

METHUEN CHECKED!

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The Highlanders Get Within Two Hundred Yards of the Boer Trenches.

When a Deadly Fire was Opened on Them from Front and Flank, Mowing Down About Two Hundred Men.

(Special despatch to the Sun.)

LONDON, Dec. 14.—The Daily News correspondent with Gen. Methuen cables: "After shelling the Boers all day Sunday with our howitzers and naval guns, the whole force, with the exception of those left to guard the camp, moved forward. The attack was opened at 3.30 Monday morning by the Highland brigade. In front were the Seaforth, Argyll and the 'Black Watch' with the Gordons and the Highland light infantry in support. The men marched in quarter column formation. The Highlanders had reached to within 200 yards of the Boer trenches when a deadly fire was opened on the front and the right flank. Here about 200 men were mown down, and those leading were forced to retreat. The supports were then brought up, but they also failed to carry the kopje, and the right flank was thus in serious jeopardy. The guns, however, dashed to the rescue, and protected by their fire our shattered force was able to re-form. The 47th and 51st regiments of the 1st Division were dismounted and skirmished through the clearing and holding it until the afternoon. Our terrific artillery fire provoked no response except from the enemy's rifles.

DESULTORY ARTILLERY FIRE

"All efforts to carry the position having failed, the action at midday sank into a desultory artillery fire, with the exception of some sharp skirmishing on the right flank. At 3.45 the Highlanders forced up to renew the attack on the entrenched kopje, but the Boers, who had made no use of their artillery during the whole day, now opened on them with a heavy shrapnel fire. The brigade was immediately forced to retire again, and the fight between the guns continued until dark.

THE LOSSES ON BOTH SIDES WERE VERY SEVERE.

Many Boers were killed in the trenches and wire entanglements. (The entanglements mentioned in the foregoing are probably explained by the fact mentioned in another press despatch that the Boers came upon open ground on the British front for the purpose of attacking the British flank, but were arrested by the Guards and the artillery.)

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The Daily Mail's correspondent says that the murderous fire on the Highlanders at 300 yards forced up in a single minute the larger part of the fearful British loss. He adds: "Startled and overwhelmed, the brigade retired quickly, but rallied and retained their position. The Guards, who crossed the open ridge against the trenches on the right, fought an invisible battle for fifteen hours."

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According to another telegram, the Boers had trenches on the level well far beyond the foot-hills. These were hidden by screens of leaves. Some trenches between these and the hills were guarded with barbed wire, the enemy evidently fearing a bayonet attack. The Boers used only one gun until sunset, when a few rounds were fired from four guns. When the Highlanders met the murderous point blank fire of the Boers about 200 were mown down. The Black Watch regiment, on re-forming, was only able to muster 160 men. The Boers also lost heavily in the trenches and also in the wire entanglements, when they came into the open in an attempt to make a flank attack on the British.

ANOTHER ACCOUNT

MODDER RIVER, Thursday, Dec. 12.—The British casualties in the battle of Magerfontein included the Marquis of Winchester, major of the second battalion Coldstream Guards, who was killed, and Col. Downham of the first battalion Gordon Highlanders, who was mortally wounded. When the Highlanders met the murderous point blank fire of the Boers about 200 were mown down. The Black Watch regiment, on re-forming, was only able to muster 160 men. The Boers also lost heavily in the trenches and also in the wire entanglements, when they came into the open in an attempt to make a flank attack on the British.

PROVOKED NO RESPONSE.

The terrific British artillery fire provoked no response except from the Boer rifles until nearly four o'clock in the afternoon, when the Gordon Highlanders formed up to renew the attack on the entrenched kopje. They advanced with the utmost gallantry to attack the Boers, close to the place where lay their dead and wounded comrades of the Highland brigade. The enemy opened with a heavy shrapnel fire as the British advanced, and it was found physically impossible to take the Boer trenches. The British got within 200 yards, but could not get nearer. It was here that Col. Downham fell.

USED BARBED WIRE.

