FROM QUEBEC TO PRETORIA

W. HART-McHARG

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With the Royal Canadian Regiment

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April 24th 1915.

By W. Hart-McHarg

Lieutenant, Rocky Mountain Rangers
Late Sergeant, Company, Royal Canadian Regiment

"Nay! We would rather perish, but, Mother, if fight we must,
There be many of your sons to whom you can lean with a surer trust;
Some of your sons are we, and in death would be dust of your dust."

WILLIAM BRIGGS
TORONTO : : MDCCCCII

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Preface

THE object of writing this book is to preserve a record of the doings of the Royal Canadian Regiment while on active service in South Africa. I hope it will be acceptable to the members of the Regiment. The general public may find it interesting, as they will be enabled to obtain a more consecutive idea of our movements and actions than they could possibly have gathered from disjointed newspaper reports published at the time. In some places the story probably gives undue prominence to the part played by the company to which I had the honour to belong, but this is unavoidable, as I was unable to move about and make general observations, and on certain

occasions the different companies were separated for short periods.

Some criticisms have been offered on general matters, but nought has been set down in malice.

ROSSLAND, B.C., March, 1902.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY HISTORY

THE history of what may be called the South African problem, with special reference to the Transvaal, seems to divide itself naturally into two parts: the first including the period up to the war of 1880-81, when the Boers finally obtained their independence and started out as an established Republic; the second embracing the period from the retrocession by the British Government to the outbreak of hostilities in 1899.

Although it is not necessary, in recounting the doings of the Royal Canadian Regiment in South Africa, to go into the question of South African history, yet the various causes which led up to the war are so interesting, especially from a colonial standpoint, that a bare *résumé* of the principal events is here given.

Jan Van Riebeck, of the Dutch East Africa Company, having heard the accounts of some Dutch sailors who had been shipwrecked in Table Bay and lived there for some time, left Holland in 1652 with three ships and a considerable number of emigrants, and formed a settlement at the Cape, which was augmented thirty-seven years afterwards by the arrival of some Huguenot refugees.

The Dutch were not the first people to hoist their flag in South Africa, the Portuguese navigator, Diaz, having been there in 1486, and the celebrated Vasco de Gama subsequently explored a considerable portion of the coast eastward from Table Bay, though no attempt at colonization was made.

The affairs of the small Dutch colony were under the control of the Dutch East India Company, and their administration became so unpopular that a deputation from the settlers went to Holland in 1789 to lay complaints before the Dutch Government, which resulted in a commission being sent out; but the suggested remedies of the latter did not meet with the approval of the settlers. Meanwhile events in Europe were undergoing great changes, and the French had overrun Holland, the Stadtholder being a refugee in England. He sent word that the Colony was to be handed over to England

for protection, and Admiral Elphinstone and General Craig went down to take possession. The officials of the Dutch Company decided to disobey the orders of the Stadtholder, and offered some resistance to the British, which was, however, speedily overcome.

The British held the Cape, General Craig becoming Governor, until the Peace of Amiens, in 1803, when it was restored to Holland, there being no further danger from the French.

In 1806 the English and French were again at war, and in view of the fact of the increasing importance of British interests in India, and the advisability of forestalling any French movement in the direction of the Cape, the British again took possession. When the war was over the matter was finally settled by the payment to Holland of £6,000,000, the British thereby acquiring title both by conquest and purchase.

After this final settlement took place, emigrants from England began to flow into the country. The two races got along well together at first, but differences soon arose, and a general short-sighted policy on the part of the English Colonial Office gave the Dutch very good reasons for grumbling, and gradually led to the determination on the part of a large number of the farmers to shake the dust of the Colony off their feet, and trek to the unknown

country to the north, out of the reach of British rule.

Their chief complaints * came under two heads:

(1) Against the Imperial Government, in that they did not give sufficient protection to the whites against the blacks; that too much credence was given to the testimony by interested persons on behalf of the blacks, while the white man's evidence was discredited; that the slaves had been liberated in an unjust manner, only two-fifths of the value having been paid, and that sum made payable in London; and that there was an apparent desire to favour the natives in every way at the expense of the white man.

(2) Against the agents of the London Missionary Society. They were charged with usurping authority which belonged to the magistrates, with misrepresenting facts, with advocating schemes against progress, and the observance of order, and it was asserted that these agents influenced the Colonial Office in everything.

Mr. Theal goes on to say that everyone in South Africa now agrees that the complaints of the emigrants were well founded.

* Theal, "History of the Boers."

In addition to the above, there were other causes of dissatisfaction, notably the substitution in 1827 of English for Dutch as the official language, and the Kaffir inroad into the outlying settlements. This latter was beaten back by Sir Benjamin D'Urban and the invaders' territory annexed, but it was subsequently given back to the natives by the Colonial Office, much to the disgust of the settlers.

What is known as "The Great Trek" began in 1836. It was composed of farmers, their wives, children and dependents, carrying everything with them in their heavy waggons. The first lot nearly all perished, twenty-six women and children being the only survivors out of ninety-eight people. But the exodus went on, and by the middle of the following year had assumed large proportions. The history of this movement is full of privation, fighting and hardships; some went on to the Transvaal, some to what is known as the Orange River Colony, and others to northern Natal. The Kruger family were with the Transvaal party, which was commanded by Potgieter, Paul Kruger being at that time a boy of ten years of age.

The Boers and English got along very well together in northern Natal, and fought together against the great Zulu chief, Dingaan. The latter agreed to make a treaty, but treacherously

murdered the representatives who went to arrange terms with him. In December, 1838, Pretorius got together a considerable force, and coming up with Dingaan, completely defeated him, and broke up the Zulu power. This was on the 15th of December, a day ever since set apart by the Boers for special rejoicing, and called "Dingaan's Day."

The republic of Natalia was then formed with a Volksraad of twenty-four members, but was never recognized by Great Britain. As the Boers grew hostile, Sir George Napier occupied Durban, and a small force went across country, only to be told by the Boers that they had placed themselves under the protection of Holland. The King of Holland, as soon as he heard of it, lost no time in repudiating the "disloyal communication of the emigrant farmers." The British having been reinforced, the Boers quietly withdrew, and Natal became a British colony (1842).

Continual quarrels between the Boers and the natives between the Orange and the Vaal rivers caused a state of uneasiness to exist, and various efforts were made to obtain tranquillity. In 1846 a British Resident and a small force were sent to Bloemfontein, and in 1848 Sir Harry Smith, then Governor of Cape Colony, proclaimed all the country between the Orange and

Vaal rivers east of the Quathlamba Mountains British territory, under the name of the "Orange River Sovereignty." An insurrection breaking out shortly afterwards, Sir Harry Smith promptly went to the assistance of the Resident, who was besieged in Bloemfontein, and severely defeated the Boers at Boomplatz, August 29th, 1848, those who were discontented subsequently moving across the Vaal.

In 1852 the Sand River Convention was entered into, guaranteeing the independence of the Boers beyond the Vaal. Unfortunately, a year or two afterwards, a vacillating Colonial Secretary decided to withdraw from the Orange River Sovereignty, despite the appeals of the loyal inhabitants, who sent delegates to England to protest against such a course. These loyal inhabitants were abandoned to their fate, and the British troops marched out of Bloemfontein in March, 1854. It was in the same month, forty-six years afterwards, that they again entered the capital of the Orange Free State, with Lord Roberts at their head.

The "emigrant farmers north of the Vaal River," as they were termed in the Sand River Convention, soon found that troubles of all kinds went hand in hand with questions of government, and it was not long before internal dissensions among themselves, troubles with the

natives, and an empty treasury, culminated in the annexation of their territory, by Sir T. Shepstone in 1877.

At first there were several republics in existence—one having its headquarters in Lydenburg, another at Pretoria, and still another at Potchefstroom—but these were subsequently incorporated, and in 1872 T. F. Burgers, a former minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, was elected President. He was a man of good education and broad-minded views, and wished to bring the Transvaal to the rank of a nation, but the material he had to work with does not appear to have been suited to the performance. Among other things, his chief ambition was to have a railway built to Delagoa Bay, so that the Boers would have an outlet independent of British territory, and to accomplish this purpose, he went to Europe in 1875, having been empowered to do so by the Volksraad. No sooner was his back turned than a faction with P. J. Joubert and Paul Kruger at its head began to operate against the Government and against Mr. Burgers personally. When he returned from his unsuccessful journey he found the relations with the native tribes almost on the point of explosion, especially with the Zulus to the south, to whom the acting President, P. J. Joubert, had sent a sort of ultimatum, and had issued a proclama-

tion laying down a boundary line far southward of the one settled by Lieutenant-Governor Keate of Natal, at the request of both parties, when a dispute had arisen on a previous occasion. But the position of affairs on the Lydenburg border was the most serious, and resulted in a formal declaration of war against the Basuto chief, Secocœni. It was simply one of the Boer cases of land-grabbing, when the natives were living quietly on their own territory and molesting no one. Secocœni told the Boers "that he did not wish to fight, but that he was quite ready to do so if they preferred it."

All went well with the Boers at first, and being helped by the Swazis, the only natives with whom they were on friendly terms, they gained two victories over Secocœni. The Swazis then left, complaining that the Boers always put them in front, and were too cowardly to do any attacking themselves. Secocœni's stronghold being finally assaulted, the Boers failed to obey the command to advance, and retreated in disorder. The total collapse of the campaign made a bad impression throughout South Africa, as it was the first time an organized white force had ever been beaten by a native tribe.

A system of border police was then inaugurated, as it was feared that Secocœni would follow up his victory; but he did not do so, and

this body of men, drawn from the worst elements in South Africa, and placed under the command of two worthies—Von Schlickmann and Abel Erasmus—established themseves in an old fort at Steelport, and sallied out from time to time, burning kraals and murdering the inhabitants.

The then state of affairs is summed up by Sir H. Barkly in his despatch to Lord Carnarvon, dated 18th December, 1876, in which he expresses the hope that Her Majesty's Government will take such steps "as will terminate this wanton and useless bloodshed and prevent the recurrence of the scenes of injustice, cruelty and rapine which abundant evidence is every day forthcoming to prove, have rarely ceased to disgrace the republics beyond the Vaal ever since they first sprang into existence."

One of the principal clauses in the Sand River Convention was to the effect that there should be no slavery. This agreement was never lived up to by the Boers, and there is a mass of evidence to prove it. It would take too much space to go into the matter here, but those who desire to learn something about it are advised to read Mr. H. Rider Haggard's "Last Boer War." One instance, however, may be given to show how the natives hated the Boers, especially on the ground of slavery. Khama, one of the greatest chiefs in South Africa, who afterwards

visited England, sent a message on the 22nd of August, 1876, to "Victoria, the great Queen of the English people," as follows:

"I write to you, Sir Henry, in order that your Queen may preserve for me my country, it being in her hands. The Boers are coming into it, and I do not like them. Their actions are cruel among us black people. We are like money; they sell us and our children. I ask Her Majesty to pity me, and to hear that which I write quickly. I wish to hear upon what conditions Her Majesty will receive me, and my country, and my people under her protection. I am weary with fighting, I do not like war, and I ask Her Majesty to give me peace. I am very much distressed that my people are being destroyed by war, and I wish them to obtain peace. I ask Her Majesty to defend me as she defends all her people. There are three things which distress me very much—war, selling people, and drink. All these things I shall find in the Boers, and it is these things which destroy people to make an end of them in the country. The custom of the Boers has always been to cause people to be sold, and to-day they are still selling people. Last year I saw them pass with two waggons full of people whom they had bought at the river at Tinane."

Taxes were levied to defray the expenses of

the Secocœni war and to pay the border police, but were not forthcoming. The treasury was empty, a lot of worthless paper money was in circulation, and the Republic owed nearly £300,000. Secocœni was again getting troublesome; Cetewayo, the powerful Zulu chief, was gathering his impis to sweep the Transvaal, and the general confusion and paralysis which seemed to exist amongst the Boers would have rendered an effectual resistance almost impossible.

Early in the year 1877 the British Government took alarm at the serious state of affairs existing in the Transvaal. They appointed Sir Theophilus Shepstone special commissioner and sent him to Pretoria, with power to take whatever steps he considered necessary, "in order to secure the peace and safety of our said colonies and of our subjects elsewhere."

Sir T. Shepstone entered Pretoria with a small staff, and had several interviews with President Burgers and other prominent officials. When he had investigated the state of affairs, he decided that annexation was the only means to save the country, and told President Burgers so, showing him a draft of the proposed proclamation. That President Burgers had no serious objections is evidenced by the fact that he suggested one or two alterations in the wording of the proclamation, which Sir T. Shepstone

agreed to. To conclusively show the then existing state of affairs in the Transvaal, it is only necessary to quote from an address read by President Burgers to the members of the Volksraad on the 3rd of March.

"I would rather be a policeman under a strong government than the President of such a state." . . .

"You have ill-treated the natives, you have shot them down, you have sold them into slavery, and now you have to pay the penalty." . . .

"I tell you openly, matters are as bad as they ever can be; they cannot be worse." . . .

"It is asked, What have they (the English) got to do with our position? I tell you, as much as we have to do with that of our Kaffir neighbours. As little as we can allow barbarities among the Kaffirs on our borders, as little can they allow that in a state on their borders anarchy and rebellion should prevail." . . .

"To-day a bill for £1,100 was laid before me for signature; but I would sooner have cut off my right hand than sign that paper, for I have not the slightest ground to expect that when that bill becomes due, there will be a penny to pay it with."

On the 12th of April, 1877, the proclamation annexing the Transvaal to the British Empire

was read in the Market Square, Pretoria, and was well received. It must have been an anxious moment for Sir T. Shepstone and his staff. He had no protection, and the small faction hostile to the proceedings had been doing their best to stir up opposition; but the people as a whole were evidently convinced that it was the only solution of the difficulty, and the proceedings were in every way harmonious. The day before the proclamation was issued, Sir T. Shepstone sent word to Cetewayo that the Transvaal was going to be made British territory, to which he received the following reply: "I thank my father Somtseu (Shepstone) for his message. I am glad that he has sent it, because the Dutch have tired me out, and I intended to fight with them once, only once, and to drive them over the Vaal. Kabana, you see my impis are gathered. It was to fight the Dutch I called them together. Now I will send them back to their houses. . . . In the reign of my father Umpanda, the Boers were constantly moving their boundary farther into my country. Since his death the same thing has been done. I had therefore determined to end it once for all."

Without a shot being fired, without military display of any kind, the Transvaal was quietly annexed to the British Empire, peace was granted to Secocœni, and Cetewayo, as we have seen, dispersed his armies.

Shortly afterwards Messrs. Kruger and Jorissen left for England to make a formal protest against the annexation, but so apathetic were even the malcontents that these two gentlemen found great difficulty in raising one-half the amount necessary to make the journey. Sir T. Shepstone wrote (May 9th): "I do not think that either of them wishes the Act of Annexation to be cancelled: Dr. Jorissen certainly does not;" and the Recorder of Kimberley wrote to Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of Cape Colony, (May 15th): "Dr. Jorissen thinks that the reversal of Sir Theophilus' Act would not only be impossible, but a great injury to the country." Returning to the Transvaal, they both took office under the British Government.

The following extracts from J. P. Fitzpatrick's excellent book, "The Transvaal from Within," give a splendid synopsis of the condition of affairs after the annexation:

"The real mistakes of the British Government began *after* the annexation. The failure to fulfil promises; the deviation from old ways of government; the appointment of unsuitable officials who did not understand the people or their language; the neglect to convene the Volksraad, or to hold fresh elections as definitely promised; the establishment of personal rule by military men, who treated the Boers with harshness and contempt, and would make

no allowance for their simple, old-fashioned ways, their deep-seated prejudices, and, if you like, their stupid opposition to modern ideas—these things and others caused great dissatisfaction, and gave ample material for the nucleus of irreconcilables to work with." . . .

"The effect of the annexation was to start the wells of plenty bubbling—with British gold. The country's debts were paid. Secocœni and Cetewayo would be dealt with, and the responsibility for all things was on other and broader shoulders. With the revival of trade and the removal of responsibilities and burdens came time to think and to talk. The wave of the magician's wand looked so very simple that the price began to seem heavy. The eaten bread was forgotten. The dangers and difficulties that were past were of small account now that they *were* past; and so the men who had remained passive and recorded formal protests when they should have resisted, and taken steps to show they were in earnest, began their repeal agitations. All the benefits which the Boers hoped for from the annexation had now been reaped. Their pressing needs were relieved. Their debts had been paid, their trade and credit restored; their enemies were being dealt with. Repeal would rob them of none of these. They would, in fact, eat their cake and still have it."

The Repeal agitation, once started, soon spread, and culminated in the rising and war of 1880-81. It was not the annexation that was at fault, but the failure to fulfil the obligations then undertaken.

Unfortunately, in December, 1879, the situation was not improved by the speeches delivered by Mr. Gladstone (then in opposition) during his Midlothian campaign. He roundly denounced the annexation of the Transvaal, and the Boers naturally felt that if the Liberals came into power retrocession would be the order of the day; but when Mr. Gladstone did become Prime Minister, his views evidently underwent a very radical change. The Boers lost no time in petitioning the new Government in England, asking that the annexation be rescinded, but the reply they got, dated June 8th, 1880, was as follows: "Looking to all the circumstances of both the Transvaal and the rest of South Africa, and to the necessity of preventing a renewal of disorders which might lead to disastrous consequences, not only to the Transvaal, but to the whole of South Africa, our judgment is that the Queen cannot be advised to relinquish her sovereignty over the Transvaal."

Lord Kimberley, in a speech delivered in the House of Lords, May 24th, 1880, said: "Difficulties with the Zulus and the frontier tribes would again arise, and, looking as they must to

South Africa as a whole, the Government, after a careful consideration of the question, came to the conclusion that we could not relinquish the Transvaal."

The Boers held meetings all over the country, and matters speedily drifted to an outbreak. On December 16th, 1880, the first shot was fired at Potchefstroom, when some Boers fired at a mounted infantry patrol. Colonel Anstruther, marching from Lydenburg to Pretoria with part of the 94th Regiment, was ambushed about thirty-eight miles east of Pretoria, on the 20th of December, at Bronkhorst Spruit, and out of a total of 267 men, three women and two children, fifty-six were killed, 101 wounded, including one of the women, and twenty of the wounded afterwards died. So unconscious were the English soldiers of any danger (the news of the insurrection at Potchefstroom not having reached them) that the band was playing when the Boers were first seen, and the column, which included a large number of waggons, was stretched out a great distance along the road. This dastardly outrage had a fitting sequel in the murder of Captain Elliott, one of the two surviving unwounded officers, who, on promising to quit the Transvaal, was released on *parole d'honneur*, and taken to a drift on the Vaal River. He and Captain Lambert were ordered

to cross at a certain drift, when it was nearly dark. They drove the horses into the river, and immediately got stuck in a hole, the cart partly overturning in the swift current. They called out that they were stuck, and received for answer the information that they would be shot if they attempted to return. They then decided to swim to the other side, but before they could jump into the water a volley from the escort killed Captain Elliott, whose body fell into the water, and was carried away by the current. Captain Lambert swam across the river, another volley being fired at him while he was in the water ; on gaining the opposite bank he ran for about two hundred yards under a heavy fire.

Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Rustenburg, Lydenburg, Marabastad and Wakkerstroom were besieged and successfully defended by small bodies of troops or loyal inhabitants. Commandant Cronje, however, succeeded in forcing Colonel Winsloe at Potchefstroom, who was short of provisions, to surrender, after an armistice between the forces had been arranged, information of which was deliberately kept from Colonel Winsloe by Cronje. Public reparation was afterwards exacted for this outrage.

The Boers descended into Natal and took up strong positions about four miles south of Lang's

Nek. Sir George Colley, with a force of something under 600 men, endeavoured on January 28th to drive them out, but met with a severe repulse, the casualties amounting to 190, a very large number, considering the force engaged. Again at Ingogo heights, on February 8th, General Colley engaged the enemy, the action lasting all day. It has been called a drawn battle, both sides vacating their ground during the night, but seventy-six men were killed and sixty-nine wounded on the British side, and as the Boer loss was much less, the advantage lay decidedly with them. Sir George Colley sent Sir Evelyn Wood down country to bring up reinforcements, but before they reached him he decided to seize Majuba Hill, and thus get command of the Nek. Taking about 600 men with him, the ascent was successfully accomplished during the night of the 26th. The first the Boers knew about it was the sight of the English soldiers on the summit the next morning. The story of the battle is well known. At first the Boers started to inspan and move off, but when they found the British had no guns they decided to storm the hill. The majority took up a position from which they kept up a long range fire, while a comparatively small party did the actual storming. No entrenchments had been made, and the men were

placed all along the ridge on the sky line. The Boers gradually crept nearer and nearer, taking advantage of every bit of cover and shooting admirably, until they actually gained the crest and rushed the position. It is a humiliating tale from a British standpoint, and no amount of excuses can explain away the result. The Boer feat of arms is deserving of all praise. At Lang's Nek they were successful from the top of the hill, at Majuba they were successful from the bottom.

While Sir Evelyn Wood was getting together the necessary forces, and while Sir Frederick Roberts was on the ocean with 10,000 men to avenge the recent defeats and re-establish the Queen's power in the Transvaal, the Liberal Government in England made up their minds that the undertaking was too large and costly for them ; they suddenly came to the conclusion that it was an unjust war, and, notwithstanding the declarations which had been made by responsible statesmen, that the country would never be relinquished by the Queen—declarations which the loyal inhabitants had been relying on, and on the strength of which they had invested money in the country, made their homes there, borne many privations and hardships, and in some instances had given up their lives—peace was made without another shot being fired.

CHAPTER II

THE BOER REPUBLIC

MR. RIDER HAGGARD says: "The news of this peace was at first received in the Colony in the silence of astonishment . . . It seemed to us who had been witnesses of what had passed, and knew what it all meant, something so utterly incredible that we thought there must be a mistake. . . . Newcastle was a curious sight the night after the peace was declared. Every hotel and bar was crowded with refugees, who were trying to relieve their feelings by cursing the name of Gladstone with a vigour, originality and earnestness that I have never heard equalled; and declaring in ironical terms how proud they were to be citizens of England, a country that always kept its word. . . . But if people in Natal and at the Cape received the news with astonishment, how shall I describe its effects upon the unfortunate loyal inhabitants of the Transvaal, on whom it burst like a thunderbolt? They did not say much, however; and, indeed, there was

nothing to be said. They simply began to pack up such things as they could carry with them, and to leave the country which they well knew would henceforth be utterly untenable for Englishmen or English sympathizers. In a few weeks they were pouring down through Newcastle by the hundreds: it was the most melancholy exodus that can be imagined. There were people of all classes, officials, gentlefolk, work-people, and loyal Boers; but they had a connecting link—they had all been loyal, and they were all ruined, . . . indeed, many of them whom one had known as well-to-do in the Transvaal, came down to Natal hardly knowing how they would feed their families next week." *

A commission was appointed to arrange the future relationship that was to exist between Great Britain and the Transvaal, and the result of its labours was the agreement known as the Pretoria Convention. A large number of the more prominent native chiefs assembled in Pretoria to learn their fate, and the remarks made by them to the Secretary for Native Affairs are instructive. Umgombarie, a Zoutpansberg chief, said: "I am Umgombarie. I have fought with the Boers and have many wounds, and they know that what I say is true. . . .

* "Last Boer War," page 165, *et seq.*

I will never consent to place myself under their rule. I belong to the English Government." Silamba said: "I belong to the English. I will never return under the Boers. You see me, a man of my rank and position. Is it right that such as I should be seized and laid on the ground and flogged, as has been done to me and other chiefs?" Sinkanhla said: "We hear and yet do not hear; we cannot understand. . . . We should like to have the man pointed out from among us black people who objects to the rule of the Queen. . . . We have now had four years of rest and peaceful and just rule." Umyethile said: "We have no heart for talking. I have returned to the country from Sechelis, where I had to fly from Boer oppression. Our hearts are black and heavy with grief to-day at the news told us; we are in agony."

The Pretoria Convention did not satisfy the Boers very long, and by continual agitation they induced the British Government to reconsider it, the result being the London Convention of 1884, an even more clumsy document than the former. Raids were systematically made on neighbouring tribes, with the view of extending the borders of the Republic, notwithstanding that the boundaries had been definitely settled by the London Convention; one expedition actually being directed against a

chief under British protection, which was only rendered abortive by the Warren expedition, which cost the British Government a million and a half sterling.

It was in 1884, while Messrs. Kruger and Smit were in England negotiating the London Convention, that the former published in the London press a cordial invitation and welcome and the promises of rights and protection to all who would come and settle in the Republic. This is surely a sufficient answer to President Kruger's subsequent declarations, "that the Uitlanders were never asked to come to the country, and were not wanted there." He also stated in May, 1881, at the Conference settling the terms of the retrocession: "We make no difference (to Englishmen), so far as burgher rights are concerned. There may, perhaps, be some slight difference in the case of a young person who has just come into the country."

The Boers had barely obtained their independence when they commenced that policy of exclusion, so far as the franchise is concerned, which was made ever more vigorous by successive Volksraads. In 1882 they passed a law that no one should be entitled to the franchise unless they had lived in the country for five years; previous to that one year's residence had been sufficient.

The discovery of the Witwatersrand gold fields (proclaimed September 8th, 1886) opened a new political and industrial era in the Transvaal. The Sheba mine and others at Barberton had already attracted a considerable population, but the rush which took place to the Rand, and the subsequent success of mining operations there, while it made the Transvaal one of the richest states in the world, brought responsibilities with which the ignorant Dopper farmers were quite unable to cope. As the Rand gold fields developed and Johannesburg was built up, the Uitlanders, as those on the Barberton gold fields had done, formed themselves into a Chamber of Mines, and began agitating for necessary reforms, and a proper protection to life and property. That their work was carried on in the right direction is shown by the fact that they drew up a bill regulating the native "pass" question, which dealt with it in all its details, even to the creation of a Government Department, and also consolidated at their own expense one of the most complicated and unworkable sets of mining regulations which probably ever existed, both of these enactments being gladly accepted by the Government, as they were quite unable to undertake the work themselves. But the Government from the first showed itself intensely hostile to the Chamber of Mines, and,

at a later period, to the Transvaal National Union, the latter made up of all the unenfranchised portion of the population, having for its object the agitation for necessary reforms.

The reforms required are set out by Mr. Charles Leonard, at one time Chairman of the Union, as follows:

1. The establishment of this Republic as a true Republic.

2. A Grondwet or Constitution, which shall be framed by competent persons, selected by representatives of the whole people, and framed on lines laid down by them—a constitution which shall be safeguarded against hasty alteration.

3. An equitable franchise law and fair representation.

4. Equality of the Dutch and English languages.

5. Responsibility to the Legislature of the great departments.

6. Removal of religious disabilities.

7. Independence of the courts of justice, with adequate and secured remuneration of the judges.

8. Liberal and comprehensive education.

9. An efficient civil service, with adequate provision for pay and pension.

10. Free trade in South African products.

There does not seem to be anything in these demands that any enlightened community would not expect as their just rights, and when it is borne in mind that the Uitlanders were paying at least seven-eighths of the revenue of the country and had no voice in the general administration of affairs—not even a say in the municipal affairs of the city they had built—and were outrageously taxed indirectly for the benefit of the "concessions" given right and left to the "friends" of the Government, it is not surprising that an active agitation was kept up with a view to obtaining from the Government the one thing considered necessary to safeguard their interests and prevent further oppression—an equitable franchise law, with representation by population. The principal grievances complained of by the Uitlanders were:

1. The franchise. As we have seen, the law was changed in 1882 from one year's residence to five. This was only the beginning of that policy of exclusion which was gradually extended, until a fourteen years' residence became necessary. Nor was this all; registration with a Field Cornet had to be shown, and the commencement of such residence dated from such registration. The consequence was that most of the arrivals from 1882 to 1890 were unable to prove their registration, owing to the unbusiness-

like way in which the Field Cornets conducted their affairs, having no office, and most of them being illiterate, not to say dishonest. However, if registration and a fourteen years' residence could be proved, the applicant could then only procure burgher rights *if the majority of the burghers in his ward will signify in writing their desire that he should obtain them, and provided the President and Executive shall see no objection to granting the same.* (Law No. 3 of 1894.)

