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**A Terrible Battle.** Letters of war correspondents published in London papers during the past week, show that the assault of the Boers upon Ladysmith, on January 6th, was of a most determined character. They had evidently gathered and massed their best strength for an attack which had been carefully planned, and which they confidently expected to result in the overthrow of the British defences and the capture of the beleaguered town. The first main assault was made in the middle of the night, upon two positions to the southwest of the town, known as Caesar's Camp and Waggon Hill, from which, if the Boers had been able to seize and hold them, they could have poured a deadly fire into Ladysmith. Caesar's Camp, held by the first battalion of the Manchesters, was the first object of the enemy's attack. Making their way under cover of darkness through the thorn brush which filled the ravine at the foot of the kopje, the Heidelberg commando of the Boers succeeded in evading the British pickets and reaching the foot of the slope. Before the extent of the danger had been realized by the British, the outlying sangers had been rushed and their defenders slain. Two companies of the Gordon Highlanders went to the assistance of the Manchesters, and as soon as the force of the attack was realized other troops were brought into action. Lieut. Col. Dick Cunningham, who was leading the Gordons out of the camp, fell mortally wounded by a stray bullet while still close to the town. At daybreak artillery was brought to bear effectively upon the enemy. The Boers fought with most desperate courage, being evidently determined to take the camp or to die in the attempt. But their impetuous bravery was out-matched by the disciplined courage of the defenders, and the Boers were finally driven back with heavy loss. Meanwhile a still more exciting conflict had been in progress in the direction of Waggon Hill. At 2 o'clock a storming party of the enemy, crept slowly and cautiously along a donga in the valley, which divided the British posts from the Boer camp, killing the pickets with a few well-aimed shots, and then gradually reaching the crest of the heights where they encountered a body of the British Light Horse, which they forced to retire, and continued to advance until they reached an emplacement where they encountered a working party of the Gordon Highlanders and the 60th Rifles, who made a brave defence but were overpowered by the numbers. Here it was that Lieut. McNaughton and 30 Gordons were captured, though not until every man of them was wounded. The British artillery was now brought into play, and prevented the storming party from being reinforced from the Boer Camp. But the enemy succeeded in making good the foothold they had secured, and held their ground with the utmost determination against the efforts of the British to dislodge them. At length a charge of the Gordons, under Major Walnutt, drove them back, but they returned to the attack, and though repulsed were able still to maintain a murderous fire. The final blow was struck when three companies of the Devonshires, led by Captain Lafone, Lieut. Field, and Lieut. Masterson, made a brilliant charge across the open ground, under a terrific fire, and fairly hurled the enemy down the hill at the point of the bayonet. In this charge Capt. Lafone and Lieut. Field were killed, and Lieut. Masterson received no fewer than ten wounds. The result of the battle was thoroughly disheartening to the Boers, who had been confident of their ability to capture the town.

**Sabbath Observance.** A number of the citizens of St. John, and it is to be hoped that the number is both large and influential, are interested in a movement for the better observance of the Lord's Day. At the last session of the Provincial

Legislature an Act was passed, which it was hoped by those who desire to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath, would have the effect of shutting up tobacconists shops on Sunday and preventing other desecrations of the day, but in this there has been disappointment. Certain tobacconists, we understand, were proceeded against, and, in one case at least, a conviction secured before the stipendiary magistrate. Then the case was appealed. This was several months ago, and since that, as we are informed, there have been no further prosecutions and no steps taken to settle the question of the validity of the conviction in the lower court. Meanwhile, if one may judge from appearances, every tobacconist in the city who desires to do so prosecutes his business on Sunday the same as any other day in the week, with none to molest or make him afraid. There is no good reason, so far as we can see, why in framing or enforcing a Sunday law any exception should be made in favor of tobacconists. If some men are to sell tobacco on Sunday, there is no reason in the world why others should not sell groceries and others dry goods, or engage in any other business, and if the wedge is once entered by permitting tobacco selling on Sunday, we may expect that it will be driven further every year. We are informed that on the west side of the harbor the Sunday law is openly set at defiance in connection with loading and unloading of steamers. And this business is managed in such a way, we are told, as to make it a very positive influence for demoralization among the laboring men of the city, since in many cases men are compelled to work on Sunday or forfeit their chance of obtaining employment for the other days of the week. Ministers in Carleton complain that their congregations are very much broken up during the winter, and it is easy to see that the desecration of the Lord's Day involved in this Sunday labor must have an evil influence which reaches far beyond the laborers themselves. It is high time that the Christian people, not only of St. John, but of the whole province, should ask themselves whether or not they are willing that this business of Sabbath desecration shall continue. There is no doubt that they have the remedy in their own hands, and it will be their fault if it be not applied. We are glad to observe a disposition to do something. Of this the meeting held last Tuesday afternoon at the instance of the Evangelical Alliance is a hopeful indication. There were present at the meeting a large number of the Christian ministers of the city as well as other influential citizens. The principle of forming an alliance with the purpose of securing a better observance of the Lord's Day was adopted, and in pursuance thereof a committee was appointed to draft a constitution for the society and to nominate its officers. This committee is as follows: Rev. T. F. Fotheringham, Rev. J. A. Richardson, Judge Forbes, Dr. Wilson, Dr. Stockton, W. S. Fisher, R. G. Haley, Dr. Bridges and E. W. Slipp. The committee is to report to an adjourned meeting and its personnel would seem to be a sufficient guarantee that its action will be prompt and judicious.