The Boers had free recourse to barbed wire entanglements, which offered great obstacles even after the damage inflicted by the British artillery fire. This morning (Tuesday) both sides occupied the positions they held before the battle. The greatest bravery was displayed by both officers and men. The wounded include Lieut. Col. A. E. Coddington and Capt. Sterling, both of the first battalion of the Coldstream Guards.

A detachment of Boers, posted among some thick bushes to the east, maintained a most destructive fire on our right.

With the remarkable tact for taking cover which the Boers always displayed, they were generally speaking, virtually invisible, and, although the enemy's artillery was practically silenced, his rifle fire was so persistent and concentrated as well as unusually well aimed, that it was absolutely impossible for the British infantry to take the position by assault. At the first advance of the Highlanders, the Boer shooting, probably owing to the darkness, was somewhat high. Otherwise the British would have been still heavier.

RISK WAS JUSTIFIABLE

So Says the London Times Correspondent Referring to Gatacre's Reverse.

LONDON, Dec. 13.—A despatch to the Times from Bushman's Hook, dated Monday evening, says: "The Boer commander has been requested to furnish full information of the British casualties in the battle of Magerfontein. The British have withdrawn to good positions along the railway southward to Moltens. 'Gen. Gatacre and staff remain at Bushman's Hook, which is important and of immense importance, but they will probably move in the direction of Sterkstroom.'"

THE STORMBERG REPULSE.

The Fight Lasted Three Hours, the British Falling Back in Fair Order.

CAPE TOWN, Dec. 13 (delayed in transmission).—The Cape Argus prints this account of Gen. Gatacre's fight at Stormberg. The despatch was sent by the correspondent of the Argus at Moltens: "Gen. Gatacre struck camp at Putter's Kraal on Saturday and put his men on a train for Moltens. The men, who occupied four trains, reached Moltens at 8 p. m. and started for Stormberg at 9 p. m. The distance was calculated to be sixteen miles, but the guides mistook the way. Hill after hill was negotiated. While the column was skirting one hill in four front order the enemy ambushed and fired on the British. The Royal Artillery covering the British retreat were leading were ordered to take cover from the fire. The Boers held the superior position, but their shooting was bad, and this saved the British from being annihilated. Indeed, the British artillery attempted to flank the enemy, but the Boers anticipated this movement, and our men were sandwiched between a furious fusillade for an hour. An artillery duel followed. Our artillery did splendid work. "The Cape police displayed conspicuous bravery, and worked their Maxims in fine style during the Boer flank attack. The British also fought well. The Boer guns were silenced for a time, but re-opened from new positions. "The fight lasted three hours, when Gatacre fell back in fair order. The British artillery retreated. The Boers followed closely and repeatedly shelled our men. "Three transport wagons had to be abandoned."

CASUALTIES NUMBERED 450.

Shell Fire Failed to Dislodge the Enemy, and British Were Unable to Get Round Their Flanks.

LONDON, Dec. 13.—Up to midnight the war office had not received any details concerning Gen. Methuen's losses. It is estimated, however, that the killed, wounded and missing number about 450. The fighting was of a desperate character. A terrific shell fire failed to dislodge the enemy from their splendid cover, and the British were unable to get round their flanks.

SUNDAY NIGHT SORTIE.

LORENZO MARQUEZ, Dec. 13 (delayed in transmission).—A despatch from Pretoria, describing the sortie made from Ladysmith on Sunday night by 500 men of the Second Rifle Brigade, commanded by Col. Metcalfe, which the British described as a victory for their arms, says that the attack was repulsed, and that nine British were killed, 70 wounded and 11 captured. Three of the leading townsmen of Pretoria were killed and several others were wounded, causing great sorrow in the town. The des-

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DOUBTS THE STATEMENT.

LONDON, Dec. 13.—Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, governor of Natal and Zululand, sends to the colonial office a statement made by a man named Reynolds, a resident of Dundee, who claims to have been in the town until Oct. 25, 1899, at which time the Boers had been in possession of the place for a number of days. Reynolds states that up to the time he left the Boers had not interfered with private persons. He does not believe the charge that the Boers had shot the artists there, as he himself was a member of the guards.

