

# BULLER'S TOUGH JOB. THE BOER POSITION.

## Impossible to Capture From a Frontal Attack.

### METHUEN BOMBARDS THE BOERS.

#### Sortie At Kimberley and Artillery Duel At Mafeking.

The greater part of the British fifth army division has reached Cape Town, and the Cape Town correspondents are beginning to hint that some large movement will be accomplished very shortly.

Helio-graph messages are seen passing frequently between Ladysmith and Pietermaritzburg, but no details are vouchsafed of what is happening.

A newspaper correspondent at Pietermaritzburg, in a despatch dated Dec. 20th, reports that a heliogram from Ladysmith said:

"Anxiety on our account is needless. Provisions are ample. The health of the troops, considering the season, is good, and their spirits are excellent. The task before us does not exceed our resources."

Many of the men who were wounded at Colenso have already left Durban and Pietermaritzburg to rejoin their commands with General Buller. This further testifies to the easiness of the wounds inflicted by Mauser bullets and to good hospital treatment.

The British naval contingent was on Dec. 20th, again bombarding the Boer position north of the Tugela River. The shells which wrecked the road bridge on Dec. 18th probably struck a Boer mine, as the damage done exceeded that which could have been inflicted by a single shell.

The 16th Lancers will go to South Africa from India, at the special request of Lord Roberts, even after the Government had decided that no more troops should be withdrawn from India.

The War Office has nominated Sir Wm. Stokes as consulting surgeon to the South African forces. He will leave Dublin for the Cape in a few days.

The recruiting of British colonists in Cape Colony is actively proceeding. Thirty thousand are already under arms, and several thousands more will be added.

A despatch from Chieveley Camp, dated Thursday, Dec. 21st, says: "Lyddite shells are daily thrown into the Boer camp to prevent them working at the trenches. The firing of big guns is heard daily from the direction of Ladysmith."

#### Surprised by the Boers.

Chieveley, Natal, Dec. 20 (delayed in transmission).—The Boers to-day surprised a picket of Hussars to the eastward of the camp here. Two of the British and seven of their horses were killed.

#### At Modder River.

London, Dec. 27.—The Times has the following special to-day:

Modder River, Dec. 20.—It is possible to estimate the influence of Cronje on the present force opposing us, from the reports of prisoners and others. It has had a great effect upon the Laodicean Free Staters, who responded well to the leaders of the Transvaalers, though leave is seldom allowed to the former by Cronje, whose assumption of the absolute command of the coalition is deeply resented by many Free Staters. The latter allege that Delarey, the Free State commandant, conceives the strategy of every encounter and that Cronje, with the aid of sjamboks, carries it out. Cronje on several occasions lately has refused to carry out President Steyn's instructions, notably in the matter of releasing Mr. J. B. Bartle. On another occasion Cronje's wife and daughters, who accompanied him on the campaign, insisted on releasing Brown, captured last week, because his young children were left unattended. Cronje has developed a silent, morose nature, and on Saturday replied to courteous letters from Lord Methuen by a refusal to continue the correspondence until the close of the war. There is no doubt of his strength of character, but he is not very intellectual. A notebook in my possession, taken from one of the Scandinavian commando at the battle of Magersfontein, contains a brief diary, which furnishes evidence that men were being drawn from even Zoutpansberg and the siege of Kimberley. So it seems, after all, that the last men said to have sent an address to the Boers on the eve of the fight, which shows that the internal communications of the enemy are good. There is evidence that half of the entire force of the enemy is continually manning the trenches. There is intermittent shelling from our naval guns. The Boers replied, bombarding our pickets.

#### Boers Have a 96 Pounder.

Modder River, Dec. 20.—Delayed in transmission.—The Boers have mounted a 96-pounder to counterbalance the British naval guns throwing lyddite shells. All of its shells have thus far fallen short.

#### Delagoa Bay.

London, Dec. 27.—Lord Somerset writes to the Times, urging the seizure

of Lorenzo Marquez and its retention, if necessary, until the end of the war, in order to prevent the landing of war material for the Boers.