**The War in South Africa.** Although there were conflicting reports, it was generally believed last week that General Buller, with the purpose of executing flanking movements upon the enemy, had sent a considerable force westward to Springfield with a view to crossing the Tugela at Potgieter's Drift, while General Warren, with 11,000 men, had gone eastward by the way of Weenan with the purpose of attacking the Boers on their left flank. But this week's despatches show that General Buller's plan of attack was quite different. The facts as now learned are as follows: On Wednesday, the 10th inst., Lord Dundonald, with a flying column, left Frere, and, marching westward, crossed the Little Tugela near Springfield, surprised the Boers and occupied Zwarts Kop, a hill commanding Potgieter's Drift, a crossing of the main river. The same evening General Lyttleton's brigade, marching by the same route, reached

Potgieter's Drift, and went into camp on the south bank of the river on Thursday, the 11th. General Hilyard's brigade reached Springfield the next day. General Warren's division had also reached Springfield on Thursday, and from thence marched to a Drift on the Big Tugela, five miles west of Potgieter's Drift. On Monday, the 15th, the British from Zwarts Kop shelled the enemy's position beyond the main river at Potgieter's Drift, and on Tuesday General Lyttleton's whole brigade crossed. On Wednesday General Warren's brigade also crossed the Tugela and occupied a good position two miles north of the river. General Buller's despatches are being sent from Spearman's Camp, which is north of the Tugela and in connection with the position occupied by General Lyttleton's brigade. At this point the British forces are confronted by the Boers in a strongly entrenched position, from which their line of defence extends northward for several miles, and also eastward along the Tugela. General Warren, with his force of 11,000 men, and General Dundonald, with his cavalry force, are operating to the northwestward of General Buller's position, and have advanced so far in the direction of Ladysmith that the British artillery has been plainly heard there, bringing great cheer to the beleaguered garrison. The despatches of Monday morning indicate that all Saturday and Sunday there was continuous and heavy fighting between General Warren's forces and the Boers, with the effect that the latter had been driven back from their positions. As a result of Sunday's fighting General Warren is reported to have advanced his left two miles, and General Buller's reticent despatch expresses the opinion that substantial progress has been made. It is thus seen that the British forces have secured a firm foothold north of the Tugela, and the flanking movement undertaken by General Warren has achieved at least a measure of success. There are reports—to which it is not worth while to give much credence—that the Boers in Natal are becoming disheartened. It is almost certain that there will have to be a good deal of hard fighting yet before the Boers are driven out of Natal. Their main positions have not yet been attacked and their strength revealed, but if the reports as to their numbers, the elaborate character of their entrenchments and their facilities for moving their artillery rapidly from one point to another are true, the contract which General Buller still has on his hands is of sufficient magnitude to cause the news from Natal for some days to come to be awaited with great anxiety.

The latest news at hand as we go to press, adds little or nothing to that given above. It is assumed by military men in London, we are told, that the fighting was resumed on Monday, but General Buller has reported nothing as to his operations since Sunday. Enough, however, has been revealed as to the strength and strategical advantages of the enemy, to show that the task which General Buller has set for himself and the generals co-operating with him is no easy one. The advance of the British, if substantial, is slow and difficult. The country around Ladysmith abounds in kopjes, and the Boers driven from one quickly retire to another, where they make a fresh and stubborn defence. The report, received Monday midnight, coming by way of Pietermaritzburg, that Lord Dundonald had entered Ladysmith with a cavalry force of 1600, may possibly be true, but it is not sufficiently probable to entitle it to credence in the absence of official or other confirmation. In the other districts there are no important movements to report. Generals Methuen, French, and Gatacre, while holding their positions, appear not to have made any significant advance during the week. The reports from Kimberly indicate that the town is being subjected to a more vigorous bombardment. It is reported that reinforcements, aggregation 5,000 men, have reached Cape Town during the last three days. Most of these, it is probable, will be sent to Natal.