall we found ourselves nowhere near the river drift, and were ordered to outspan for the night; and next morning the escort told us they would look for the drift. In-spanning at daybreak we again started, but after driving about for some hours across country, I told the escort we would stop where we were, while they went to search for the drift. Shortly after they returned, and said they had found it, and we must come, which we did, eventually arriving at the junction of two rivers (Vaal and Klip), where we found the River Vaal impassable, but a small punt capable of only holding two passengers at most, by which they said we must cross. I pointed out that it was impossible to get my carriage or horses over by it, and that it was not the punt the General said we were to cross. The escort replied it was to Pretorius’ Punt that the General told them to take us, and we must cross; that we must leave the carriage behind and swim the horses, which we refused to do, as we should then have had no means of getting on. I asked them to show me their written instructions, which they did (written in Dutch), and I pointed out that the name of Pretorius was not in it. I then told them they must either take us back to the Boer camp again or on to the proper drift. We turned back, and after

going a few miles the escort disappeared. Not knowing where we were, I proposed to Captain Elliott we should go to the banks of the Vaal and follow the river till we came to the proper punt. After travelling all Monday, Tuesday, and up till Wednesday about 1 P.M., when we found ourselves about four hours or twenty-five miles from Spencer's Punt, we were suddenly stopped by two armed Boers, who handed us an official letter, which was opened and found to be from the Secretary to the Republican Government, stating 'that the members were surprised that as officers and gentlemen we had broken our *parole d'honneur* and refused to leave the Transvaal; that if we did not do so immediately by the nearest drift, which the bearers would show us, we must return as prisoners of war; that as through our ignorance of the language of the country there might be some misunderstanding, they were loth to think we had willingly broken our promise.' We explained that we should reply to the letter and request them to take it to their Government, and were prepared to go with them at once. They took us back to a farm house, where we were told to wait till they fetched their Commandant, who arrived about 6 P.M., and repeated to us the same that was contained in our letter of that day. We told him we were ready to explain matters, and requested him to take our answer back to camp. He then ordered us to start at once for the drift. I asked him, as it was then getting dark, if we could start early next morning, but he refused. So we started, he having said we should cross at Spencer's, being closest. As we left the farm house, I pointed out to him that we were going in the wrong direction, but he said never mind, come on across a drift close at hand. When we got opposite it, he kept straight on; I called to him, and said that this was where we were to cross. His reply was 'Come on.' I then said to Captain Elliott, 'They intend taking us back to Pretorius, distant some forty miles. Suddenly the escort (which had all at once increased from two to eight men, which Captain Elliott pointed out to me, and I replied, 'I suppose they are determined we shall not escape, which they need not be afraid of, as we are too keen to get over the border),' wheeled sharp down to the river, stopped, and pointing to the banks said, 'There is the drift, cross.' Being pitch dark, with vivid lightning, the river roaring past, and as I knew impassable, I asked had we not better wait till morning, as I did not know the drift? They replied, 'No, cross at once.' I drove my horses into the river, when they immediately fell; lifted them, and drove on about five or six yards, when we fell into a hole. Got them out with difficulty, and advanced another yard, when we got stuck against a rock. The current was now so strong and drift deep my cart was turned over on to its side, and water rushed over the seat. I called out to the Commandant on the bank that we were stuck, and to send assistance, or might we return? to which he replied, 'If you do we will shoot you.' I then tried but failed to get the horses to move. Turning to Captain Elliott, who was sitting beside me, I said, 'We must swim for it,' and asked could he swim? to which he replied 'Yes.' I said, 'If you can't I will stick to you, for I can.' While we were holding this conversation a volley from the bank, ten or fifteen yards off, was fired into us, the bullets passing through the tent of my cart, one of which must have mortally wounded poor Elliott, who only uttered the single word 'Oh,' and fell headlong into the river from the carriage. I immediately sprang in after him, but was swept down the river under the current some yards. On gaining the surface of the water I could see nothing of Elliott, but I called out his name twice, but received no reply. Immediately another

volley was fired at me, making the water hiss around where the bullets struck. I now struck out for the opposite bank, which I reached with difficulty in about ten minutes; but, as it was deep, black mud, on landing I stuck fast, but eventually reached the top of the bank, and ran for about 2,000 yards under a heavy fire the whole while. The night being pitch dark, but lit up every minute by vivid flashes of lightning, showed the enemy my whereabouts. I found myself now in the Free State, but where I could not tell, but knew my direction was south, which, though it was raining, hailing, and blowing hard, and bitterly cold, an occasional glimpse of the stars showed me I was going right. I walked all that night and next day till one o'clock, when eventually I crawled into a store, kept by an Englishman, Mr. Groom, who did all in his power to help me. I had tasted no food since the previous morning at sunrise, and all the Dutch farmers refused me water, so without hat or coat (which I had left on the banks of the Vaal) and shoes worn through, I arrived exhausted at the above gentleman's place, who kindly drove me to Heilbron, where I took the post-cart to Maritzburg *via* Harrismith. I fear that Captain Elliott must have been killed instantly, as he never spoke, neither did I see him again. I have to mention that both Captain Elliott and myself, on being told by the South African Republican Government that the soldiers who had been taken prisoners were to be released on the same conditions as ourselves, expressed a wish to be allowed to keep charge of them, which was refused, but we were told that waggons, food, and money should be supplied to take them down country. But when they reached Spencer's Punt over the Vaal River, they were turned loose without any of the above necessaries, to find their way down country. They met an English transport-rider named Mr. F. Wheeler, who was going to Pietermaritzburg with his waggon, which had been looted by the Boers, and who kindly gave them transport, provided them with food, and is bringing them to the City, which, as I passed them at the Drakensberg on Tuesday, they should reach on Sunday next—consisting of one sergeant and sixty-one men, all that remain of the Leydenberg detachment and head-quarters of the 94th Regiment."

