

it seemed, cutting their way to the besieged town. The tragic intensity of the feeling aroused in the hearts of all true Britons and their kinsmen beyond the seas culminated as we read of the garrison and townsfolk at Ladysmith seeing and hearing the shells dropped by Buller's guns on the Boer positions at Spion Kop, of men "keeping their glasses glued to their eyes to catch the first sight of the much-longed-for khaki uniform." Then, after days and nights of the roar and clatter among the hills to the south-west that told of deadly conflict, came the silence that betokened failure and defeat. The joyful excitement which had arisen in Great Britain was exchanged for the stolid acceptance of another serious reverse, and for a renewal of the stern resolve to wage war to a victorious issue at any cost.

The stern and resolute Buller soon made a third effort to reach Ladysmith. On this occasion his design was to pierce the enemy's centre at points lying east of Brakfontein Heights and Spion Kop. On the morning of Monday, February 5th, a feigned attack was made by three battalions of infantry and six batteries, at a point on the Tugela facing the Brakfontein Hill. At eleven o'clock the Boer guns opened fire, and the British force was withdrawn after holding the ground for an hour. Meanwhile, under the protection of a heavy fire from our guns hidden on the wooded heights of Zwarts Kop, a pontoon bridge was quickly thrown across the river, and the main attack made to the east. General Lyttelton's brigade crossed at Molen Drift, about five miles north-west from the point where the river is joined by the Little Tugela. The hill called Vaal Krantz, to the east of Brakfontein Heights, was at last carried by a splendid charge with the bayonet, and our infantry advanced eastwards along the ridge.

On Tuesday morning, February 6th, the enemy's guns were severely bombarded by the British batteries and naval guns, which did splendid work. One of our 4.7-inch pieces, at a range of nearly seven miles,

exploded a Boer ammunition waggon. In the afternoon the Boers, supported by artillery and Maxims, made a sudden rush to recapture the hill, but were driven back by the speedy advance of Lyttelton's men. On the same day, a great hill called Krantz Kloof, east of Vaal Krantz, was captured by the British, and the road to Ladysmith, with Waggon Hill and Caesar's Camp lying about eight miles away to the north-east, seemed to be open to Buller's force, whose bursting shells were again eagerly watched by the expectant garrison. They and the comrades striving to reach them were again doomed to disappointment.

The British general, in his advance, was really going into a deadly trap, from which he was happily warned off by signals from the invaluable war balloons floating over the scene of action. He was again foiled by the nature of the ground and by the enemy's powerful artillery. To the south-east of Krantz Kloof lies another great hill, called Doorn Kloof. The southern side, facing the Tugela where Buller's main force had crossed, is so precipitous as to prevent the taking up of artillery. The northern side is of easy access, and the enemy, during the fighting at Vaal Krantz and Krantz Kloof, had occupied Doorn Kloof in force, and, above all, had dragged up about twelve great guns, enabling them to pour a deadly fire on our troops in their further advance, and to command all the tracks over open ground to Ladysmith. Persistence in the effort would have, beyond doubt, resulted in a great and useless sacrifice of life, and on the night of Wednesday, February 7th, General Buller withdrew his forces from Vaal Krantz and Krantz Kloof. On Friday, February 9th, his forces were again south of the Tugela, having incurred losses limited to two or three hundred men.

At Colesberg, in the first week of February, the Boers were strongly reinforced, and some smart fighting took place on February 8th and the following day in consequence of the enemy's efforts to