In other words, the Uitlanders were disqualified forever.

2. The railway policy. The worst example of the way in which the mining industry had to suffer, owing to the extortionate rates of the state-owned railway (the Netherlands Railway Company), is shown by the fact that its yearly revenue reached the respectable sum of $15,000,000. If it had only been half that sum, handsome profits would still have accrued to the company and the other half been saved to the public. Needless to say, it was protected by a stringent monopoly. The Selati Railway scheme, another of the celebrated concessions, is an object-lesson in itself. It is described by Mr. Fitzpatrick* as "one of the biggest 'steals' even in the Transvaal"—the money made "on the

* "The Transvaal from Within," p. 70.

side" by the Government and their friends, of course, coming out of the pockets of the unfortunate tax-payers.

3. A glance at the revenue is instructive, as it shows the amount of taxation directly levied. In 1871 the revenue was £40,988; in 1886, the year the Rand was proclaimed, it amounted to £196,236, and from then it went up by leaps and bounds until, in 1899, the budget showed £4,087,852, this in addition to the enormous sums taken out of the pockets of the people by the Netherlands Railway, the Dynamite Monopoly, and all the other concessions held by Mr. Kruger's friends.

4. The Dynamite Monopoly. This was a concession to manufacture explosives—a very important article in a mining community—and the duty on the imported article was raised to a point that enabled the concessionaire to sell his goods at a price nearly 200 per cent. dearer than the article could otherwise be imported for. It is estimated that it constituted an extra burden on the Rand mines of £600,000 per annum.

5. The Question of Education. This was always a burning question, and the Uitlanders went so far as to raise a sufficient sum of money by voluntary subscriptions to establish schools, and secured the services of a Director-General of Education, with a competent staff, no relief

being obtainable from the Government at Pretoria. In 1895 the Government spent 1s. 10d. a head on Uitlander schools, while the expenditure per Dutch child was £8 6s. 1d.

In a sketch like this it would be impossible to deal with all the grievances of the Uitlanders. In addition to those already referred to, the following must be mentioned: The gross abuse of the public expenditure, the subornation of the courts by the executive, the refusal to allow Uitlanders to act as jurymen, the squandering of the public revenue, the general corruptness of the Legislature and the Civil Service, the maladministration of the liquor law, by which a large number of natives were continually drunk; no municipal control, religious disabilities, a corrupt and violent police, and interference with the press and the holding of public meetings.

The franchise was always the predominant feature of the agitation, because without that and a fair representation reforms, even if instituted by the Government, could be as easily rescinded. The enactment of 1894, which practically shut out the Uitlanders from any chance of ever obtaining the franchise, seems to have been the turning point in the Reform movement at Johannesburg. Up to that time there had always been, at least, a modicum of hope that President Kruger would do something towards rectifying

their many grievances, but there could be no mistake about the intention of Law No. 3 of 1894.

From that time matters drifted steadily towards an open rupture; funds were collected, arms and ammunition were imported into Johannesburg, and the Uitlanders decided that the tyranny they were groaning under justified an armed rising. In an evil moment they decided to get the assistance of Dr. Jameson and the Chartered Company's police, and an undated letter was given him to use, in which he was asked to come to the aid of the British subjects in the Transvaal should a disturbance arise. It was arranged that he was to hold in the meantime some 800 men and artillery in readiness on the western border of the Transvaal.

The principal item in the Reformers' programme, and a very feasible one, was the seizure of the fort and magazines at Pretoria, and the railway between the two towns. There were only about 100 men in the fort at the time, and part of the surrounding wall had been removed. In the fort were 10,000 rifles, a dozen field guns, and 12,000,000 rounds of ammunition. What could not be brought away on a couple of trains was to be destroyed. Some delay occurred towards the end of December, chiefly owing to the question of the flag. A good many people

thought that as the Chartered Company's troops were going to be used, the English flag would be hoisted, and while this would appeal to the feelings of the majority of the Reformers, it was generally felt to be an altogether wrong proceeding; firstly, because there were many in their ranks to whom the British flag did not appeal, and secondly, because the members of the National Union had always taken the ground that they simply wanted the Republic established as a true Republic. Emissaries were despatched to see Mr. Cecil Rhodes about the matter, as he had given his consent to the Chartered Company's troops being used, and messages were sent to Dr. Jameson telling him that the rising would not take place quite as soon as expected. As Dr. Jameson was evidently getting impatient, two messengers were sent to him, one taking the train by way of Kimberley and the other riding across country, and both conveying the most emphatic instructions not to come, as owing to the flag incident and the slowness of getting arms in, the people were not yet in a state of preparedness. Both these messages were delivered to Dr. Jameson before he started.

Notwithstanding this fact, he started on Sunday, the 29th, with 500 men, being met and defeated at Doornkop by the Boers, who had assembled in large numbers to bar his entry

into Johannesburg. The Reformers could do nothing; in fact, it had never for a moment been supposed that Dr. Jameson would need any assistance to get into Johannesburg; if he came at all, it was to help the Reformers; they never thought they would have to help him. Dr. Jameson surrendered on the express understanding that the lives of all would be spared; but President Kruger, once he got them to Pretoria, kept that information to himself, and told the Uitlanders that his prisoners' lives depended on their (the Uitlanders') good behaviour; consequently the latter desisted from any further overt acts. The ringleaders were all promptly arrested, although the Government had been treating with them for the previous three days, "holding out the olive branch," and definitely stating in a proclamation that the Government was "still prepared to take into consideration all grievances that may be laid before it in a proper manner, and to submit the same to the people of the land, without delay, for treatment."

The Reformers were tried before Mr. Gregorowski, Attorney-General of the Free State, a noted anti-Britisher who was specially imported for the occasion, and he passed the death sentence on four of the prisoners, all the others being sentenced to two years' imprisonment, with a fine of £2,000, or one year's further im-

prisonment, to be followed by three years' banishment from the State. The death sentence above mentioned was afterwards commuted to a fine of £25,000 each.

The history of the Transvaal between the raid and the outbreak of hostilities in 1899 is largely composed of preparations on the part of the Boer Government for some great struggle. They had sufficient money, thanks to the Uitlander community. Forts were built for the protection of Pretoria; another was built to menace Johannesburg, arms of all descriptions and enormous supplies of ammunition were imported, and military experts were brought from Europe to drill and instruct the burghers. If the position of the Uitlanders had been hopeless before the raid, it was certainly one of despair afterwards. The "olive branch" which had been held forward so prominently when the military force and preparedness of Johannesburg for a rising was an unknown quantity, and Dr. Jameson was invading the Transvaal, was never again shown, and the promise that the "grievances" would be "submitted to the people of the land for treatment" was forgotten.

What is known as the High Court crisis occurred early in 1897. Chief Justice Kotzé declared in a judgment that a certain Act passed by the Volksraad was unconstitutional. The

President immediately introduced an Act empowering him to dismiss the judges unless they would give assurances to respect all resolutions of the Volksraad, whether they conflicted with the constitution or not. Chief Justice Kotzé and Mr. Justice Ameshof were immediately dismissed because they would not submit to such a state of affairs.

The Uitlanders by constant agitation induced the Government to appoint a commission to inquire into their grievances, Mr. Schalkburger being made chairman. The report issued by the commission was a complete justification of the stand taken by the Uitlanders, and President Kruger was so incensed at Mr. Schalkburger having signed such a report, that he publicly branded him as a traitor in the Volksraad.

The year 1898 brought the usual crop of concessions, resulting in the further indirect taxation of the mining industry. One incident only gave satisfaction to the Uitlanders—Dr. Leyds relinquished his post of State Secretary, and betook himself to Europe to act as plenipotentiary. But it was the closing days of this year that furnished an incident which was probably the beginning of the end. A man named Edgar, returning home about midnight, knocked down a man who insulted him on the street. He was

immediately followed to his house by four policemen, one of whom burst open the door and shot Edgar dead in front of his wife. The policeman was arrested the following morning, but released on a paltry £200 bail. An important step was then taken. Four or five thousand people held a meeting in the market-square, and decided to present a petition direct to Her Majesty asking for protection. The petition had to be subsequently redrawn, and 21,000 signatures were obtained. The Boer jury, as expected, acquitted the murderer of Edgar, and the judge said to the prisoner as he was discharging him, "With that verdict I concur, and I hope that the police under difficult circumstances will always know how to do their duty."

The petition was sent to England in April, 1899, and negotiations were at once opened between London and Pretoria. A conference was arranged at Bloemfontein between President Kruger and Sir Alfred Milner, the meeting taking place on the 30th of May. The chief point discussed was the question of franchise, and Sir Alfred Milner asked that voting power be granted to everyone who could prove five years' residence, and that the Uitlanders be given adequate representation in the Volksraad. President Kruger offered a seven years' franchise, hedged round with the usual encum-

brances, and would only allow five members out of a total of thirty-one. As usual, nothing came of the negotiations, and the Transvaal actively prepared for the war which they fondly thought would see the disappearance of the English flag from South Africa, and the establishment of that Dutch power from the Cape to the Zambesi which had been the dream and aim of their statesmen for many years.

CHAPTER III

FROM QUEBEC TO BELMONT

THE negotiations which had been proceeding between London and Pretoria were suddenly interrupted by the despatch of the celebrated ultimatum from Pretoria, on the 9th of October, 1899, demanding "that all British troops on the borders of the Republic be immediately withdrawn, that all reinforcements which had arrived in South Africa during the preceding year should leave the country, and that those which were on their way to South Africa should be returned without landing." Forty-eight hours were given for compliance with these requests, otherwise the Boer Government would regard the action of Her Majesty's Government as a formal declaration of war.

The following reply was sent through Sir Alfred Milner: "Her Majesty's Government have received with regret the peremptory demands of the Government of the South African Republic conveyed in your telegram of the 9th of October. You will inform the Government

of the South African Republic in reply that the conditions demanded by the Government of the South African Republic are such as Her Majesty's Government deem it impossible to discuss."

And this was the end of the negotiations. The hope of a peaceable solution of the South African problem was also at an end, deliberately cast aside by the Boer Government. Surely all the means of diplomacy had not been exhausted; surely a solution of the difficulties could have been found, and the Government of the South African Republic made to recognize that at the very end of the nineteenth century all law-abiding white men must have equal rights. That the Boers were evidently anxious and determined to resort to the arbitrament of war was evident, and as the conflict proceeded and it was seen what stupendous preparations had been made for it, less and less surprise was felt at their being the aggressors. The entire want of preparation on the part of the British is alone sufficient to prove that they did not precipitate hostilities.

The burghers of the Orange Free State, headed by President Steyn, voluntarily threw in their lot with their northern brethren, or, to be more precise, the Free State forces had been mobilized early in October. It was a matter of some surprise that the Free State should have

joined the Transvaal in a war against Great Britain. There was no quarrel between the two countries. In fact, they were and had been for many years on the most friendly terms, and President Steyn had been assured that, if he remained neutral, not a foot of his territory would be violated. But Mr. Steyn was evidently imbued with the ambition of seeing the British flag driven out of South Africa, and to accomplish his end committed the crime of making war on a people with whom he had no cause for quarrel.

An astonishing sight now presented itself to the world, and one that has had and will have the most far-reaching consequences. The great self-governing colonies of the Empire determined to take their share in the struggle. Offers of men were made, first by Queensland, and then in quick succession by the remainder of the Australian colonies and Canada. It was in no hurried spirit that the people of the Dominion decided to assume the grave responsibilities attendant on this new departure—responsibilities which, however, have now come to be looked upon by a large majority as part and parcel of membership in a great Empire; but the resolution, once made, was carried through with a quiet enthusiasm which augured well for the success of the undertaking.

In no part of the Empire had the hope been more fervently expressed that the closing years of Queen Victoria's life should not be darkened with the shadow of war. The negotiations had been followed with the closest interest, but it was early foreseen that the end of it must be either a complete backdown of the Boer Government from their untenable position, or the subjugation of the Transvaal. No one, however, was quite prepared for what actually took place. When the Boer leaders deliberately threw away the means to a peaceable solution of the difficulties and declared war, at the same time invading and annexing British territory, and commandeering British subjects and their property, any doubts the Canadian people may have entertained as to the part they should play were speedily swept away, and they cheerfully set about to take up their share of the burden of Empire.

The offer of a contingent of one thousand men from this country was accepted. It was to be mobilized, equipped and landed at Cape Town at the expense of the Dominion Government, and then be taken over by the Imperial authorities as a regular British regiment, to be treated as such during the campaign, and returned eventually to Canada. Steps were immediately taken to mobilize. To each military district

was allotted the task of furnishing a proportionate number of men, who were raised by voluntary enlistment from the different militia regiments, the permanent corps also furnishing their quota. Recruiting stations were opened at all the principal towns, the requisite number being easily obtainable; in most cases it resolved into a case of selection. The new Regiment was to be known as the 2nd (special service) Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry, a sister battalion to the permanent regiment of infantry. Major-General Hutton, the officer commanding the Canadian Militia, was most active in every detail relating to its formation, and much of the success attending the mobilization was undoubtedly due to his ability and untiring energy and zeal.

But it was probably to the Hon. Dr. Borden, Minister of Militia, that the lion's share of the credit was due. Difficulties were overcome and mobilization expedited in a manner which reflected the greatest credit, not only on Dr. Borden but also on the Militia Department as a whole. The despatching of the other contingents from Canada to South Africa only confirmed the general public in the opinion they had formed of the ability and good judgment of this Minister. It has been a surprise to many that when the different honours were bestowed

in connection with the war that Dr. Borden should have been passed over.

The regiment was divided into eight companies, drawn from and representative of the different parts of the Dominion as follows: A Company, British Columbia and Manitoba; B Company, Western Ontario; C Company, Central Ontario; D Company, Eastern Ontario; E and F companies from the Province of Quebec; G Company, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island; and H Company, from Nova Scotia. Lieutenant-Colonel W. D. Otter was given the command.* The staff-sergeants and a colour-sergeant for each company were drawn from the permanent corps, an arrangement which proved in every way satisfactory.

The mobilization took place at the city of Quebec, and the last detachment to arrive, that from the far West, reached the Citadel at an early hour on Sunday, the 29th of October. During the morning special farewell services were held in the Cathedral and Basilica, while the afternoon was spent in outfitting the late arrivals. On Monday morning a review was held at the Esplanade, when Lord Minto, the Governor-General; Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Premier; Major-General Hutton, and Mayor

* For full list of officers see Appendix A.

Parent, of Quebec, delivered addresses, directly after which the regiment marched to the wharf and embarked on the Allan Line steamship *Sardinian.*

The culminating enthusiasm of the Canadian people, as manifested in the farewell scenes at Quebec, will not soon be forgotten. The ancient capital of Canada was in every way a fitting place from which an expedition of this kind should embark on its eventful journey. All through the decorated streets Gaul and Saxon seemed to vie with each other in cheering the men who were going to take their share in deciding which should be the paramount power in South Africa, Boer or Briton. From the ship it was seen that every available coign of vantage ashore was black with people—the Citadel, the house-tops, the cliffs, Dufferin Terrace, and the wharf. The weather-beaten ramparts of the Citadel rising majestically above the surrounding cliffs, re-echoing the cheers of the thousands of people, and the accompanying boom of cannon as flags were lowered and the ship moved slowly down stream, left an impression on the mind not easily eradicated.

And so we were off on our eventful journey, from the autumn of Canada across the equator to the midsummer of South Africa. Thirty days on a troop-ship, be it the best on the ocean,

cannot be an enviable journey ; but on the *Sardinian* it was about as bad as it possibly could be. As soon as the confusion attendant on our embarkation had somewhat abated, the baggage piled about on deck got below, and an opportunity given to look about us, we found that the ship was altogether unfitted to convey over a thousand men on such a long voyage, and that we could look forward to a period of considerable and quite unnecessary discomfort. The lavatory and sanitary arrangements were quite inadequate, and left much to be desired. The drinking water was only made to last by placing a strong guard over the tap, and husbanding the supply in every way. During the latter part of the journey it was quite tepid. The upper deck being blocked with temporary structures, horse stables, lavatories, etc., it was almost impossible to move about. There were no awnings to protect the men from the fierce heat of the sun. At night, once the tropics were reached, the heat down in the bunks was almost unbearable. Every part of the ship was overcrowded, but probably the worst part was the lower deck, where the bunks were. There was no room or place to put one's kit or accoutrements, consequently everything had to be piled into one's bunk, in which there was just room for a man to lie. The ship was one of the

slowest that could have been chosen, and the boats, to a landsman, looked to be totally inadequate for the large number of men on board. Fortunately we did not have to test their capacity.

The comfort, health and safety of the men were not in any way improved by the fact that those in authority had had no previous experience of troop-ships. One mistake was made at the outset—too much of the outfitting of the men was left to be done on board ship, and the crowded state of the vessel made this a very difficult matter. At first no systematic attempt was made to keep the ship clean; no general regulations having been issued, there was no organized effort. Captain Todd, of the Dublin Fusiliers, who had passage on the ship to join his regiment at the Cape, undertook the duties of quartermaster, and things soon became somewhat ship-shape under his direction. Rules governing the conduct of the men in case of fire were not posted up until the voyage was half over.

Probably the most foolish proceeding was the promulgation of an order that the men were to go about barefooted during the day and keep their trousers rolled up to the knees, the idea presumably being to harden the feet. Imagine bare feet in the tropics on a sun-scorched deck!

There were so many cases of bad sunburn that the order had to be rescinded a few days after it came into force.

The principal efforts during the voyage were directed to obtaining proficiency in drilling. Two Morris-tube ranges, under Captain Bell's direction, were fitted up, and the men fired a few rounds each, the only objection to this being that there was not enough of it. It is hardly necessary to argue that everything else should have given way to such an important object as efficiency in shooting. Much more might have been done. If there is only time to teach a volunteer one thing on his way to active service, that one thing is to shoot straight. It is absolutely essential that he should be a good shot; it matters very little whether he presents arms perfectly or not.

I came to the conclusion that too much attention was paid to what might be called "barrack square" work; and this remark does not apply only to the voyage to Cape Town, it was a very prominent feature all through the campaign. Perhaps this was the fault of the system in vogue at our permanent corps "schools," for it must be remembered that all our senior officers were permanent corps men. In the different barracks throughout Canada there is very often a bare half company of duty men, but all the

routine of a regular British regiment is faithfully gone through. Red tape in a highly developed form is naturally the consequence.

The question of saluting officers appeared to be a very vital one on the *Sardinian.* No one quite knew what was wanted, as it seemed absurd that the hundreds of men sitting, lying and standing about the deck should come to attention every time an officer passed along. Sometimes officers would be passing backwards and forwards every few minutes. No wonder the men could not be got to carry out the order satisfactorily, and it was certainly a relief to find on mixing with the Imperial troops that compliments to officers are not paid on board troopships. In fact, on active service there is very little saluting done; the officers do not wish to be bothered with it.

Very fortunately for us, the weather was everything that could be desired throughout the voyage, which passed off without particular incident, excepting the regrettable death of Private Des Lauriers, which occurred when we were only a few days out. A bath under the salt-water hose the first thing in the morning was, probably, the most enjoyable part of the day's routine, while the evenings were occasionally enlivened by impromptu concerts.

On the 29th of November the cry of "Land

ahead!" went round the ship, and shortly afterwards the outline of the famous Table Mountain could be distinguished. During the afternoon we entered Table Bay. The harbour was filled with transports and other vessels, all of which set their sirens and whistles going by way of welcome. We passed close to one vessel crowded with kilted soldiers, who cheered us again and again, the cheers being as enthusiastically returned. We learnt on landing that they were the 1st Battalion of Gordon Highlanders, a gallant regiment it was our good fortune later on to be brigaded with for many months.

The next morning the work of disembarkation took place, and we marched out to Green Point Common, headed by the pipers of the Cape Town Highlanders, through streets of cheering people, our reception being most enthusiastic. We had barely pitched our tents and got settled down, when we received orders that we were to entrain the following day for De Aar Junction. Valises and kit bags were all to be left behind, the only things to be taken being overcoats, with a shirt and pair of socks rolled inside, together with what articles could be carried in a haversack, always remembering that room must be left in the latter for one, and perhaps two, days' rations. One Canadian blanket

per man was taken packed in bales—and very poor blankets the most of them were, compared with what the British soldiers had. The valises and kit bags, with all our belongings in them, were piled up in rows and left in charge of an officer and some men who were told off to stay at the base. When we got back to the Cape we found that everything had been rifled and most of the articles stolen—a most disgraceful state of affairs, and one that could have been easily avoided. I understand there was always an officer of the regiment, with a few men, in charge. If not, or if he found it impossible to look after our kits properly, a building might easily have been rented in town, everything put into it, and securely locked up. The same slackness was again observable with regard to things left both at Belmont and Bloemfontein. Articles packed up and left in charge of members of the regiment were stolen—in some instances the whole parcel disappearing.

News of the campaign was eagerly sought after as soon as we landed, and we heard for the first time of Lord Methuen's advance. The battle of Belmont—a name we were to become very familiar with later on—had been fought and won, as also had Graspan and Modder River, but the road to Kimberley and Mafeking was still barred by General Cronje and his army at

Magersfontein. Ladysmith was closely besieged, and since the disaster at Nicholson's Nek Sir George White had acted purely on the defensive. General Buller was organizing his army south of the Tugela for the relief of the beleaguered town. General French, who won the battle of Elandslaagte, and was sent from Ladysmith in the last train which came through, was holding the Colesberg line, while General Gatacre was at Sterkstorm, holding in check the Boers who had advanced to Stormberg. From De Aar we might be assigned either to General French or Lord Methuen. We hoped at the time it would be to the latter, as we were told that General French did not care much for infantry, and consequently we did not think he could be very much of a general, an opinion which has since become somewhat modified.

On the 1st of December we again marched through the principal streets of Cape Town, meeting with an even more enthusiastic reception all along the route than we had received the previous day, and entrained for De Aar. Sir Alfred Milner, High Commissioner, the busiest of busy men, found time to come down to the station to see us off. The weather was very hot, and some of the men took the opportunity of buying canvas water-bags. Hanging outside a moving train is a particularly good place for them, as

the water becomes quite cool. Two trains, made up of the ordinary English third-class carriages, conveyed us to our destination.

The Cape Government Railway system is what its name implies, a Government railway. Apart from the grade and curves, it has an excellent road-bed, solid and smooth, being superior in this respect to the Canadian and American lines, and the bridges and culverts are all iron and stone; but it is all grades and curves, and a narrow gauge into the bargain. At one moment the train rushes along at sixty miles an hour, a minute or two later passengers can get out and walk; in fact, the grades are so numerous that all along the line there are small white posts with two arms, the latter indicating by their departure from the horizontal, above or below, which way the grade is. They may not be necessary to the engineer in the day time, but they certainly are at night.

The trip to De Aar passed off without any exciting incidents. At different points the military authorities had big kettles full of boiling water, and we stopped three times a day to make tea or coffee, rations of bread and meat also being served out. The people were quite enthusiastic all along the line, and it is apparently a custom to have a look at all the trains going through; at any rate, they turned

out and welcomed us with cheers and waving of pocket handkerchiefs, our men naturally responding. We were rather surprised, on detraining at one of the stations to be politely told by Colonel Otter that there was to be no more cheering, that we were to try and remember that we were "soldiers" now, and not act like a lot of "d——— fools" any more. The *rationale* of this was to us somewhat of a mystery. In future, let all commanding officers, when on active service, keep their men shouting as long as they will shout.

We reached De Aar about 3 a.m. on Sunday morning, the 3rd of December, and, detraining, marched to our camping ground and pitched our tents. We had barely finished doing so when the wind arose to half a gale, and throughout the whole of the day an exceedingly bad sand-storm raged, the thermometer being about 90° in the shade. Give me a Manitoba blizzard any day in preference to a South African sand-storm.

During the few days we remained at this point, the regiment was put through some very useful attack formations in the early mornings before the sun became too hot. The general movements were, of course, founded strictly on the lines laid down in the drill book; it was not until we advanced to the attack in reality

that it was found these regulations had to be very considerably modified. Transport mules and waggons, together with ammunition and water-carts, were issued to us, including a supply of Kaffir drivers, so that we were practically ready to take the field.

When we arrived at De Aar, one of the infantry regiments already there immediately moved on. The procedure was for one regiment to relieve the other, and move up to the front by stages; and so, on Thursday afternoon, the 7th, the 1st Essex having arrived, we received orders to entrain early next morning for the front. Our tents were struck and packed up before daylight, and everything, including the mules (this latter no small job), entrained by six o'clock. Our one ambition was to get up to the front, but we were disappointed in this, for after a tedious journey in open trucks, under a blazing sun, we arrived at Orange River, where we were told we had to stop.

Up to this point we were always fortunate in finding dry canteens*—each regiment, excepting our own, seemed to have one. It was sometimes a lot of boxes and cases piled on the ground, with a tarpaulin thrown over; but they were quite invaluable to Tommy Atkins, as he

* Canteens in which no liquor is sold.

could purchase at them the ordinary necessaries at reasonable prices, and above De Aar they were practically the only places for a long time where any purchases could be made at all. The reader must remember that the British soldier is never content to confine himself to his rations (meat, dry bread, tea, etc.), and this remark will naturally apply, but in an even greater degree, to the Canadian volunteer.

At Orange River we came in touch with the fruits of the reconnaissance which had been made on the 10th of November by Colonel Gough—a small grave-yard, including, amongst others, the grave of Colonel Keith-Falconer, of the Northumberland Fusiliers. There was also a large field hospital containing many wounded, the victims of Belmont, Graspan and Modder River. Here were also some wounded Boers who had been taken prisoners; they seemed very contented, and were being well looked after by the British medical staff.

During the day the line at Enslin (Graspan) was destroyed, and a couple of culverts blown up, by Commandant Prinsloo, who attacked with a large force of men and two guns. There were only two companies of Northumberlands garrisoning the place, and it was thought that reinforcements would have to be sent from Orange River. One company from our regi-

ment was asked for, and A Company was accordingly ordered to hold itself in readiness to move at a moment's notice. We consequently did not pitch our tents when the other companies did, but a violent thunderstorm coming up just at dark, we tried to get our tents up, with but varying success, the wind howling along with great velocity. It was, probably, a picturesque sight to watch the men hanging on to the guy ropes and struggling vainly with the poles, the whole dimly seen in the gathering gloom and through the driving rain, but the scene was not appreciated by those of us who were the chief actors. A good many of the men got thoroughly wet through, and had to remain in that condition all night, as we expected to move at any minute. Overcoats had not been unrolled, nor were our blankets unpacked.

When morning came we learnt that reinforcements from Modder River had relieved the Enslin garrison and driven off the enemy, the line being fully repaired again. That same day we again entrained, and were taken up to Belmont, where we were destined to remain for some considerable time.