The first news of the outbreak in the Transvaal reached the Colonial Office in England on the 20th of December, and was in the form of a telegraphic message from Sir G. Pomeroy Colley to Earl Kimberley as follows:—"Pietermaritzburg, 19th of December.—Boers numbering about 5,000 have taken possession of Heidelberg and established Republican Government. Kruger, President; Joubert, Commandant. No collision or violence used. Communication with Pretoria cut off. I am sending up all available troops, and leave myself shortly." Then followed the news of Captain Elliott's murder and Captain Lambert's escape, and of the rapid progress of the outbreak throughout the Transvaal, hemming in the troops then stationed in the various garrison towns, which produced a perfect panic throughout South Africa. On the 3rd of January, 1881,

Sir George Colley was instructed to assume the Government of the Transvaal immediately on entering the Province, and to take the oaths of allegiance and office in the most formal manner possible, before either a judge or magistrate, if possible. Arrangements were made to bring up all the available troops to Newcastle, and reinforcements in strength were promised quickly from home and India. Meanwhile, the Boers assembled in great force near the Border, and on several occasions penetrated into Natal, capturing waggons, goods, horses, cattle, and sometimes men. But their main object was to establish themselves in strength near the rugged and circuitous frontier line between Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State, where the main road to Pretoria ascends through and over the Drakensberg, so as to prevent the advance of the small force, then known to be in Natal, into the Transvaal to the relief of any of the beleaguered garrisons. With this object Commandant-General Joubert threw forward a body of Boers to Meekis, and had other large reserves forming at the rear.

Sir George Colley had issued orders for the troops then in Natal, consisting of the 58th and 3-60th Regiments, to march up to Newcastle to form an entrenched camp. On the 28th of December, in his military capacity as Commander-in-chief, he issued a general order explanatory of what had occurred, and of the manner in which steps were to be taken to re-establish Her Majesty's authority, and vindicate the honour of the British arms, and in the following terms:—

“Head-quarters, Pietermaritzburg, December 28, 1880. 1. The Major-General Commanding regrets to inform the troops of his command that a detachment of 250 men of the 94th Regiment, on its march from Leydenberg to Pretoria, was surprised and overwhelmed by the Boers—120 being killed and wounded and the rest taken prisoners. The attack seems to have been made while the troops were crossing a spruit, and extended to guard a long convoy. The Major-General trusts to the courage, spirit, and discipline of the troops of his command, to enable him promptly to retrieve this misfortune, and to vindicate the authority of Her Majesty and the honour of the British arms. It is scarcely necessary to remind soldiers of the incalculable advantage which discipline, organization, and trained skill give them over more numerous but undisciplined forces. These advantages have been repeatedly proved, and have never failed to command success in the end against greater odds and greater difficulties than we are now called on to contend with. To all

true soldiers the loss we have suffered will serve as an incentive and stimulus to greater exertions; and the Major-General knows well he can rely on the troops he has to command, to show that endurance and courage which are the proud inheritance of the British Army. The stain cast on our arms must be quickly effaced, and rebellion must be put down, but the Major-General trusts that officers and men will not allow the soldierly spirit which prompts to gallant action to degenerate into a feeling of revenge. The task now forced on us by the unprovoked action of the Boers is a painful one under any circumstances; and the General calls on all ranks to assist him in his endeavours to mitigate the suffering it must entail. We must be careful to avoid punishing the innocent for the guilty, and must remember that though misled and deluded the Boers are in the main a brave and high-spirited people, and actuated by feelings that are entitled to our respect. In the operations now about to be undertaken, the General confidently trusts that the good behaviour of the men will give him as much cause of pride and satisfaction as their conduct and gallantry before the enemy, and that the result of their efforts will be a speedy and successful termination to the war."

(Signed) A. H. WAVELL,
Lieutenant-Colonel, Assistant Adjutant-General.

In addition to the 58th and 3-60th (two companies of the latter regiment, stationed at Harding, were ordered up at once), two steamers—H.M.S. *Humber* and the R.M.S. *Anglian*—fortunately arrived at Durban the day following Christmas, with large drafts, consisting of 148 men of the 58th, 91st, and 94th by the latter, while the former brought 209 officers and men for the 3-60th and 21st R.S.F., then, with the unfortunate 94th, the only two Regiments in the Transvaal. Two days afterwards, on the 27th of December, orders were given in England for the immediate despatch of the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, 91st Argyllshire Highlanders, 93rd Sutherland Highlanders, and the 97th Regiments as reinforcements to Natal. The 91st were then quartered at Cape Town, with detachments at Mauritius and St. Helena. A Naval Brigade was also landed from H.M.S. *Boadicea*, under Commodore Richards, R.N., and sent up at once; and Major Vesey Bromilow, of the 1st King's Dragoon Guards, got together a squadron of 150 cavalry and mounted infantry combined, and hurried up to Newcastle; while the Natal mounted police were also ordered out for active service, though not without protest from the Natal Colonists, who objected to their purely local force being used for Imperial purposes.

His Excellency Sir G. Pomeroy Colley remained at Pieter-

maritzburg in constant communication with the Home authorities until after the meeting of the British Parliament summoned by Her Majesty for the transaction of special and urgent business on January 6. Affairs in the Transvaal were referred to in the course of the customary Speech from the Throne, in the following paragraph:—"A rising in the Transvaal has recently imposed upon me the duty of taking military measures with a view to the prompt vindication of my authority; and has of necessity set aside for the time any plan for securing to the European settlers that full control over their own local affairs, without prejudice to the interests of the natives, which I had been desirous to confer."

Subsequently, Sir George left, and arrived at Newcastle on the evening of the 11th of January, escorted by a few Natal mounted police. He found there everything in readiness at the camp, Fort Amiel, which is situated on an eminence over the river half a mile away from and commanding the town. All the disposable infantry had arrived, and the mounted troops followed on the 14th, another Naval Brigade arriving at the camp on the 19th.

