

The Semi-Weekly Colonist.

FORTY-SECOND YEAR.

THE VICTORIA SEMI-WEEKLY COLONIST THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1899

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Buller and Methuen.

British Generals Unmasking Enemy's Position and Two Great Battles at Hand.

Boers Tell of Fifty Prisoners Taken From Methuen But Report Not Confirmed.

Skirmish on Line of Railway Near Point Six Protected By Canadians.

By Associated Press.
Frere Camp, Natal, Dec. 11 (Monday) 7 p.m.—The British cavalry reconnoitered to-day abreast of Colenso and exchanged shots with parties of Boers who fell back across the river. The kopjes were observed to be thickly occupied by the enemy.

The railway bridge at Colenso has been completely destroyed. Two stone piers were blown up last night. The highway bridge is intact.

London, Dec. 11.—The bridge over the Tugela is complete, and a general advance is momentarily expected.

METHUEN FEELS HIS WAY.

Can Get No Reply From Supposed Defences of Spytfontein But Unmasks Another Boer Position.

Modder River, Cape Colony, Dec. 10.—This afternoon the naval gun took up a position north of the camp, while the howitzer battery was posted southeast. Both opened fire with lyddite shells and shrapnel. The Boers replied with a dozen guns, thus unmasking their position. After an hour's fighting the Boer guns were silenced. The explosion of the lyddite caused the whole ground over an extensive area to rise in the air in dense brown clouds. A Boer long gun was dismounted.

It now appears that the Boers intend that the next fight shall take place at Magersfontein. Apparently Spytfontein is unmasked and the Boers are unwilling to unmask their position there, as the replies to the British artillery were all from guns at Magersfontein.

THE BOER VERSION.

Pretoria, Dec. 11.—In the fighting at Modder River yesterday evening Gen. Cronje maintained his position and captured 50 British soldiers.

SKIRMISH ON THE LINE.

London, Dec. 11.—The Daily Telegraph's despatch from Modder River, December 5, says:

"A thousand Boers attacked two companies of the Second Northamptonshire Regiment, who had been left to guard the line of communication at Enslin. Gen. Methuen despatched the Twelfth Lancers and Seaforth Highlanders, together with the Sixty-Second Field Battery, to their assistance. The enemy withdrew when the reinforcements approached. The cavalry pursued them. The British loss was one killed and six wounded."

THE SORTIE PRAISED.

New York, Dec. 11.—The Herald's London cable says news of the destruction of the Boer guns at Ladysmith has created great enthusiasm, and the fact that the correspondent's account of the fighting reached Frere on Saturday is taken to indicate that the Boer investment is not so strict as it has been.

SPYTFONTEIN IN DETAIL.

Gen. Gatacre Does Not Impute Treachery to Gaily's Retreating Column.

London, Dec. 12.—The war office has received the following from Gen. Gatacre reports as follows:

"The idea to attack Stormberg seemed to promise certain success, but the distance was underestimated by myself and the local guides. A policeman took us round some miles, consequently we were marching for about nine miles, and were landed in an impossible position. I do not consider the error intentional."

"The Boers commenced firing from the top of an unscalable hill and wounded a good many of our men while in the open plain. The Scotch Northumberlanders tried to turn on the enemy, but failed. The Second Irish Fusiliers seized a kopje near by and held on, supported by the Mounted Infantry and Cape Police."

"The guns under Jeffrey's could not have been better handled, but I regret to say that one gun was overturned in a deep nullah and another sank in quicksand. Neither could be extricated in time to be available."

"Seeing the situation, I sent a despatch rider to Molleno with news and collected and withdrew our force from the ridge to ride for about nine miles."

"The Boer guns were remarkably well served. They carried accurately 5,000 yards."

"I am holding Bushmanshook and Geyerz, and am sending the Irish Cavalry and Northumberlanders to Stormberg to recuperate."

"The wounded proceed to Queenstown. The missing Northumberlanders number 366, not 306 as previously reported."

A HARD BLOW.

Methuen Fails in Assault on Boer Trenches—Two Hundred of Black Watch Slain in Few Minutes.

Taken by Surprise When Marching in Close Formation by Murderous Fire From Hidden Enemy Two Hundred Yards Distant.