CHAPTER IV

AT BELMONT

THIS station, on the main line of the future Cape to Cairo Railway, had been rendered famous by giving its name to the battle which was fought on the 23rd of November by Lord Methuen. Three companies of Gordon Highlanders and some of Australia's first contingent were acting as garrison, and on our arrival the former immediately moved up the line. Most of the Australians were out on duty, but those who were not came over to the station and greeted us in a most friendly though somewhat inquisitive manner. They looked a very workmanlike and self-reliant lot of men, and created the impression that they would give a good account of themselves when once their actual campaigning began. That this view was not incorrect is proved by the whole history of the war. As soon as we detrained we marched out to Van Wyck's farm, about two miles to the north-west, and camped there until next day. There was a good supply of water—a

scarce commodity in South Africa—and we all indulged in a good wash.

Shortly after midnight about half of A Company fell in, and marched to the big kopje three quarters of a mile east of the station, known as Scots Kopje,* and reinforced the Australian outpost. The latter retired at daylight, and together with the rest of their corps moved on up to the front during the morning.

About the same time our regiment came in from Van Wyck's farm, and formed a camp on the east side of the railway, close to the station, the remainder of A Company joining their comrades on the kopje until the following morning, when G Company relieved. Our first experience of outpost work had been carried out under rather unpleasant circumstances, as the extreme heat of the day, without any shelter, was followed by a pitch-dark night and torrents of rain, the greatest difficulty being experienced by the reliefs and visiting patrols in moving about over the boulder-strewn ground.

The Belmont garrison consisted of our regiment, one section (two guns) P Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, one company of Mounted Infantry (Munster Fusiliers), and a few Rimington

* Scots Kopje, or Scots Ridge, so called because the Scots Guards stormed it at the battle of Belmont.

Guides, with Colonel Otter as Camp Commandant. It was not by any means an ideal spot. Some half dozen one-storey houses and a closed-up store made up, with the station buildings, the village of Belmont. A few Australian gum-trees—which, by the way, thrive exceedingly well in South Africa—gave a little relief to the everlasting brownness of the surrounding landscape. Not a blade of grass was to be seen anywhere. The only animals the country seemed capable of supporting were a few undersized goats and sheep and a bunch of rather ragged-looking ostriches. To the west the Karroo desert, covered with a low sage scrub, stretched in an unbroken line, for some five miles, to a ridge of kopjes; to the north and south, along the railway track, the ground was slightly more undulating, while on the east were the three successive kopjes culminating in Scots Ridge, where the Boer riflemen had so severely handled the brave Guardsmen and Northumberlands, on the 23rd of November, and then ridden away to take up a new position at Graspan. The more one studied that battlefield and examined the splendid positions the Boers occupied, while the British troops had to advance without any cover at all, the more did one wonder that the latter were so successful.

Our stay at Belmont was not a particularly

happy part of our South African experience; things were not working any too smoothly, and some grumbling was naturally the consequence. It was felt that, making all allowances for the exigencies of campaign life, affairs in general might have been managed in such a way as to lessen some of the hardships. The men never objected to hardships and privations which were naturally connected with campaigning, but they felt at times that there was a supercilious indifference on the part of the officer commanding and the majority of the other officers, as to their welfare, and the remark was often heard, "The next time I go on active service, it will be in a regular regiment. No more volunteer outfits for me."

The water question might have been considered an annoying one, but the men good-naturedly made the best of it. The only good drinking water was brought in by ox-team from Thomas's Farm, a couple of miles distant, and there was more or less of a *mêlée* to get at the barrels when they arrived; it was a case of first come first served, and not enough for everybody. The washing arrangements were rather unique. A well at the back of the station, without a pump or even a bucket, was the only place where water for this purpose could be obtained. The scene in the neighbourhood of

that well, when a good proportion of the 1,400 men constituting the garrison were trying to get a wash, was often lively. The few buckets available were naturally at a high premium, but one could always console himself with the knowledge that "everything comes to the man who waits," and a wait of an hour or two, combined with a little skilful manœuvring, generally brought about the desired result.

When Colonel Rochford-Boyd, R.E., subsequently took over the duties of camp commandant, one of his first acts was to improve the washing arrangements; first of all, by having water brought up on the railway in water-tanks and run into troughs, and later on by sinking a new well and having the water pumped into a large canvas bath.

A matter that caused a good deal of complaint was the neglect of Colonel Otter to establish a dry canteen. The food was not particularly palatable, especially in such hot weather. Dry bread, boiled meat, tea, coffee and sugar, with occasionally a few vegetables—this was the daily routine, relieved every now and then by an issue of a quarter of a pound of jam per man. A few things could be purchased at a small store which had opened up at the station, but two prices were of course asked. The neglect to have a canteen was evidently quite deliber-

ate, because Dr. Barrie, the Y.M.C.A. representative, told me, later on in the campaign, that he had asked permission to establish a coffee shop with eatables, but had been refused permission by Colonel Otter, who told him that he did not think the men needed anything more than they were getting, and that they must get used to campaign fare. Colonel Otter and the colonels of the British regiments evidently held widely different opinions on this subject, for the latter never missed an opportunity to provide canteens when possible.

I would like here to record an appreciation of Dr. Barrie's work with the First Contingent. The rank and file had no better friend throughout the whole campaign than this gentleman, who, in a quiet and unostentatious manner, was always doing what he could to oblige everyone, and worked hard and unselfishly for the welfare of the men whenever an opportunity offered.

The duties devolving upon the regiment at this time were somewhat heavy, two companies being required every twenty-four hours for guards, outposts and patrols. In addition to this there were drilling and some route marching. The Oliver equipment was thoroughly tested, and the general verdict was that it was unsatisfactory. Theoretically, it seems to be properly constructed, but in practice it is hard

on the wearer. The water-bottle was absolutely no good. All the men had to sleep fully dressed, even to their bandoliers and boots, and man the trenches surrounding the station every morning before daylight. Later on, when we were actually in touch with the enemy, and were allowed to sleep with as little clothing on as suited us, the Belmont rule seemed a case of over-precaution; it may, however, have been done in consequence of some general order. It certainly cannot have been conducive to good health to have men living in this way, especially when there was an average of fourteen men in each tent.

The outpost duty was an experience in itself. One had to get up at 2.45 a.m., and remain on outpost duty until six o'clock the following morning. The principal position was Scots Ridge. At first there was no shelter from the fierce heat of the sun, but this was afterwards remedied somewhat. The flies were a perfect torment, but probably the worst feature was the presence of some fifteen dead horses just behind the crest of the hill, which had apparently been killed by a shell. There were also about a dozen dead Boers on different parts of the kopje, who had evidently been very hurriedly buried by simply having a few stones piled on them where they had fallen. We immediately scraped together

some earth and improved their last resting places as best we could. We could do nothing with the horses. During the long hours of the night there was always one object which never failed to make its appearance to the outposts. The great Kimberley searchlight could be seen swinging up and down and round and round, assuring us that the garrison was still holding out, but anxiously waiting for that long-looked-for relief. Occasionally some little incident occurred to relieve the monotony. One night, when the countersign was "Saskatchewan," one of the Cornwall patrols came along, and was challenged in the usual way: "Halt! Who goes there?" "Patrol." "Stand, patrol. Advance one, and give the countersign." "Oh, I can't remember that blooming word—something like 'catch-as-catch-can.'" The patrol was given a lecture on the pronunciation of Canadian names by the sentry, and duly allowed to pass. On another occasion, when the countersign was "Halifax," a French Canadian sentry challenged someone as follows: "Halt! Who go dare?" "Friend." "Avance, fren. Say 'haversack' and pace on. All is vell."

The daily routine of camp life was broken on the 12th of December by the arrival of Red Cross trains from the front, filled with wounded soldiers. The latter were eagerly questioned

through the windows. Bit by bit the terrible tale of Magersfontein was gleaned from them: how, the morning before, the Highland Brigade with the Black Watch leading, had been led in mass of quarter-column through the rain and the darkness right up to the barbed wire in front of Cronje's trenches, and how, without a word of warning, and before any deployment could be effected, the hillside in front of them was suddenly lit up with the flame of the Mausers, and a deluge of lead crumpled up the head of the column, General Wauchope being one of the first to fall. Nearly half the Black Watch were stricken down, and in the awful confusion which ensued the whole brigade retired in disorder, the attempt to take the position being a complete failure. It was only by getting scraps of information here and there from different men that anything like a connected story of the engagement could be pieced together. It was not until the English and Canadian papers reached us, giving full accounts of the battle, that we really understood what had happened. May the day be far distant when the gallant Highlanders are called upon to go through such another terrible ordeal.

A conversation I had with a Boer prisoner who passed down on the train about this time surprised me somewhat. He was an intelligent-

looking fellow, and spoke English very well. He appeared to have a quite settled conviction that it was impossible for the British to win, and smiled incredulously at the idea of such a thing. The impression he gave was that he and his friends were not simple patriots fighting to defend their homes, but that they were in the game to give us a good whipping, and he seemed to look forward to the finish, prisoner and all as he was, with evident satisfaction.

A few remarks must now be made about the treatment of the sick. The routine for sick parade was as follows: One sick parade was held each day, usually in the morning, after breakfast; duplicate lists were made out of the men "going sick" in each company, and the regimental orderly corporal marched them to the hospital and remained there until all were inspected. The lists were handed in to the doctor, and as he examined each man he marked opposite the latter's name on the lists the ailment he was suffering from and whether he was fit to do duty or not. One of these copies was eventually sent to the respective company orderly sergeants, so that the latter knew the number of men they had available for duty.

It appears that the regimental authorities came to the conclusion that there was shamming going on amongst the men, and that a good

many of them were parading sick in the hope of getting off duty; at least, that was the ordinary presumption in face of the order then promulgated, which was to the effect that in future every man attending the sick parade must do so in heavy marching order.

The questions which naturally present themselves are: Was this a proper and sensible order, under any circumstances? and, was it necessary? If a man was shamming sick in the hope of getting off duty, the order might not deter him, but might it not deter men who really were sick? It is not a particularly pleasant occupation, even for a perfectly healthy man, to be in heavy marching order for an hour or so, especially in broiling hot weather, but what must it be for a sick man? One effect it had was to induce some men of high spirit to remain away from the sick parade when they undoubtedly should have gone, as they felt that the whole sick parade was looked on with suspicion.

The answer to the second question is, that the order was not necessary, because a doctor should know whether a man is shamming or not. The doctors seemed to think the sick parades were too large, and hurried through them, merely asking each man a few questions. The ordinary, every-day civilian methods, such as using the thermometer and feeling the pulse, were

seldom resorted to. There are, no doubt, some complaints which have very little outward sign, and men could pretend to have them without much fear of being exposed; but surely a rigorous examination by the doctor would have been the proper proceeding, even if it was felt that some men were shamming successfully. The order above mentioned was an insult to the regiment, and should never have been issued under any circumstances.

The days gradually drifted past, and we soon found ourselves approaching the end of the year. Christmas Day was one of those hot, dusty days which are the rule in that part of the world, and very naturally our thoughts drifted to Canada, where the good old-fashioned wintry day was being celebrated by our friends; but it was a new experience, and experiences were what we were after. Colonel Buchan had us called together and spoke a few kindly words, telling us, amidst much laughter, that "a pint of beer per man would be issued, but we were to be sure and keep sober." The eatables that had been purchased out of the regimental funds were distributed, and although making a very poor showing, considering that £120 was spent on them, yet, added to the regular rations, tended to help things out a little.

The garrison at this time had been increased

by the arrival of the Queensland Mounted Infantry, a particularly fine, well set-up lot of men, and two companies of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

The New Year was ushered in by the very successful engagement at Sunnyside, under Colonel Pilcher, who had taken over the duties of camp commandant. This affair, with its happy result, was hailed with delight by all, and seemed to put new life into everyone. An account of it will be given in the next chapter.

On the 9th of January Colonel Pilcher made a reconnaissance to the east, through a part of the Free State. The force consisted of two guns of P Battery, R.H.A., the Queensland Mounted Infantry, two Maxims, and A, B and half of H companies, Royal Canadian Regiment. The route lay at first to the south-east. When out about eight miles, A and B companies, with one Maxim, were left, under Major Pelletier, the orders being to be in readiness to move at any moment, the rest of the column changing its direction to the east and continuing its journey. At three o'clock in the afternoon orders were received by us to retrace our steps to Belmont.

The following day the signallers on the kopje sent in word that a force was approaching from the north-east. Two companies were sent out

to take up a position to meet the new-comers, one company of Cornwalls and A Company R. C. R., but it turned out to be Colonel Pilcher returning, after having made a detour through the enemy's country. They had no fighting, but managed to gather up and bring in a quantity of horses and stock. Colonel Babington, with the 9th and 12th Lancers, a party of the Victoria Mounted Rifles, some mounted infantry, and G Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, from Modder River camp, had been on a similar errand, the two forces having come in touch with each other.

On the 16th sports were held, our regiment supplying all the prizes. The usual events were on the programme, and everything passed off most successfully, our antipodean brethren carrying off the great majority of the prizes. The tug-of-war was probably the most exciting event of the day, the brawny Queenslanders, who only entered one team, while we had one from each company, finally pulling all their opponents over the line. In the evening an open-air concert was held, and the day's proceedings wound up with the distribution of prizes.

Colonel Rochford-Boyd, R.E., who had succeeded Colonel Pilcher as camp commandant, organized the following force on the 21st of January, and started off in a westerly direction:

two guns, P Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, 100 Victoria Mounted Rifles (who had been brought down from the Modder River camp), one Canadian Maxim, one company of the Cornwalls, and A Company Royal Canadian Regiment. The infantry were placed on waggons, and Thornhill, otherwise called Cook's farm, was reached before sundown, the distance covered being about twenty miles. The next morning the force marched nine miles farther on to Dover Court farm, or Rooi Pan. The usual reservoir or dam was in evidence, a goodly portion of it being dry, and in this A Company was placed, while some fortifications were thrown up round the farm buildings. During the afternoon a patrol of the Victoria Mounted Rifles came in touch with the enemy and were fired on, one man being severely wounded in the arm; but, as the enemy was in force, the Australians retired. Although an attack was expected, none came off, but there was not much sleep indulged in, as about midnight one of our sentries fired at what he thought were some men on horseback, which daylight proved to be a small band of horses roaming about. The force remained at this farm for two days, when Colonel Rochford-Boyd received information that a large number of Boers were closing in on us from three directions; and as we were some distance from our base, with a line of communica-

tions very weakly held, a retirement was effected on the evening of the 24th to Thornhill, under cover of the darkness, where we arrived at one o'clock a.m., and found it garrisoned by fifty men of the Queensland Mounted Infantry. Two days later the force was again withdrawn towards Belmont, this time to a farm called Richmond, where G Company R. C. R. had taken up a position, acting as a line of communication. Colonel Rochford-Boyd evidently made up his mind that he would not retire any farther than this, and set the men to work building fortifications on the surrounding kopjes.

We remained there until the 11th of February, the only event out of the ordinary which happened being the mobilisation of a mounted force, composed of C Squadron Scots Greys, 600 Roberts' Horse, 400 mounted infantry, and the remaining four guns of P Battery. They made a reconnaissance to the north and west, but failed to locate any of the enemy, although they covered a distance of some sixty miles in two days.

Shortly after midnight on the 12th of February A and G companies, having been relieved by two companies of Munster Fusiliers, packed up, marched into Belmont, and rejoined the regiment after an absence of three weeks.

CHAPTER V

SUNNYSIDE

THE complete success of this engagement was mainly due to the clever manner in which Colonel Pilcher surprised his enemy. Not until all dispositions for attack had been made, and the first shell from the Horse Artillery had burst among their tents, did the Dutchmen know of the close proximity of the British force. A wise system of preventing news getting to the enemy had been adopted. For several days before the expedition actually started, natives and others who were ordinarily allowed to move in and out of camp were under strict surveillance; when once the force was launched no one was allowed outside the lines, and in addition to this small guards were left at what farms and kraals were passed on the line of march, to prevent any possibility of the movement of the small column being carried to the enemy from these points. Not satisfied with these precautions, a feint movement was made on the 29th of December eastward towards the

Free State border, and from all visible indications there was something of interest to be expected in that quarter. When the Belmont force actually did start for the west, Lord Methuen sent a mounted force west to Koodoosberg Drift, while the Orange River garrison sent a similar force westerly along the bank of the Orange River to Marks Drift, both of these forces acting as screens to Colonel Pilcher's movements.

On Sunday, the 31st December, at 2 p.m., the following force assembled at Belmont: One section P Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, under Major de Rougemont; 250 Queensland Mounted Infantry under Colonel Ricardo, with two galloping Maxims under Lieutenant Pelham; forty mounted infantry of the Royal Munster Fusiliers; C Company, Royal Canadian Regiment (100 men), under Captain Barker, with two R.C.R. Maxims under Captain Bell; one section, including two ambulance waggons, of the New South Wales Army Medical Corps under Captain Roth, and a few Royal Engineer Field Telegraphists. Lieutenant-Colonel Pilcher was in command, while Major Bayley, N.S.W., general staff, acted as staff-officer. A considerable number of transport waggons and carts accompanied the column, and as these were only lightly loaded, the Canadians were told to ride. Two companies of Cornwalls under Major Asby followed on foot and established a line of communication.

It was not until the force actually moved off towards the west that anyone except those in authority knew there was work for it to do in that direction. It appears that the rebellious spirit so prevalent in some parts of northern Cape Colony had affected a considerable number of the farmers and inhabitants of Dutch descent in the vicinity of Douglas, a town about forty miles west of Belmont. It was not a particularly wealthy district, or rather there were a good many impecunious men knocking about; so much so that the Government had started relief works in the shape of road-making. Good wages were paid the men, and those who had to work at any distance from their homes were supplied with Government tents. These men formed the nucleus of the rebellious movement. They gathered up the Government tents, and, with the rest of the rebellious inhabitants, formed what was known as the Badenhorst laager, at the foot of the Sunnyside kopjes, making themselves exceedingly objectionable to the loyal farmers for miles around.

Proceeding in a westerly direction, Colonel Pilcher's small but mobile force passed Richmond farm, and by seven o'clock that evening had reached Thornhill. The Boer force was some ten miles to the north. The next morning at sunrise (New Year's Day), guided by

Dugmore and Cohen, sons of loyal farmers in the district, a start was made in a northerly direction, and the column marched about seven miles over heavy sand covered with the usual heathery scrub. It was a very hot day and the thirst soon began to be tormenting. The Sunnyside kopjes are composed of a series of ridges culminating in a kopje of some proportions, at the northern end of which was situated the Boer camp. When within about four miles of his objective, Colonel Pilcher halted his men and made the final dispositions for attack, sending out two reconnoitring patrols from the Queenslanders to the right and left; but before any information was received from them the main advance was made. Part of the force under Major de Rougemont was sent off to the right, with instructions to establish itself to the east of the main kopje. This force moved off as follows: The Munster Mounted Infantry formed a screen, followed by C Company, Nos. 2 and 3 sections leading in extended order; then came P Battery's two guns and the Canadian Maxims. Being favoured considerably by the contour of the ground, Major de Rougemont found himself after an hour's march in full view and within striking distance of the Boer tents. It was just eleven o'clock.

Practically the only mishap which occurred to

the British force had already happened. The patrol of Queenslanders which had been sent round to the west suddenly found themselves confronted by two Boers not more than fifty yards away among the rocks on a small kopje. Lieutenant Adie, who was in charge, immediately dismounted and called on the two men to surrender. Just as he did so, he and his party were fired on by another lot of Boers whom they had not seen, the result being disastrous. One man was killed outright, and Lieutenant Adie and two out of the remaining three troopers were severely hit, one of whom subsequently succumbed to his wounds.

Major de Rougemont, having found the range of the Boer tents to be 1,700 yards, opened fire, the first shell from the 12-pounder bursting nicely over them. That it was a complete surprise was very apparent. A scene of the greatest confusion followed, men rushing out of every tent and clambering up the neighbouring kopjes, but mostly to the main kopje just above the laager. It is probable that a good many quietly withdrew at this stage and made sure of an unmolested retreat. The Munster Mounted Infantry moved more to the north and very cleverly worked their way round the enemy's position, preventing any further escape in that direction. The Queenslanders were soon in

action after P Battery had opened fire. One company was sent well to the left to attack the western slope, becoming hotly engaged as soon as they were within range, while the remainder advanced astride the ridges. Captain Barker took his company to a ridge to the left front of the guns and opened a brisk rifle fire, supported by Captain Bell's Maxims. This practically left the guns without any escort, and No. 4 section had to be sent back to remain with them. The position at this time was as follows: The Munster Mounted Infantry were working round to the north; the Canadians and artillery were on the east, a company of Queenslanders on the south-west, while the main advance under Colonel Pilcher was being made from the south. Major de Rougemont decided to get in touch with the main advance, and ordered No. 3 section of the Canadians to move to the left to join hands with the right of the Queenslanders. In doing so they came under a very brisk fire, as they had to move across the open. This position was maintained for some little time, and both sides pounded away at each other. Our men were well extended and took advantage of every bit of cover, it being noticed that there was none of that machine-like precision and consequent unnecessary exposure which undoubtedly accounted for a large percentage of

the British casualties in some of the previous engagements.

The Queenslanders on the west kept up such a very interesting and well-directed fire that they soon dominated that of their opponents. This was a sign for a forward movement to be made, which immediately resolved itself into a general advance. Fixing bayonets, the whole force converged rapidly upon the Boers, who, nevertheless, kept up their fire till the very last. The Queenslanders on the west, having the shortest distance to go, were the first to reach the top, when the Boers in front of them all surrendered. The remainder of the enemy, seeing what had happened, decided to surrender, too; any doubts they may have had about the advisability of doing so being quickly dispelled by the arrival of the Canadians and the rest of the Queenslanders over the crest of the hill, all very much out of breath but ready for anything.

Forty-two prisoners, mostly rebels, were taken and were subsequently sent down to Cape Town, where they were tried for treason. Twelve casualties were accounted for among them, but their loss was undoubtedly a good deal heavier. As soon as the men had found water and somewhat quenched their thirst, a couple of the Boer waggons were run together, ignited, and into this bonfire everything combustible about

the camp was speedily thrown, including the ammunition. The Boer rifles were smashed across the boulders and then consigned to the flames. Our casualties were two men killed and one officer and one man wounded, all belonging to the Queenslanders, and all suffered by the western patrol. The complete surprise the Boers received, together with the accurate shell fire from P Battery, must have completely shaken their nerve; and this, together with the excellent style of advance followed by the Canadians and Australians, accounts for there being so few casualties on our side.

The following morning the force went on to Dover Court farm, and thence to the village of Douglas, where they were heartily welcomed by the loyalist inhabitants. As the place could not be held, these people, to the number of 175, left with the troops on Wednesday morning, Thornhill being reached that evening. Here Colonel Pilcher decided to give his men a day's rest. A Company of Cornwalls was in possession of the place, and they with half of C Company (Nos. 2 and 3 sections), R.C.R. were sent on with the refugees and prisoners to Belmont. During the afternoon Colonel Pilcher received information that a large force of Boers was following him and that their advance guard was already at Dover Court farm. He immediately

telegraphed to Belmont to have reinforcements sent out, and decided on a night march, starting at ten o'clock. By daylight next morning, after a trying and weary march, his force was six miles from Belmont and shortly afterwards met A and H companies, Royal Canadian Regiment, who had been sent out to reinforce; but as there was no further news of the enemy, the whole force came into Belmont.

So ended the Sunnyside engagement. At the time it was regarded as one of the most skilfully planned and successfully carried out engagements of the campaign, and it will probably be so regarded when the campaign is over. However that may be, the participants returned to Belmont feeling very well satisfied with themselves and proud of their young commander.

CHAPTER VI

THE MARCH TO PAARDEBERG

EVENTS in Belmont had been undergoing a great change. Long lines of troops, horse, foot and guns, with hundreds of waggons, had been passing up to the front, some by the railway, but mostly by road; our six companies had been sent up to Graspan and then sent back again to Belmont. The greatest expectation and uncertainty pervaded everything. Lord Roberts, who subsequently proved himself to be the Master Mind of the South African campaign, had gathered up the threads in his hands and was evidently preparing to make a move on the left flank of the theatre of war. All sorts of vague rumours were afloat. Some thought that Kimberley was to be relieved by a movement to the west of Magersfontein, others that it would be done from the east side, while others again said that a direct attack in overwhelming numbers was to be made on Cronje's stronghold. No matter what was going to happen, there was

one thing quite evident: the largest army that had yet operated in the war was to be put in motion.

Whatever conjecture and uncertainty pervaded the atmosphere as to the general movement about to be made, there was news of a definite kind for us on the 12th of February, and of a kind we had been waiting and wishing for ever since we had reached the country: we were to be brigaded at last, and in the best of company. The 19th Brigade had been formed, composed of the 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, the 2nd King's (Shropshire Light Infantry), the 1st Gordon Highlanders and the Royal Canadian Regiment, under the command of Major-General Smith-Dorrien, and we were to proceed immediately to Graspan to join the other three regiments.* Whatever Lord Roberts' plans might be, we would have a share in carrying them out. Needless to say, everyone's spirits rose at the prospect.

That same evening we went up to Graspan by train. No tents were taken. Each man had an overcoat and a blanket, while there was a rubber sheet between two; but we were not supposed to carry them, as extreme mobility was aimed at, and the infantry were to march as light

* For battle honours of these regiments, see Appendix B.

as possible, transport waggons being provided for the blankets, etc. On arriving at Graspan, we bivouacked close to the other regiments of our brigade; emergency rations were issued, ammunition made up to the required amount, and everything got in readiness for a general advance in the morning.

The troops with which Lord Roberts struck at Bloemfontein, and made his celebrated move round the left flank of Cronje's position, were the following:

CAVALRY.

LIEUT.-GENERAL FRENCH.

1st Brigade. Colonel Porter.	9th Lancers. 12th Lancers. 16th Lancers. Carabineers.
2nd Brigade. Brigadier-General Broadwood.	Household Cavalry. Scots Greys. Inniskillings. 10th Hussars.
Mounted Infantry. 1st Brigade. Colonel Hannay.	1st Regiment. 3rd " 5th " 7th "
Mounted Infantry. 2nd Brigade. Colonel Ridley.	2nd " 4th " 6th " 8th "

Cape Colonials.	Bailey. Rimington's Guides. Roberts' Horse. Kitchener's Horse.
Over-Sea Colonials.	N. S. W. Lancers. N. Z. Mounted Rifles. Queensland Mounted Infantry.

ARTILLERY.

Royal Horse Artillery - -	7 batteries.
Royal Field Artillery - -	8 "
Howitzers - - - -	2 "

INFANTRY.

6TH DIVISION—LIEUT.-GENERAL KELLY-KENNY.

13th Brigade. Major-General C. E. Knox.	2nd East Kent. 2nd Gloucestershire. 1st West Riding. 1st Oxfordshire L. I.
18th Brigade. Brigadier-General Stephenson.	2nd Royal Warwicks. 1st Yorkshire. 1st Essex. 1st Welsh.

7TH DIVISION—LIEUT.-GENERAL TUCKER.

14th Brigade. Major-General Sir H. Chermside.	2nd Norfolks. 2nd Lincolns. 2nd Hampshire. 1st K. O. Scottish Borderers.

15th Brigade. Major-General Wavell.	2nd Cheshire. 1st East Lancashire. 2nd South Wales Borderers. 2nd North Staffords.

9TH DIVISION—LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR H. COLVILLE.

