ST. JOHN SEMI-WEEKLY SUN

VOL. 23. ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, MAY 26, 1900. NO. 44.

ACROSS THE RHENOSTER!

Despatch to the London Telegram Says Roberts' Army is on the North Side of the River.

Utter Demoralization is the Only Explanation of the Boer Abandonment of Their Strong Position at Rhenoster.

Believed in Semi-Official Circles in London that Another Month will See the End of the War—The Natal Railway Has Been Repaired as Far as Glencoe—Plenty Supplies Reaching Mafeking.

CANADIANS AT WOOLWICH HOSPITAL.

MONTREAL, May 22.—The Star's special cable from London says: The principal medical officer at Woolwich hospital reports the following Canadians there: Pte. A. Macaulay of D Co. (late of 43rd Ottawa and Carleton Rifles); Pte. A. O. Lohman of A Co. (late of fifth regiment Canadian Artillery); Pte. J. F. McConnell of D Co. (late of Governor General Foot Guards); Pte. Henry F. Durant of G Co. (late of 14th battalion); Pte. Harry Bradshaw of G Co. (late of R. C. Regt. Infantry); Pte. Jas. Johnson of G Co. (late of 62nd St. John Fusiliers); Pte. J. B. Corley of B Co. (late of 38th Wellington Rifles); Pte. F. McNab of H Co. (late of 63rd Halifax Rifles), and Pte. F. B. Irwin of E Co. of Montreal.

PRAISE FOR ARTILLERY.

TORONTO, May 22.—The Telegram's special cable from London says: Canada's artillery is now winning commendation. By fast marching they succeeded in reaching the vicinity of Mafeking in time to render valuable assistance to Col. Mahon in raising the siege. The brave colonel pays a high tribute to the men from Canada, whose arrival on the morning of the fight which succeeded in bringing about the entrance of his column into Mafeking was brought about by forced marches.

In a letter to the London Daily Mail Julian Ralph, the well known war correspondent, referring to looting among the British soldiers, says one of Lord Roberts's staff, seeing a member of the Royal Canadian regiment in possession of two fowls, asked him where he got them and the soldier from Canada replied: "I commandeered them, sir."

"For goodness sake hide them quickly," remarked the officer, "here is Lord Roberts coming. He will have you shot." When the little commander-in-chief of the British forces arrived he asked sternly what the man was doing with chickens, and the officer told him that the Canadian understood Lord Roberts was short of rations and he desired to offer the fowls he got from a farmer close by.

Lord Roberts said: "You are very kind. What is your name? I am much obliged to you." The Canadian rode away, leaving the plunder, and glad to part as he did.

MAJOR GEN. BADEN-POWELL NOW.

LONDON, May 22.—Robert S. S. Baden-Powell was yesterday promoted from colonel to major-general for his masterly defence of Mafeking.

BRITISH SQUADRON AMBUSHED.

LONDON, May 22, 4 p. m.—It is officially announced that Col. Bethune has reported that while marching in the direction of Newcastle, Natal, yesterday, one of his squadrons of Mounted Infantry was ambushed by a party of Boers six miles west of Vryheid, in the Transvaal, and that very few of his force escaped. His casualties numbered sixty-six men.

LONDON, May 22, 4.48 p. m.—The war office has received the following despatch from General Buller:

NEWCASTLE, May 22.—I have received the following from Bethune: "May 21, while marching in the direction of Newcastle, one of my squadrons of Bethune's Mounted Infantry was ambushed by Boers six miles west of Vryheid, and very few escaped. Lieuts. Lausum and Capell are among the missing. Captain the Earl De La Warr is slightly wounded in the leg. The total casualties are about sixty-six. Will march tomorrow for Newcastle via Dundee."

General Buller then proceeds: "I detached Colonel Bethune and about five hundred men from Dundee, May 17, with instructions to march by Vauts drift and show his force at Nqutu, which was reported to have been evacuated by the enemy, preparatory to the return of the magistrates and the civil establishment to the district. He was to rejoin me at Newcastle afterwards."

MRS. LANGTRY'S CONTRIBUTION.

