

A BOER POET

ON February 27, 1900, the battalion to which I belonged paraded on the northern banks of the Tugela to take part in the general attack, which Sir Redvers Buller's force was to make on the Boer position at Pieter's Hill. During the advance which took place "by rushes," my company took cover for a few moments behind some breastworks of stones which had afforded protection to a Boer outpost on the preceding days.

Underneath a large stone I found a manuscript which I glanced at and placed in my haversack.

It was sent home subsequently as a memento of the action at Pieter's Hill, and lay in a cupboard till quite recently, when it occurred to me to have it translated.

The manuscript consists of a series of poems written in the "Taal," evidently by an uneducated man; in short, by a typical specimen of the rank and file of the Boer army.

Poetical ideas there are none, and the only interest in the work lies in the fact that it was written in the field, when the writer was face to face with the enemy, and expresses in simplest form the actual thoughts and feelings of the Boer at that time. No attempt to versify has been made in the selection that follows (the verses have merely been translated word for word).

Many of the writer's efforts are very much alike, and it is not worth while reproducing them all.