3rd Brigade. Major-General Macdonald.	2nd Black Watch. 1st Highland L. I. 2nd Seaforths. 1st Argyll and Sutherland.
19th Brigade. Major-General Smith-Dorrien.	2nd Cornwall L. I. 2nd Shropshire L. I. 1st Gordon Highlanders. Royal Canadian Regiment.

Added to these were the bearer companies, field hospitals, ammunition columns, Royal Engineers, and the enormous transport necessary for the feeding of such a number of horses and men away from the railway line.

Our brigade was in motion at 4.30 on the morning of the 13th, and our march to a farm called Ramdam was in some ways one of the hardest knocks we got, as we suffered more from thirst than at any other time during the campaign. For some reason or other we had to carry our overcoats, although none of the other regiments did; and an overcoat strapped on one's back for eight and a half hours in a sweltering sun makes a good load, when added

to one's accoutrements, etc. We covered only thirteen miles, but on account of delays, caused by one thing and another, we did not reach our destination until one o'clock. The drinking water in the bottles played out early in the day; even if any were saved, it got quite warm and was perfectly useless to quench thirst. To give an idea how hard a march it was it is only necessary to record the fact that fifty-two men of our regiment fell by the wayside, some of them dropping in the ranks in a dead faint. The spirit of the men, however, rose superior to the surroundings, and a song was attempted, the Gordons, who were in front, looking round in amazement; but our throats would not respond. Our water-cart might have helped the situation out a good deal more than it did, but it was not until our campaigning was nearly over that those in authority seemed to realize that the water-cart was for use and not for ornament.

At Ramdam we found evidences of previous occupation by a large force. General French, with the Cavalry Division, seven batteries of Royal Horse Artillery, and three Field Batteries, had bivouacked there on the night of the 11th, and was already forty miles away at Klip Drift, on the Modder River, on his famous ride to Kimberley. The 6th and 7th Infantry Divisions had also bivouacked there, and were

following General French as speedily as possible.

There was a very large dam, full of water which, under ordinary circumstances, a man would not care to wash his hands in, but every one immediately made for it, notwithstanding that it was so uninviting. One man, who was sitting in a limp position at the edge of the water, assured me that he had just drunk five bottlesful, and was still thirsty. Hundreds of animals being watered and churning it up, men bathing, and others filling their water-bottles out of the same pond—it was a novel sight. Here we were joined by the Highland Brigade, commanded by General Hector Macdonald, and the two brigades formed the 9th Division, under Sir Henry Colville.

At four o'clock the following morning we continued our march in the direction of the Riet River. As the country was pretty open the infantry marched three regiments abreast, in column of companies, and was accompanied by a proportion of mounted scouts, artillery, ammunition column, medical corps, engineers, transports, etc. A part of the Naval Brigade also joined us, and, taken altogether, the column must have made an imposing spectacle moving across the plain. Waterval Drift, on the Riet River, was reached about noon, and the rest of

the day was occupied in getting the guns and transports across. The thirty-two oxen on the 4.7 naval guns were quite unable to get up the steep sandy banks, so they were taken off, long ropes attached, and a couple of hundred Canadians accomplished the task most successfully. The whole force bivouacked on the north side in the evening, Lord Roberts' headquarters being also there.

The next day we turned down the river, and marched to Wedgraai Drift. During the afternoon the 15th Brigade (Wavell's) advanced, and after a short engagement took possession of Jacobsdal. That same evening General French led his column into Kimberley.

Although we knew it not till a few days afterwards, General Cronje, who had been sitting in security behind the impregnable lines of Magersfontein, finding that a large mounted force had passed completely round his eastern flank, and that his line of communication with Bloemfontein was threatened, determined to abandon his stronghold. On this same evening of the 15th, as soon as darkness set in, he moved his whole force out, and struck boldly for the east. By the next morning he had made a record march of thirty miles, a notable feat when the sandy nature of the soil is remembered and the fact is borne in mind that a large

number of his waggons were drawn by oxen. His force crossed the route General French had followed, and made a dash for liberty considerably to the north of Kelly-Kenny's Division, which had reached Klip Drift, on the Modder. The cloud of dust which was raised by and hung over the distant column made the presence of the latter known to the British, who immediately started in pursuit, and it is largely due to the efficient manner in which this division hung on to Cronje's rear and flank that the subsequent hemming in at Paardeberg was made possible.

The movements of our brigade during the day had simply been a march of a few miles into Jacobsdal, which had been cleared of the enemy the previous afternoon. A convoy of 180 waggons, in charge of a small escort, was attacked at the Waterval Drift, Riet River, and although a sufficient force to extricate it was at first sent back by Lord Roberts, he subsequently ordered its abandonment, evidently thinking that it would be better to let it go, in view of the big issues that were at stake, than waste time in rescuing it—a decision fully justified by subsequent events; but we probably did not appreciate the fact at the time, as the result was to give us our first experience of reduced rations.

At nine o'clock that night our brigade was set in motion in an easterly direction. Marching by night was preferable to marching in the day time, because it was so much cooler, the only drawback being that it was almost impossible to get any sleep during the day on account of the heat. During the five-minute halts the troops threw themselves down, most of the men being asleep as soon as they touched the ground. Stumbling along in the dark, half asleep, not knowing where we were or where we were going, we at length, just about daylight, reached Klip Drift. The men piled arms and dropped down beside their rifles, without waiting to take off a single article of equipment. A couple of hours' sleep was indulged in, when breakfast was ready, and after that it was too hot to think of sleep. Nearly everybody who could get away went down to the river and had a refreshing swim in the muddy water.

Close by, in a roomy farm-house, were many wounded from the 6th Division, the victims of the fighting with Cronje's rear-guard, for General Kelly-Kenny was hanging on to the retreating enemy and successfully blocking the different drifts to prevent his convoy from getting across to the south. About mid-day General French, by probably the most remarkable feat he ever accomplished, coming post-

haste from Kimberley, and keeping sufficiently to the north to get round Cronje's army, threw himself right across his path. The Household Cavalry and the 10th Hussars seized a line of kopjes which commanded the Wolveskraal Drift just as Cronje's advance guard was making for them. The position of affairs, then, on the evening of Saturday, the 17th of February, was as follows: Kelly-Kenny's infantry were on the south side of the river holding the Paardeberg Drift, while his mounted infantry were perpetually engaging Cronje's rear-guard to the north. General French had, by a clever manœuvre, headed off the retreating army, and was holding the Wolveskraal Drift, so that Cronje's further progress was practically barred. At six o'clock that same evening we got orders to march. We were still about twenty miles from Paardeberg Drift. There was to be fighting there for sure in the morning. Would we get a look in?

The night's march was much like the previous one, only the men were even a little more sleepy. Our regiment was rear-guard, and the rear company on one or two occasions, after the five-minute halts, gathered up some men who were lying sound asleep on the veldt. They had not heard the word to advance, and had not been noticed by their comrades. One

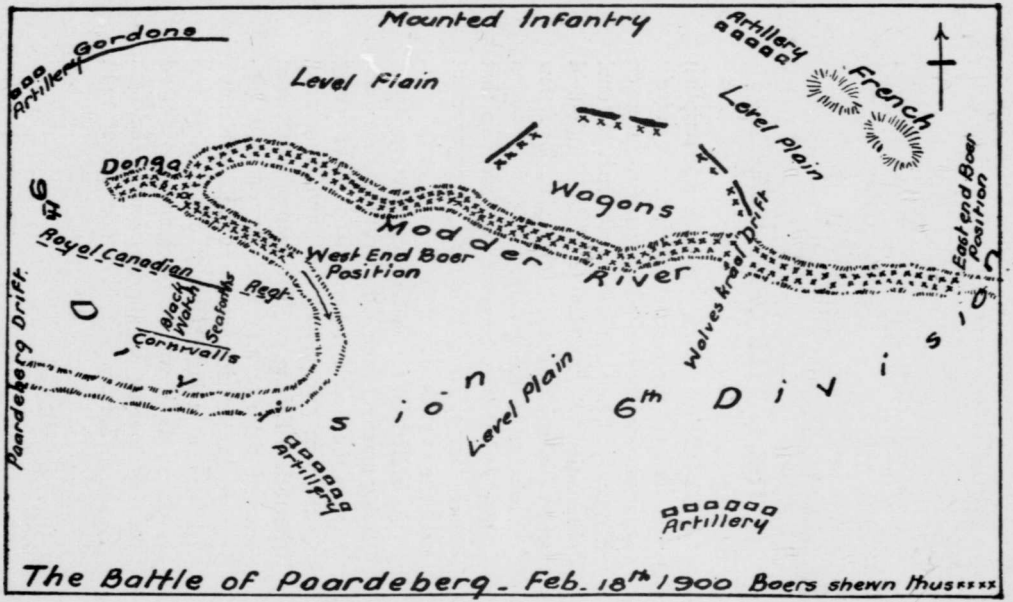
man, belonging to a flanking company, was left behind altogether, but fell in with some mounted men, and caught us up the next day. From eight o'clock till eleven a halt was made, when everyone had a good sleep. Much refreshed, we stumbled along in the darkness, through the dawn to the daylight, and reached Paardeberg Drift about 5.30 o'clock on the memorable 18th of February.

CHAPTER VII

THE BATTLE OF PAARDEBERG

ANYONE attempting to give a description of an engagement in which he was actively engaged necessarily finds himself very much handicapped, and can only speak from personal observation of that portion of the battle-field where his regiment found itself placed. A few remarks as to the general scope of the action under review can, however, be added, so that the reader may understand what the engagement was like as a whole.

As stated in the last chapter, our regiment, having marched from Klip Drift along the south bank of the Modder River, arrived at Paardeberg Drift about 5.30 o'clock on Sunday morning, the 18th of February. The head of our column reached there at 4.15 a.m. It was quite apparent that we had come up with Kelly-Kenny's Division, as a large amount of transport was spread about all over the place, and troops could be seen moving in all directions. The 65th Howitzer Battery was in action to our right



The Battle of Poardeberg - Feb. 18th 1900 Boers shewn thus xxxx

front on a small ridge, shelling the river-bed higher up, and the distant rattle of musketry could be distinctly heard. We were all very much exhausted, and the reduction of our rations to three-quarters of a pound a day was beginning to make itself felt; but the sound of the firing and the chance of at last getting into a "scrap" put new life into us.

The position of affairs at this time seems to have been as follows: As soon as daylight broke, Kelly-Kenny's mounted infantry again attacked Cronje's rear-guard, which up to that time had been holding the kopjes to the north-west of Paardeberg Drift. Cronje's main body, with the exception of a cordon drawn round his waggons, which were on the north bank, had already withdrawn into the river-bed and entrenched itself, and his rear-guard now abandoned their kopjes and followed their leader into his new position. The western end* of the Boer position, when the rear-guard went down to the river about sunrise, was not much above the Paardeberg Drift, and the whole force occupied about three and a half miles of the river.

The Highland Brigade, which had marched across from Wedgraai, had arrived during the night and commenced crossing the river at

* It is impossible to speak of the "right" or "left," as the Boer position faced both ways.

Paardeberg Drift early in the morning; but after some companies of the Black Watch and Seaforths had crossed, the brigade was detached from General Colville's command and placed under General Kelly-Kenny, with the exception of the companies which had already obtained a footing on the north side. General Macdonald was wounded in the foot at the drift while these companies were crossing, as at that time the Boers had not withdrawn round the bend (as shown in the sketch). The whole of the Infantry of the 6th Division was extended along the south of Cronje's position, Stephenson's Brigade (the 18th) being worked round to the eastern end, the Welsh Regiment being on the extreme right, while General French's force was on the north and east; thus it will be seen the Boers were completely surrounded. The enemy's waggons and carts were all clustered on the north bank of the river towards the eastern end of the position, and could be plainly seen by everyone. As soon as we halted breakfast was got ready and a ration of rum served out with the coffee. A few of us took the opportunity to go down to the river and have a swim. About 8.30 our brigade received orders to go into action.

Every man must necessarily experience different feelings when he is given an order to go

under fire, and they will vary according to his temperament. A nervousness to a greater or less extent is, I think, felt, just as singers say they are nervous while waiting for their turn to go on the stage; but, like the singer, once the soldier gets fairly started, all nervousness is a thing of the past, the only result of its temporary presence being a bracing and nerving up of the whole constitution for the great work that lies before him. This nervousness is probably less apparent when first going under fire than on subsequent occasions. There is always a keenness on the part of the untried soldier to get into his first action; he thinks less then of its pains and penalties than he does afterwards, when experience has brought them home to him.

There was no mistaking the temper of the men of the Royal Canadian Regiment on the morning of the 18th of February. It was three months and a half since they left Canada; they had been in South Africa since the 30th of November. Their great fear had been that they would not be given a chance. "Colonials will only be put at garrison work and on the line of communication," they argued, and "we shall go home without getting under fire, and be more laughed at than pitied." But all these fears were things of the past. Men could be seen

going about with a contented smile on their faces, congratulating each other on the realization of their hopes and aspirations. True, one company had received its baptism of fire, and done the greatest credit to the regiment, at Sunnyside; but it was only a small part of the regiment, acting as a detached unit, and the very men who composed it were as anxious as any of the others to see the regiment take part in a big battle.

A finishing touch having been given to the rifles, we fell in, and were marched, first of all, along the south side of the river to where the battery of artillery was in action, as before mentioned. Our orders were soon changed, however, and we were brought back to the Paardeberg Drift and crossed the river to the north side with the 82nd Field Battery. The Cornwalls were left on the south side till the afternoon. The water was running pretty swiftly, and in the centre it took an average-sized man up to the armpits. A rope was strung across by the engineers, and the men crossed, in single file, by its aid. Some time was occupied in this proceeding, and it was about ten o'clock when we formed up on the opposite bank.

We immediately proceeded up the river, marching in column of companies, and took open order, A Company leading, followed by

C Company, while D and E companies formed the support, and B, F, G and H the reserve. The Gordon Highlanders and the Shropshires moved over some distance to the left and established themselves more to the north. One oversight was made at this stage: no explanations were given to the men, or section commanders, as to where the Boers were or what we were to do, and a present-day battle scene is merely a landscape with no moving thing visible. About a mile higher up there was a big bend in the river, which practically brought it right across our front. We advanced towards this.

Eliminating the kopjes, which stood back some distance from the river, the battle-field was a good deal like the western prairies of Canada. The Modder River cut its way through the open veldt in a sinuous line, the upper parts of the trees which grew in between its banks just showing nicely above them. There was absolutely no cover for the attacking force, and what made the job all the more difficult and deadly, was that the ground inclined slightly towards the river. Across this open ground, towards the big bend, we steadily advanced. It was not the kind of battle-field one's imagination leads one to expect—not a living creature could be seen—but the rattle of musketry which we had heard all morning now became loud and

fierce, and an occasional volley, intermingled with the independent firing, told us that some British troops were in front of us. We formed our opinions of what was before us entirely from what we heard, as we saw nothing except the fringe of trees we were approaching. The bullets were whizzing past us, and throwing up little sprays of sand in all directions as they struck the ground. In a very few minutes we were well in the fire zone, and were ordered to lie down. All round us were men of the Black Watch and Seaforths, the supports of the firing line, which was about 300 yards farther on. These men were lying perfectly prone, taking advantage of every inch of cover, the bullets finding them out even there, as one poor fellow I passed close to eloquently proved with his upturned face and glassy eyes.

The order was then given to the leading companies to advance by alternate sections, at the double. This was a mistake, as the advancing section could not be covered by the fire of the others, the Highlanders' firing line intervening between us and the enemy, and one section getting up at a time naturally drew a concentrated fire on it from the Boers. Three or four rushes brought us up to the Highlanders, and we extended their line on the right and left, some of our men joining in with the Scotchmen.

By keeping a wide extension and advancing rapidly we reached the firing line with but few casualties. As we had shaken well out on the right, we completely enveloped the western end of the Boer position, the right of our line resting on the bank of the river.

And here we remained. Through the fierce heat of the morning, and on through a cold rain in the early part of the afternoon, with nothing to eat or drink except the odd bits of biscuit in our haversacks and the water in our bottles, we lay prone and fired into the trees in front of us. Not a Boer could be seen. We only knew where the enemy was by the incessant rattle of the Mausers and the endless procession of bullets striking all about us or passing overhead, one of which every now and then claimed its victim.

We had to be most careful where we fired, because it was impossible to know whereabouts the other regiments were. We knew that they were doing much the same kind of work as ourselves, on the other side of the river, and orders were continually being passed up and down our line, first from one end and then from the other, to cease fire. The 82nd Battery was shelling the bed of the river in front of us, enfilading it from the left at long range, which effectually prevented any advance up the river between the

banks, although it was at first attempted by a detachment of Highlanders, but immediately abandoned.

Our casualties were mounting up. Our firing line had been swelled too much by bringing up three companies—a dangerous proceeding, except at long range, especially when the attacking force is entirely exposed and the force being attacked is completely hidden. Captain Arnold, of A Company, the brave and the kind, had fallen mortally wounded, while sitting up trying to locate the enemy in the trees through his field-glasses; Sergeant Scott, the celebrated oarsman, had fallen with a bullet through his brain, at the head of his section. Altogether, some thirty or forty had been put out of action, and the moaning of the wounded and the cries for "stretcher bearer" went on incessantly in all directions. The wounded had to lie where they were, the men next to them doing what they could in the way of first aid. Stretcher bearers could do nothing in that firing line, as the Boers deliberately turned their fire on them as soon as they got up and began moving about. Three men were struck down carrying Captain Arnold to the rear.

Drill-book formations were more or less discarded; companies were mixed up. On the

right small parties of three and four men could occasionally be seen dodging from place to place to try and get into better positions. Some men were sound asleep. Others would fire a few shots and then turn and chat with whoever was beside them. Highlanders, Canadians and Mounted Infantry were all mixed up together.

As the afternoon wore on the rain ceased, and the sun came out again and dried our clothes a bit. Was nothing going to be done to drive those Boers out of the position in front of us? Were we to lie there till dark and then retire without having gained anything?

The answer to these questions was not long in coming. The Cornwalls had been brought across the river to support us and soon made their presence felt. Colonel Aldsworth, D.S.O., formed up two companies some little distance behind our firing line and ordered them to charge. The first intimation we on the right had of what was happening in our rear was the sound of hoarse cheering. Looking round, we saw the Cornwalls coming up at the charge. There were cries on all sides to fix bayonets and join the on-coming line. When it reached us we jumped up, and joining in the mad rush—Cornwalls, Highlanders, Canadians, and Mounted Infantry, all in one grand *mêlée*—went yelling

and shouting for that hateful line of foliage which had been spitting out death and destruction at us all day.

It was costly work, but it was exciting to a degree. Poor young Todd, an American who had been out in the Philippine war, yelled out, "Come on, boys; this beats Manila hollow." He never spoke again. The fusillade that met us from the repeating rifles was terrific. The whole air seemed to be filled with lead; we were shot at from the front and enfiladed from the donga at the bend of the river on the left; it is a mystery that so many reached the bank. As we approached the river, we found that a state of things existed which it was impossible to know of from where we had been lying all day. Close to the river the ground sloped rapidly down. The trees, which had seemed to us to be equally on both sides of the river, were all on the other side; and so were the Boers, still invisible, while the river was practically unfordable. The charging line broke in two; the right half, seeing some small bushes near the water which would afford a little cover, made a dash for these, while the left half, seeing nothing except an absolutely coverless slope between them and the water, threw themselves down and again opened fire. But their position was not an enviable one, as owing to the sloping nature of the ground they

were more exposed than they had been before. Nor had we on the right improved our position. The cover was scanty and we were more or less at the mercy of the Boers, who knew exactly where we were while they were all invisible to us. The small bushes which afforded us some scant cover were cut to pieces with the lead which the Boers poured into them. We were also in great danger from our own artillery, which was still enfilading that part of the river-bed from the left. The Boers drew in their western end a little as the result of our advance. All we could do was to hang on to the ground we had gained. This position remained unchanged until darkness set in, when the Boers vacated that part of the river altogether and withdrew some distance round the bend.

We then had to do what we could for the wounded. No one knew where the field hospital was. It was not anywhere within two miles—that was certain. No stretchers could be obtained. The only thing to do was turn to and render what assistance was possible. The work done by some of the men that night was magnificent; it would be invidious to mention names, but there was one man who may be mentioned without fear of anyone feeling slighted. I refer to Rev. Father O'Leary. He tended and soothed the wounded all through that bleak night on the

battle-field, and carried comfort and solace to the dying. His work was not finished until next morning, when Canada's honoured dead having been gathered together and placed in their sandy grave in a little grove of trees some distance from the banks of the fateful river, he, in hushed accents which sent a thrill through everyone within sound of his voice, tenderly committed them "to the keeping of God's angels."

CHAPTER VIII

THE SURRENDER OF CRONJE

THE Royal Canadian Regiment had been withdrawn after dark to a point about a mile and a half from the scene of the fighting; but as the men had become so scattered during the day, a good many did not turn up till the following morning, having lost their way in the darkness while trying to find the regiment. The company rolls were called the first thing in the morning, and it looked as if the casualty returns would be much larger than they afterwards proved to be, owing to the number of missing; but these soon came straggling in from all directions and eventually every man was accounted for. The grim total was soon known: Eighteen killed; three mortally and sixty severely or slightly wounded.*

Our first baptism of fire had been a costly one, but the great question was, How had the regiment carried itself? We knew we had not

* For complete list see Appendix C.

gained as much ground as we would have liked on the previous day, but we also knew that under the most trying circumstances no man had flinched, and what had been gained had been held. We also knew that the very keenness and dash of the men, and the way they fearlessly exposed themselves, were responsible for a considerable portion of the casualties. But what would be the verdict of our generals, and, above all, what would the Canadian people say? We had not long to wait for an answer. Our Brigadier, General Smith-Dorrien, came personally to the regiment and thanked us for what we had done. He said he was glad when he was first told that the Royal Canadians were to be in his brigade, but that he was more than proud now that he had seen the gallant manner in which they had acted during Sunday's very trying engagement. He was proud to be a member of the Empire to which they belonged.

The following telegram was sent by Lord Roberts to Lord Minto, the Governor-General:

"The Canadian Regiment has done admirable service since its arrival in South Africa. I deeply regret its heavy loss in the fighting on February 18th, and beg that you will assure your people how much we all admire its conspicuous gallantry on that occasion."

The following telegram from Sir Wilfrid

Laurier to Colonel Otter was taken as reflecting the feelings and sentiments of the Canadian people, and was very deeply appreciated by all ranks:

"I desire to convey to you and your men the grateful thanks of the Government and Parliament of the Dominion for your gallantry displayed on the battle-field. Canada warmly appreciates the sacrifices made by her sons for the honour of the Empire. The wounded have our sympathy, and our prayers for their speedy recovery. Those who have given up their lives will forever be held in remembrance by a grateful people."

The other troops engaged, but whom we could see nothing of during the battle, had had much the same experience as ourselves—the same open level plain to advance over, the same deadly torrent of lead from a perfectly invisible foe to meet, and the same uncertainty as to where it was safe to fire, not knowing where the other regiments were, or how close to the river bank those on the other side might be.* At the eastern end Stephenson's Brigade had succeeded in forcing the enemy to contract his line, so that

* That the other regiments had suffered equally with ours is shown by the total casualties: Officers killed, 23; wounded, 54; men killed, 271; wounded, 851.

now the part of the river-bed actually occupied was about two and a half miles long.

Lord Kitchener had been in charge of Sunday's operations. On Monday Lord Roberts arrived. With him were General Tucker's Division (the 7th), three batteries of Field Artillery and the Naval Brigade, the latter composed of the 4.7 guns and two 12-pounders. During the afternoon these guns were got into position to enable them to effectively shell the river-bed, a few rounds being then fired; but it was not until the following afternoon (Tuesday) that anything like a heavy bombardment was attempted. This seems a pity, as undoubtedly the Boers were at this time constructing those marvellous trenches and caves which for the remainder of the siege rendered them almost entirely safe from shell fire. Early on Monday morning General Cronje asked for a twenty-four hours' armistice, which was granted; but on Lord Roberts' arrival, at 10 a.m., it was immediately revoked, as it would simply have been used by the Boers to entrench themselves, free from any molestation whatever; they also wanted to gain time, as reinforcements were hurrying up to assist them. Hearing that there were some women and children with the besieged, permission was sent to have them removed to a place of safety; but, for reasons best known to themselves, this offer was declined.

On Tuesday morning a cordon of infantry was drawn all round the laager,* and advanced to within about 1,500 yards. No assault was intended, and very little rifle firing took place, but the guns, which by this time had all been placed in the most advantageous positions, kept up a steady and sustained bombardment of the whole river-bed. The infantry were simply in position to prevent any breaking out that might be attempted by the enemy, and at night-fall were withdrawn. The following casualties occurred in our regiment as a result of the long-range rifle fire, all the men wounded being in the reserve: C Company, Bugler J. B. Holland, very slightly, and Private R. W. Kidner, slightly; F Company, Private W. Downing, slightly; H Company, Private A. Parker, very slightly.

For the rest of the time the besieged held out the settled plan was followed which proved so efficacious, and was brought to a fitting climax by the Royal Canadian Regiment on the morning of the 27th of February.

The dispositions made by Lord Roberts were as follows: Trenches were dug at both ends of

* The expression "Cronje's laager" meant that part of the river-bed occupied by his forces. It, of course, also included the waggons and carts upon the bank, which were rapidly demolished by our shell fire.

the Boer position, extending from some distance out on the banks right down to the water's edge. These were to be gradually pushed forward as occasion offered, a brigade being assigned to look after the work at each end, while the remainder of the troops surrounded the ill-fated force and the guns kept up an intermittent fire. Our brigade was to look after the trenches at the western end, while the opposite ones were occupied by Chermside's Brigade (the 14th). The following duties were performed by the regiments of our brigade: One regiment went into the trenches for a spell of forty-eight hours, another occupied a large flat-topped kopje to the north-west, to ward off any reinforcements which might try to pierce through from that direction; the third regiment acted as a guard and escort to the guns, the main body of which was posted on Artillery Hill, a small kopje near the river on the north side; while the remaining regiment was supposed to have a couple of days' rest preparatory to going into the trenches.

On Thursday we moved up into the kopje and remained there until Saturday. It was principally a case of outpost work, but under very disagreeable circumstances. The rain came down in torrents. We were without overcoats, and had very little to eat. Our regimental

transport had been left on the south side of the river in the first place, and when they attempted to bring it across, the rain had swollen the river so much that the attempt had to be abandoned for the time being. The regimental cooking was carried on under the most absurd conditions, the men having to carry the cooked food nearly a mile, and then go a good deal farther than that to refill the pots with water. Captain Bell took the matter in hand, and a few common sense alterations made a material difference to the comfort and convenience of the men. There was not much protection from the rain, as there was less than one blanket per man. They had all become mixed up in getting sufficient for the wounded.