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Newcastle, most of them in close business connection with the Transvaal and with branch houses in that Province, were very desirous of remaining neutral in the coming struggle between the Imperial forces and the Boers; and they held meetings at which these views were agreed to, and a memorial was presented on the subject to Sir George on his arrival, steps having been previously taken by the Resident Magistrate, Mr. W. H. Beaumont, to inform Commandant General Joubert of this intention. As the correspondence which ensued was the cause of much ill-feeling at the time, and caused subsequent retaliation from the Boers, I think a brief *résumé* will be of value. The first letter from Mr. Beaumont to Joubert declared the desire for the neutrality of Natal, and was dated 5th of January, 1881. Mr. Beaumont said:—"I need hardly remind you that the quarrel of the Transvaal Boers is with the Imperial Government, that the Natal Government has, from the beginning, wished, and believed also that the Transvaal Boers wished, that the Government and

people of Natal should have nothing to do with this quarrel, and should hold a neutral position. The Government of Natal has used every endeavour to preserve this neutrality; and I may mention that the Legislative Council, with this object in view, passed a resolution that they would not vote any money either for offensive or defensive purposes, connected with the war with the Transvaal Boers. The few men of the Natal mounted police stationed here, and who are patrolling within our borders, have nothing whatever to do with the military, and were merely sent here to watch whether you should in any way violate our Border. I trust you will carefully consider what I have said, and at once show your good faith and friendly intentions by withdrawing any men within the borders of this Colony, and prohibiting any further violation of territory. I may inform you that I act as the mouthpiece of His Excellency the Governor of Natal, who will, you may be sure, deal with you in accordance with the manner in which you accede to or refuse the demand I now make." Commandant Joubert replied on January 7th :—" I acknowledge receipt of your letter of 5th inst., in which you desire to remind me that the quarrel is one between the Imperial Government and the Transvaal Boers, and that the Natal Government from the beginning has wished not to have anything to do with this quarrel. I am glad to be informed of this, and can assure you that it is in no way the intention of the people and the Government of the South African Republic to do or to show the very least hostility to the people or the Government of Natal. Any patrol sent by me had only the intention to prevent the free passing of hostile forces, as it appears to me that the Natal Government, as a neutral Government, has in this forgotten its duty, by allowing the gathering of hostile forces against the Republic, within the borders of the Natal Colony, after the friendly information from the Government of the South African Republic to the Governor of Natal."

On these facts being communicated to the Boer Head-quarters, the Triumvirate also addressed a letter on the subject to Sir George Colley, under date January 10th. After a brief reference to their former communication, its non-receipt or non-acknowledgment, they expressed their satisfaction at the complete and

entire agreement between the views of the Natal Government and their own about the neutrality of Natal, and their full concurrence with the opinion of the Resident Magistrate of Newcastle, that the Government and people of Natal had nothing to do with the quarrel. It would give, therefore, full satisfaction to everybody to hear that Commandant-General P. J. Joubert had withdrawn to their side of the boundaries. They saw with pleasure that in the Legislative Council a motion of Mr. Moor was carried, to the effect that the Colony of Natal would in no way be held responsible for the costs, or any portion of the costs, of any offensive or defensive measures as might be deemed necessary by Her Majesty's officers; and that the Resident Magistrate of Newcastle, who wrote that he acted "as the mouthpiece of His Excellency the Governor of Natal," alluding to said motion, said that this might be accepted as a proof of the endeavours to preserve neutrality. In conclusion, they said:—"We trust that from these premises we have a right, alluding (1st) to the preamble of Mr. Moor's motion—that in view of threatened hostilities between the Imperial Government and the Transvaal, and in anticipation of Natal again becoming the base of military operations (directed against us)—and (2ndly) alluding to the fact that there is at Newcastle a large military force apparently with hostile purposes against us—to ask Your Excellency earnestly whether this can be called preserving the neutrality of Natal. As far as we can understand neutrality, in accordance with the principles of international or public law, we have always held that a neutral country may not even allow the passage of any hostile force, ammunition, or horses whatever; that any country which becomes the base of military operations intended against a third State loses thereby its position of being a neutral Power; but now, after the outspoken letter of Mr. W. H. Beaumont, we feel sure that Your Excellency will be able to clear up any doubts which we might entertain upon this point."

The pertinent and embarrassing nature of the concluding sentences was, however, qualified by the prompt repudiation of

Mr. Beaumont's despatch by Sir George after his arrival at Newcastle. And a week later, after various meetings had been held in Newcastle by the inhabitants, the memorialists received their quietus as follows:—" Army Head-quarters, Fort Amiel, January 15, 1881. Sir,—I am directed by his Excellency the Governor to acknowledge the receipt of the Memorial forwarded by you urging that Natal should be kept neutral in the contest between the Imperial troops and the Transvaal insurgents, and that the Natal mounted police should not be employed beyond the Border. In reply, I am to point out to the memorialists that neutrality as between the Queen and Queen's enemies is incompatible with the position of Natal, as a part of Her Majesty's dominions, and of its inhabitants as loyal British subjects. His Excellency therefore assumes that this request has been made in ignorance of the meaning of the terms used. At the same time, it has been, and will continue to be, his Excellency's endeavour to limit the area of disturbance as much as possible. As regards the employment of the mounted police, that force is maintained for the protection of Natal, and His Excellency is responsible for its employment, under the conditions provided for by law, in such manner as will best secure that object." Thus ended this unpleasant episode, from which Sir George Colley and Joubert alone emerged with credit and consistency, and which materially intensified the ill-will already shown by the Colonists against the Imperial Government.

On the 12th of January the Secretary of State for War, Mr. Childers, after the meeting of Parliament, and in view of the serious aspect of affairs, offered strong reinforcements of all arms from England and India, for service in the Transvaal, to be ready in ten days, which offer was gladly accepted by the General, and steps were taken accordingly to provide for their reception and transport to the scene of action. Pending their arrival Sir George Colley determined to advance from Newcastle with the small force at his disposal ; at any rate, far enough to meet the Boers on the frontier, and try at least to check their further advance and daily raids, even if it should be found

impossible to proceed farther to the relief of the beleaguered garrisons, some of which were known to be short of provisions, weak for defence, and in no fit state to withstand the numerous and aggressive forces which the Boers could, and doubtless did, bring into the field.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BRITISH ADVANCE.

Inquiries on Captain Elliott's Murder—Complicity of Boer Leaders denied—Ensuing Correspondence—Finding and Burial of Captain Elliott's Body—Sir G. Colley's Ultimatum and Boer Reply—Action of British House of Commons—Relief Column at Newcastle—Sir G. Colley's Address—The Start—Mount Prospect Camp—Boer Positions—Utrecht Captured—Cape Sympathy—Petition from Holland—President Brand's Mediation—Telegrams thereon.

THE murder of Captain Elliott next engaged the attention of Sir George Colley, and on the 12th of January a letter was addressed to Commandant-General Joubert on the subject, enclosing copy of a statement made by Captain Lambart, 2-21st Regiment R.S.F., of the circumstances attending the release from the Boer camp at Heidelberg and murder of Captain Elliott, 94th Regiment, in the confident belief that the Commandant would cause inquiry to be made into the circumstances of the outrage, and deal with the perpetrators according to their deserts; and offering publicity to the reply.