WORCESTER, Mass., May 22.—Lilly Langtry, who appeared here tonight, says that she closed her estimates today of the amounts she has turned in to the British war funds for the widows and orphans of soldiers killed in South Africa. On both sides of the water she has collected £25,000.

WANTED TO BLOW UP THE MINES

LONDON, May 23.—The Durban correspondent of the Times, telegraphing Tuesday, says: "The Rev. Adrian Hofmeyer tells me he was informed by a high Boer official that when President Kruger notified the Raad of the government's arrangements to blow up the mines and to destroy Johannesburg, General Louis Botha hurried to Pretoria and had a stormy interview with President Kruger, to whom he said that, if the plan were not cancelled, he would himself defend Johannesburg, adding that the Boers were not barbarians. At this, according to Mr. Hofmeyer, the plan was abandoned."

LORD ROBERTS TO THE WAR OFFICE.

LONDON, May 23.—The war office late this evening published the following from Lord Roberts:

"South Bank of the Rhenoster River, May 23, 1.30 p. m.—We found, on arrival here this morning, that the enemy had fled during the night. They had occupied a strong position on the north bank of the river, which had been carefully entrenched; but they did not think it advisable to defend it when they heard that Ian Hamilton's force was at Heilbron, and that our cavalry, which had crossed the river some miles lower down the stream, were threatening their right and rear.

"The bridge over the Rhenoster, several culverts and some miles of railway were destroyed.

"Ian Hamilton's force drove the Boers under Ret De Wet before them from Lindley to Heilbron. The passage of the Rhenoster was stoutly disputed. Our loss might have been heavy but for a well concerted plan, which brought Smith-Dorrien's brigade on the enemy's flank just at the right moment.

"The officer commanding at Boshof reports that upwards of 350 Free Staters have surrendered during the last few days, and that they have given up 360 rifles, 100 horses and a large amount of ammunition.

"Kelly-Kenny reports that three companies of Yeomanry, who were sent to repair the telegraph line and to clear the country between Bloemfontein and Boshof, have returned to Bloemfontein, having performed the duty exceedingly well."

FISCHER ADVISES KRUGER TO SURRENDER.

CAPE TOWN, May 23.—It is reported here that President Kruger has received a communication from Abraham Fischer, one of the Boer delegates now in the United States, advising him to surrender on the best terms obtainable from Lord Roberts.

It is also understood that when Lord Roberts crosses the Vaal river he will issue a proclamation announcing that if the burghers return to their farms their property and stock will be respected.

CANADIANS FIRST AT HEILBRON.

MONTREAL, May 23.—W. Richmond Smith, special correspondent of the Star with the British forces in South Africa, cables as follows:

"HEILBRON, May 22.—This place was occupied by Gen. Hamilton this morning. The Royal Canadian Regiment was the first to enter the town. The Boers, who occupied a strong position west of the town, attacked a cavalry convoy and shelled the wagon carrying the British sick. The action continued all day Sunday."

WAR SUMMARY.

LONDON, May 24, 8.40 a. m.—Lord Roberts is drawing near the frontier of the Transvaal. His infantry masses are 33 miles north of Kroonstad, at the Rhenoster River. Some thousands of cavalry are already across the river.

The Boers are retiring toward the Vaal, with their heavy baggage. They are reported from Pretoria as already across that river. Twelve thousand men and fourteen guns compose the retreating army. Trains continue to run from Vereeniging to Pretoria.

Foreign engineers assert that Pretoria is able to stand a year's siege.

According to advices from Lourenso Marquez the Pretoria fortifications are described as complete; but Johannesburg has not yet been placed entirely in a state of defence. The Transvaal government papers and the war chest have been removed to Lydenburg.

Foreigners continue to leave the republic. The Dutch cruiser Friesland is at Delgoa Bay—so it is reported—to furnish an asylum to the fleeing Hollanders and passage to Europe.

The Boer forces continue to dwindle. Some of the correspondents assert that probably only about 24,000 of the hardiest fighters yet remain, although there are detached parties in various parts of the Transvaal.