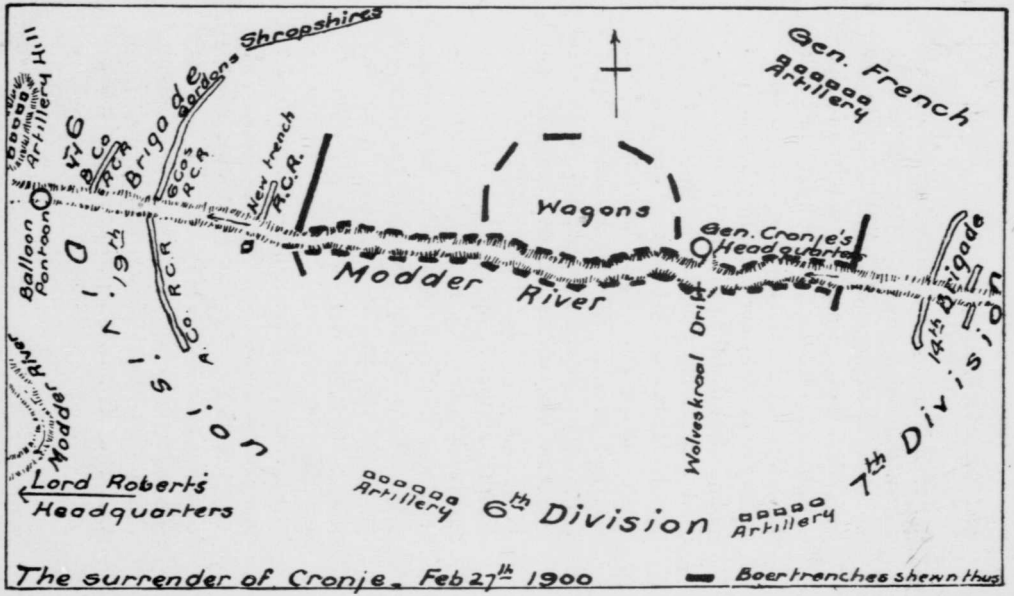
On Friday afternoon a party from A Company marched down to pay the last sad rites to Captain Arnold, who had passed quietly away that morning. He had practically been unconscious ever since he received his fatal wound on Sunday, and there had never been the slightest chance of recovery. We laid him to rest beside an officer of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, on the south bank of the Modder River. His death was a distinct loss to the whole regiment. He was the senior captain, and was rightly looked upon as a particularly efficient officer. But it was to A Company that

the blow was most severe. He was an enthusiastic, painstaking and competent officer, and in addition to this he had endeared himself to every one of his men by the careful manner in which he looked after their interests, and by the sympathy he always evinced in all matters relating to the internal economy of his company. He was exceedingly proud of A Company, and his men were equally proud of their captain, mourning his untimely death very deeply.

On Saturday we were relieved by the Shropshires, and came down off the kopje for the two days' rest before taking our turn in the trenches. Unfortunately a flat piece of ground was chosen for our bivouac, and a heavy rain coming on through the night, we were completely flooded out. By midnight the water had soaked through everything and formed pools on the rubber sheets on which we were lying. Very soon afterwards everyone was up and moving about in a more or less bedraggled condition praying for daylight to come. There is one redeeming feature about South African rain-storms—they are nearly always followed by bright sunshine, so that everything can be dried out. As soon as the sun rose, we rescued our things from the mud and water and moved to higher ground, where we succeeded in drying them during the day.

The British troops at Paardeberg were not only a containing force, but they had to ward off the reinforcements which had come up from Ladysmith and the northern frontier of Cape Colony and were continually trying to break through our lines. Some idea of the extent of country covered by our forces may be gathered from the fact that the perimeter of the encampment surrounding the Boer laager was about twenty-four miles. A kopje to the south-east on which the enemy had obtained a footing was cleared on the 20th, while on the 23rd the Yorkshires and Buffs engaged a party of about 2,000, inflicting severe loss on them and capturing eighty prisoners; forty more prisoners were taken the following day. These with individual Boers and Kaffirs, who were continually escaping from Cronje's army and giving themselves up, made a considerable number of prisoners on our hands before the final surrender on the 27th.

On Monday (the 26th) it was our turn to go into the trenches and relieve the Cornwalls. At nine o'clock in the morning we fell in and marched up the river to where the balloon section was at work. The balloon (The Duchess of Connaught) had been doing very successful work during the previous week, as from it a good deal of the Boer position could be seen,



The surrender of Cronje. Feb 27th 1900

and the fire of our artillery was largely directed by the observations made from time to time. At this point a section of a pontoon bridge working on a rope was used as a ferry across the river, and by this A Company crossed, and advancing up the south bank of the river occupied the foremost trench on that side ; the other seven companies took possession of the trenches on the north side. These trenches had been commenced by the Shropshires, who had gallantly pushed forward on both sides of the river-bed on the 21st and established themselves at these points. There was about five hundred yards intervening between us and the Boers, and continual sniping was kept up on both sides through the day when occasion offered, but without any apparent result. The main trench on the north side of the river was about 460 yards long, extending almost from the water's edge at right angles, except that part at the outer end, which curved a little to the east.

Towards evening it became known that some decisive movement was in contemplation. It was well known that the following day was the anniversary of Majuba Hill, and it was generally thought that something out of the ordinary would be attempted. A midnight assault on the main Boer trench by the Royal Canadian Regiment was decided upon.

By ten o'clock the following dispositions had been made: H, G, F, E, D and C companies occupied the main trench from right to left, about two hundred Gordon Highlanders being on the extreme left, to act as supports, while out on the left front, about 1,500 yards from the river, were the Shropshires; thirty Royal Engineers were on the right next the river, B Company was in reserve, while, as before stated, A Company occupied a long semi-circular trench on the south bank, which terminated down at the river opposite the main northern trench. The instructions issued to the latter company were to be on the alert all night and keep a sharp lookout, as it was thought probable the Boers might try to break away in that direction when the assault was made on the other side. The trench, being an extensive one and having only one company in it, was not strongly held.

At 2 a.m. the order was given to advance. The six companies, C, D, E, F, G and H, immediately got out of their trench and formed up in two ranks. The front rank fixed bayonets and extended to one pace interval, the ranks being fifteen yards apart; the rear rank slung their rifles and carried picks and shovels; the Royal Engineers also carried entrenching tools. The orders were to advance as quickly as possible towards the Boer trench, and not to fire unless

fired upon; if the Boer trench could not be reached, the ground gained was to be held by the front rank, while the rear rank were to construct new trenches under the direction and with the assistance of the Engineers.

It was a still starlight night when at 2:15 a.m. the Royal Canadians moved forward on their venturesome enterprise. The ground to be moved over was new to all of them. The Boers knew every inch of it, as they had at one time held it; and since their retirement to their present position they had narrowly scanned its every feature, and on more than one occasion during the previous nights had covered it with a sleet of lead in the dread that the British were advancing on them.

Slowly feeling their way in the darkness over the uneven and broken ground, the men in the two lines moved forward. Not a word was spoken, and every possible precaution was taken against any noise being made. One hundred! two hundred! three hundred yards! The tension was getting extreme. They knew they were advancing on a perfectly constructed trench, strongly held by resolute and desperate men, each armed with the quick-firing Mauser. Eyes tried to pierce the darkness, but nothing could be seen. Were the Boers by any chance asleep? Would they be able to reach those

trenches and decide the question solely with the cold steel! Four hundred yards! The men were breathing hard, not from exertion but from nervous excitement. They were surely within striking distance now, whatever happened. Despite the darkness and the unknown ground a few more yards gained would surely enable them to rush those trenches and use the bayonet. Suddenly the report of a rifle rang out sharp and clear, followed instantly by a second. An order was immediately given to the men to lie down. This order was apparently not promptly obeyed by all, as a good many men no doubt thought that a rush would be made for the trench, and were quite prepared to run all risks in the hope of reaching it. That this could not have been accomplished was immediately evident. A perfectly murderous fire was at once opened along the whole line of the Boer trench. It was a second Magersfontein, but this time the troops had had the whole situation explained to them, were properly prepared for their work, and knew what to do.

It was found next morning that G Company's front rank was only sixty-five yards from the Boer trench. H Company had had the most difficult task during the advance, having to go over and along the broken ground of the river bank, but when the fire broke out most of them

were fortunately in a slight hollow; F and G companies were in the most exposed position, and lost heavily. As soon as the first terrific blast of the firing had subsided somewhat, the rear rank and Engineers began to entrench, the front rank steadily returning the Boer fire. At the same time the Shropshires, who had been given points during the previous afternoon upon which to direct their fire, opened up with steady volleying, sweeping the river-bed in the neighbourhood and to the rear of the main Boer trench.

The entrenching did not proceed as well at the left end of the line as it did at the right, and someone called out in an authoritative voice, "Retire and bring back your wounded." This order was, of course, never issued by anyone in authority, and no one seems to know where it originated, but a *contretemps* of that kind is always liable to happen during night operations. The order was obeyed by the four companies on the left, and they withdrew to the main trench, one man on jumping into the Gordons' trench receiving a bayonet wound. G and H companies either did not hear the order to retire, or, hearing it, came to the conclusion that it was not authoritative and remained where they were.

The ultimate success of the operation is un-

doubtedly due to the part played by these two gallant companies from the Maritime Provinces. While the front rank acted as a covering party, the rear rank and Engineers worked like Trojans at the trenches, and when day dawned it found the two companies entrenched in a commanding position within one hundred yards of the main Boer position. At a quarter past five proposals of surrender were made from the Boer trenches, but no notice was taken of this, as it was impossible to tell whether or not these proposals came from anyone in authority, and our men kept up their fire and put the finishing touches to their trenches. As soon as daylight broke the balloon went up, and it was seen that there was a small stone building on the south bank from which the new trench could be enfiladed. A party from A Company was immediately ordered forward to occupy it just before six o'clock.

Shortly afterwards a white flag was seen to be approaching on the north bank, and the Boers got out of their trenches, threw down their arms, and began singing a hymn. By six o'clock two hundred had come forward, and at the same time a large white flag, hoisted above the trees about the centre of the position, announced to the whole British force that Cronje and his army had surrendered and that the great engagement was over.

That the Boers could have held out much longer was impossible, but a large force had already gathered to the south-east, and a big attempt at rescue was evidently pending. It was necessary that Cronje's hand should be forced, and it was decided on Monday that the night attack which proved so successful should be launched in the early hours of Tuesday, the 27th of February, the anniversary of Majuba Day. Who would have thought when reading the accounts of the British reverse at Majuba Hill, in February, 1881, that it was to be avenged by the Canadian militia nineteen years afterwards in the Orange Free State?

Our regiment suffered the only casualties, thirteen killed or died of wounds and thirty wounded.*

Shortly after six o'clock General Cronje rode to Lord Roberts' headquarters and made an unconditional surrender. Gradually the Boers emerged from their trenches and holes in the banks, and escorts were sent to bring them down to headquarters. They were certainly a motley crew, old, middle-aged and young, some carrying blankets, and others pots and pans and articles of food. And so these were the men who had sent the gallant Highlanders reeling

* For detailed list see Appendix D.

back at Magersfontein; and these were the men who had held us off for the last nine days and inflicted heavy casualties on us! The thought uppermost in my mind was, what a power the modern rifle is in the hands of a man who knows how to use it, acting on the defensive. Not counting 150 wounded, 3,919 prisoners fell into our hands, including General Cronje, Major Albrecht, and three officers of the Free State Artillery, twelve commandants, and twenty-one field cornets. They were all despatched that same afternoon under escort to Modder River station, there to entrain for Cape Town. In addition to the prisoners, three 7.5-centimetre Krupp field guns, one old pattern 12-pounder quick firing gun, and one Vickers-Maxim automatic 3.7-centimetre quick firing gun were taken, together with the prisoners' rifles, a large quantity of Mauser ammunition, and some badly damaged waggons.

During the morning the regiment was formed up, and Lord Roberts, accompanied by his staff, rode out and congratulated us very heartily on what had been accomplished, attributing the unconditional surrender of General Cronje and his whole force to the success of our attack. In his official telegraphic despatch, dated the 27th of February, he speaks of the operation as follows: "At 3 a.m. to-day a most dashing

advance made by the Canadian Regiment and some Engineers, supported by the 1st Gordon Highlanders and 2nd Shropshires, resulted 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 position till morning—a gallant deed, worthy of our colonial comrades, which, I am glad to say, was attended with comparatively slight loss;" and again in a subsequent despatch on the 31st of March, "I would here like to mention the distinguished part played by the Royal Canadian Regiment in its advance on the enemy's trenches on 27th February."

Numerous complimentary telegrams were received by Colonel Otter, the senders including Lord Strathcona, Lord Wolseley, Colonel Ivor Herbert (formerly commanding the Canadian militia), the mayors of several Canadian cities, and others. The following telegram was received from the President of the Legislative Council and Speaker of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia: "To Colonel Otter: We convey to you and the bravest sons of Canada under your command our admiration for distinguished gallantry displayed, reflecting as it does high honour upon their country. Canada is proud of her sons, while she deeply mourns the brave who have fallen."

CHAPTER IX

THE ADVANCE ON BLOEMFONTEIN

THE regiment bivouacked on the night of the 27th a short distance from the remains of Cronje's waggons and carts, on the north side of the river. The shell fire had been directed largely at them, and those that had not been burnt up presented a dilapidated appearance. All sorts and conditions of articles were to be found among the debris, from artillery ammunition to children's clothing, and the men picked up a few souvenirs both here and down in the river-bed, to remind them of the eventful days spent on the great battle-field. As everything taken had to be carried, it can be easily imagined that very little was secured, and these only articles of small bulk. A strict order was issued against taking any Boer rifles, but this apparently did not apply to our officers, most of whom secured Mauser carbines. Some flour and cornmeal was found, and as we had been on the shortest of rations so long, no time was lost in making rather crude pan-cakes and

flap-jacks, and boiling the cornmeal into "burg-out." The effect of so much badly cooked and hastily eaten food was rather disastrous with a good many, but they, doubtless, thought that it was better to run the chance of a "pain" than continue hungry.

On the 1st of March we moved a couple of miles higher up the river, and formed with the Highland Brigade a divisional camp at Osfontein. Before we left the vicinity of Paardeberg, volunteer parties went back to the scene of the fighting and carefully improved the last resting places of our comrades, fixing up the graves as well as possible, and placing large stones round them. We remained at Osfontein for nearly a week, resting and getting generally straightened up after the confusion that necessarily arises during a period of continued fighting attended by a considerable number of casualties. Unfortunately the weather was very wet, the rainy season being well on, and the rain came down in torrents. Our regiment was on particularly unfavourable ground, and we had to break up our bivouac, each company moving independently to wherever the contour of the ground made it look more favourable. Some of the men paired off and erected small shelters, wedge-shaped, with the aid of their two blankets—rifles being used for poles—thus

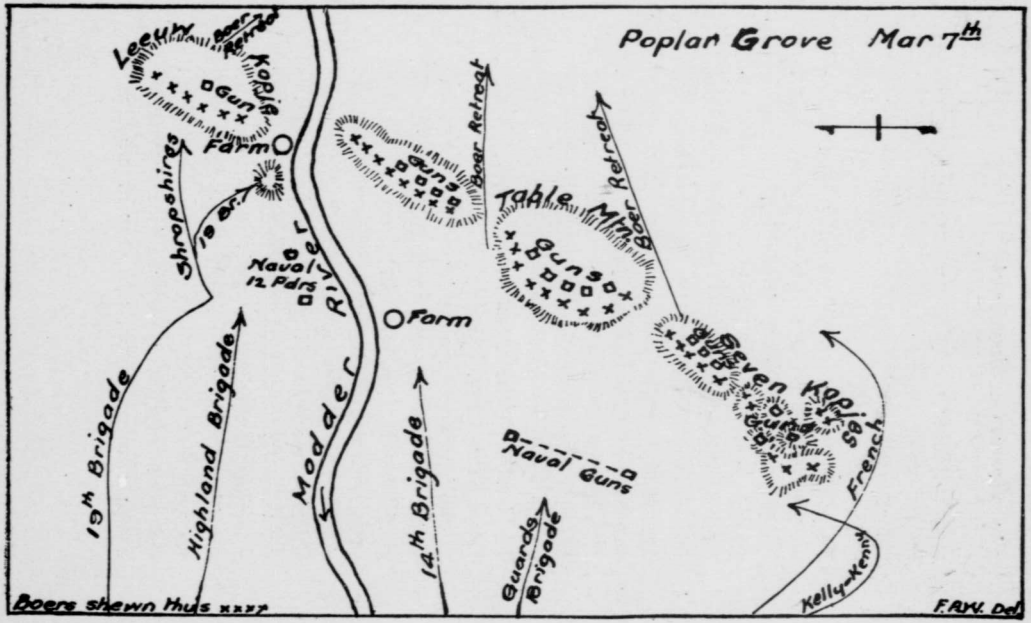
leaving them a rubber sheet, or perhaps two, with their overcoats for covering, a trench being dug all round the outside to catch the water as it ran off the blankets. These shelters acted very well, unless the wind got too strong, and were the popular rule with the British regiments; but their blankets were much better than ours, being larger and heavier. Those who did not erect shelters dug trenches in the form of a small oblong, threw the earth into the centre, and lay on top of it. In this way one's covering at night shed the rain pretty well, and the ground being high in the centre, the water could not work in underneath.

The general appearance of the country surrounding our camp was a vast improvement on what we had become so accustomed to at Belmont. Instead of the brown-looking, scrub-covered sand, and the seemingly interminable kopjes of the western border, the district we were now in was much more open; the short green grass, which the rain did much to improve, giving it the appearance of a fertile pasture land, while a few farm-houses, in groves of trees along the banks of the river, made one of the most picturesque scenes we came across in South Africa.

On the 6th of March our brigade was put in motion at seven o'clock in the morning, and

marched some six miles farther up the river, the Highland Brigade having gone up the day before. Preparations were in progress for a general attack on a strong position held by the Boers, diagonally astride the river from south-west to north-east, a few miles above a farm called Poplar Grove. This position had a frontage of ten and a half miles and was strongly fortified, the main part of it being to the south, with its right resting on a big hill called the Leeuw Kopje, about two miles to the north of the river, on which was posted a Krupp gun. In the centre was a large flat-topped kopje called Table Mountain, while a cluster of kopjes at the southern end was known as the "Seven Kopjes." All the main features had artillery mounted on them.

The forces occupying this position were those which had been trying to break through the British cordon hemming in Cronje at Paardeberg, reinforced by other Free Staters from the south and south-east who had withdrawn themselves from northern Cape Colony and Natal as soon as the capital of the Orange Free State was directly threatened. It is now known that Presidents Kruger and Steyn were present with the burghers, having come up to exhort them to make a stubborn resistance to the further advance of Lord Roberts into the Free State.


Poplar Grove Mar 7th
Leeuw Kopje
Boer Retreat
Guns
Farm
Shropshires
18 Pdr.
Naval 12 Pdrs
Modder River
Boer Retreat
Table Mtn
Guns
Farm
Boer Retreat
Seven Kopjes
Guns
French
19th Brigade
Highland Brigade
14th Brigade
Naval Guns
Guards Brigade
Kelly-Kenny
Boers shewn thus xxxx
F.A.W. Del

Lord Roberts' objective was Bloemfontein, and this force at Poplar Grove had to be overcome as a preliminary. The dispositions made were somewhat as follows: Our division, assisted by three naval 12-pounders and a force of mounted infantry under Colonels De Lisle and Henry, was to make a wide flanking movement on the Boer right and drive the enemy from the Leeuw Kopje. General French was to make a similar movement on their left, and to try and establish himself in rear of the centre of the enemy's position, being followed by General Kelly-Kenny, with his infantry division (the 6th), who had orders to attack the "Seven Kopjes" and then move on to Table Mountain, to be assisted at the latter place by four 4.7 naval guns, some field artillery, and the Guards' Brigade; while the 14th Brigade of the 7th Division, together with artillery and mounted infantry, was to advance up the south bank of the river and make a demonstration towards Poplar Grove drift.

We were up at two o'clock on the morning of the 7th, and moved off at four, keeping slightly to the north and advancing towards the Leeuw Kopje, the Highland Brigade being between us and the river. Each regiment of the division was in extended order, and, together with the columns to the south, must have made an im-

posing sight. Major Cartwright, who was in a position from which he could see the general advance, said that it was no wonder the enemy cleared out, as "it looked as if the whole British Empire was advancing on them." By twelve o'clock our brigade had reached a point about two and a half miles from the Leeuw Kopje, and a halt was ordered. Looking across the river we could see the enemy were preparing for a general retreat, and our 12-pounders immediately opened a long-range fire on a string of waggons which were moving quickly to the east. The Krupp gun on the Leeuw Kopje then opened fire on the 12-pounders, and the latter had to turn their attention in that direction, a very pretty artillery duel taking place. The practice of the Boer gun was exceedingly good, but their shells were, fortunately for our gunners, very bad, and the majority of them did not explode. Our brigade made a detour and took possession of a small kopje overlooking the river, expecting to come in touch with the retreating enemy, but they were already out of range. The Shropshires assaulted the Leeuw Kopje and captured the Krupp gun before it could be got away, only a very slight resistance being made. Altogether we had covered about twenty miles of ground and carried out the duties assigned to us most successfully.

Unfortunately the forces on the south side of the river, and especially the cavalry, had not been so successful; and although the enemy had been forced to abandon a really formidable position, with a comparatively slight loss on our side, yet a splendid opportunity was lost to make the result much more decisive. It appears that General French moved off before daylight to get into the position assigned him, but the 6th Division, which was following, made too wide a detour, and by the time it got to the "Seven Kopjes," French's guns behind and the naval guns in front had dislodged the enemy, while the pressure on the centre and on our side of the river caused a general retreat. The distances to be covered were great, the horses were in the poorest condition, and a well-planned and successful rear-guard action, which kept French manœuvring about until the enemy's guns and waggons were well out of danger, were the principal causes of the Boers' successful retirement. The action was a disappointing one, as so much was hoped from it, while the only result was the abandonment by the enemy of a particularly strong position.

We had got so far ahead of our transport that it did not catch us up until the next morning, the night having to be spent just as we were, without overcoats, blankets or rations. It was

pretty cold, and the only thing to do was to make small fires and try and get some sleep, the men taking it in turns to gather up something that would burn and keep the fires going. A little flour having been obtained by a few of the more fortunate, from a deserted farm-house, it was mixed with water, and the dough toasted on the embers. Those who in their hurry had taken some lime from the farm-house, thinking it was flour, did not relish being laughed at.

The next day our Brigadier, Major-General Smith-Dorrien, issued the following in brigade orders:

"The Major-General commanding the brigade wishes all ranks of the brigade he has the honour to command to understand how thoroughly he appreciates the spirit and zeal shown by them since the brigade assembled at Graspan. All have been called upon for exhausting exertions, and have had to undergo forced marches, short rations, great wettings, want of water and sleep, and severe and trying fighting, concluding with an extremely arduous flank march yesterday of some twenty miles. It will be satisfactory to them to know that yesterday's march turned the Boer position on the Leeuw Kopje and Blue Kopje, and threatened their rear and caused them to retreat in haste, making them cease firing on our naval guns and abandon their own

gun, which the Shropshires eventually captured. It also enabled the Highland Brigade to advance direct on the enemy's trenches without opposition, and further caused the retirement of a large force of mounted men and guns from the Blue Kopje, which force had held the Mounted Infantry on the left flank of the brigade in check since the morning. It will be gratifying to all to know that, thanks to the untiring energy shown by everyone, the 19th Brigade has established a high name for itself, which the Major-General feels sure all will continue to do their utmost to maintain."

The following day we had a rest, and during the afternoon of the 9th we crossed the Modder River, preparatory to starting on the general advance on Bloemfontein. Lord Roberts divided his forces into three columns. General French was in command of the one on the left, and had with him, besides the 1st Cavalry Brigade, the 6th Division (infantry), Alderson's Mounted Infantry, and a proportion of artillery. The centre column, which was accompanied by Lord Roberts, consisted of our Division (the 9th), the Guards' Brigade, the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, Martyr's and Le Gallais' Mounted Infantry, the 65th Howitzer Battery, four 6-inch Howitzers, the Naval Brigade, the ammunition reserve, the supply park, and the 7th Field Company Royal

Engineers. The right column, under General Tucker, included the 7th Division, with its artillery, the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, and Ridley's Brigade of Mounted Infantry.

On Saturday, the 10th of March, the combined movement of the three columns began. We got up at 3.30 a.m., and marched off at daylight, the right and left columns starting at the same time, but they were not within sight. The three infantry brigades in our column marched one behind the other, about a mile apart, taking it in turns to lead. On the first day out the Highland Brigade was in front, then came our brigade, followed by the Guards, the regiments in each brigade marching in line of columns. The cavalry formed a screen in front, while the artillery were on our right, and the interminable lines of transport all over the place.

By ten o'clock we had marched about ten miles and reached a farm with a very comfortable-looking house and buildings, the latter flying the German flag alongside a white one; in fact, from that time on, every building we passed, from the more pretentious dwellings of the wealthier burghers to the Kaffir kraals, had some sort of a white emblem above it. After a couple of hours' rest, we replenished our water-bottles at the "dam" and moved on again, reaching Driefontein about 5 p.m., having covered twenty

miles. As we approached we could hear firing on our left front, and before we halted we could see shells bursting along a line of kopjes behind Abraham's Kraal. General French's column had come in touch with the enemy, and he moved his cavalry to the south to try and turn their left flank; but the Boers made a quick movement in the same direction and occupied a kopje about four miles long right across the road. Our Cavalry Brigade (the 2nd), as soon as it reached Driefontein, went to the assistance of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, and assisted in the movement to turn the enemy's left; but the gun fire from the latter completely outranged our field guns, and very little progress was made in that direction. The infantry of the 6th Division gradually pushed back the Boers from the right of their position, but they made a very determined stand in the centre. As soon as we arrived at Driefontein orders were received for the Guards and our brigade to go to the assistance of the 6th Division, but before this order could be carried out the position was rushed in a very gallant manner by the 1st Essex and 1st Welsh, supported by the 2nd Buffs. It was a big engagement and stubbornly fought, the British losses amounting to sixty-nine killed, 363 wounded and eighteen missing, while the Boers actually left 102 dead bodies on the field.

That evening the left and centre columns bivouacked together in the vicinity of Driefontein, and the following day marched to Aasvogel Kop without opposition. It was a very trying march, although the distance was only about thirteen miles. We had orders to march at daylight, and got ready to do so, but these orders were countermanded and we did not get away till nine o'clock, marching through the hottest part of the day, with water very scarce.

The next day, the 11th, we covered about sixteen miles, but as we got an early start and the day was a little cooler, we finished in pretty decent shape, bivouacking at a farm called Venters Vlei, where there was a good supply of water. Lord Roberts' headquarters was still with the 6th and 9th Infantry Divisions, while the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Brigades, under General French, were pushed on to Brand Dam Kop, a farm about seven miles to the south-west of Bloemfontein.

On the 13th of March Lord Roberts proceeded to Brand Dam Kop with the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Brigades having already occupied some kopjes overlooking the town, while the 6th and 9th Divisions marched to a point on the railway a few miles south of Bloemfontein. We reached our destination—a farm belonging to ex-President

Steyn's brother—about 1 p.m. Lord Roberts received the submission of Bloemfontein at the same time, and entered the city, meeting with quite a cordial reception. He made his headquarters in the official residence of the State President, which Mr. Steyn had vacated the previous evening. The 6th Division entered Bloemfontein on the following day, while our Division did not march in until the morning of the 15th.

The troops were all on reduced rations during the four days' hard marching from the Modder River to Bloemfontein, and had, in fact, been on short rations since the 16th of February. We were hungry all the time. Some idea of the hardness of the march can be gathered from the fact that during those four days the three columns lost 796 mules and 3,500 oxen. The weather was hot and water scarce, so altogether a very trying time was experienced. We were glad to be near a civilized town once more, and looked forward to being able to purchase some eatables. During the afternoon some passes were issued, and all those fortunate enough to obtain one had no difficulty in getting commissions to execute. Nor were the messages hard to remember; it was "bread" or "biscuit," "something to eat," "anything."