KAFFIRS MARCH TO WREK WRIGHT

PRETORIA, Natal, Dec. 11, 7.25 p. m.—About 300 Kaffirs have just marched to Wrekwright, as called following the singing war songs and flourishing knob-korries and long knives. It was a most inspiring sound and a most extraordinary sight.

STUDENTS ARRESTED.

CAPE TOWN, Dec. 11 (delayed in transmission).—Sixteen colonial students were arrested on the steamship Algo, bound for Delagoa Bay. Thirteen of these students were released on parole. Parole was denied the other three, and they were detained.

MORE TROOPS FOR THE FRONT.

LIVERPOOL, Dec. 13.—Two thousand troops, including the Yorkshires and Lancashires, embarked on the transport Majestic today, bound for South Africa. The Lord mayor, many prominent citizens and a large crowd of people witnessed their departure. The men were enthusiastically cheered.

MARQUIS OF WINCHESTER KILLED.

LONDON, Dec. 14.—The correspondent of the Telegraph at Modder River writes that the Marquis of Winchester, of the Coldstream Guards, who succeeded Lieut. Col. Spottwood after his death, was killed in the first Modder River battle. He was killed in the last engagement.

CONTRIBUTION FROM GAMBIA.

(Special Despatch to the Sun.) LONDON, Dec. 13.—The unofficial members of the council, in behalf of the colony of Gambia, propose to contribute £200 for the relief of the families of soldiers killed in South Africa.

BOERS WILL OCCUPY MOLTENS.

MOLTENS, Cape Colony, Dec. 11 (delayed in transmission).—It is expected that the Boers will advance and occupy Moltens.

FOREIGN ATTACHES MOVE.

CAPE TOWN, Dec. 13.—In consequence of a telegram which was received from Gen. Buller, the foreign attaches have sailed for Durban.

NATAL POLICE WITH BULLER.

DURBAN, Natal, Dec. 13.—A troop of the Natal police are acting as Gen. Buller's body guard.

MONDAY'S BATTLE

LONDON, Dec. 13.—Gen. Methuen's report from Modder River shows that he met with a serious check on Monday and suffered great loss.

NORTH OF MODDER RIVER.

Monday, Dec. 11.—Early yesterday evening the Highland brigade and brigades moved from the Modder river camp, marching in the night, in a northeasterly direction. The objective of the Highlanders was the eastern bank of the river position, the objective following the bank of the river while the Yorkshire Light Infantry moved along the river side. Just before daylight the Highlanders arrived within 200 yards of the Boer entrenchments at the foot of a hill. Unsuspecting that the Boers were in the vicinity the British were still marching in quarter column, in close order, when they met a terrific fire from the flanks and were forced to retire with heavy loss.

BOER GUNS SILENCED.

The troops reformed under the shelter of some rising ground and gallantly held their position. Later, the Gordons arrived and the troops gradually worked their way until within 300 yards of the Boer positions, displaying the greatest gallantry. In the meanwhile a naval gun at Modder river, the howitzer batteries and the horse artillery opened a terrific fire, enfilading the trenches and searching every portion of the Boer position. The Boer guns were entirely silent. In the meanwhile the Boers on the open ground, directly in front, moved with the object of making a flank attack, but this was frustrated by the guards and artillery.

THE BOERS RECOMMENCED SHELLING IN THE EVENING, BUT NO DAMAGE WAS DONE.

The British slept on their position. It is expected that there will be a renewal of the fighting tomorrow. The losses on both sides were very heavy.

GEN. METHUEN'S REPORT.