This elicited an immediate denial from the Boer Government, showing the steps they had at once taken upon hearing of the dastardly act; and accompanied by an emphatic protest, from their point of view, against the steps taken by Sir Owen Lanyon, and the general orders of Sir George Colley. This document, though lengthy, is too important not to be reproduced here. In acknowledging the receipt of that letter, and expressing sincere thanks for the transmission of the statement made by Captain Lambart, Mr. E. Bok, the State Secretary, said that he was ordered to express at once, and in the most emphatic way, the deep feelings of horror and disgust which the Government felt for an act so outrageous as described by Captain Lambart. It was only on the 14th

of January that some vague rumours about the horrid act reached them from the Free State, and at once the Government sent an express to Heilbron, with instructions to inquire at the Landdrost's office into the matter; so there could be no reasonable doubt that the real perpetrators of this foul act would be punished according to law. He also enclosed a translation of the instructions sent to Mr. Steyn, Landdrost of Heilbron, Orange Free State, to the following effect:—"This very moment we learn from Messrs. Botha and Willem Bester, inhabitants of the district of Harrismith, Orange Free State, that they have heard that Captain Elliott, of the 94th Regiment, who was set at liberty by us, has been shot in the river (the Vaal), in the beginning of the night. The above-named gentlemen tell us that statements with regard to that affair have been investigated by you. Be so kind immediately to send copies of the given statements and of your held investigation. We can assure you that if the rumours might prove to be true we look upon that act as public murder, and that we will not rest before the perpetrators have undergone their just punishment, always in the case the perpetrators are inhabitants of this State."

Finally, the communication set forth the views of the Triumvirate in these terms:—

"This Government fully agrees with His Excellency the Major-General Commanding, that it is desirable to mitigate, as far as is possible, the suffering which the ensuing war must necessarily entail, and to carry on the military operations with the humanity and amenities usual amongst civilised races; and although they are very sorry that it was only on the opportunity of a bad act committed by a few of their people, that such a desire has been expressed, they are thankful that they have it on record. It is with due respect to His Excellency that, starting from this mutual agreement about what they wish to call the main principles of an honest and noble war, they take the liberty to advance a few points and facts, and to bring them under the light of those broad principles.

"1. What is to be said about the military orders given by order of Sir W. Owen Lanyon, and instructing Her Majesty's troops to fire at the Burghers, as is fully explained in Nos. 20, 21 of the second Proclamation? 2. Does the firing, without any previous summons or warning, at the Burghers, as is amply set forth in Nos. 8 and 17 of the same Proclamation, come under cover of the humanity and amenities usual amongst civilised races? 3. Does the bombarding and shelling of an open town, occupied by women and children, as is explained more fully in the Nos. 8, 11, 28 of the same Proclamation, when it is done by the troops of Her Majesty

and under the protection of the British flag, belong to those military operations which unfortunately may become necessary, or are there good substantial grounds to call it such an outrage as scarcely even among barbarians could have been thought of? 4. What will be the verdict of an international jury about this very plain and unmistakable order of Colonel W. Bellairs:—'Keep off all armed bodies of men approaching your position, whether under cover of a flag of truce or otherwise.'—Dated Pretoria, 31st of December, 1880? 5. And about this other fact, that as 'political prisoners' at Pretoria, are kept in gaol two ladies and their whole families, babies included. 6. And also that born Afrianders living in Pretoria, and not wishing to fight perhaps against their own fathers, brothers, or friends, and therefore refusing to be armed by the authorities in Pretoria, have been imprisoned and treated in a shameful manner. 7. And also that when, on the 18th of December, 1880, after the surrender of Major Clarke at Potchefstroom, our Burgher, C. Bodenstein, went up to the camp outside Potchefstroom in order to bring a letter for Major Clarke to Colonel Winsloe, quite alone, unarmed, with a clear flag of truce in his hands, on the barren veldt, his horse was shot dead under him.

"8. Let the same international jury give their verdict in the following case:—In the name, and calling himself the mouthpiece of His Excellency the Governor of Natal, the Magistrate of Newcastle addresses himself to P. Joubert, Esq., Commandant-General, &c., &c., Transvaal, requesting him to respect the neutrality of Natal, said Colony being entirely out of the quarrel between the Transvaal Boers and the Imperial Government. This happens on the 5th of January. Mr. P. J. Joubert, replying the 7th of January to said letter, states that he is very willing to respect the neutrality of Natal, but in order to do so he wishes to be informed what the meaning is of the massing of Imperial troops in Newcastle. The Republican Government, in a letter dated the 10th of January, addressed to His Excellency the Governor of Natal, enlarges on the same topic. In the meanwhile the Commander of the Republican troops withdrew his troops behind the boundaries. Well, on the 8th of January a letter was written and sent by the Resident Magistrate of Newcastle to the Commandant-General P. J. Joubert, informing him that—'Having submitted to His Excellency the Governor a copy of his letter of the 5th instant, he had been directed by him to at once inform Mr. Joubert that, with the exception of the first paragraph, he had to consider the letter as cancelled, and as having been written without the consent of the Governor.' The point at issue here, whereupon we wish to have the verdict of an international jury, is this:—Can it be called lawful warfare, to bring forward the delicate point of neutrality of a third country, forcing, by the raising of this point, one of the belligerent parties to withdraw his advanced guards from a very desirable spot, and when this succeeds to tell the same party very quietly two days afterwards that it was all nonsense? In order to enable said jury to give a true verdict upon this point it is necessary to draw their attention to the fact, that the very same man is Governor of the country which wishes to be respected as neutral, and at the same time head or chief of one of the belligerent parties. With due respect for the impartiality of the said jury, we contend that the mutual desire to mitigate the suffering which the ensuing war must necessarily entail will be frustrated by such acts showing an utter want of respect of the one belligerent party to the other.

"9. In the letter of J. C. MacGregor, Esq., it is stated that a certain general order issued by His Excellency Sir George Pomeroy Colley in his

capacity as Major-General Commanding, dated 28th of December, 1880, is a proof of His Excellency's desire to carry on the military operations 'with the humanity and amenities usual among civilised races.'