One of the curious pieces of gossip sent from Lourenso Marquez is that several women tried to sjambok President Kruger, who was rescued by his bodyguard. He rarely leaves the presidency now, but works incessantly, holding councils at daybreak and during the night. It was announced at Pretoria Sunday that the government purposed removing their prisoners from Pretoria.

Mafeking despatches continue to pour into London relating to the events immediately preceding the relief and the entry of the troops. The correspondents agree that the Canadian artillery, Major Endon's seven guns, did splendid work. Some of them assert that the Canadians did "absolutely essential work in the fighting."

About seven in the evening of the day before the relief, after Col. Mahon and Col. Plumer had defeated the Boers nine miles from Mafeking, Major Davies and nine scouts entered the town. The Boers were then retreating. At four on the following morning, 1,000 men, including the Canadians, arrived. With them were twenty wagon-loads of food, which were received with wild demonstrations. The armored train and a detachment then pushed forward to Gametree fort, the scene of the unsuccessful sortie in December. The Boers had evacuated it on the east. They were pursued, and the correspondent, telegraphing these facts Thursday afternoon, closed his despatch thus:

"We caught up with the retreating Boers and have them now surrounded."

Lady Sarah Wilson has managed to get through a message from Mafeking, dated Thursday, and announcing the entry of the relief column. She says:

"The fighting before the relief was very hard. A severe struggle proceeded yesterday, May 16 (from 2 p. m. until dusk). The Boers were forced slowly to retreat, contesting every inch. At sunset they still held the last position.

"Col. Mahon entered the town in the brilliant moonlight. The Boers were as tired out as we were; and they never guessed that an attempt would be made to force an entry before morning. Therefore their surprise was complete. They deserted their laagers, leaving a lot of food, which was divided up among the people of Mafeking."

A Daily Telegraph correspondent describing the march of the relief column says:

"On the morning before the little force started from Kimberley, General Hunter wrote to Colonel Mahon:

"This is the most dashing exploit of the war. Every man in the column has been especially selected. I wish you God speed."

The action opened at 1 p. m. Wednesday with Maxim fire, and this soon told upon the enemy, who surrounded us, but who had not hindered the forward march. The value of Boer methods of warfare when used in flat country may be estimated by this action. Little cover was afforded the enemy, with the result that they fled as soon as our guns were turned upon them. The fight raged most fiercely on the left; but our guns soon silenced the enemy, who were seen flying in all directions.

"Those on the left flank, finding that their comrades in front had abandoned their positions, ran helter skelter. Then ensued the finest Boer hunting witnessed during the war. The dismounted British plied the enemy with rifle fire, while the pom-poms hustled them until not a single Boer was left in front of us.

"The Canadians kept busy on the right, replying with the seven-pounder to the enemy's biggest gun, until darkness fell upon the scene."

The ensnaring of the squadron of Bethune's Horse appears to have been quite as bad as was at first reported. Gen. Bethune, thinking there were no Boers at Vryheid, determined to go that way toward Newcastle, as a short cut. The advance squadron was hurrying to make Vryheid before dark. It left the main body behind and trotted into the ambush. The Boers had Maxims, and the British, seeing they had no chance to retire, dashed forward to a point within twenty yards of the Boer rifles. Five officers and sixty-three men were killed or wounded.

Bethune ordered his four other squadrons to retire.

The damage to Laing's Nek tunnel is capable of prompt repair. The strength of the Boers at that point is not known. Probably they have from 6,000 to 8,000 men.

Dr. Leyds, according to the Brussels correspondent of the Daily Express, has quarreled with the Transvaal government. A representative of President Kruger is alleged to have demanded an accounting respecting £500,000 that has passed through Dr. Leyds's hands. Dr. Leyds is said to have replied that the money had all been expended, and to have expressed indignation when asked for an itemized statement.

President Kruger's emissary is described as showing to Dr. Leyds certain ante war letters in which Germany and France said they would intervene, and Dr. Leyds, according to this account, grabbed the documents and threw them into the fire, having a bodily struggle with the emissary. These alleged incidents are cited to explain the recent reserve of Dr. Ledys.