LONDON, Dec. 15.—The war office has received the following despatch from Gen. Methuen, dated Tuesday, Dec. 12: "Our artillery shelled a very strong position held by the enemy in a long high kopje from four o'clock until dusk Sunday. It rained hard last night. The Highland brigade attacked at daybreak on Monday the south end of the kopje. The attack was properly timed, but failed. The guards were ordered to protect the Highlanders' right and rear. The cavalry and mounted infantry, with a howitzer artillery battery, attacked the enemy on the left and the guards on the right, supported by field artillery. They shelled the position from daybreak, and at 1.15 sent the Gordons to support the Highland brigade. The troops held their own in front of the

Dowling Brothers, 95 King Street, St. John, N. B.

Important Selling of Jackets.

Bargains are plentiful in the Great Sale of Ready-made Jackets now in progress at this store. LADIES MIXED TWEED JACKETS—at \$3.00, \$4.00 and \$5.00. These jackets are worth from five to eight dollars each. The \$4.00 ones have plaid lining and the \$5.00 ones are silk-lined. BLACK ROUGH CLOTH JACKETS—at \$3.00, \$4.00, \$5.00, \$6.00, \$7.00 and \$8.00. Those from \$5.00 upward are silk and satin lined. BEAVER CLOTH JACKETS, in

The largest Retail Distributors of Ladies' Ready-made Jackets, Capses and Blouse Waists in the Maritime Provinces.

Fawn, Navy and Black, Ladies' and Misses' sizes from \$5.00 upward. In ordering by mail please state bust measure and length of back from collar to waist line, and also inside length of sleeve, and we will fit you perfectly. SPECIAL LINES—Tweed Dress Suiting, 42 inches wide, in Mixed Blues, Browns, Greens, Garnet and Plum. Only 20c. per yard. 600 PAIRS CASHMERE HOSE, 85c. per pair. A cheaper lot at 25c. per pair. LADIES' HEAVY UNDERVESTS at 25c.

DOWLING BROS., 95 KING ST., ST. JOHN, N. B.

enemy's entrenchments until dusk.

The position extending (including the kopje) for a distance of six miles towards the Modder river. Today am holding my position and entrenching myself. I had to face at least 15,000 men. Our loss was great."

GEN. WAUCHOPE KILLED.

LONDON, Dec. 13.—The war office has received the following despatch from Gen. Forster-Walker: "Cape Town, Tuesday, Dec. 12.—Methuen writes that General Wauchope was killed in action yesterday."

Major General Andrew Gilbert Wauchope, C. B., M. G., was in command of the Third Brigade. He was in his 54th year. He entered the army in 1865, joining the Black Watch. He was appointed colonel in 1888. He served with distinguished gallantry in the Ashanti campaign, 1873; the Egyptian war, 1882; the Sudan expedition of 1894-5. He was four times wounded. He was a member of the Transvaal war as brigadier general commanding the Brigade Egyptian expeditionary force of 1898. A Scottish laird, he was the opponent of Mr. Gladstone at Mid Lothian a few years ago, but was defeated. He was an excellent shot and rough rider.

ALARM FOR METHUEN.

LONDON, Dec. 13.—Alarm is beginning to be expressed in many quarters as to the situation of Gen. Methuen. The Westminster Gazette says: "If England ever needed a victory it is now, and it is to Buller, the soldier, strong, cool-headed and reticent, that the country looks for this victory."

Considerable signs are showing the government for its complete optimism and inability to grasp the strength of the opposition it had to overcome in South Africa.

Concomitant significance attaches to Gen. Methuen's statement that he is entrenching himself, indicating fear that the Boers may follow up their advantage, adopt the offensive and attack him. Indeed, the gravity of the situation from the British point of view can hardly be overestimated. Gen. Methuen's long lines of communication to De Aar are most vulnerable. Should they be cut, Gen. Methuen would find himself in a very tight place, if only from lack of supplies.

The news of the British reverse had a bad effect on the stock exchange, where there was a general collapse. Kaffirs and Rand prices dropped 1-2 points, and De Beers dropped 3-4.

MILITARY CIRCLES ALARMED.