"We humbly submit those three points for further consideration:—
 1. Can it be said to comply with said desire, when our noble struggle is called a rebellion? and 2. When a fair fight is called an unprovoked action? and 3. The troops are told when in that fight they were conquered that a stain is cast on the British arms which must be quickly effaced. But, sir, we leave off going on in this strain. Our case is fairly and fully explained in the past history of the last three years of our country, and substantiated in both our Proclamations. We are of opinion that if what happens here in the Transvaal did happen somewhere in Europe, and if instead of the English Government being the annexing Power, Russia, Prussia, or some other reputed autocratic Power had sent Sir Theophilus Shepstone to Pretoria, killing the freedom of an independent state, the three kingdoms would ring from one end to another, from sea to sea, with a clamour of sympathy for that poor people who did dare to fight against an overwhelming Power. But, alas, we are now rebels! Why? Do we fight against our legal Government? No, sir, we do not. Although we have been explaining our case, since more than three years, we see now that it is utterly in vain. His Excellency, addressing Her Majesty's troops, gives us still bad names. Well, good or bad names cannot alter very much our position, but they may do a very great wrong. They may cause just what Sir G. Pomeroy Colley and we wish to avoid—they may raise a feeling of revenge. It is not yet too late to prevent further harm. We put the whole matter in the hands of His Excellency. At the very same moment that we, after a lapse of three years, took up again the reins of our legal Government, we offered to meet the Imperial Government in any wishes of theirs for the consolidating or confederating of the Colonies in South Africa; and we offer the same still. We did our utmost to prevent bloodshed—and how are we met? With treacherous shells at Potchefstrom, and threats of large forces gathering at Newcastle, brought over from Europe, and ready to crush us as rebels. Sir, *the General Orders* of His Excellency Sir G. Pomeroy Colley still speak of us as of a *mised* and *deluded* people, continuing thereby that most untruthful of all misrepresentations, originated in Pretoria, and which may be called the main cause of all the miseries, past and future. Perhaps, after all, we are misled and deluded. By what or by whom? By our faith in a living God, Who will be the Defender of the weak against the strong, of the oppressed against the oppressor, Who will raise a feeling of shame among the English people for the evil deeds which are perpetrated in their name in South Africa. In the name of our Lord we will fight until death. I have the honour to express the thanks of the Government for the Declaration made by you, that this reply will be published in the same way as the statement of Captain Lambart.—W. E. BOK."

While this correspondence was proceeding the body of Captain Elliott was recovered in the Vaal River by a Free State Burgher named Prinsloo, who buried it on the Free State side of the river, and gave information thereof to the authorities. Upon this, Mr. Steyn, the Landdrost of Heilbron (the nearest

town to the scene of the murder), and Dr. Vowell proceeded directly to the place and exhumed the body in order to ascertain whether it was the remains of Captain Elliott. On their arrival at the place, a medical examination was held, and four shot wounds were found on the body: one in the temple, one in the wrist, one in the leg (which was broken), and one in the middle of the back. Both the first and last were mortal, and sufficient to cause almost instantaneous death. A full description of the clothes was taken, and, on being sent down to Captain Lambart, then at Pietermaritzburg, it was recognized as corresponding in every respect with the dress worn by the deceased at the time. In the pockets were found £30 in notes, 6s. in silver, and a Victoria Cross, with the name of Private Fitzpatrick, of the 94th Regiment, which deceased was taking care of for the owner. Landdrost Steyn had a coffin made, and the body was then decently interred on the farm of Mr. Groom, who had so willingly assisted Captain Lambart on his escape.

On the 23rd of January General Colley sent an Ultimatum to the Boers, ordering them as insurgents to disperse; but without naming any time within which such steps were to be taken. This Ultimatum was communicated by Commandant-General Joubert to the Government at Heidelberg, and a characteristic reply thereto sent back with all possible despatch, dated the 29th of January:—"We beg to acknowledge receipt of yours of 23rd. In reply we beg to state that, in terms of the latter, we are unable to comply with your request, as long as Your Excellency addresses us as insurgents, and insinuates that we, the leaders, are wickedly misleading a lot of ignorant men. It is nearly hopeless for us to attempt to find the proper words for reply; but before the Lord we would not be justified if we did not avail ourselves of this, perhaps the last, opportunity of speaking to you as the representative of Her Majesty the Queen, and people of England, for whom we feel deep respect. We must emphatically repeat, we are willing to comply with any wishes of the Imperial Government tending to the consolidation and confederation of South Africa, and in order to make this offer from our side as clear and unequivocal

as possible—although we have explained this point fully in all our documents, and especially in paragraphs 36 to 38 of our first Proclamation—we declare we would be satisfied with a rescinding of the Annexation and restoration of the South African Republic under a Protectorate of Her Majesty the Queen, so that once a year the British flag shall be hoisted, all in strict accordance with the above-mentioned clauses of our first Proclamation. If Your Excellency resolves to reject this, we have only to submit to our fate; but the Lord will provide.”

In England, the House of Commons, then sitting in extraordinary session, negatived a motion of Mr. Rylands, “That the Annexation of the Transvaal was impolitic and should be reversed”; and the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, in the course of his speech thereon, said that though annexation at the time might have been impolitic and undesirable, its reversal now was quite impossible. This took place on the 22nd of January (the second anniversary of Isandhlwana), and the news reached South Africa by telegraph next day.

After the despatch of the Ultimatum, Sir G. Colley held a review of all the troops at Newcastle, and addressed the forces, announcing that a relief column would start on the following day, and appealing to the valour of the troops, though inferior in numbers, to fight for the relief of the garrisons and loyal inhabitants of the Transvaal; as waiting for the reinforcements, causing at least a month’s delay, would involve suffering and suspense, and probably in some cases necessitate surrender. The address was received with enthusiasm. The morning of the 24th of January, 1881, saw the departure from Newcastle camp of the small column of Her Majesty’s troops that could be got together for the relief of the Transvaal. It was commanded in person by General Sir G. P. Colley, accompanied by Commodore Richards, R.N., Colonel Ashburnham, 3-60th, Colonel Deane, D.A.G., temporarily in command of the 58th Regiment, and comprised about sixty officers and 1,200 men. The exact strength of the force which moved out of Newcastle in the relief column was not known for some

time ; as it was thought inexpedient to allow its paucity of numbers to become publicly known, especially as the Boers were well known to have many spies throughout the Colony of Natal, as well as active sympathisers and advisers in Pietermaritzburg.