Four passes were issued to each company. I

obtained one of the four issued to A Company, and managed to get a supply of biscuits, jam, oatmeal, sugar, etc. Bread was not to be had till the following day, so I left an order and went down the next morning at 5.30 and got thirty-eight loaves for the company, at 25 cents a loaf. It was not long before all the stores were sold out, and the merchants could not get any fresh supplies in, as the military authorities needed the railway as soon as it was open, to bring up clothing, food and remounts for the troops.

Bloemfontein is a picturesque little town, situated at the foot of a flat-topped kopje, the white of the low buildings contrasting with the green of the many trees making a pretty picture. The principal thing that struck one's eye was the number of signs over shops and stores in English; nearly every merchant seemed to be a Britisher. The principal newspaper appeared in English, with Dutch translations of the news items on an inside page. Altogether it was a much more English town than we expected to see as the capital of the Orange Free State.

The town was full of soldiers, all apparently intent on one thing—buying supplies. A more orderly crowd it would be quite impossible to find anywhere. At first sight one would have

thought that the men must nearly all belong to one regiment, so similar were the uniforms, with the exception of the Highlander's kilt and the slouch hat of the Colonial; but closer inspection generally showed a badge of some kind on the left side of the helmet or hat, and one began to distinguish cavalry from artillery, the Guards from infantry of the line, Queenslanders from New Zealanders, and Cape Colonials from Tasmanians—a khaki army drawn from the four quarters of the globe, all wearing the uniform of the English Queen. The old Union Jack again floating from the flag-staff over the Government buildings, after an absence of forty-six years, reminded us of all it had cost the British Empire in blood and treasure to re-establish its sovereignty over the land and avenge the insult of the 9th of October, 1899.

CHAPTER X

AT BLOEMFONTEIN

AS soon as the British had taken possession of Bloemfontein the following Army Order was issued by Lord Roberts :

"It affords the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief the greatest pleasure in congratulating the army in South Africa on the various events that have occurred during the past few weeks, and he would specially offer his sincere thanks to that portion of the army which, under his immediate command, has taken part in the operations resulting yesterday in the capture of Bloemfontein.

"On the 12th of February this force crossed the boundary which divided the Orange Free State from British territory. Three days later Kimberley was relieved. On the thirteenth day the bulk of the Boer army in this State, under one of their most trusted generals, were made prisoners. On the seventeenth day the news of the relief of Ladysmith was received, and on the 13th of March, twenty-nine days from the com-

mencement of the operations, the capital of the Orange Free State was occupied.

"This is a record of which any army may well be proud—a record which could not have been achieved except by earnest, well-disciplined men, determined to do their duty and to surmount whatever difficulties or dangers might be encountered.

"Exposed to extreme heat by day, bivouacking under the heavy rain, marching long distances (not infrequently with reduced rations), the endurance, cheerfulness and gallantry displayed by all ranks are beyond praise, and Lord Roberts feels sure that neither Her Majesty the Queen nor the British nation will be unmindful of the efforts made by this force to uphold the honour of their country.

"The Field-Marshal desires especially to refer to the fortitude and heroic spirit with which the wounded have borne their sufferings. Owing to the great extent of country over which modern battles have to be fought, it is not always possible to afford immediate aid to those who are struck down; many hours have indeed elapsed before some of the wounded could be attended to, but not a word of murmur or complaint has been uttered. The anxiety of all, when succour came, was that their comrades should be cared for first.

"In assuring every officer and man how much he appreciates their efforts in the past, Lord Roberts is confident that in the future they will continue to show the same resolution and soldierly qualities, and to lay down their lives, if need be (as so many brave men have already done), in order to ensure that the war in South Africa may be brought to a satisfactory conclusion."

The bivouac of the 9th Division was to the south of Bloemfontein; the Highland Brigade was on the right. The whole faced the town, each battalion having a frontage of one company. Our brigade was in the usual formation, the Cornwalls on the right, then the Shropshires, the Gordons, and ourselves, according to seniority. We were on a nice open, grassy plain, very different to the desert of the western border. The ground sloped slightly to the north and west, which did not help to make the camping ground of our regiment a particularly enviable spot, especially as the rain often came down in torrents.

The two leading companies, A and B, could not keep their lines, and had to go in groups to the higher spots and make the best of it. I once saw Colonel Otter take the trouble to walk down through the lines and see how his men were faring, but he did not go past C Company,

and therefore did not see the worst of it. Not that he had not seen enough to have caused an ordinary man in charge of a regiment to apply to have the camp shifted. It is quite certain that if an application had been made to move the regiment to better ground, permission would have been cheerfully given. The sick parades were unusually large during these days, and a good many men were sent over to the Field Hospital with enteric, never to return. I do not say that the bad state our camp was in, and the miserable condition in which the men had to live, had anything to do with bringing on enteric fever, but it certainly would not help a man in the early stages of the disease, and was conducive to bad health generally.

It is not my intention to take up the question of the Royal Army Medical Corps and the Bloemfontein Field Hospitals, as they were during March and April at that place, but there are two or three things that struck me, and may as well be noted here. I have read Mr. Burdett-Coutts' letter dealing with the Field Hospitals at Bloemfontein, and am sorry to say that the accusations there made are only too true. The question is, Could anything have been done to avoid it? Yes; there was a simple remedy that would have mitigated a good deal of suffering. A good staff of orderlies to look after the sick

would have made all the difference in the world. The supply of doctors was very limited, but a doctor can go around and visit a good many men in a day, though an orderly can only properly look after a very limited number. Why did not the principal medical officer get permission to take some picked men from each regiment to go and help in the hospitals? This would have made a very great difference to the sick. Why did the Royal Army Medical Corps struggle along so under-manned and not try and get more orderlies? They may say, "We couldn't have obtained trained men." Quite so, but I venture to say that with a little careful selection they could have obtained much better men than they already possessed—men who would have been honest, at least. The whole cry of the men who went through any of the advanced hospitals in South Africa, especially during the early part of the campaign, was against the "hospital orderly." A man with enteric fever does not like lying with seven or eight others on the ground in an ordinary bell tent, with his dirty, vermin-covered clothes on, that he has been living in night and day for months; but he likes still less to be neglected by the man who is supposed and paid to look after him, and who, instead of doing so, steals both his belongings and the very medicine and nourishment that is ordered him by the doctors.

The principal trouble with the R.A.M.C. is, that there is too much "militarism" about it. Instead of its being a case of doctor and patient, it is too often a case of officer and private. All the "parading" of the sick should be done away with. I have seen men faint in the ranks during the sick parade. The very idea of sick men being "paraded" and "marched" to hospital is repugnant to ordinary common sense.

Another point that might be mentioned is, that there is a little too much difference made in favour of the wounded as against the sick man; not that the former should not be attended to first, but the sick man should not be neglected for the other, as is too often the case. One might even go further than that, and say that the sick and wounded should be attended to on their merits; for instance, a man who is very ill should be looked after before a man who is only slightly wounded. But such is not the case, and our British doctors even attended to wounded Boers to the exclusion of British sick. After the surrender at Paardeberg on the 27th of February, I went back to the pontoon with a message for the adjutant. I crossed over to the north side of the river, and there, lying on the ground amongst the trees on the north bank, I found half a dozen of our men. They said they were sick, but had been unable to see a doctor;

one man was very bad, indeed, with dysentery. Seeing a British ambulance on the south side of the river, I recrossed, and, going up to the surgeon, explained the case. No, he could not possibly go over to see the men, but he would give me some medicine. Looking into the ambulance with which he was moving off, I saw two wounded Boers who had just been brought out of the river-bed.

I have had occasion to speak of the treatment of the sick of our regiment while at Belmont; it is with considerable reluctance that the subject is taken up again. Probably the shortest and most effective way to give an idea of how things were managed at Bloemfontein is to take a leaf out of my diary (April 16th), describing what took place one morning when I happened to be regimental orderly corporal, and in charge of the "sick parade." A large parade fell in at 6.45 a.m. and was marched to the front of the regimental hospital tent. It was wet and muddy under foot, with a cold damp wind blowing, and a little rain. It was an exceedingly ill-chosen hour, as the breakfast bugle went at seven o'clock, and as the parade lasted between one and two hours, it meant very cold coffee for a good many. On this particular morning Major Wilson was not at the hospital tent when we arrived there, and after waiting some time I

asked the hospital sergeant if it would not be advisable to let the surgeon know the parade was ready. The sergeant did not take kindly to the suggestion, and gave me the impression that waking up Major Wilson was a job he would not care to undertake. However, after we had waited a long time, and it was getting on towards 7.30, I got the sergeant to go over, and Major Wilson appeared. He sat inside the tent and interviewed the men one by one, the parade not being over until nine o'clock.

It was not a pleasant duty to stand by and hear the conversations that went on. Major Wilson apparently seemed to think that it was part of his duty to speak to the men as if they were shamming. He ridiculed their complaints, and treated them generally in an overbearing and most unprofessional manner. Although enteric was raging at the time, the thermometer was seldom or never used. One man on saying he thought he was getting fever and would like to have his temperature taken, was asked by Major Wilson in a sneering way, "how much he would bet that he was feverish?"

The orderly sergeant of A Company reported to me that Private Wilkins, whose name was on the report, was too sick to attend the parade, and when his name was called I so reported the matter to the surgeon. I knew of my own

knowledge that the man was seriously ill, as I had seen him lying in his tent for some days and had refrained from putting him on duty, notwithstanding that he had been returned fit for duty from previous sick parades. Major Wilson's only reply was, "He will have to come or I will know the reason why. Does he think I am going to see *him?* Anyone would think this was a private dispensary." He went on to say that he knew the "kind of man Wilkins was," and intimated that he considered it was a case of shamming. I tried to explain matters, but he wouldn't listen to me, so word was sent up and Wilkins came staggering down. He was so weak that he could not stand up while the surgeon was speaking to him. The result of the interview was that he was immediately sent over to the Field Hospital with a well-developed case of enteric, his comrades having to carry him over on a stretcher. The day before he had been returned fit for duty from the sick parade. Fortunately he pulled through and rejoined the regiment in September.

The canteen question again caused some grumbling. It was bad enough to have to pay two prices for everything in Bloemfontein, but even at that it became impossible to get anything. Colonel McBean, of the Gordon Highlanders, managed somehow to get supplies for

his men, and they had quite a decent canteen with reasonable prices whenever it was possible for the regimental authorities to procure the necessaries. True, some of our regimental funds were spent when we first reached Bloemfontein in buying supplies, but unfortunately bad management was in evidence, and instead of making a contract for bread, those in authority purchased flour, baking powder, tea, coffee, sugar, etc.; and it would have been amusing if it had not been a little pitiful to see the men sitting on the ground with each of the above articles spread round them on pieces of paper, wondering how they could make the best of an absurd situation —the water being a mile away and the wood four, to say nothing of an order prohibiting the lighting of any fires except the ones used by the company cooks—and heartily cursing the stupidity of their superiors.

Our stay at Bloemfontein was broken by two expeditions, both in an easterly direction. The first was as a reinforcement to General Broadwood at the time of the Sannah's Post reverse. A good deal has been written about this affair, and most of it of an erroneous nature. As our regiment was remotely connected with the matter, it may not be uninteresting to give a few details of what actually occurred. Brigadier-General Broadwood, with whom was Colonel

Pilcher, of Sunnyside fame, was sent out to Thabanchu with the following force: Q and U Batteries, Royal Horse Artillery; Household Cavalry, 160 sabres; 10th Hussars, 160 sabres; and Alderson's Mounted Infantry, 800 rifles. On the 30th March General Broadwood received information that a large force of the enemy was advancing on Thabanchu from the direction of Ladybrand, and that another force was working round him to the north. A withdrawal towards Bloemfontein was decided upon. Early in the afternoon the outposts east of Thabanchu were attacked and the retirement began. At first it was intended to go only as far as Israel's Poorte, seven miles distant; but as it became certain that the northern force of Boers was closing in, it was decided to continue the retirement to Sannah's Post, a farm about twenty-one miles east of Bloemfontein, not far from the water-works. After marching all night this point was reached at 3:30 a.m., the baggage having preceded the force and arrived at 11 p.m., under Colonel Pilcher's escort. He found three companies of mounted infantry occupying the water-works, and therefore only posted a few groups, by way of outposts, round his baggage for its immediate protection.

Shortly after daylight, on the 31st of March, a long-range shell fire, to which General Broad-

wood's Horse Batteries could not reply, was opened on his force from the north-east. He immediately gave orders for a retirement on Boesman's Kop, a hill some distance to the west on the Bloemfontein road. U Battery and Roberts' Horse were instructed to accompany the baggage, while General Broadwood personally superintended the operations of his rear-guard, where, to all appearances, the only danger lay. But the Boers, with a courage and cleverness which will ever redound to their credit, had during the night worked quietly round in front of the column and occupied a dry water-course called the Koorn Spruit, about 2,000 yards west of Sannah's Post. As is invariably the case, the baggage train, as soon as it came under shell fire, immediately began to stream off of its own accord, and was well on its way to the west before Roberts' Horse could get out in front of it and act as an advance guard. Nearly the whole of the convoy was permitted by the Boers to cross the water-course, and five guns of U Battery had actually gone down into the spruit and been quietly taken possession of by the enemy before the alarm was given. Roberts' Horse came under a short-range rifle fire, sustaining much loss, and, wheeling about with Q Battery, the remaining gun of U Battery, and the rest of the cavalry, retired to take up a posi-

tion from which they could properly operate. Owing to the horses in the battery being shot down, the latter came to a halt about 800 yards from the spruit, and came into action under a heavy rifle fire.

This was the position of affairs when General Broadwood came riding up from where he had been with his rear-guard. Working his mounted infantry round the right or southern end of the Boer position, and reinforcing gradually to the left towards Boesman's Kop, he formed a pivot round which the guns subsequently withdrew, two of Q Battery's having to be abandoned owing to the loss in horses. By about eleven o'clock the force was practically clear, with the loss of seven guns and the whole of the convoy.

Such was the action of Sannah's Post. Lord Roberts ascribes the success of the ambush to the action of a patrol sent out over night to Boesman's Kop from the waterworks' force, with orders to return at daylight. This patrol was unable to return on account of the spruit being occupied by the Boers, but took no means to make the presence of the enemy known to the column. The ambush was certainly a piece of daring which has hardly been equalled during the campaign, as the slightest untoward event would have easily upset the carefully-laid plan, with big chances of a complete annihilation of the whole Boer force.

When General Broadwood found himself hotly pressed in his retirement from Thabanchu, he asked Lord Roberts for reinforcements. General Colville was instructed to march to the assistance of the retiring column, with the 9th Division, early the next morning. At four o'clock we were astir, and got away shortly after daylight, the Highland Brigade leading. It was not until nearly noon that the force reached Boesman's Kop, and General Colville sent word to that effect to General Broadwood, who, it will be remembered, had by that time extricated his force, but was still sharply engaged with the enemy in the hope of recapturing guns and convoy. General Broadwood sent back word that the best way to assist would be to advance directly on the spruit, but General Colville, without proceeding personally to see how matters stood, and contrary to the suggestion of General Broadwood, decided on a wide flank movement to Waterval Drift, a point some distance to the north of the scene of the engagement. General Broadwood, hearing of this, decided that nothing further could be done, and began sending his units on to Bloemfontein. General Colville has been severely criticised for his action on this occasion, and apparently not without reason. It, no doubt, had a good deal to do with that officer's subsequent withdrawal

from South Africa and his being placed on the retired list.

It will be readily seen that although remotely connected with the action at Sannah's Post, we had no hand in it; in fact, if General Colville had acted on the suggestion and advanced his Division direct on the spruit, and a general action followed, our regiment would probably not have seen much fighting, as we were rear-guard and in charge of the baggage.

This position is not the most pleasant one a regiment can occupy on the march, and the usual ups and downs were not absent on the occasion under review. A rear-guard, especially if there is much baggage, is generally late in starting, and later still in reaching its destination. If, unfortunately, a drift is reached late in the afternoon and all the transport has to be got across, the night will be well advanced before the men settle down in bivouac, and the worst of it is, you know while still at the drift that all the rest of the force are quietly cooking what should have been their mid-day meal; if the rear-guard get theirs much before midnight they are lucky.

Towards noon part of the convoy, composed entirely of ox waggons, came to a halt, and A and D companies were ordered to remain with them and continue the journey later on. Half

the battalion went to Boesman's Kop, the other two companies going straight on to Waterval Drift, whither we followed them when the oxen had had a good graze.

On the way we passed most of General Broadwood's force going into Bloemfontein, a very dejected-looking lot. A good many of the Mounted Infantry were leading their horses, and here and there a riderless horse, keeping up with the column of its own accord, told its own story. Ambulance waggons with wounded, men on horseback with arms and heads tied up—it was not an encouraging sight, but they were the remnant of a body of men who had made one of the most gallant fights, under exceptionally trying circumstances, that the campaign can boast of.

What with slow moving and occasional stops, the waggons did not reach the drift, some twenty miles from Bloemfontein, till nine o'clock. It was pitch dark, and no one to meet us to show us where the other two companies were. Unfortunately our baggage was with them, and as we couldn't find them, it was a case of getting through the night without overcoats or blankets. As I did not relish the outlook, I went over to some waggons and, routing out a Kaffir driver, asked him if he could lend me a blanket for the night. "Oh, no, he hadn't an extra one, couldn't

do anything." I told him I thought it would be worth about a shilling for me to have the loan of a blanket until the morning. The sight of the silver, I am thankful to say, had the desired effect.

The next afternoon we marched back to Boesman's Kop and rejoined the regiment, which returned to Bloemfontein on the 3rd of April. The next day the Division got orders at noon to march at two o'clock. Proceeding in a south-easterly direction, we marched until half-past eight. The following morning we were up at 4 a.m. and continued our march at half-past six, having been joined by three batteries of field artillery and some cavalry. After proceeding a few miles a general halt was called, and then the whole force retraced its steps. It appears that one of the mobile Boer forces which were overrunning the south-east corner of the Free State at that time was expected along that way and we were to deal with it, but it evidently changed its direction and went off somewhere else.

On returning to Bloemfontein we found that our tents had come up from Belmont, and we slept in them that night, the first time we had decent shelter from the weather for two months; but our further stay did not prove to be of long duration. On the 21st of April we again started

on what was understood to be another two or three days' operation east of Bloemfontein, but we did not see the town again till we were on our way home, as, owing to the exigencies of the campaign, our objective point turned out to be Pretoria.

CHAPTER XI

BLOEMFONTEIN TO HOUT NEK

WHILE we were at Bloemfontein operations were being carried on on a large scale to clear the south-eastern corner of the Orange Free State of the enemy. On account of the enforced long wait after Bloemfontein was occupied, to procure remounts, outfit the men, get up supplies along a single line of railway, with several broken bridges, from a base 750 miles distant, and prepare generally for the further advance northwards of the army, the Boer forces, which had been completely demoralised by the crushing defeat at Paardeberg, followed by severe handling at Poplar Grove and Driefontein and the occupation of one of their capitals, found time to reorganize themselves into several formidable columns, and practically took the offensive, reoccupying Ladybrand and concentrating between Brandfort and Thabanchu. The force which so cleverly closed in on General Broadwood proceeded southwards, gathered up three companies of Royal Irish Rifles and two

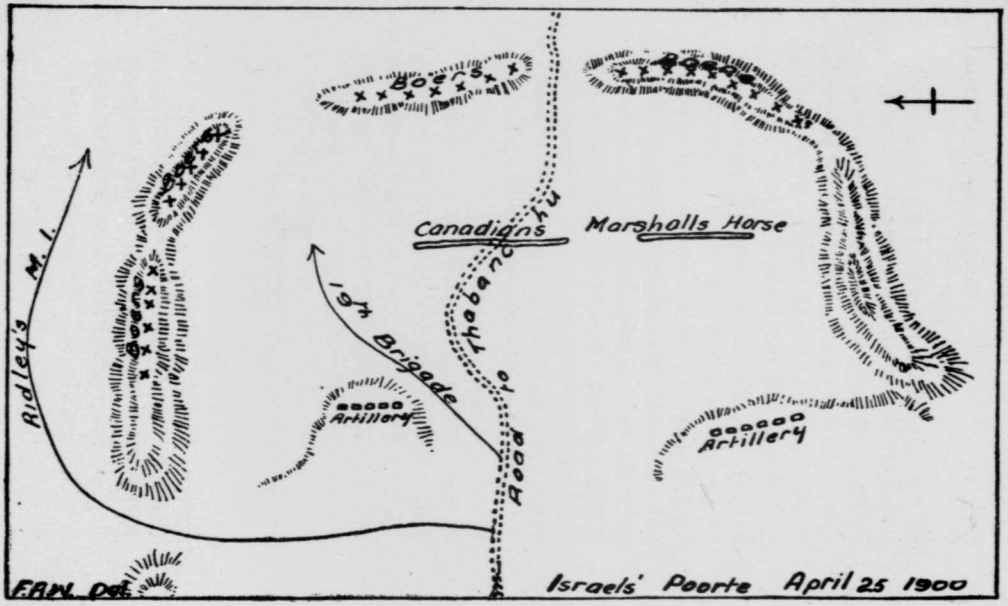
of Mounted Infantry at Reddersburg, and occupied Dewetsdorp. As it was necessary to clear out the south-east and relieve Wepener, where Colonel Dalgety with a small force of Cape Colonials was closely besieged, Lord Roberts put several columns in motion, the result being that Dewetsdorp was reoccupied and Wepener relieved, the Boers retiring to the north.

As a part of the operations, Major-General Ian Hamilton, with the 2nd Mounted Infantry Brigade under Brigadier-General Ridley and our old friends, P Battery Royal Horse Artillery, were sent out on the 22nd of April, with instructions to reconnoitre the waterworks, and if he found them weakly held to occupy them and call up our brigade as reinforcements.

The previous day we had marched to Springfield, a farm about seven miles east of Bloemfontein, and relieved the 18th Brigade, which joined the new 11th Division at Leeuw Kop under General Pole-Carew. We remained there the following day, and on the 23rd received orders to support General Hamilton at the waterworks, he having occupied them and driven the Boers into the kopjes on the farther side. We reached the waterworks just after dark. The following morning at sunrise we continued our march, crossed the river at the waterworks, and, joining General Hamilton's force, completely cleared

the hills of Boers, the resistance being of the slightest. General Hamilton was then reinforced by the addition of a field battery and was ordered to advance on Thabanchu, presumably in the hope that some of the Boer forces moving north from Dewetsdorp and Wepener would be headed off.

The Highland Brigade arrived during the night to relieve us, and we started the next day (the 25th) at nine o'clock, our regiment being advance guard. Preceded by a screen of mounted infantry, we marched in an easterly direction until noon, when we found our further progress barred by a large number of the enemy, who had taken up a position with several guns on some kopjes, on each side of the road at Israel's Poorte, one of the numerous "neks" or small passes where roads pass through ranges of kopjes. General Hamilton's dispositions were soon made, and he decided he would not press home a frontal attack. Moving the artillery up so that all the guns could be brought to bear on the enemy's position, our regiment and Marshall's Horse were ordered to advance towards the main ridge and take up a position within about 600 yards of it, opening a steady rifle fire, while the other three regiments of the brigade were taken over by General Smith-Dorrien to the left, and Ridley's Mounted Infantry made


Boers
Boers
Boers
Ridley's M.I.
Canadians
Marshalls Horse
19th Brigade
Artillery
Artillery
Modder River
F.A.W. Del.
Israels' Poorte April 25 1900

an extended flank movement to the north, to threaten the Boer line of retreat.

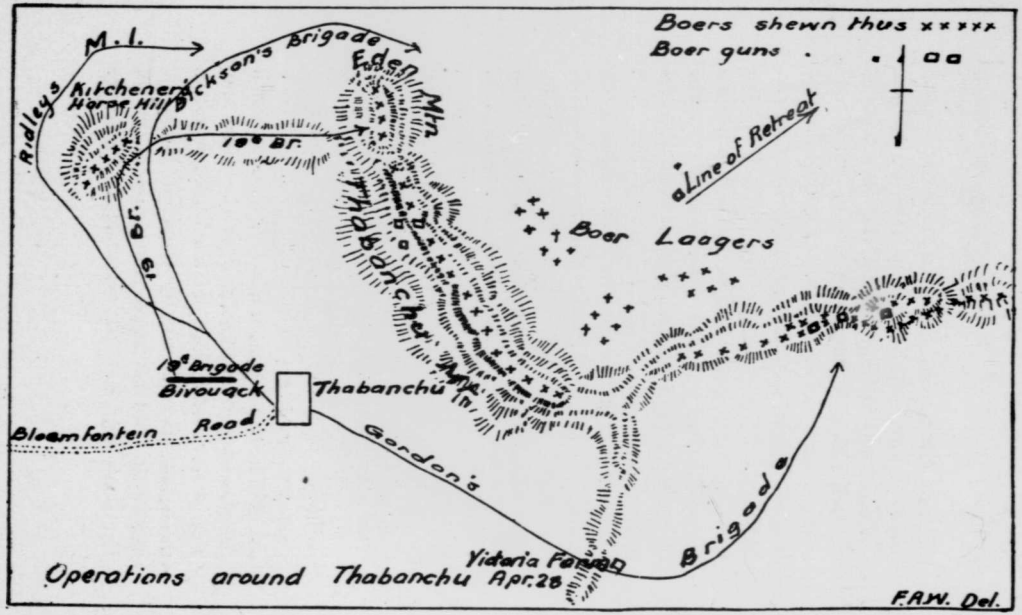
It took General Ridley some hours before he could get into position to bring pressure to bear on the Boers' right flank, and in the meantime the artillery and the rifles kept up an incessant fire. As soon as their line of retreat became threatened, however, the Boer fire began to slacken, and Colonel Otter gave the order to move forward. We immediately advanced and, with Marshall's Horse, occupied the line of kopjes in front. By the time this was effected it was getting dark, so we bivouacked on the ground we had won. Our casualties were: Colonel Otter, slightly wounded; Private J. Defoe, of H Company, killed; and Privates Culver (enlisted as Raymond), G Company, and Lance-Corporal Burns, D Company, severely and slightly wounded respectively, the total casualties being about 20 killed and wounded. Lieutenant-Colonel Buchan assumed command of the regiment, as Colonel Otter had to go back to Bloemfontein. A great deal of regret was expressed on all sides over Colonel Otter's wound, and everyone was glad it was not more serious. Colonel Otter was always very cool under fire, and inspired confidence in whatever part of the field he happened to be; his handling of the regiment at Israel's Poorte was specially commended by General Ian Hamilton.

The next morning we rose at three o'clock, marched into Thabanchu, and hoisted the British flag. The brigade was broken up for the time being, and each regiment sent to different points to guard the approaches from the south and east, as it was still thought that the retreating Boers from Dewetsdorp and Wepener had not yet passed through. Our regiment was sent out about three miles to the south-east, to guard a nek at Victoria Farm, through which one of the main roads passed, two Royal Horse Artillery guns being with us. We spent the afternoon in digging trenches and erecting stone fortifications, which we occupied at night, hoping that in the morning we should have the opportunity of meeting the Boers with the usual conditions reversed; but the daylight only brought Rundle's Infantry Division, who told us that the enemy had kept off to the east. We moved back into Thabanchu, and bivouacked close to the town. That same evening B and D companies were detailed to go with the Gordon Highlanders to the assistance of a party of Kitchener's Horse, which was reported to be surrounded on a kopje some five miles to the north. In the darkness the force was led in a wrong direction, and returned to camp during the afternoon of the next day. It is reported that when daylight broke they found themselves about five miles to the south of the village, but

we never quite got at the facts, as the participants were reticent. Kitchener's Horse succeeded in beating off the Boers, and reached camp about midnight.