WILD WITH JOY.

LONDON, May 23, 8.14 p. m.—A despatch from Mafeking, dated May 17, the first message, except Col. Baden-Powell's despatch, forwarded since the relief of the town, tersely says the place was wild with joy, that many people wept as they greeted their deliverers, and that the scene as the troops traversed the streets baffled description.

THE LAST BIG SUCCESS.

MAFEKING, May 18.—The whole town is animated with a keen sense of exultation over yesterday's victory, which was complete, decisive and far-reaching. The military position, shortly after sunrise, was extraordinary. All the outlying works of the town were intact; the British had lost hardly any men, and yet three bodies of the federals, right inside the British lines, had been surrounded, cut off and given an opportunity to surrender, which they declined.

Commandant Sarel Eloff did not realize that his supports had been driven back; and he informed a messenger that the town was at his mercy. Toward noon there was a lull in the fighting. Everybody at headquarters went to breakfast and the commissariat requisitioned for horse sausage, bread and water for the men on the fighting line. There was no thought of half rations. Everyone got all he could eat.

The British in the Stant, moving from rock to rock, gradually drew in their circle around the federals, whom they corralled like cattle in a compound. Shortly after 4.30 p. m. a white flag was hoisted by the enemy and then, amid ringing cheers, the first batch of Boers was disarmed and sent to the town. The erstwhile besiegers furnished an inspiring spectacle to the townsfolk, themselves so long cooped up. As the hungry, dirty, battle-stained Boers marched between the gleaming bayonets of the British, the British population received them respectfully, but the Kaffirs gave full rein to their enthusiasm in hoots, yells and similar expressions of delight. The prisoners seemed glad that the fight was over.

As the afternoon advanced the crackle of musketry began again, continuing until nearly 7 o'clock, when Capt. Singleton shouted: "Cease fire." A message had come from headquarters to the effect that Eloff, his officers and men, had surrendered and had lain down their arms unconditionally to Col. Hore, who, with a handful of men, had been a prisoner of Eloff during most of the day.

Shortly before this a fusilade was heard. It was Eloff and the men who stood by him firing on their own deserters, eighty of whom fled.

As the news spread by telephone to the garrisons of the various forts, cheer upon cheer resounded. In the town some one started God Save the Queen, and the strains of the national anthem mingled for a few minutes with the hoarse shouting of the natives.

Soon Capt. Singleton and Col. Hore approached, accompanied by Commandant Eloff and his officers.

The meeting between Col. Baden-Powell and the Boer commandant was dramatic. "This is Commandant Eloff, sir," said Capt. Singleton.

"Good evening, commandant," said Col. Baden-Powell; "won't you come and have some dinner?"

As the British has already captured 120 prisoners, about all they could handle, Col. Baden-Powell sent word to Lord Charles Bentinck to open the way and to allow the scattered remnants of the federals to be driven from the staat. In half an hour everything was over; and in the mess room at headquarters the three Boer officers were dining.

Nearly every mess in town raked up somewhere a hidden store of liquor. The whole town joined in the jubilation, singing patriotic songs all night long. The rank and file of the Boer prisoners were lodged at Masonic hall. Most of them are Johannesburgers. They seemed in excellent spirit, scrambled for the blankets issued, wrote letters to their friends and grumbled at Gen. Snyman.

MAJ. GEN. BADEN-POWELL'S REPORT.

LONDON, May 23, 11.50 a. m.—The war office issued a despatch from Lord Roberts, under date of Honing Spruit, May 22, announcing the receipt by him of the following message from Major General Baden-Powell:

"MAFEKING, May 17.—I am happy to inform you that Mafeking was successfully relieved today. The northern and southern columns joined hands on May 15 and attacked the enemy yesterday, and after a small engagement entirely defeated them, with loss. The British casualties were three killed and twenty-two wounded. The relieving force marched into Mafeking at nine this morning, and the relief and defence forces combined and moved out and attacked the enemy's head laager. We shelled them out and nearly captured Snyman, and took one gun, a flag and a large amount of ammunition, stores, etc. Five dead and fifteen wounded Boers were found. The enemy appeared to be retreating in all directions except one commando, which is lying low, possibly to cover the retreat of the main body. Capt. McLaren and Corp. Murray were found in the Boer hospital. They are doing well. The townspeople and the garrison of Mafeking are heartily grateful for their relief."