Owing to the rain which had fallen for three days previous to the march, the column was unable to proceed far the first day. On the second they reached the Ingogo River, seeing Boer patrols a few miles distant ; and on the 26th they encamped and entrenched themselves at Mount Prospect, a hilly position about three and a half miles from Lang's Nek, where a large Boer force was encamped, and easily discernible. The Boers had previously sent a large detachment to Utrecht, under Commandant Viljoen, who established himself in that town. He captured the Landdrost Rudolph, who was sent under escort as a prisoner to Heidelberg ; and the other officials were sent across the Buffalo River by an armed escort, who stationed themselves on the Drift, to prevent the escape of other loyal Boers, and give notice of the passage of any British troops by that road. A few skirmishes occurred between the patrols, but with no casualties. The 27th of January was spent in inactivity, through a heavy storm of rain and thick mist, but, the weather clearing on the 28th, an advance was then made.

The course of serious events thus occurring through January, was well known all over South Africa and Europe ; and earnest endeavours were made by many in order to avert further collision between British troops and the Boers, and the consequent spilling of blood. Meetings were held throughout the Cape Colony and Orange Free State, subscriptions were got up, a Red Cross society started for helping the wounded, and large quantities of provisions, arms, and ammunition were sent up through the Free State to the Transvaalers. At Cape Town, Graaff Reinet, the Paarl and other towns in the Cape Colony, large meetings were held and resolutions passed, declaring that the Transvaalers never would have taken up arms had not a fair hearing on the part of Her Majesty's advisers been refused them and their sentiments been misrepresented : that negotia-

tions be entered into, by means of a Royal Commission or Special Commissioner, with a view to bring about a condition of affairs satisfactory to all parties, otherwise to enforce Her Majesty's rule by force of arms would tend to alienate from her rule the minds of many of Her Majesty's subjects in South Africa: that it was the duty of the Cape Government and all colonists to endeavour to bring about a settlement by means of negotiation with the men calling themselves the South African Republic, instead of enforcing Her Majesty's rule at the point of the bayonet; and further, that the only solution of the difficulty would be the restoration of the independence of the Transvaal, under certain conditions, and the absolute neutrality of the South African Colonies and States.

A strong Deputation from Holland also visited England in order to obtain an interview with the British Ministry to arrange steps for the conclusion of a mutually satisfactory peace settlement with the Boers. And an appeal, printed in Dutch and English, was signed by over 7,000 Hollanders and presented to the British Parliament. The following is the principal text:—

“We, the undersigned, as Dutch citizens, have followed with deep interest the late events affecting the people of the Transvaal, our own flesh and blood by derivation; and we can no longer repress the feeling of wonder and regret experienced by us when the late Government of England resolved to deprive the Transvaal people of their national independence and subject their small territory to the Administration of the English Crown. It would be useless to detail the reasons of our wonder and regret. Many of us at the time, and especially our Prime Minister, entered an energetic protest against the Annexation of the Transvaal as an equally impolitic and unjust act. The people of the Transvaal continued to cherish the hope, and not without reason, that the wrong done them would again be made good. Still, as all these expectations have been disappointed, their patience has been exhausted, and in despair they have rushed to arms. We may lament this act of theirs, but we find it intelligible; for are their forefathers not ours also—the men who, for eighty long and grievous years, struggled for the preservation of their national independence? And shall the spirit of their ancestors be quenched among them? No, Britons, you yourselves a free people, you cannot do otherwise than sympathise with another if comparatively unimportant race, which your powerful Government, it is true, can exterminate and scatter, but which will never allow itself to be subjugated. And it is this feeling which encourages us to direct this appeal to the sense of justice of the British nation. The people of England cannot brook the dishonour which must inevitably result from a struggle that is as unequal as it is unjust, from a struggle with a powerless race, with a people who wish for nothing further than to live in peace and quiet under

their own laws, cultivating the ground that has become their own through stress and peril. And we cherish the hope that this appeal of ours will not remain wholly unattended to. We are still inclined to believe that the voice of public opinion will give a powerful support to the present Government of England in order to enable Her Majesty's Ministers to undo an act of injustice, which, to judge from the liberal professions of the Cabinet, and from its own particular views, should never have been planned and carried out."

President Brand, of the Orange Free State, ever foremost in counsel and acts for the good of South Africa, also stepped forward and tried to mediate between the Boers and the British. The following are the telegrams from His Honour and the replies from Sir Hercules Robinson, Governor and High Commissioner, Cape Town :—

"Bloemfontein, January 25.—Is it not possible to offer the Transvaal people, through the High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, now in Cape Town, certain terms and conditions, provided they cease armed opposition—making it clear to them how this is to be understood?"—"Cape Town, Jan. 27. With reference to your telegram to the Secretary of State inquiring 'if it would not be possible to offer to the Transvaal people, through me, certain terms and conditions, provided they ceased armed opposition,' I am directed to inform Your Honour that, if armed opposition ceased forthwith, Her Majesty's Government would thereupon endeavour to frame such a scheme as they believe would satisfy all enlightened friends of the Transvaal country."—"Bloemfontein, Jan. 28. I read Your Excellency's telegram of yesterday with very great pleasure. Don't Your Excellency think that it will be good to inform the Transvaal people, without delay, of the contents, explaining to them what is meant by forthwith ceasing armed opposition? From the telegram published here yesterday, and dated Pietermaritzburg, it would appear that Sir Pomeroy Colley was preparing to move forward into the Transvaal; and I am afraid that, unless some effort is made to explain to the Transvaal people the contents of Your Excellency's telegram, and upon what terms they are forthwith to cease armed opposition, a further collision will take place, and the satisfactory arrangements which Her Majesty's Government contemplated may become more difficult. If Your Excellency can devise some means by which the object which Your Excellency hopes to attain can be effected at once, and the armed opposition cease, so that there is time and opportunity to make the scheme, mentioned in Your Excellency's telegram, known to them, much may be effected. I think every moment is precious. Oh! do Your Excellency's best. You will thereby earn the gratitude of the whole of South Africa. Forgive the urgency with which I express myself, but no time can now be lost."—"Cape Town, January 28. I have to thank Your Honour for your telegram of to-day, just received. I have at the same moment a telegram from Natal reporting that a battle is now taking place at Lang's Nek, between Sir George Colley's force and the Boers. I would suggest that Your Honour might give immediate and widespread publicity to your telegram to the Secretary of State, and to the reply which I yesterday transmitted to Your Honour from Her Majesty's Government."—"Bloemfontein, January