After Desperate All Day Assault Gordons Make Gallant Charge Over Same Position But Driven Back by Hail of Shrapnel.

Methuen Rests in Security at Modder.

London, Dec. 13.—Gen. Forester-Walker telegraphing from Capetown at 4:30 p.m. sends the following despatch from Gen. Methuen dated Modder River, December 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."

"I have gathered from some of the prisoners and from our men with the ambulance who talked with the Boers that the enemy's losses were terrible, some corps being completely wiped out."

"The Boers have been most kind to my wounded."

London, Dec. 13.—The war office has received the following despatch from Gen. Methuen dated December 12:

"Our artillery shelled a very strong position held by the enemy in a long, high kopje from four until dusk on Sunday. It rained hard last night."

"The Highland Brigade attacked 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 and 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 I sent the Gordons to support the Highland Brigade."

"The troops held their own in front of the enemy's entrenchments until dusk, the position extending, including the kopje, for a distance of six miles to the west of the Modder River."

"To-day I am holding my position and entrenching myself. I had to face at least 12,000 men. Our loss was great."

THE PRESS DESCRIPTION.

North of Modder River, Monday, Dec. 11.—The Guards and the Highland Brigade early last night moved from the Modder River camp, marching in a northerly direction. The objective of the Highlanders was the eastern source of the Boer position, the Guards following the bank of the river, while the Yorkshire Light Infantry moved along the river side.

Just before daybreak the Highlanders arrived within 200 yards of the Boer entrenchments at the foot of a hill. Suspecting that the Boers were in the vicinity, the British were still marching in quarter column in close order, when they met a terrible fire from the flanks, and were forced to retreat with heavy loss. The troops returned under the shelter of some rising ground and gallantly held the position. Later the Gordons arrived and the troops gradually worked their way to within 300 yards of the Boer position.

In the meanwhile a naval gun at the Modder River, the howitzer batteries and the artillery opened a terrific fire enfilading the trenches and searching every portion of the Boer position. The Boers 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.

When the Highlanders met the numerous misfortune to members of the Ottawa company. Many inquiries reached the militia department, and it fortunately turned out that no bad news of the Canadians had been received.

Your correspondent asked the Minister of Militia if any further steps had been taken in regard to furnishing a second Canadian contingent. "The home authorities have our offer," replied Dr. Borden, "and you know the answer we received. We are quietly preparing, so that in the event of the British government deciding to accept the services of a second contingent, we could promptly send the men."

"Don't you think that the acceptance of the contingent by the Imperial government might be regarded at this juncture as an evidence of weakness?" your correspondent asked. "The answer," replied the doctor, "is that it might, but it would not be so regarded by the British people."

Ottawa, Dec. 13.—The news of Methuen's reverse caused great excitement in the city, as coupled with it were rumors of misfortune to members of the Ottawa company. Many inquiries reached the militia department, and it fortunately turned out that no bad news of the Canadians had been received.

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In baking powder, in these days of unscrupulous adulteration, a great name gives the best security.

There are many brands of baking powders, but Dr. Price's Cream Baking Powder is recognized at once as the brand of great name, a powder of highest favor and reputation. Everyone has absolute confidence in the food where Dr. Price's Baking Powder is used.

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Dr. Price's Cream Baking Powder assures the finest and most wholesome food.

NOTE.—Avoid the imitation baking powders. They are mostly made from alum, a cheap, caustic acid, which makes the food unwholesome.

PRICE BAKING POWDER CO., CHICAGO.

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A Terrible Surprise.

British Marched Without Giving Close to Protected and Concealed Enemy.

Artillery Raked Boer Trenches With Deadly Effect But Storming Impossible.

Colonial Offers of More Troops Should Now Be Accepted by War Office.

By Associated Press.

London, Dec. 14.—4:45 a.m.—The papers this morning sorrowfully admit that Lord Methuen's check at Magersfontein is the most serious event the war has yet produced.

The Times says: "At least 30,000 additional men must be sent out. The entire available reserve must be called out and the militia and volunteers turned to account. Efforts must be made to increase the local colonial forces and further offers of troops from Canada and other colonies must be sought and accepted."