GOOD WORK OF OUR ARTILLERY.

DOUGLAS, Cape Colony, May 22.—A force under Gen. Warren, consisting of mounted infantry, imperial yeomanry and two guns of the Canadian artillery, left Rooipan, Cape Colony, on the night of May 20 and marched in two columns under Colonels Hughes and Spencer. Nothing was seen of the Boers until the British were within two miles of Douglas, when a few shells from the Canadian artillery sent the burghers in full retreat towards Douglas. Colonel Hughes's column advanced in skirmishing order, and after a lengthy exchange of shots the Boers fled, leaving their laager and a quantity of stores and ammunition. Again today three hundred Boers opened a hot fire on a detachment of yeomanry, and the Canadian artillery repeated their excellent practice and compelled the enemy to retire.

WAR SUMMARY.

LONDON, May 25, 3.35 a. m.—Lord Roberts's infantry advance is delayed at the Rhenoster river for a day or two by the depth of the stream, which is not fordable. The banks, which are precipitous, are forty feet high. A pontoon and temporary bridge constructions are under way.

The railway has not been damaged to any great extent between Kroonstad and the Rhenoster. The Transvaalers have offended the Free Staters by destroying their splendid bridges when retiring to Kroonstad. They returned from doing this on the retreat to the Rhenoster, but now they are destroying the railroad and bridges, almost completely north of the Rhenoster. The British troops are in the form of a crescent, with horns thirty miles apart, with Gen. French's cavalry on the left, within 23 miles of the Vaal, and Gen. Ian Hamilton's mounted men on the right, within 30 miles of the Vaal. The centre of the crescent is about 40 miles from the Vaal.

Seventy or eighty miles to the left Lord Methuen is advancing up the Vaal.

Boer telegrams say that 3,000 British with ten guns are near Vredefort, which is close to the Vaal and close to Parys. One correspondent refers to the advance as a "promenade." Another describes it as a "Boer hunt."

The Free Staters are pictured as "bolting like hares" at the first sight of the British. The latter, according to one writer, did not even find women and children, as the fleeing farmers take their families with them, in consequence of reports current among the Transvaalers that the British kidnap children over twelve years of age.

The Boer rear guard was composed of Russians, to whom was committed the task of destroying the bridges. They also looted freely.

What the Boers are doing is an absolute mystery. The embargo upon news out of Pretoria for the last 24 hours has been complete. Such shreds of information as the correspondents at Lourenzo Marques have picked up do not illuminate the Boer designs and dispositions further than that the movement toward Lydenburg continues and that a referendum on the question of continuing the war is going on among the Boer fighting men. It may be a fortnight before the results of this singular vote are fully determined.

In Natal Gen. Dartnel's volunteers occupied Mount Prospect Monday. Lord Dundonald's cavalry is at Firmstones, near Ingomog. His infantry rests at Schoenshoogte. Those names are all of fateful memory in the first Boer war. They face Laing's Nek, where the Boers, through the range glasses of the British, are occasionally visible.

In the march across the Biggarsberg all the farms except one were found vacant. A temporary bridge has been finished at Waschbank. Trains now go to Dundee. Gen. Buller said the best way to celebrate the Queen's birthday was to repair the railway to Newcastle, and every man was put to work.

Earl De La Warr, who was supposed to have been captured at the time of the disaster that befell the squadron of Bethune's Horse, contrived to escape. He lay all night with a wounded leg behind an ant heap, reaching the camp the next day.

As the railway is now open north of Mafeking, an abundance of provisions is entering the town, plenty of flour and meat and a few luxuries. The telegraph messages will probably come from Mafeking direct over the northern route in a day or two.

South Africa has another infliction. An extraordinary issue of the Gazette at Durban announces the death of an East Indian from the bubonic plague. The government has put into force the most stringent preventive measures, but fears are expressed that the pestilence may get among the troops.