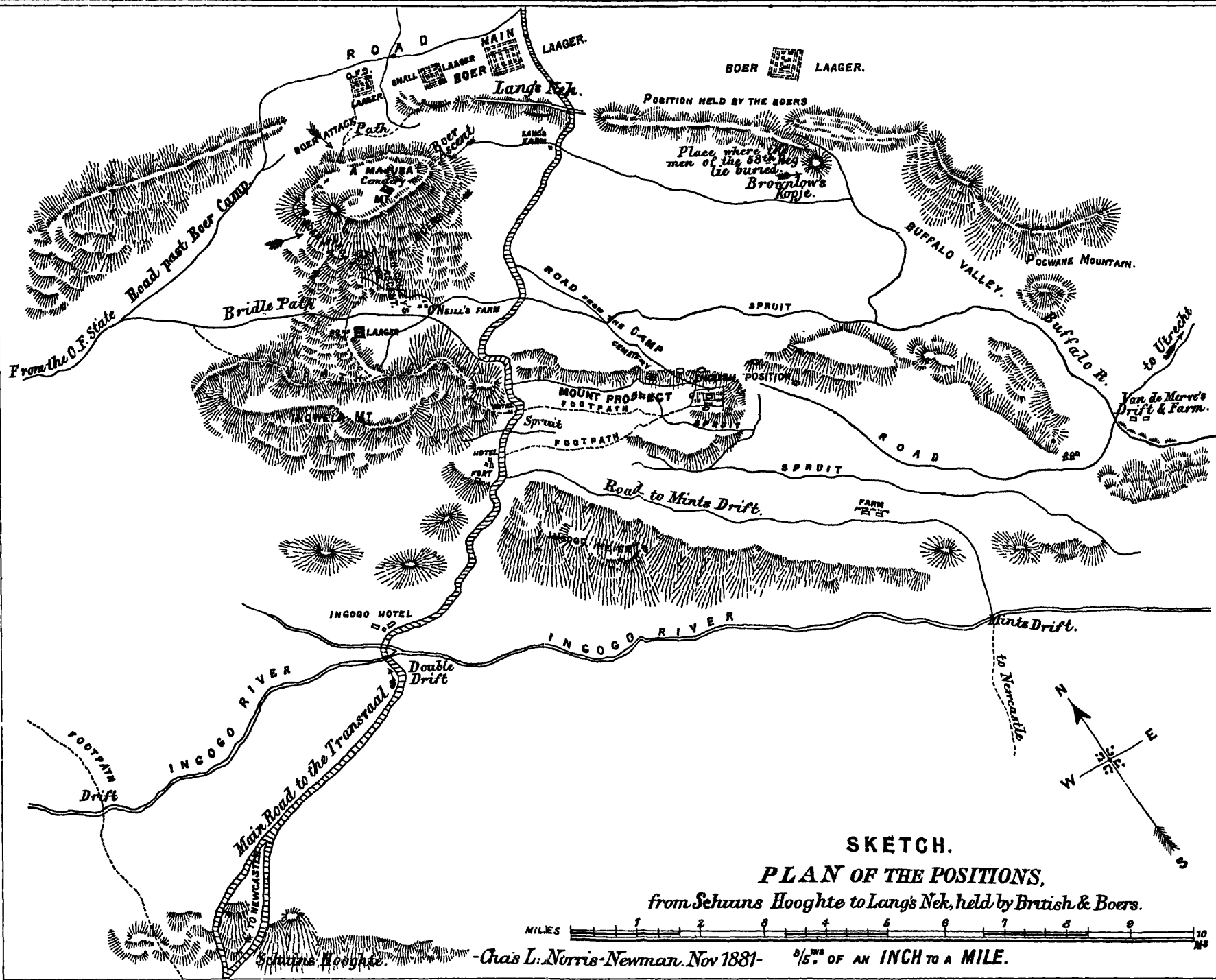
28. I am indeed very sorry to learn from Your Excellency's telegram that a battle is now taking place between Sir George Colley's force and the Transvaal people. I was in hopes that, by coming to some understanding as to the guarantees under which they would cease armed opposition, further bloodshed could have been avoided and a satisfactory settlement effected. I handed Your Excellency's telegram, which I received this morning, to the Editors of the *Friend* and the *Express* for publication, almost immediately after I received it."

CHAPTER XV.

LANG'S NEK.

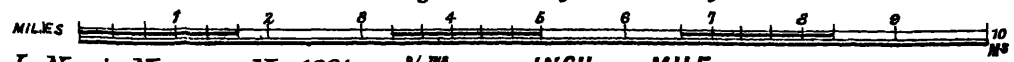
Advance of Force from Mount Prospect—Arrival at the Nek—Attack arranged—Artillery Fire—Charge of the Mounted Squadron—Advance of the 58th—Gallant Attempts—Death of the Officers—Repulse of the British—Details of the Fight—Retreat to Camp—Removal of Dead—Succour of Wounded—Next Day's General Orders—Memoir of Colonel Deane and Major Poole—Prisoners' Statements—General Joubert's Report—Losses on both Sides—Arrival of Reinforcements at Durban—Sir Evelyn Wood's Appointment—2-60th, 15th Hussars, 2 Battery R.A.—83rd and 92nd from India—H.M.S. *Dido's* Naval Brigade—Message from the Queen—Richmond Road Camp—Boers in Natal—Telegrams from the General—Gunpowder and Arms ordered at the Cape by the Orange Free State—Permission refused—News from Pretoria—Communications cut off—Boers at Ingogo.