The following morning (the 28th) we were astir at three o'clock, and marched out (six companies) in a northerly direction, taking part in a movement extending over a wide area, under the direction of General French. Besides Hamilton's force, there were Gordon's and Dickson's Cavalry Brigades, while Rundle's Division held the town and menaced the centre of the Boer position. It appeared that some of the forces which had been operating in the south-east corner of the Orange Free State were laagered to the north-east of the big Thabanchu Mountain, and were holding the latter with artillery and riflemen, while their flanks were extended a great distance over very rough country.

Our brigade was the first to come in touch with the enemy at Kitchener's Horse Hill (so called because of the fight there the day before), and came under a brisk fire, but it did not take long to clear the Boers out; in fact, when they saw that a determined advance was being made on them, they left the position and made off. Dickson's Cavalry Brigade then advanced, and Ridley's Mounted Infantry made a sweeping


Boers shewn thus xxxxx
Boer guns
M.I.
Ridley's
Kitchener's
Harper Hill
Dickson's Brigade
Eden
Mtn
18th Br.
Line of Retreat
Boer Laagers
Thabanchu
Mtn
Thabanchu
19th Brigade
Bivouack
Bloemfontein
Road
Gordon's
Brigade
Victoria Farm
Operations around Thabanchu Apr. 28
F.A.W. Del.

flank movement farther out to the west, so as to drive in any of the small parties distributed out on the Boers' right flank, the object being to work round the northern end of the mountain and get at the laagers. Gordon's Cavalry Brigade was on a similar errand in the opposite direction.

After our brigade had occupied Kitchener's Horse Hill, we were distributed about on some of the smaller ridges adjacent to it, and remained there the greater part of the day. Dickson pushed forward into the more open country to the north, and when he had worked well forward and was almost within striking distance of the enemy he sent word to Hamilton asking him if he could assist him. Hamilton immediately gave orders for a general advance, and our brigade made for a big hill called Eden Mountain, a continuation to the north of Thabanchu Mountain. Being thus supported, Dickson continued his advance, and at last came within sight of the main Boer force, which was quietly withdrawing to the north-east. As soon as the British appeared, a well-directed shell fire was opened on them, and at the same time a large force which had detached itself from the main body moved smartly round to the north and west with a couple of guns to cut off Dickson's retreat. As Gordon on the other

flank had failed to get through the nek, and no diversion could be expected from that quarter, Dickson had to withdraw as quickly as possible, the result of the day's operations being very nearly the exact opposite of what was intended.

It was nearly dark when we made good our footing on Eden Mountain, and the chill evening air, after a hard climb which had warmed us up, made our teeth fairly rattle; however, shortly after it got dark, we were ordered down, a feat which was accomplished with some difficulty, and we marched back to Thabanchu, arriving there at half-past ten.

The next day was Sunday, and our brigade was given a much needed rest. We could hear artillery fire going on intermittently all day, and one shell came over a low ridge at the back of our bivouac, falling within two hundred yards of us; but we were getting used to that sort of thing, and it caused no excitement, hardly a man taking the trouble to get up to see what had happened. At seven o'clock that evening a rather unusual event occurred—the church bells in the village ringing the inhabitants to their several places of worship, while the sound of the artillery fire reverberated round the mountain. That same evening General Hamilton received orders to march on Winburg, through Jacobsrust, as the right flank of the

general northern advance, our column to be strengthened at Jacobsrust by the newly-formed 21st Brigade (Derbys, Cameron Highlanders, Sussex and C. I. V.) under General Bruce Hamilton, Broadwood's Cavalry (2nd Brigade), another horse battery, two more field batteries, and two 5-inch guns.

We commenced our northward march from Thabanchu on Monday morning, the 30th, at a quarter to six, and had covered about seven miles when the advance guard found the enemy in a strong position at Hout Nek, barring our further progress. The road at this point runs along and over some very undulating ground, bounded on the west by Thaba Mountain, a more or less flat-topped hill of large extent, while to the north and east the ground rises to a series of rough kopjes. On Thaba Mountain, dominating the road, a large force of Boer riflemen was collected, the approaches to it from the south and east sides being covered by the fire of two guns. On the east and north were long-range guns, supported by the main body of the enemy. Our right and right rear were threatened throughout the day by the eastern force.

By ten o'clock we were in action, the main attack being directed against Thaba Mountain. The Shropshires were the leading battalion of

Boers shewn thus x x x x x
Boer Gun
Boer Gun
Boer Gun
Boer Gun
Long Tom
F.A.W. Del.
Shropshires
Mounted Infantry
Cornwalls
Baggage
Canadians
Artillery
Gordons
To Jacobsrust
Turning movement of Cavalry next morning
Hout Nek afternoon of April 30th

our brigade, and they deployed to hold the enemy in front, supported by the guns, while the Gordons were ordered to advance up the southern slopes of the mountain and support Kitchener's Horse, who had already made good their footing on it. Our regiment, with the mounted infantry, took up a position on the right, facing the Boer guns on the east, and the Cornwalls remained with the baggage. This position was maintained until early in the afternoon, the Gordons having worked their way over about half of the mountain ; but the Boers, seeing the determined attempt made to secure this hill, reinforced their men there to such an extent that no further progress could be made. During this time the peculiar sight was witnessed of the British and Boer artillery both shelling the same hill (see sketch). General Hamilton ordered the Gordons to be reinforced, and two companies of Shropshires, with our regiment, moved across to work up the hill behind the Gordons. As we did so we came under the most severe shell fire we experienced during the campaign. The two Boer guns on our right were firing segment shells, and their practice was exceedingly good, each company being enfiladed as it crossed the open ground before reaching the hill. That only six or seven men were hit seemed almost a miracle. A wide extension and

rapid movement contributed largely to the immunity from heavy casualties. About this time the Boers on the right and right rear made a strong demonstration against the Mounted Infantry, and their shells found the baggage waggons and gave them a good shaking up. These were got into a safer place and preparations made to meet what looked like a determined attack, but the enemy did not seem desirous of coming to closer quarters in that direction.

When we made good our footing in support of the Gordons, it was getting on towards dark, and an order came up from the General that the hill must be cleared at all costs. It was decided, therefore, that the regiments should be strung across the hill, and at seven o'clock (after dark), a general advance should be made with fixed bayonets to sweep the entire feature. Wiser counsels apparently prevailed, and the whole force fixed bayonets, lay down exactly where it was, posted guards in front, and waited for daylight to renew the fight. General Hamilton decided that his force was not strong enough to operate successfully over such an extent of ground, and sent word to General French at Thabanchu asking for reinforcements.

At daylight the next morning the attack was renewed. B Company and some Shropshires

worked well round to the left, a good deal of ground being gained. While this was going on, the 8th Hussars, a Lancer regiment, a field battery, and the East Yorkshire regiment arrived from Thabanchu. The field battery and the infantry were sent to support the right and right rear, where the pressure was still strong; the cavalry and a horse battery were sent right round the mountain to threaten the line of retreat, and about noon a determined effort was made by the infantry to dislodge the Boers. A general advance, the brunt of which was borne by the Gordons and Shropshires, had the effect of sending the Boers pell-mell down the hill, where some of the cavalry were successful in getting in amongst them. The Boers on the right immediately withdrew into the hills, subsequently joining their comrades and retreating in great disorder to the north. We got our waggons across the nek during the afternoon, and bivouacked a couple of miles on the other side. Although the total casualties were under a hundred, I consider the action at Hout Nek as the hardest fight we took part in, always excepting Paardeberg. Our casualties were: Lieutenant J. M. Ross, B Company, slightly wounded; Pte. H. Cotton, D Company, killed; Ptes. R. Irwin and C. K. Rorison, B Company, slightly wounded; Bugler P. R. Foster, D Company,

slightly wounded; Pte. J. Letson, G Company, slightly wounded; Pte. J. A. Lutz, G Company, very slightly wounded.

The next day we were up before daylight expecting to continue our march, but orders came after breakfast cancelling the previous order; and as several men of our regiment were missing, an armed search-party was sent out to search Thaba Mountain. The only body we found was that of a young Englishman belonging to Kitchener's Horse. Our missing men had all turned up by the time we got back to camp in the evening. During the day Generals Bruce Hamilton and Broadwood joined the column with their commands, coming from the direction of Kranz Kraal, and preparations were made for a forward movement in the morning, Lord Roberts having put in motion the centre and left columns, which, together with ours, constituted what was called the Grand Army.

CHAPTER XII

HOUT NEK TO KROONSTADT

ON May 3rd the Winburg column, as we were now called, marched sixteen miles to Isabellafontein, where the cavalry skirmished a little with Boer patrols. The next day we had barely got started when we heard a rattle of musketry in front, and on breasting a ridge saw the cavalry exchanging shots with the enemy, who were on a long line of low kopjes running east and west near the Welkom Drift on the Vet River, supported by about a dozen guns. All dispositions were made for an infantry attack, but two incidents occurred which rendered this unnecessary. Our two 5-inch guns came into action, and their excellent practice, supported by the field-guns, soon dominated the Boer fire, while at the same time a cleverly executed manœuvre by the Household Cavalry, 12th Lancers, and Kitchener's Horse prevented the junction with the main body of a large force of Boers from Brandfort which was coming up to their assistance. As their plans were completely

frustrated, they retreated hurriedly, their dead and wounded being left on the field.

Although the Boers made a precipitous retreat we did not expect that they would pass the kopjes to the north of, and commanding, the Vet River without making a stand, but such proved to be the case, and on the 5th of May the column marched sixteen miles to Winburg and entered the town unopposed, the British flag being immediately hoisted. General Hamilton received a message from Lord Roberts, congratulating him and the Winburg column, as we had arrived at the latter place two days before it was expected we would, notwithstanding we had been meeting with opposition all along the route. The draft, or reinforcements, which had been sent out to us from Canada under Lieutenants Carpenter, Winter, Boyd and MacDonald, caught us up at this point, by a series of hard forced marches from Bloemfontein, and were warmly welcomed by the regiment. The new men were distributed among the different companies.

The next day (the 6th), having been relieved by General Colville with the Highland Brigade, who were following us up all the time, we marched ten miles north to Dankbarsfontein, and the centre and left columns, which had had a smart engagement at the Vet River the

previous day, occupied Smaldeel Junction. Lord Roberts called a general halt on the 7th and 8th, to give the troops a rest. Continual marching on reduced rations, with a weight of thirty pounds on one's back, soon begins to tell. Our biscuit ration was three-quarters of a pound per day, and the meat, when it reached the men in the shape of cooked food, never averaged much over half a pound, although one pound per man was drawn in the first place. The animals were driven along with the column, and it can easily be imagined that they were in anything but good condition. The very freshness of the meat was a drawback, as I have seen it cut up and put into pots to boil before it got cold. When the regiment's ration of meat was drawn, the first thing done was to select the best part for the officers' mess; then the staff-sergeants' mess, of which the quarter-master-sergeant was a prominent member, came next, after which the meat went to the companies. Not that more than their share was taken by either of the above-mentioned messes, but as fried steaks are much more palatable than greasy boiled meat, that part of the animal most suitable for steaks was appropriated, and consequently the proportion of bone and fat in the share which went to the men was so much the greater.

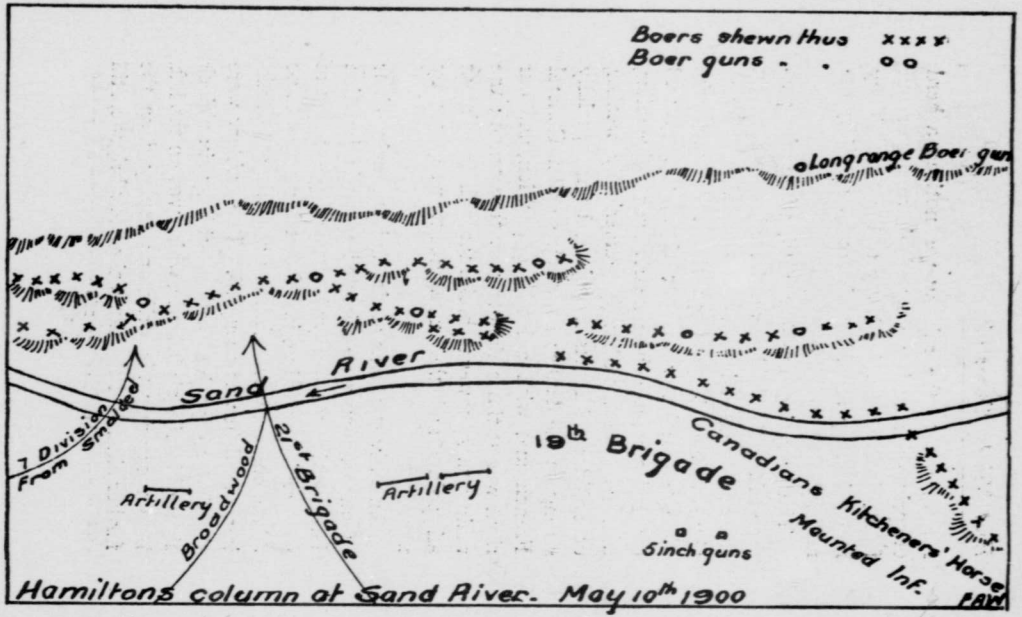
Another feature of the ration question might have been improved upon. I always understood that the reason we were kept on a reduced biscuit ration was, not so much because the supply in the country was short, but because it was impossible to keep up a proper supply with the columns, on account of the difficulties of transport; and the latter being the reason, I never could understand why the tea and coffee ration was reduced, as surely the bulk to be carried did not amount to much. In addition to getting a reduced tea and coffee ration, we used to lose in other ways. Almost every day we were on the trek coffee was boiled in the morning, and the meat would not be cooked until the day's march was over, generally in the evening; consequently, unless there was time afterwards to make the tea, which was rarely the case, we would go without it. But, strange to say, instead of the tea accumulating, as it should have done under such circumstances, and the men getting the benefit of a strong brew later on, on most occasions no ration would be issued until the first one was used up, and the men would simply be that much out. The result was that the men insisted on the tea and meat both being cooked, no matter what time it was, and I have seen one or other dished out at midnight, the men, other than the cooks and orderlies, turning in in the meantime.

On May 9th we marched ten miles to Bloemplaats, near the Sand River, on the north bank of which the enemy had taken up strong positions covering the drifts. A few shots were exchanged by the right flank patrols with the Boers, who were working round and crossing the river higher up, and some shells were sent at a party of 150 who exposed themselves on the other side. The principal excitement of the afternoon was the rushing through the camp of a large herd of antelope, which had apparently been driven forward by the wide movement of the general advance until their further progress was barred by the river. They were about the size of the Canadian white-tailed deer, and at first were seen to be rushing up and down between the camp and the river. Finally they turned and streamed right through the lines, a good many men trying to catch them; but a runaway horse with no intention of stopping until he had to would have been just as easy to get hold of. The temptation to shoot was very great, and a good many shots were fired, but it was dangerous work, and the result was that a mounted infantryman was wounded. An order was issued that night forbidding shooting at game in the future. The only other place where a similar thing happened was when our column reached the railway south of Bloemfontein from Poplar Grove.

As we got to the railway we noticed a herd of spring-bok racing up and down across our front, finally breaking away to the rear. They had evidently a strong dislike to crossing the railway.

The operations on May 10th, when the passage of the Sand River was forced, were amongst the most extensive of the campaign. From General French, on Lord Roberts' left, to the Mounted Infantry on our right, the ground covered must have been nearly twenty-five miles, and the Boers, although numerically weaker, occupied all important points, being specially strong on the flanks; so much so that General French met with a lot of opposition, and our right was at times dangerously threatened; the main attack, however, broke through the line at all points and the engagement was over by noon.

An early start was made, and the main efforts of our column were directed towards Junction Drift, which the Derbys had taken possession of the previous evening, just forestalling about 400 of the enemy, who advanced at dark, not thinking the drift was occupied. The artillery were the first to get into action, and by six o'clock Bruce Hamilton's brigade, which was on the left, began crossing the drift, and deployed on the farther side. At the same time our brigade, still


Boers shewn thus xxxx
Boer guns . . oo
Long range Boer gun
Sand River
7 Division from Modder
Broadwood
2nd Brigade
Artillery
Artillery
19th Brigade
Canadians
Kitchener's Horse
Mounted Inf.
6inch guns
Hamiltons column at Sand River. May 10th 1900
F.B.W.

keeping on the south side, advanced towards the river more to the right, which at this point was thickly fringed with scrub and strongly held by the Boers, their main position being on a series of ridges rising up from the river to the north and ending in a line of low kopjes a mile or a mile and a half back. As the 21st Brigade began working its way across the drift on the left, the 7th Division of the main army converged towards it, and by a simultaneous assault, supported by artillery, cleared the heights beyond. Meanwhile the pressure on our right flank had become more severe, and our brigade gave all its attention to warding off what looked like a threatened attack on a large scale. Our regiment and Kitchener's Horse bore the brunt of the fighting at this point, B Company being in advance. On going forward to engage the Boers in the scrub, the latter went a little too far, and came under a very heavy rifle fire from the concealed enemy. The success of the 21st Brigade and 7th Division, however, had the effect of weakening the pressure at our end, and a general retreat soon took place, work then being started to get the baggage and guns across the drift.

A and H companies had been acting as escort to the two 5-inch guns all morning, and had a good view of some interesting artillery practice. The first shot was fired just at break of day, and

went shrieking over our heads across the river to where a Boer laager was supposed to be. Some mounted infantry, who had been acting as a picquet down near the river, had an exciting time getting away, when they withdrew towards us, having to run across some open ground, where they were freely potted at by Boers who had come down into the scrub on the opposite side. The guns moved over more to the left, after sunrise, to engage a long-range Boer gun which was posted on a kopje about three miles north of the river. They caught sight of us moving across and fired at us, but although their aim was good, their shells did not burst. A big cloud of smoke as the gun fired was all we could see, and then, waiting for a few seconds, the shell coming through the air could be heard, followed by a thud as it struck the ground and threw up a cloud of dirt twenty feet high. As soon as the range-finders got the distance, our gun pointed its nose up in the air and flung a shell. While the shell was in the air, probably three-quarters of the way across, the white smoke from the Boer gun appeared and immediately afterwards our shell struck. The dust, etc., from the explosion seemed to actually mingle with the smoke of the other gun. Our third shot put the gun out of action.

Our casualties during the engagement were:

Pte. E. Armstrong, A Company, slightly wounded; Pte. F. G. W. Floyd, B Company, killed; Pte. G. W. Leonard, B Company, died of wounds; Pte. A. McLean, B Company, severely wounded.

As soon as the action was over the big guns were hauled across the drift, and the two companies, A and H, still accompanied them. We marched about five miles and then bivouacked, Broadwood's Cavalry keeping more to the east and occupying Ventersburg after a little skirmishing. We found that the remainder of the regiment had stayed at the drift for the night, and the baggage with them. We each had one blanket, which we were carrying, but it was getting on towards the South African winter and one blanket was not much good. We were also without rations. The result was that one of those little things happened which did so much to foster good feeling between the different regiments of our brigade. As soon as the Gordons and Shropshires heard how we were situated, the former brought us over some of their blankets and a ration of rum, and the Shropshires made tea for us that evening and coffee the next morning.

All the Boers who had been opposed to the British force retired on Kroonstadt, the capital —since Bloemfontein had been taken—of the

Orange Free State, where, we understood, a determined stand was to be made.

A general advance took place the next day, and half the distance between the Sand River and Kroonstadt was made. As our column was converging from the east, and the main army was marching directly north, the latter got ahead of us and halted that night within eight miles of Boschrand, where the enemy was holding a strongly entrenched position to defend the town. During the night, however, it was evacuated, a hurried retreat to the north being decided upon, and Lord Roberts entered the second capital of the Orange Free State and hoisted the Union Jack, President Steyn having transferred himself and the seat of Government, in a Cape cart, to Lindley on the previous day. During the morning we had pressed on, expecting every minute to hear firing from the direction of the main column. When word was received that all the positions had been vacated by the enemy, the pace slackened up, and in the middle of the day we were given three hours' rest. We subsequently marched to Kroonstadt Spruit, about three miles south-east of the town, and bivouacked among the small kopjes which we had previously understood were to be one of the features of the most stiffly contested battle-field of the campaign.

CHAPTER XIII

KROONSTADT TO DOORNKOP

LORD ROBERTS halted from the 12th to the 22nd of May at Kroonstadt, in order that the railway line, on which he was depending for his supplies, could be repaired. It was necessary, however, before the main advance to Pretoria should be recommenced, that the flanking columns, which had been drawn into the main body at Kroonstadt, in the expectation of a stubborn fight, should be again extended. It was also necessary that Mr. Steyn should be followed up, and still another of his capitals taken possession of.

We had two days' rest at Kroonstadt, and they were certainly very much needed. I remember being so stiff from the effects of the steady, hard marching that I could scarcely move about. However, a couple of days' rest improved matters a little. Lord Roberts, accompanied by his staff, went round to the different bivouacs and inspected the regiments. We could hear them cheering him after he had been

through their lines, the sound coming nearer and nearer. We were told we would be called upon for the same thing, but on no account was there to be a "tiger." "Tigers," we were given to understand, were low-down things, only indulged in by people from wild and woolly regions, and Lord Roberts would think we were wild and woolly instead of a barrack-square regiment if we let ourselves loose in such a manner. This incident illustrates somewhat the apparent fear there was that in some way we should show a little independence or individuality. We were always made to copy any little "wrinkles" of the British regiments, and our drill was changed half a dozen times to make it conform to something some of the other regiments did which took the adjutant's eye. At Windsor Castle, after being reviewed by the Queen, we had dinner in the riding-school. The officers lunched with the household. When we drank the Queen's health we gave three cheers *and* a "tiger," the London papers describing it next morning as a supplementary Canadian cheer of special vigour and heartiness. After that the "tiger" was trotted out on all occasions.

On the 15th of May our column was again put in motion, and we marched five miles in the direction of Lindley. The next day we did not start till three in the afternoon, but

once we did start we made up for the rest, as we kept going till nine o'clock and covered about fourteen miles. I have a note in my diary that tea was dished out half an hour after midnight. We should probably not have had to go so far, only the veldt was burning in all directions, and we had to keep on until we got a suitable camping ground. When first seen in the distance, the burning grass, which looked like a string of camp fires, was hailed with satisfaction, as we thought the cavalry which was ahead had halted, but a will-o'-the-wisp was never more misleading.

On the 17th of May we got an early start, and although having to cross two difficult drifts, we covered sixteen or seventeen miles, having halted in the middle of the day for a couple of hours and gathered up firewood, which had to be carried five miles, not a stick of any kind being visible from where we subsequently bivouacked. As the transport was much delayed, we had to shiver in the cold for some hours before we got our blankets. Some water I left in my canteen that night showed a good coating of ice in the morning. We were still about fourteen miles from Lindley, but General Broadwood, who had been keeping well ahead, had already received the surrender of the town.

The next day the 21st Brigade went on to

Lindley, but as some patrols were sniped at to the north of our bivouac, denoting the presence of the enemy, and as a convoy was expected from Kroonstadt with much needed supplies, our brigade, with a battery of artillery and some mounted infantry, were left behind, with orders to bring along the convoy and join the rest of the column, when it turned north from Lindley on its way to Heilbron. The Cornwalls and four companies from our regiment, with the field battery, went out to reconnoitre to the north, but no enemy could be seen.

On the 19th we moved to the north-east in order to strike the main column, and came up with it the following day (Sunday), just in time for our mounted troops to take part in forcing the passage of the Rhenoster River. The unexpected attack on their right caused the Boers to retreat northwards in great haste. Some of their waggons were plainly visible for a time, and we wondered why the artillery was not brought up quickly, as they looked to be within range and darkness was setting in. It turned out afterwards that General Smith-Dorrien's aide-de-camp, who was sent back to bring up the guns, was thrown from his horse and rendered unconscious, the order consequently not being delivered. We camped that night on the north side of the Rhenoster River, a couple of

hours after dark, having marched about eighteen miles. The other part of the column had been fighting a rear-guard action all day, the Boers who had been hanging on the outskirts of Lindley following up as soon as the town was vacated; thus two rear-guard actions proceeded simultaneously, the one in front of us and the one behind.

On Monday we marched to Witpoort Farm, eight miles from Heilbron, and the following day (the 22nd) advanced on the town which for a few hours had been the fourth capital of the Orange Free State, ex-President Steyn, with his council, leaving hurriedly for the east when he heard of our approach. After that we gave up capturing Orange Free State capitals and turned our attention to the one across the Vaal. General Broadwood, moving with his cavalry and guns on our left front, came within view of the town of Heilbron just in time to see the tail end of a Boer convoy disappearing over the top of a ridge to the north, and immediately gave chase. He succeeded in capturing seventeen Boers and fifteen waggons. In the meantime we had come up, and as we were the leading regiment, G, H, and A companies were extended in skirmishing order and advanced directly on the town. As no opposition was met with, and the officials surrendered to General Smith-Dorrien,

we marched through the streets, posted sentries on the principal buildings and stores, and closed them up. Later in the day we were able to purchase some bread, cornmeal, sugar, etc., the stores being well stocked.

On the same day that we occupied Heilbron, Lord Roberts commenced his northern advance from Kroonstadt. The Boers had retired to the kopjes north of the Rhenoster River, and made elaborate preparations to bar his further progress, but the success of our movements thirty miles to the east had so threatened their left flank that they deserted their positions without firing a shot, and Lord Roberts was able to cross unopposed, and on the 24th of May reached Vredefort Road Station. From Heilbron we inclined towards the railway and came in touch with Lord Roberts' column on the 24th of May, passing over a very rolling, open country, just freshly burnt, the light ash from the grass filling the air and making the men look like sweeps. The artillery horses showed signs of great exhaustion that day, and more had to be abandoned than I had ever noticed before. We marched thirteen miles. The biscuits were all gone and flour was issued instead. We bivouacked at 2 p.m., and spent most of the afternoon trying to do a little cooking. In the evening a ration of rum was issued and the

Queen's health drunk. The regiments of the 21st Brigade cheered and sang the National Anthem in turn, then our Brigade took it up, and the cheering and singing passed along the whole line, the sound gradually dying away in the distance.

With the exception of Generals French and Hutton, the former of whom crossed the Vaal at Parys, on the 24th, the main army was again united. Lord Roberts then changed his plans, and instead of continuing as the army of the right flank, General Hamilton was ordered to move across the railway and advance to the Vaal on the left of the main column. This strategy proved most successful, as the Boers, thinking we were going to cross at Engelbrecht's Drift, east of the railway, had collected a large force there to oppose us, whereas, after two days' marching, we crossed the river and stood upon the territory of the South African Republic without firing a shot. The crossing was effected at Wonderwater Drift, at 3.30 p.m., May 26th. Colonel Otter, who had recovered from his wound, joined us early in the morning, very thoughtfully bringing up with him some supplies, clothing and boots. We had been living on what we could make out of dry flour, water and wood being very scarce for some days, and the three-quarter pound of hard-tack which we

got for the next four days tasted sweeter than ever. The English army biscuit is certainly a good one. We once or twice were served out with biscuits captured from Boer convoys, and found them to be very inferior to our own and full of weevils.

Once across the Vaal we halted, and as we were all very dirty, especially from the effects of the last march, which had been through heavy sand, we made for the river and had a good wash. The main body only got as far as Taaibosch Spruit on the 26th, but on the following day they crossed the river and bivouacked at Vereeniging, the Grand Army thus securing its footing in the Transvaal preparatory to striking at the principal capital of Dutch power in South Africa.