The Standard, which comments upon the "seemingly astonishing number of Boers," is driven to the conjecture that a substantial portion of the Boer commandos have been recruited from the Cape Dutch. It continues: "All eyes are now turned hopefully to Gen. Buller, who taking into account the troops with Gen. White in Ladysmith, has altogether 30,000. At this moment there must be few men in Her Majesty's dominions who have as great a weight of care upon them as Gen. Buller carries on his shoulders."

The Morning Post says: "We have had our day of humiliation appointed for us; let us accept it humbly and nobly, and be better and stronger for the lesson it has taught us. This last reverse will make us a fresh bid in Europe. There was never a more apt occasion to prove to Europe what we are worth."

KIMBERLEY TOOK NO PART.

London, Dec. 13.—A despatch from the Boer sources says that Kimberley remained quiet during the battle at Magersfontein.

THE BOER REPORT.

Pretoria, Dec. 11.—An official report says:

"The battle at Modder River began yesterday. Heavy fighting occurred between 3:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., with cannon, Maxim's and rifles. A bombardment began at 4:30 o'clock and the fighting continued."

"A balloon has just arisen above the British position, where it remained 10 minutes and descended."

"At 9 o'clock this morning a further report was received from Modder River. A despatch rider 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 cannon fire had somewhat abated."

BOERS CLEVERLY HIDDEN.

London, Dec. 14.—The special correspondent of the Daily Mail at Modder River, describing the fighting, says: "The Boer trenches extended far beyond the kopje and the open plain. Those on the plain were hidden by screens of leaves. Those near the kopje were guarded by a double line of barbed wire, evidently for fear of our storming and bayonet attack."

EXCUBATION BY ARTILLERY.
"We raked the kopje and trenches with an intense, well directed fire of 30 guns, including a naval gun and a howitzer battery, both using lyddite. I believe they inflicted severe damage."

"The Boer prisoners report that one lyddite shell fell among 40 men, only five of whom escaped unhurt. Other shells burst in the enemy's laager, causing its complete destruction."

"The Boers are still in larger force than we found them at Modder River, outnumbering us by almost three to one. The Transvaalers are apparently dominating in their military councils, although in a minority."

A TERRIBLE SURPRISE.

London, Dec. 14.—Mr. Julian Ralph, describing his battle at Magersfontein, in a special despatch to the Daily Mail, says:

"The Boers were entrenched at Magersfontein, four miles from Modder River. At dawn Monday the Highlanders, advancing across the veldt, were suddenly subjected to a murderous fire from the trenches, about 200 yards in front. The greater part of the fearful fire of the day was thus suffered in a single minute."

"Startled and overwhelmed, the brigade retired quickly, but soon rallied and retained their positions. This was on the left."

"On the right the Guards brigade advanced across the veldt against the outside trenches and fought an invisible foe for 15 hours."

At 11 in the morning the Gordon Highlanders were sent to the front. The Boers allowed them to pass one line of trenches and then enfiladed them.

"We raked the Boer trenches throughout the day. The fighting only ceased with nightfall."

MORE MEN AT ONCE.

London, Dec. 14.—The Associated Press understands that the war office yesterday (Wednesday) decided, in view of Lord Methuen's losses at Magersfontein, to mobilize the Eighth division in reserve and to send the Seventh division to the Cape. Certain foreign stations will probably be garrisoned with Militia, and if necessary volunteers will be called to take the place of the Militia at home. It is also likely that the Militia reserve will be sent out to join their respective battalions, and the war office intends to order four more battalions of militia for permanent duty.

STILL SHELLING LADYSMITH.

Boers Maintain Their Feeble Attack—Buller Probably Now Advancing on Colenso.

Frere Camp, Natal, Dec. 12.—The Boers are still shelling Ladysmith. The heat is terrible.

London, Dec. 13.—A despatch from Frere Camp, dated Tuesday, says: "This morning, a union brigade, under Gen. Barton, advanced without opposition and took up a strong position near Colenso."

Gen. Buller's advance in the direction of Colenso seems to have actually commenced. The military attaches have left Capetown to join Gen. Buller via Durban.

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New York, Dec. 13.—A special from Pietermaritzburg to the World, dated yesterday, says one thousand Kafirs have been sent forward to aid the British forces at Frere Camp.