As the day progressed and dribbles of information leaked out, the extreme gravity of Gen. Methuen's position was more fully recognized, and the possibility of his isolation created a small stir in military circles. It was thought in some quarters that he ought to retrace his steps to Orange River before his lines of communication were seriously severed.

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SPECULATIONS ON THE FIGHT.

LONDON, Dec. 13.—Gen. Methuen, as expected, followed up his artillery attack with a general assault on the Boer positions on Monday, and his reports show that the anxiety of the public regarding the result occasioned by the ominous silence of the war office was amply justified. The engagement was evidently of considerable magnitude, and the list of killed and wounded will be proportionate without the compensation which a victory would have brought, if indeed the affair does not turn out to be a mere

serious defeat than Gen. Methuen admits.

The Highlanders, it is believed, must have stormed the Boer position more than once, while the fact that the Guards were ordered to support the Highlanders' rear looks as though the Boers may even have outflanked their attackers. One report declares that Gen. Cronje attacked the British. Then only compensation the British have been able to discover in the disheartening story is in Gen. Methuen's statement that he maintains his position close to the Boers, thus arousing the hope that he will retrieve the situation. Apparently the bombardment of Saturday and Sunday did not shake the Boers' grip on their position, and it seems certain that they merely withdrew their guns and riflemen under cover, while Gen. Methuen indulged in the usual artillery preliminaries Monday, and that when the British guns were obliged to cease firing owing to the danger of hitting the advancing troops, the Boers speedily re-occupied their trenches and overwhelmed the Highlanders with their terrible rifle fire, probably accompanying this by an attack on the British right flank and rear.

THE BOER VERSION.

PRETORIA, Monday, Dec. 11.—An official report says: "A battle at Modder River began yesterday with cannon firing, heavy fighting proceeding from 3.30 o'clock in the morning until 2.30 o'clock with cannon, Maxims and rifles. A bombardment began at 4.30 o'clock, and the fighting still continued. A balloon has just arisen above the British position, where it remained ten minutes and descended. There were heavy rains during the night. At 9 o'clock this morning a further report was received from Modder River. A despatch earlier brought word that all the Boer positions had been maintained and that 41 British prisoners had been taken. At 9.30 o'clock it was reported that the heavy bombardment had somewhat abated. The British are constantly using their balloons. The fighting was still going on at noon. Kimberley is still quiet."

JULIAN RALPH'S ACCOUNT.

LONDON, Dec. 14.—Julian Ralph, describing the battle at Magerfontein in a special despatch to the Daily Mail, says: "The Boers were entrenched at Magerfontein, four miles north of Modder River. At dawn Monday the Highlanders advanced across the valley, were suddenly subjected to a murderous fire from the trenches about 200 yards in front. The greater part of the fearful loss of the day was suffered in a single hour. "Startled and overwhelmed, the brigade retired quickly, but soon rallied and retained their position. This was on the left. "On the right the Guards' brigade advanced across the valley against other trenches, and fought an invisible foe for fifteen hours. "At eleven in the morning the Gordon Highlanders were sent forward. The Boers allowed them to pass one line of trenches, and then enfiladed them. We raked the Boer trenches with the artillery throughout the day. The fighting only ceased with night-fall."

ENGAGED AN ARMORED TRAIN.

LONDON, Dec. 14.—A special despatch from Pretoria, by way of Lourenço Marques, says: "While the battle of Magerfontein was proceeding, the Free State artillery engaged an armored train along the railway line toward Belmont. "Forty-one prisoners, belonging to the First Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders, have just traversed Jacobabad. "In the last attack on Surridge Hill, three leading Pretoria townsmen were killed and several others wounded, causing great sorrow here."

ENEMY'S LOSSES TERRIBLE.

LONDON, Dec. 13.—Gen. Forster-Walker, telegraphing from Cape Town at 3.30 p. m. today, sends the following despatch from Lord Methuen, dated Modder River, Tuesday, Dec. 12, 7.30 p. m.: "As the Boers occupied their trenches strongly this morning, I retired in perfect order here, where I am in security."

(Continued on Page Eight.)

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