At six o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, January 28, 1881, the order for the advance of the little British force, comprising the Relief column, was given; and within half an hour everything was in readiness, and the troops started away from Mount Prospect for an attack upon Lang's Nek, where the Boers were seen to be in a position of some strength, though in what numbers was not known. The troops consisted of five companies of the 3-60th under Colonel Ashburnham; five companies of the 58th Regiment under Colonel Deane; 150 Mounted Infantry and Dragoons under Major Brownlow; seventy-five Naval Brigade with two 24lb. rockets; parts of two Batteries of Artillery, with four 9-pounders, and two 7-pounders, under Captain Greer, R.A., and about twenty Natal mounted police, with ambulances and some of the Army Hospital Corps. The entrenched camp was left in charge of a Detachment, 100 strong, of the 2-21st R.S.F., thirty Naval Brigade, with the two Gatlings, and fifty Transport and Army Service Corps men. The force advanced to the left of the road, distant about 1,000 yards, and at nine o'clock they arrived at the low



SKETCH.

PLAN OF THE POSITIONS,
 from Schuurs Hooghte to Lang's Nek, held by British & Boers.



-Chas L. Norris-Newman. Nov 1881- 3/5" OF AN INCH TO A MILE.

ground at the bottom of the rise to the Nek. Here the following dispositions were made: the 60th were extended to the left, with the Naval Brigade and the two rockets, and the Natal mounted police, with ambulances in the rear; while the main attack on the spurs to the left of the Boer position (on the British right) was commenced by the guns shelling the heights and dongas, with the Cavalry in rear of them.

At ten o'clock, the 58th were ordered to advance on the hill to the right of the Nek, and the Mounted Squadron to charge a hill still more to the right (or Boer left), with the object of out-flanking the enemy. The mounted men got up first and were received with a heavy fire. The first troop, under Major Brownlow himself, charged grandly right up to the ridge which the Boers held, and in so doing Sergeant-Major Lunny shot one man dead with his revolver and wounded another before being killed in the midst of the enemy. Major Brownlow and Lieutenant Lermite, 2-21st R.S.F., led the men magnificently, and had narrow escapes, their horses being shot under them. Lieutenant Pigott, 3-60th, attached to the 2nd troop Mounted Infantry, who was well in advance of his men, had his horse shot under him. The Squadron was, however, obliged to retire after the first volley, having half its saddles emptied, but they reformed, and with the second troop under Captain Hornby, 58th, charged again, but to no purpose; their opponents were under shelter, and the ground was in no way suitable for cavalry charges. Had the men been dismounted and allowed to creep up steadily in skirmishing order, as Mounted Infantry ought to do, the fortunes of the day might have been changed. Neither bravery nor numbers avail to enable cavalry to approach infantry, especially up steep ascents when charging against men under shelter, armed with breechloading weapons of precision.

The 58th, in the meantime, began the ascent of the steep hill and succeeded in getting half way up it without much opposition or loss. When they, however, arrived near the Boer position and were being extended, the order to charge was issued without giving breathing time to the men, who were exhausted with the hurried ascent of a gradient of one in

fifteen, and tired with the long rank wet grass clinging to their legs, and retarding their progress. Before they were able to deploy properly to the right and left a volley was poured into them from above, which shook the Regiment for a moment, and a party of Boers managed also to enfilade them on the right flank. Two minutes of this firing, answered as best it could, by the men, showed how unavailing it would be, and the order to "charge" was given by Colonel Deane, whose horse was immediately shot under him; but springing to his feet, he called to the men, "I am all right," and then fell mortally wounded with another bullet right through him. Lieutenant Inman, 3-60th, his orderly officer, was also shot dead just behind him, and Major Hingeston then took command, giving the order to "fix bayonets," and all the other officers then went well forward and encouraged their men, with such success as to drive the advanced Boers back on their supports. But finding that the enemy was being reinforced, and the enfilade on the right flank increasing, from a sudden accession of the Boers who had repulsed the cavalry attack, the order to retire was reluctantly given; but only after nearly all the Staff and officers were killed or wounded. At half-past eleven the 58th retired as best they could, being followed by a heavy fire from the Boers, which was, however, somewhat checked by a heavy artillery fire of shells directed with great precision from the guns on the right. Upon their reaching the flat, the 3-60th were then ordered to the front to cover the retreat of the 58th, after having been exposed, almost inactive, to the heavy cross fire of a party of Boers who had ensconced themselves in a bush-covered donga or ravine on the British left, and who were only driven out at last by some splendid rocket practice of the Naval Brigade. The Boers did not follow up the troops, and the Natal mounted police never came into action. Sir George Colley, evidently thinking that the Boer position was too strong and too numerously defended to be forced with the small number of men at his disposal, fell back upon the Mount Prospect camp, and there made arrangements for the burial of the dead and the succour of the wounded. Nearly all the General's Staff, including Major Poole, R.A.,

and Lieutenant Elwes, Grenadier Guards, were killed in following Colonel Deane in advance of the 58th, except Major Essex, 10th Regiment, who must be considered a fortunate man, having been one of the few that escaped from Isandhlwana.

Referring again to the details of the plucky advance of the 58th, after Major Hingeston fell, Major Poole and Lieutenant Dolphin were killed at the same time, and Captain Lovegrove, who had succeeded to the command, was also badly wounded, so that temporarily the command devolved on Lieutenant S. Jopp, whose bravery and coolness received honourable mention at the time and reward afterwards. Lieutenant Baillie, while carrying the Regimental Colours, was mortally wounded, and then Lieutenant Peel offered to assist him. "Never mind me, save the Colours," was his only and last reply, and with that Peel, who was carrying the Queen's Colours, took the other also; but on his falling into a hole, Sergeant Budstock, thinking he was shot, ran to him and took the two Colours back out of the immediate range of fire. Private Brennan, of this Regiment, was, it is thought, the only man who bayoneted a Boer. Brennan, when near the top, saw a Boer firing at a wounded soldier, and made a run at him; the Boer fired at and killed the wounded man, but before he could re-load Brennan ran him through, and with pride showed his bayonet covered with gore on his return to the camp.

After the engagement, during which Chaplain Ritchie had been most assiduously attending to the wounded, even under a heavy fire, Captain McGregor rode up to the Boer camp with a flag of truce, in order to obtain permission for the recovery of the dead and wounded. Commandant Joubert being absent, the next officer in command stated that he could only give authority to remove the men from the foot of the hill; but shortly afterwards, Joubert arrived and gave the requisite permission, even sending parties to assist, and supply the wounded with brandy and water, &c. The burial of the dead and the removal of all the wounded lasted until late in the evening of the next day. The bodies of the officers were brought back and interred with military honours at Mount Prospect camp, along with those who died from their wounds afterwards. The total