PEACE DELEGATES' PROGRAMME.

WASHINGTON, May 24.—The plan of campaign of the Boer peace commissioners has not yet been fully outlined. They probably will remain in Washington until next Tuesday, after which they will begin a tour of the west, as has been previously intimated. Mr. Fischer, of the delegation, is now busy outlining this itinerary, but he said today that it was too early to give any definite details of that plan. The delegates have not yet decided whether or not they will issue an official statement before leaving Washington. They feel that under the circumstances this would be a delicate undertaking, and no matter how carefully it was worded would be liable to misconstruction. Therefore it is quite probable that their statements will be confined to whatever addresses they may make at the pro-Boer meetings which are being arranged for their coming tour of the country.

STEAD AND THE PEACE DELEGATES.

LONDON, May 24.—At a "Stop the war" meeting in London this afternoon Wm. T. Stead said that the Boer delegates now in the United States told him they were prepared to accept on any terms compatible with independence, and asked if it would do any good to try to see Lord Salisbury. Mr. Stead said he replied that it was useless to do so unless they were prepared to surrender their independence, so the delegates went to America, where "they have met with such coldness in officialism as has excited the exultation of those who are determined to throttle the little states to death."

GOT THEIR REVENGE.

MAFEKING, Thursday, May 17, via Kimberley.—The British relieving force occupied this town at 9 o'clock. The garrison immediately moved out with twelve pounders and pom-poms and attacked McMullin's laager. The Boers resisted weakly for half an hour and then fled in disorder. The British then occupied all the Boer positions.

Col. Baden-Powell gave the garrison an opportunity of revenging themselves, using the relief force as a reserve and as supports.

Men and women swarmed to the housetops, and Lady Sarah Wilson, on a bicycle, accompanied the troops as far as the Boer lines.

The town guard formed up in the market square for the march past of the relief force.

There was immense enthusiasm over the fact that the relief of the place was accomplished by colonials.

SECOND CONTINGENT.

From Edenburg to Bloemfontein—Have Struck the Rainy Season.

EDENBURG, S. A., April 17.—Dear Father—We arrived here last night, having marched from Jaggersfontein yesterday. We leave here this afternoon in the direction of Bloemfontein. No doubt you saw about the Manchesters having a scrap a little above this place. We are to join the eighth division. Everyone is well.

EDENBURG, April 18.—Yesterday I mailed you a letter card saying that we were just off to Bloemfontein, but we are still here. We struck camp and marched off to Reddesburg to join the eighth division. We had gone about two miles when a messenger came riding up and we returned to Edenburg. It seems that Gen. Buller's victory has changed our disposition, and we are to go to Bloemfontein after all tomorrow. Bloemfontein is about 30 miles from here. There are not many troops here now, only about 600. We are quartered on the top of a hill with the Imperial Yeomanry. They are going up to the front as General Roberts's body-guard. The last two days has rained terribly and the mud we got in Halifax was mild compared to this. The water is a long distance off. We wash our hands in the mud puddles, but have not washed our faces for three days. The horses are standing in mud a foot deep. There is no doubt about our having struck the rainy season. We had to move the horses tonight, as the mud was too thick. We leave tomorrow for Bloemfontein.

R. F. MARKHAM.

PASSED ITS SECOND READING.

LONDON, May 23.—Notwithstanding government opposition, the second reading of the bill to enable women to be elected aldermen and councillors in the new borough councils, formed under the London government bill of 1899, was carried in the house of commons today by a vote of 248 to 129. The secretary of state for the colonies, Joseph Chamberlain; the home secretary, Sir Matthew White Ridley; the president of the board of trade, C. T. Ritchie, Henry Labouchere and John Redmond voted with the minority. The majority was composed mostly of liberals and Irish members, with a sprinkling of conservatives.

The bill was referred to the committee of law.

Subscribe for the WEEKLY SUN.

SCREEN DOORS

Two Styles. Four Sizes.

WINDOW SCREENS

Two Sizes.

Write for prices.

W. H. THORNE & CO., LTD.

ST. JOHN.