

## CURRENT EVENTS.

The last detachment of the second Canadian contingent for South Africa has sailed from Halifax, and the Strathcona Horse will follow in a few days. The first detachment of the second contingent arrived at Capetown the first week in March, and has been sent to the front. In the meantime, men of the first contingent have sealed with their blood their pledge of loyalty to the empire, winning high praise from their commander-in-chief for their bravery in action; and one-eighth of them have fallen, killed or wounded on the field of battle. Several of the men who went from the Atlantic provinces are among the killed. Fighting like veterans, falling like heroes, our sorrow for their loss is alleviated by the knowledge that the sacrifice is not in vain.

The whole wide empire is rejoicing over the news from the seat of war. On the 15th of February, the relief of Kimberley was effected; on the 27th came the announcement of the surrender of Cronje and his army, quickly followed by news of the relief of Ladysmith on the night of the 28th. Never before in British history has there been such rejoicing over news of battle; and never was it possible for a British victory to be celebrated on three continents before the next sunset.

Lord Roberts had quietly gathered some 50,000 men at Modder river, when the order was given for the advance of a column led by Gen. French. The Canadians were with this column. On the 15th, Gen. French reached and occupied Jacobsdal (Yak-obs-tal) a town in the Free State, not far from the border line. Leaving the Canadians and others behind, he pressed rapidly forward from Jacobsdal, turning the flank of the Boer army opposed to Lord Methuen, and reached Kimberley the same day. The delay that occurred in crossing a difficult drift (fording place) on the Modder river, gave Commandant Cronje (Cron-je) time to retreat towards Bloemfontein (Bloom-fon-tine) the capital of the Orange Free State. Overtaken at Paardeberg (Pard-berg), Cronje made a gallant stand; but the British forces surrounded and closed in upon him, scattering the columns that were advancing to his aid, and at daylight on the 27th, he was forced to surrender. With pride we read that the immediate cause of this surrender was a charge by the Canadian troops. It is thus announced in the official despatch from Lord Roberts:

At 3 a. m. to-day, a most dashing advance was made by the Canadian Regiment and some Engineers, supported by the First Gordon Highlanders and Second Shropshires, resulting in our gaining a point some six hundred yards nearer the enemy and within about eighty yards of his trenches, where our men entrenched themselves and maintained their positions till morning—a gallant deed worthy of our colonial comrades, and which, I am glad to say, was attended by comparatively slight loss.

This apparently clinched matters, for at daylight to-day a letter signed by Gen Cronje, in which he stated he surrendered unconditionally, was brought to our outposts under a flag of truce.

When this despatch reached London, it was read both in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons, the reference to the Canadians evoking loud and prolonged cheering.

“Englishmen,” says a London daily paper, “were never so proud of their fellow subjects across the ocean, whose participation in this great struggle has made imperial unity a reality. The capitulation of Paardeberg will be remembered throughout Greater Britain as the turning point in the process by which the British Empire has been made one and indivisible.”

The defeated Boer commander and his army of 4,000 men are now prisoners of war, and their loss must be a serious blow to the Boer cause. Cronje and chief officers will be sent to the Island of St. Helena.

The small British forces left to hold in check the Boer invaders of Cape Colony south of the Free State found their opponents weakened by the departure of many sent to Cronje's relief, and they have now re-occupied places lost earlier in the campaign.

The continued activity of Gen. Buller's forces along the line of the Tugela held many of the enemy who might otherwise have gone to oppose Lord Robert's advance. On the 27th, after a week of hard fighting, which was almost one continuous battle, he approached and took Pieter's Hill, a strong position in the middle of the semi-circle of fortified camps that lay between his army and Ladysmith; and, on the evening of the last day of February, a portion of his forces, under Lord Dundonald, reached the city, and the long expected relief of Ladysmith was accomplished.

The emperor of Germany, the emperor of Austria and the King of Italy telegraphed congratulations to the Queen.

The siege of Kimberley began soon after the outbreak of the war, and lasted one hundred and twenty-three days. The town, which lies about 650 miles north of Cape Town, is the well-known centre of the great South African diamond fields; and it is said that the diamonds stored there at the time of the siege were worth many millions of dollars. It has a population of about 29,000, and was defended by the North Lancashires, volunteers and engineers, about 2,500 in all, under Col. Kekewich.

The siege of Ladysmith began on the 2nd of November, and lasted nearly four months. It is the chief town in the northern portion of Natal, but was ill chosen for defence. Its relief will add Gen. White and about 10,000 men to the effective forces of the British army; but these will require rest and care for a few weeks at least before again entering on active service.

Both the surrender of Gen. Cronje and the capture of Pieter's Hill which opened the way to Ladysmith, took place on February 27, the anniversary of the battle of Majuba Hill, in which in 1881 General Sir George Colley was killed and his little army cut to pieces by the Boers. Majuba is a flat-topped hill overlooking a mountain pass on the boundary between Natal and the Transvaal Republic. It was occupied by about 350 British, a sufficient force, Gen. Colley hoped, to hold it until reinforcements arrived; but they were defeated, and the official returns showed 292 of the 350 killed, wounded and missing. Remembering the events of Paardeberg and Pieter's Hill the Boers will probably no longer regard Majuba day as a national holiday.

At a place called Sunnyside, near Belmont, while guarding the line of communication between Cape Town