The Times, in a special article, discussing the international law aspects of Boer importations through Delagoa Bay, says:

"Were we to adopt, either with or without the consent of Portugal, the drastic measures which are so airily suggested in some quarters we might find ourselves suddenly confronted with international complications far more serious and injurious to the successful prosecution of the South African war than the evils of which it was sought to secure an abatement."

#### Captured Marconi Instruments.

Modder River, Dec. 21.—Six Marconi wireless telegraph instruments intended for the Boers have been captured.

#### Boers Bridge Tugela River.

London, Dec. 27.—The Daily Telegraph's correspondent at Chieveley, in a despatch dated Dec. 20th, says that the Boers have constructed a temporary bridge across the Tugela River, near Pieter's Station, and from that place have sent a commando, which is now building entrenchments on Mount Liandvann and the hills further east.

The correspondent supports the previous British statements of heavy Boer losses on Dec. 15th. He says that certainly more than 300 were killed.

#### CHURCHILL'S ESCAPE.

He Tells How He Gave Boer Captors the Slip.

Lorenzo Marquez, Dec. 22.—Mr. Winston Churchill arrived here late last night and left for Durban by the steamer Induna.

London, Dec. 27.—Mr. Winston Spencer Churchill has cabled and the Morning Post publishes to-day an account of his escape from captivity with the Boers, after having been taken prisoner in the reconnaissance of an armored train at Estcourt. The despatch, which is dated Lorenzo Marquez, Dec. 21st, says:

"In the evening I concealed myself in a railway truck, under a great pile of sacks. I had a small store of good water. I remained hidden so, chancing discovery. The Boers searched the train at Komati-poort, but did not search deep enough. After sixty hours of misery I came safely here. I am very weak, but am free. I have lost many pounds in weight, but am light in heart. I shall avail myself of every opportunity henceforth to urge earnestly the unflinching and uncompromising prosecution of the war."

#### HIS ESCAPE.

"On the afternoon of Dec. 12th the Transvaal Secretary of War informed me that there was little chance of my release. I therefore resolved to escape, and the same night I left the state school prison in Pretoria by climbing the wall when the sentries' backs were turned momentarily. Walked through the streets of the town without disguise, meeting many burghers, but was not challenged in the crowd. I got through the pickets of the town guard and struck the Delagoa Bay Railroad. I walked along it, evading the watchmen at the bridges and culverts, and waited for a train beyond the first station. The 11.40 goods train from Pretoria had arrived before I reached the place, and was moving at full speed. I boarded it with great difficulty, and hid under boiler seats. I jumped from the train before dawn, and was sheltered during the day in a small wood, in company with a huge vulture, who displayed a lively interest in me.

#### MUCH HARDSHIP.

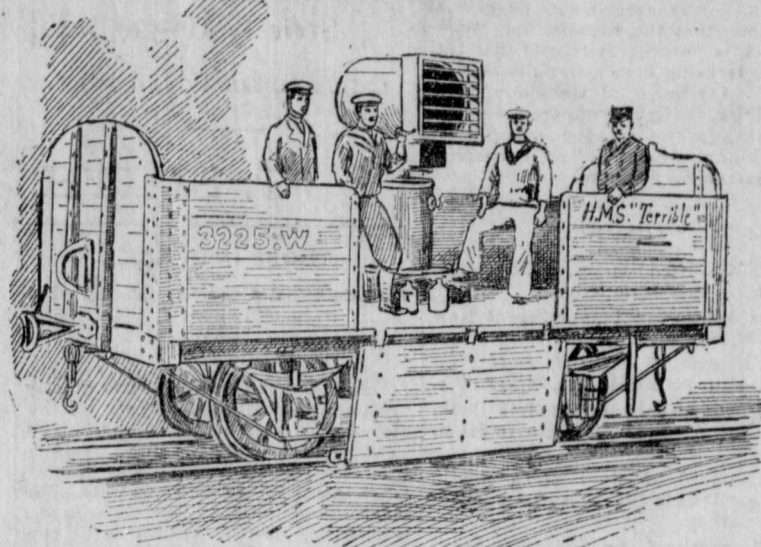
"I walked on at dusk. There were no more trains that night. The danger of meeting the guards of the line continued, but I was obliged to follow it, as I had no compass or map. I had to make wide detours to avoid bridges, stations and huts, and so my progress was very slow. Chocolate is not a satisfying food. The outlook was gloomy, but I persevered with God's help. For five days my food supply was very precarious. I was laying up by daylight and walking by night.

"Meanwhile my escape had been discovered and my description telegraphed everywhere. All trains were searched and everyone was on watch for me. Four times the wrong people were arrested.

"The sixth day I managed to board a train beyond Middleburg, from whence there was direct service to Delagoa."

#### Wants to Fight.

New York, Dec. 27.—Sydney Paget, racing partner of W. C. Whitney,



New Searchlight Apparatus Used in the Transvaal, and Captain Percy Scott, R. N., its Inventor.

#### BRITISH OFFICERS KILLED OR WOUNDED.



MARQUIS OF WINCHESTER. Major, Coldstream Guards, Killed at Magersfontein.



MAJOR W. LINDSAY. Royal Field Artillery, Wounded.



CAPTAIN J. C. KNAPP. Imperial Light Horse, Killed.



MAJOR STURGESS. Second Northumberland Fusiliers, Missing.

and brother of Almeric Paget, Mr. Whitney's son-in-law, sails to-day for England, where he will join the body of Rough Riders now being organized by Lord Woolverton for service in South Africa.

#### ROBERTS-KITCHENER.

The Two Commanders Sailed From Gibraltar to-day.

Gibraltar, Dec. 27.—The British steamer, Dumotrar Castle, having on board Gen. Lord Roberts, of Kandahar, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in South Africa, arrived here yesterday evening. Gen. Sir H. Kitchener, who came from Egypt to join Gen. Roberts as his chief of staff, embarked on board the Dumotrar Castle, and the vessel sailed early this morning for Cape Town.

#### Roberts Has a Free Hand.

New York, Dec. 27.—Lord Roberts, according to the Herald's London correspondent, absolutely refused to take command in South Africa until this ultimatum was acceded to: "The only conditions under which I will go out are that I shall have absolutely supreme command and receive no instructions from home."

This was said at a meeting at the War Office, at which were present Lord Lansdowne, Secretary of State for War, and Lord Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief. It lasted for hours, during which it was demonstrated by the arguments that the opinions of those present were far from being

unanimous. When the point he insisted on had been yielded Lord Roberts then demanded that Gen. Kitchener be given him, and this was agreed to.

#### SLOW PROGRESS HINTED AT.

It is argued now that Roberts and Kitchener will so completely reorganize the methods of the campaign that it will be March before the first decisive move is made to end the war.

The British had determined to destroy a house on the bank of the river that the Boers were using as a shelter from which their sharpshooters picked off incautious British soldiers.

At dawn the 12-pounders and the 4.7-inch lyddite gun, with three wagons, escorted by the 12th Lancers, moved out to attack the Boer lines in front of the kopjes. The wagons were fastened behind the river bank.

As soon as the British were seen by the Boers they opened fire upon them.

There was a party of Boers stationed 20 yards from the well near Ganger's cottage. A detachment of Lancers attacked them, but they scattered unharmed.

The Boers worked another gun from the railway track to the north.

Altogether they had four guns, besides two quick-firers. These guns were mostly mounted beyond the crest of the kopje. The heaviest fire was directed against the Lancers.

The object of the reconnaissance was successfully carried out, the house on the bank being blown up, creating a great dust.

The Boers fired a few shots afterwards, but the British made no reply.

Four of the horses of the Lancers were hit by a shell. None of the men were hurt.

The enemy have brought their trenches a thousand yards nearer to the British lines since the repulse at Magersfontein.

The reconnaissance established the fact that they have not advanced many of their guns. Their vanishing gun is nearest the British lines.

#### Buller's Tough Job.

London, Dec. 28.—The Daily Telegraph's correspondent at Chieveley says that when the American military attaché was shown the position at Colenso, he remarked quaintly:

"Is there no way round?"

Winston Churchill cables to the Morning Post from Chieveley Camp, under date of Dec. 26th:

"The situation is difficult, the Boer position being one of extraordinary strength, with high hills lined tier on tier, with trenches and galleries rising from an almost unfordable river, and with a smooth plain in front. The enemy have all the ranges marked, and many powerful guns dominate the various points of the river, while the drifts are commanded by converging musketry fire from possibly 12,000 Boers. There are sixteen miles of wild, broken country before reaching Ladysmith, which demands early relief."

#### Gen. Warren With Buller.

London, Dec. 28.—The cable along the east coast of Africa has been repaired, and this has enabled the receipt of news concerning Gen. Buller's force up to Dec. 26. There is, however, nothing of the first importance recorded. The most noteworthy item from Natal is contained in a Pietermaritzburg despatch, dated Dec. 26, which states that Gen. Warren, concerning whose movements much mystery has been observed, arrived there with his staff on Christmas day and went to the front.

The reports seem to be accurate. Some of the papers build on this fact the expectation that Gen. Buller's command will shortly move again.

The Cape Town correspondent of the Daily News, in a despatch dated Dec. 21, records a curious report that General Buller is returning to that city to meet General Warren, and that both of them will probably go to Modder River. This story can be safely ignored as untrue.

Five battalions of the eight belonging to General Warren's division have gone to Natal from Cape Town.

#### A Vast Army Needed.

The military critic of the Morning Post writes:

"The task before the British is to collect at some point a force decidedly superior to the enemy's and to drive the latter before them. Not until that is done will there be a change for the better, but a superior force means more than a numerical excess. There must be sufficient transport and a due proportion of cavalry, mounted infantry and horse artillery. There are no means of knowing the state of General Buller's transport, but until he has three-quarters of his force equipped with the minimum transport, he will not have the mobility requisite to turn the enemy's position.

"It will be the beginning of February before the necessary transport and mounted troops can be available in the west. By that time General Roberts may be able to concentrate the forces of Generals Methuen, Gatacre and French, and the sixth and seventh divisions, but much may happen before then."

So far as is ascertainable the position of the British at Ladysmith is unchanged.

#### Two Batteries From India.

London, Dec. 28.—The Imperial Government, according to a despatch from Calcutta to the Times, has accepted an offer of two batteries made by the Indian Government.

#### A Kimberley Sortie.

Kimberley, Dec. 20.—At half-past two this morning, mounted detachments, under Col. Peakman, with three Maxim's and three seven-pounders, under Major May, reconnoitred.

Leaving the entrenchments, the British advanced to Toll Pan. The Boer pickets fled, and our Maxim's replied, the Boers disappearing over the ridge.

Our guns then began to shell Toll Pan at a range of 2,500 yards.

A Boer gun dropped four shells near our men, but did no damage. As the Boers were strongly entrenched we withdrew. Their guns are well posted.

#### Artillery Duel at Mafeking.

London, Dec. 28.—The latest advices from Mafeking bear date of Dec. 18, when there was a mutual bombardment, which lasted two hours, without, however, apparently changing the situation.

#### What the Canadians Want.

Ottawa, Dec. 27.—In reply to an inquiry from Hon. F. W. Borden as to the most necessary supplies for Canada's troops in the Transvaal, the following cable was received to-day: "Borden, Ottawa: Have cable from Otter, dated Belmont, 18th, that compressed meat and lime juice tablets most acceptable. Committee being formed; will act accordingly. (Signed) Strathcona."

#### From a Toronto Boy.

Toronto, Dec. 28.—Mr. Barker, father of Captain Barker, of Company C, Toronto, of the Canadian contingent, yesterday morning received from Belmont the following message:

"Wishing you a happy Christmas. The message is dated December 27th, but Mr. Barker is under the impression that the despatch was sent on Christmas day."