On May 27th we continued our march and covered about fourteen miles, reaching Rietkuil just at dark. Before we started a Cape cart came into the bivouac, containing an old Dutchman and two women, a dirty pocket handkerchief on a forked stick fastened to the seat doing duty as a flag of truce. Colonel Otter interviewed the old gentleman, after which he sent him and his belongings over to headquarters to be dealt with. It was our day for rear-guard, and although the head of the column started about 8 a.m., we did not get away till nearly

eleven. The country was very rolling, and at times a splendid view of the whole column could be obtained, as when, for instance, we breasted one of the larger ridges and everything was laid out before us. Away in the distance, distinguishable only through field-glasses, the main body of mounted troops could be seen, their advance guard being entirely out of sight; then the advance guard of the infantry, followed by the two brigades, the different regiments marching independently, some of them a couple of miles apart; batteries of artillery, with the main column and the long string of waggons, probably five or six parallel lines of them, creaking along behind their teams of skinny mules and oxen—the whole column, from the cavalry advance guard to the screen behind us, covering a distance from front to rear of about ten miles, with a breadth of four.

The next day we had an easy march to Syperfontein, and bivouacked about noon on the south side of a range of kopjes. Our orders were to be in readiness to move at a moment's notice, to assist in an action which was expected to develop in front of Lord Roberts. General French, who, ever since we crossed the railway to the west, had been advancing on our left front, came in touch with the enemy, posted in a strong position to the north of the head-waters

of Klip River, and with General Hutton's Mounted Infantry operated over a large tract of country, trying to pierce their lines, but without success. The day's operations consisted chiefly of an artillery duel, the casualties on the British side being light. As this was the first opportunity we had, the waggons brought up by Colonel Otter were hauled to the front, and the afternoon spent in issuing clothing, the winter khaki made of serge. A couple of prisoners were brought in by some of our mounted men during the afternoon. They were both Western Americans, and of a pretty good class. In conversation with a staff officer, they stated that they had been captured owing to their friends, the Boers, having taken their horses when they decided that a retreat was necessary. "When a Boer makes up his mind it is time to get out," one of them said, "he takes the first horse he can catch, if his own is not handy; if the nearest one should happen to belong to the Commandant, so much the worse for the Commandant. We knew the Boers were retiring all round us, and when we thought it was about time to withdraw, and looked round for our horses, we found they had taken them, and of course we couldn't get away." Asked as to where he thought the Boers would make a determined stand, he replied, with a sneering drawl, "Not much this

side of the Mediterranean, I guess." Late that evening three-quarters of a pound of biscuit was issued for the next day, and it was suggested to us that we had better try and keep some for the day after, as there was no more on the waggons, and it was uncertain when more could be obtained!

On the 29th May we made an early start, our orders being to march eighteen miles to Florida, a suburb to the west of Johannesburg; but the rocky ridges of Doornkop (the battle-field where Jameson's ill-fated force surrendered in January, 1896) had to be crossed, and unless French and Hutton were more successful than they had been the previous day, it meant that we would have to drive the Boers out of their positions before we could reach our objective. The undulating nature of the country was becoming more pronounced as we advanced north, and the long lines of ridges steeper and more frequent, while the quartz rock, which had first led the gold-seekers to the rich veins of the Witwatersrand, showed ever more plainly on the surface. The incessant boom of artillery on our front and right front gradually sounded louder. Evidently the mounted brigades had failed to dislodge the enemy, and an infantry attack would have to be launched. About one o'clock, as we overtopped a ridge, we came in view of a level

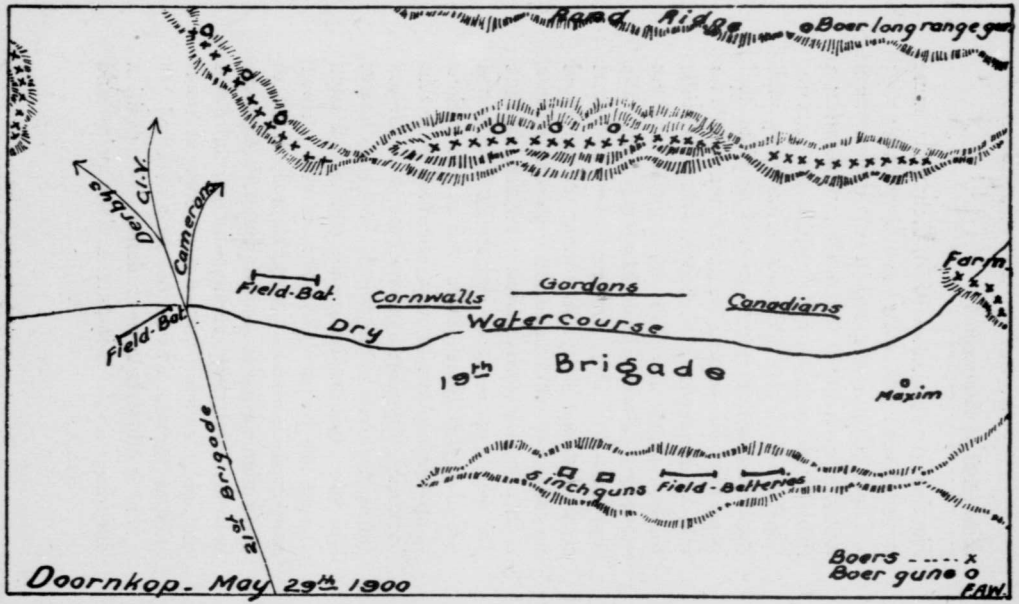
piece of ground, extending for some distance in front of us, on the opposite side of which rose a small kopje, surmounted by French's horse batteries flinging their shells at a bigger kopje two miles farther to the north; but it was easily seen from the return fire that the enemy's guns were much the heavier. The previous afternoon General French had been operating several miles east of this position, and, leaving a force of mounted infantry to hold the ground he had been occupying, he moved the greater part of his force to the west, to try and turn the enemy's right and continue his march to the north. His later movement had had the unexpected effect of locating what proved to be the Boers' main position.

There are certain occasions when no words are necessary to inform the infantryman that it is "up to him" to do some fighting. The present was one of these. Descending into the plain in front of us, and marching in the direction of the small kopje already mentioned, we "parked" our waggons about the centre, and crossing a small swampy stream, the head waters of the Klip River, met the whole of French's force, cavalry and horse batteries, going to the rear. The situation stood explained. French had found an enemy too strong for him to dislodge; Hamilton with his infantry,

his field artillery, and his 5-inch guns, must undertake the job, while the cavalry leader took his squadrons and 12-pounders to the west and north to help the main attack by executing a flank movement on the Boer right.

We moved up to the south slope of the small kopje, the artillery guns were dragged up and placed in position, and the dispositions made for attack; but General French had not had time to cover the ground necessary to make his flank movement felt, so a short halt was called. We had marched about twelve miles and were tired; two hundred yards farther and we would be under fire. While we rested we discussed with each other the probabilities of the coming fight. But we did not rest for long; the short afternoon would soon be gone; there were no more rations on the transport; to stay where we were was impossible; the enemy's lines had to be broken through.

Their position was well chosen. Posted among big rocks on the top of a long ridge, supported by heavy guns, the main body of their riflemen faced our brigade. Away to the west a second ridge, tending to the north, was strongly occupied, while another force still farther to the west was posted on a detached hill covering the whole right flank. The position was about six miles in extent. The main Rand


Road Ridge
Boer long range guns
Derbyshire
K.R.R.
Cameron
Field-Bat.
Field-Bat.
Cornwalls
Gordons
Canadians
Dry Watercourse
19th Brigade
Farm
Maxim
21st Brigade
6 inch guns
Field-Batteries
Boers ----- x
Boer guns o
Doornkop. May 29th 1900
FAW.

ridge stood out prominently to the north, and on it was posted a long-range gun.

The 21st Brigade, supported by two field batteries, moved over to the left to deal with the right of the Boer position, while our brigade, under cover of two field batteries and the 5-inch guns, advanced to the main attack. The Gordons were the leading regiment that day, and they were placed in the centre, the Cornwalls being on their left and our regiment on the right, the Shropshires remaining with the baggage. The three regiments advanced, each with a frontage of two companies, in four lines, the latter 150 yards apart, an extension of from twenty to thirty paces being observed between the men. As soon as we advanced over the ridge we had been waiting behind, the ground sloped rapidly away only to rise with a gradual incline to the ridge opposite, the distance between the two ridges being about two miles. The Boers had fired the grass, and as there was a light wind from the north, it was burning towards us and we had to run through the flame about half way down the slope, beards and eyebrows in some cases getting badly singed. From that point we were on burnt ground, the khaki showing up well against the black.

The method had been adopted of having a different company leading every day on the

march, consequently F Company was in front on the 29th, and we went into action in the following formation: F and G companies in the front line, H and A in the second, then B and C followed by D and E. We had not proceeded far when the right of our lines came under a nasty cross-fire from some Boers in a farm building and trees on our right. One of the drawbacks to the wide extensions now adopted when advancing to the attack was immediately apparent. The officers commanding the right and left half battalions were on the left of the lines — that being the directing flank —consequently they did not know what was happening on the right, as the configuration of the ground prevented them from seeing. The obvious movement was for one of the companies on the right to change direction and protect the flank, but a captain does not care to take the responsibility of acting on his own initiative, especially when he has specific orders to carry out, and his company forms part of a general movement. Fortunately our Maxim came up and by a well-directed fire drove the enemy from that particular point.

Our orders were to advance within about 1,000 yards of the ridge opposite and keep up a sustained fire. I understand the Gordons had the same orders. Covered by a heavy shell fire from our two batteries and the 5-inch guns, we

advanced down the slope and part way up the opposite incline. The front line established itself in a good position from which to open fire, and the second line reinforced. This position was maintained till sundown. In the meantime the Gordons, once away from the Brigadier, took matters in their own hands. Halting every now and then to reply to the fire of their opponents, they gradually drew nearer the crest, and notwithstanding the withering fire poured upon them, rushed the position at the point of the bayonet in the most brilliant manner. The clearing of the main feature had the effect of weakening the resistance in front of us, and we advanced rapidly up the slope only to see the last of the Boers scampering away on their horses. On the left the attack was led by the C. I. V., supported by the Camerons, while the Derbys drove the enemy from the kopje on the west, all the positions being cleared just as it got dark. The honours of the day were easily with the famous Gordon Highlanders. I cannot imagine anything finer, from a military point of view, than the sight they presented on May 29th, at Doornkop. They marched up to the muzzles of the Boer rifles with a calm and even stride, which was the admiration of all who saw them. They were never steadier on the parade ground of Edinburgh Castle. Nine officers and eighty-eight men put out of action in so short a

time testified to the severity of the fire they were subjected to, but I believe if there had only been a half company left it would have closed with its foe.

Our casualties, fortunately, were light: Pte. J. E. Davies, A Company, severely wounded; Pte. J. B. Robinson, B Company, severely wounded; Pte. J. Jordan, C Company, severely wounded; Pte. F. S. Richardson, E Company, severely wounded; Ptes. A. V. Evans and J. Hill, F Company, slightly wounded; Ptes. A. Haydon and A. J. B. Mellish, G Company, slightly wounded.

The total casualties in Hamilton's column were two officers and twenty-four men killed, and nine officers and 106 men wounded.

We formed up on the ground we had won and waited for orders. It was quite dark and very cold, so we wrapped ourselves in our blankets and lay about on the ground. At length a messenger, who had been sent off to find the Brigadier, returned and told us we were to make our way over to where the Gordons were, about a mile to our left. We stumbled along the rocky ridge from which our friends, the Boers, had lately been firing at us, and found our comrades in arms settling down for the night. We all of us did what we had often done before —went to sleep hungry—this time with the full knowledge that there was nothing at all to eat in the morning.

CHAPTER XIV

PRETORIA

WHILE we were fighting at Doornkop the main column had occupied Germiston, a suburb of Johannesburg, meeting with only slight opposition. The principal stand to defend the Witwatersrand was made at Doornkop, and the signal defeat inflicted on the Boers there had the effect of clearing all the surrounding heights, and the Johannesburg authorities made an unconditional surrender to Lord Roberts.

The following morning we were up at four o'clock. It was still dark, and no fires were allowed, as it was not known whether the Boers had deserted the ridges farther back and the main Rand ridge, from which the Long Tom had been firing the previous day. The order about the fires was practically unnecessary, as we had neither fuel nor food. At the first streak of daylight the Mounted Infantry advanced and found all the country to the north clear. We waited until nine o'clock, and then marched five miles to Florida. It was heavy work and

the pace was very slow. We were played out. Hard work in the open air with only about half the proper amount of food soon reduces vitality. "Fine drawn" infantry the newspaper correspondents called us. It was probably the nicest way they could put it.

At noon we reached Florida, a mining suburb to the west of Johannesburg, consisting, apart from some mines, of one store, a small semi-private hotel, and two or three houses. It was our first sight of the Rand. Innumerable mine buildings, all of a substantial character, stretched away to the east as far as the eye could reach. It was a forest of smoke-stacks. Round Florida were several large properties; a few had their pumps going to keep the water down, but most of them were doing no work at all. A small artificial lake, two or three large groves of planted trees, and substantial roads made a pretty picture after the interminable treeless veldt over which we had been marching.

We bivouacked to the right of the road, leaving room beside us for the Gordons, who had stayed behind to bury their dead. There is not much cheering or hurrahing in a hard campaign. No bands play the weary soldier along on his march. Sometimes the pipers of the Highland regiments struck up, but it was hard work for them, and marching across the rough veldt made

it too hard for the men to keep step. With head thrust a little forward, and eyes fixed on the ground, carrying his rifle the way it suits him best, taking his own step, and saying very little, the soldier marches stolidly along, and if he arrives at his destination he does all that is required of him. His joys and sorrows are indulged in temperately. There was not a cheer from any of the regiments when Cronje surrendered at Paardeberg. "Hulloa, what is that over there above those trees?" "Looks like a white flag, all right. By Jove, it is; thank God, it's over." A few moments of excitement; staff-officer comes galloping up from headquarters, looks through his glasses, and then ejaculates half to himself, "It's all right; it's a surrender; they're massing." We heard while on the march to Pretoria that Mafeking had been relieved. We always thought it would be. We were exceedingly glad to hear the definite news, but we did not celebrate; we left that for the people at home.

About an hour after we had settled down in bivouac the Gordons came along, headed by their pipers. We knew they felt about as weary as we did, but when they came to our lines they braced up and swung past to the skirl of the pipes with the same old debonair swagger that does duty for church parades in Edinburgh,

and is characteristic of the regiment. We had been eye-witnesses of their gallant conduct the previous day, and a spontaneous impulse ran through our regiment, "Let's give them a cheer!" and as they wheeled round on to their ground on our right, every Canadian jumped to his feet and hurrahed till he was hoarse. It was the heartiest and most spontaneous thing I witnessed during the whole campaign. The Gordon officers came over to express their appreciation, and a sergeant who met one of our men down the line a couple of months afterwards said, "There is one thing the Gordons will never forget, and that is the cheer you fellows gave us after Doornkop."

Early in the afternoon a double ration of meat was issued, and half a pound of cornmeal. I was fortunate enough to get a meal in the evening in the semi-private hotel. The building was buried in a grove of trees, and hard to find. The meal consisted only of corned beef and dry bread, provisions being scarce, owing to the war, but it was as good as roast turkey and plum pudding to me, and the sensation of once more sitting down on a chair at a table in a room was not the least enjoyable part of the proceeding.

The following message was received by General Hamilton from Lord Roberts: "I am delighted at your repeated successes, and grieve

beyond measure at your poor fellows being without their proper rations. A trainful shall go to you to-day. I expect to get the notice that Johannesburg surrenders this morning, and we shall then march into the town. I wish your column, which has done so much to gain possession of it, could be with us. Tell the Gordons that I am proud to think that I have a Highlander as one of the supporters on my coat-of-arms."

The next day we did not move, but on June 1st we marched five miles and bivouacked within about four miles of Johannesburg. Passes were given to a good many men, who went into the town and procured supplies. On Sunday, June 3rd, we continued our northward march and made about fifteen miles, keeping a little to the west. The following day we got an early start, and continued in the same direction. We were now within a good day's march of Pretoria, and many were the ideas which crowded through one's mind. How long would the city stand a siege? Visions of interminable trenches being dug, of heavy artillery bombardment, of numerous assaults on those frowning forts, floated up one by one. The culmination of the great campaign was almost in sight. "Over my dead body," Kruger had said. It would probably be another Sebastopol; but it would finish it—that

was the one good feature about it. Pretoria, with its elaborate forts encircling it, each mounting big guns, had to be reduced, the British flag hoisted in the place of the Vierkleur, and the South African problem would be solved.

We had barely got started on our march, when a sudden change was made in direction. The head of the column swung sharply to the north-east, and we followed. What did it mean? It was not long before rumours were flying about, but one which seemed to be authentic was that Pretoria had surrendered without firing a shot. To say that we were incredulous at first is to put it mildly; but as the rumour was persistent, and emanated from the General's staff, we gradually came to believe it. The effect was magical. Fatigue was forgotten. We quickened our pace, and there was more chatting and laughing in the ranks than I had ever heard before. We were told we had to make a very long march and push along as rapidly as possible, but that did not matter—we seemed to have new life in us. Pretoria had fallen, and consequently the Boer power was at an end.

About noon we were rather surprised to hear the distant boom of cannon, and, as we proceeded, it became louder and louder. Evidently there was something wrong, but no one could

give any explanation. Towards the middle of the afternoon, after a long, hard march, we reached Six-mile Spruit. That an action on a large scale was proceeding was very evident. From the spruit the ground rises in successive parallel ridges, culminating in the hills on which the southern forts are situated. Shells from our guns could be seen bursting all along; evidently Pretoria had not surrendered. The first ridge had been taken before we arrived, and British guns could be seen working on it. The mounted troops kept to the left, while the 19th and 21st brigades advanced up the ridge and opened fire on the Boers, who were still holding the second ridge.

Lord Roberts, with the main column and siege guns, had found both banks of Six-mile Spruit occupied by the enemy, but pushed the latter back without much trouble to the first ridge, where a good deal of their artillery was posted. The heavy guns were pushed up to the front and the enemy's fire soon silenced. They then worked round Lord Roberts' left, but our force, converging to the right, closed the gap between the two columns. Our mounted infantry pushed round the Boer right, and Colonel De Lisle's corps, composed mostly of Australians, got within rifle-shot of Pretoria. The Boers vacated all their positions before dark, and made a

hurried retreat through the town. Colonel De Lisle sent an officer, Lieutenant Watson, New South Wales Mounted Rifles, under a flag of truce, into Pretoria to demand the surrender of the town, and a letter was sent to Lord Roberts from Commandant-General Botha, asking for an armistice for the purpose of arranging terms under which the city would be handed over to the British. Lord Roberts replied that the surrender must be unconditional, and a further letter was received the next morning, at five o'clock, from the Commandant-General, stating that he would not defend the place any longer, and entrusting the women, children and property to Lord Roberts' protection.

On June 5th we were up bright and early. We were not sure whether there was to be more fighting before we entered the capital, but the general opinion, from what we had seen the night before, was that an unopposed entry was before us, and so it turned out. At sunrise we moved off, our regiment being the leading one of the column, and passed along the narrow defile through which the road runs into Pretoria from the south-west. Lord Roberts' column entered by the southern road. Emerging from the hills we found ourselves in a valley about a mile and a half wide, running east and west, and there, three miles to the right, lay the city of Pretoria. It was a welcome sight, for was not

this the end of the campaign? The capital had fallen; the great wealth-producing Rand was in our possession; the principal towns were occupied by our troops; we controlled nearly all the railways. Speculation was rife, as we marched along, as to how soon we would be sent down country. The outside limit allowed was two weeks.

Once in the valley we advanced about a mile and, turning off the road, came to a halt, and there we remained until nearly noon, Lord Roberts having decided to make a ceremonious entry at 2 p.m. We were on a slope facing the city, and the column was all gathered together for practically the first time. Pole-Carew's Division and Henry's Mounted Infantry occupied a similar position a mile south of the city. I think Lord Roberts wanted the inhabitants to see something of the British forces, and took this opportunity of making a peaceful but practical demonstration.

At noon we moved to the west of the race-track and bivouacked, our orders being to march into the city at two o'clock. The principal point of interest in Pretoria is Church Square. Here are situated the Raadzaal and Law Courts, handsome buildings both; but the general effect is spoiled by the old Dopper Church right in the centre of the square. Close beside the church is a large pedestal, at that time just completed,

and waiting for the statue of Paul Kruger. Lord Roberts, with Lord Kitchener and all his staff, took up a position on the south side of the church, facing the Raadzaal. The only band which could be mustered (the Derbys, I think), was placed on the opposite side, and the great march past began.

The Guards fixed bayonets and headed the procession, followed by the Warwicks, the Yorks, the Essex and the Welsh. Then our turn came, and we were followed by the 21st Brigade. It was the climax of the campaign, even if it was not the end of the war. I shall never forget that parade. Ragged and tanned, footsore and weary, dirty and gaunt, we trudged along the western road leading into the square; past the race-course, where the British prisoners had been kept; past Paul Kruger's house; through lines of transport and mounted troops moving in different directions; past British sentries guarding piles of arms the burghers were busy surrendering; a "Halt! Fix Bayonets!" and then on into the square.

As we wheeled round the corner the band struck up "The Boys of the Old Brigade." I thought it was the sweetest music I had ever heard. We squared our shoulders, chucked out our chests, and put all the ginger we could into our step. I hope everyone else felt as much

stirred up as I did; if so, they experienced a sensation they will not forget in many days. Out of a regiment of 1,150 men, we entered Pretoria with 438. We had marched 620 miles on scant rations since being brigaded on February 12th, had assisted in the capture of ten towns, had fought in ten general engagements and on many other days, and had stood shoulder to shoulder all through with British regiments of long and great tradition. But what thought we of perils and hardships? We stood on June 5th as the representatives of the Canadian people in the Grand Army of the British Empire, in the surrendered capital of the enemy. And there was "Bobs," a little thinner and somewhat browner than when we last saw him at Kroonstadt, but sitting his horse in the same old incomparable style, and the light of his eye as undimmed as ever; while on one side of him sat Kitchener, and on the other our gallant brigadier, Major-General Smith-Dorrien, who had led us successfully and well during the past four months.

It was one of those unique moments which only come to a man occasionally during a lifetime. It will never be forgotten. If anyone asks me what I consider the greatest occasion in my life, I say that it was when I marched past Lord Roberts in Pretoria, June 5th, 1900, with the Royal Canadian Regiment.

CHAPTER XV

AFTER PRETORIA

ALTHOUGH the Boers had been driven from pillar to post before the relentless advance of Lord Roberts' victorious army; although one of their capitals had been in our possession for nearly three months, and the erstwhile Chief Executive was a fugitive, roaming about the country with his "Government" in a Cape cart; and although the second capital—the heart if not the brains, because the brains often gave signs of existing in large proportions in the Cape Colony—of the Dutch Republics, notwithstanding its elaborate forts and its unique position, political and strategic, had surrendered with barely an effort, and the President was living in a railway car, out on the Delagoa Bay line, with his only asset the gold he had stolen from the banks before he hurriedly took his departure from the city, it did not take long to find out that the unexpected was going to happen.

A favourite motto of the Boers must be:

> "He who fights and runs away
> Will live to fight another day"—

applied, of course, in a different way to the original meaning. It is absolutely no disgrace to a Boer to run away; it is simply part of his method of fighting. I could never agree with those who called the Boers cowards. They are not. They certainly have no *esprit de corps*—in fact, no sense of *morale*. They fight as they think—more or less independently. A Boer stays in a position just as long as he can put men on the other side out of action; once they close in on him, and he sees the position cannot be held any longer without endangering his life, he jumps on his horse, makes off, and takes up a new position, ready to do battle again in the same way when his enemy reappears. If he had remained at his post and died there, his death would have been a direct loss to his cause, offset, perhaps, by the example of his gallant conduct—an example totally lost on his friends, however, as they could not understand, much less appreciate, it. The ultimate result of that style of fighting is a defeat bordering on annihilation, but it takes time and costs the opposite side men and money, especially in a country so admirably suited to that kind of warfare as South Africa.

Bloemfontein and Pretoria did not prove to be the nerve centres to the Orange Free State and the South African Republic that London is to England or Paris to France. The pastoral character of most of the inhabitants probably accounts for what appears at first sight to be an abnormal state of affairs, but be that as it may, although the Boers were driven out of all the principal towns, and their main army had to retire from Pretoria along the Delagoa Bay line, they were about as much a fighting entity as they had ever been, and Lord Roberts had to set about, once the railway behind him was restored, to deal both with the main body and the separate commandoes which had escaped round our flanks as we marched north, and were operating at different points below us. The main body of the Boers retired fifteen miles east of Pretoria, on the Delagoa Bay Railway, and took up an extensive position at Diamond Hill, from which they were driven by Lord Roberts after severe fighting on the 11th and 12th of June. They then retired from point to point along the railway, being finally broken up at Koomati Poort at the end of September.

Immediately after the fall of Pretoria our brigade was split up, the Shropshires being sent down on the line of communication. We understood that the Royal Canadian Regiment

SERGEANT HART-McHARG

From a photo taken in front of the Staats Artillerie barracks, Pretoria, completed just previous to the British occupation

was to act as garrison in Pretoria with the Gordons, but it proved to be a rumour without foundation. The day after we entered Pretoria we were moved over to the east side, and bivouacked beside the Waterval road. We congratulated ourselves on the fact that we were going to have an opportunity to get fed up a bit. During the evening most of the prisoners who had been released by the cavalry at Waterval (fourteen miles north) came streaming past. A good many came over to our lines and stayed the night with us. They were certainly a unique collection, representing as they did nearly every regiment in the service. I had conversations with three—a trooper of the 18th Hussars who had been captured during the action at Talana Hill, October 20th, 1899; a Devon who had, as he expressed it, been "one of the unfortunate escort to the guns at Colenso," and the third an artilleryman, a victim of Sannah's Post. The close confinement and weary monotony, to say nothing of the lies they were regaled with by their guards about British defeats with appalling slaughter, must have made their incarceration a trying experience.

Needless to say, the "barrack square" business made its appearance without delay, but this time it was not going to stop at half measures. The following is from my diary, June 7th: Reveille,

6 a.m.; roll call; breakfast at 7; muster parade at 9; orderly room, 10.30; orders to wash trousers* and helmet covers. Just as they were drying and the adjutant was talking about getting razors in Pretoria and making all the men shave, orders came to move at 2.30 p.m., ten miles south, the Hamilton column having been reconstituted, the Suffolks taking the place of the Shropshires. Got to our destination about 9 p.m."

So we were on the trek again. There was one consolation, however—we would not have to shave. There should be an Army Order forbidding shaving on active service. Not that it would be very necessary. I know of only two regiments in South Africa which indulged in the luxury—the Household Cavalry and the Gordons. Poor Gordons, we often used to pity them—it was the one pull we had over them. When we were on the march and happened to bivouac fairly early in the afternoon and could get a good rest, we could lie on our backs and watch the unfortunate fellows nearly all on their feet shaving each other. I do not suppose there were a dozen unbroken looking-glasses in the whole regiment; and think of the condition the razors must have been in! We often thanked

* We had only one pair.

our lucky stars that we had been told to leave our razors at Cape Town. It was the only thing that saved us.

We camped that night to the east of Irene Station, and the following morning moved across the railway and turned south. General Smith-Dorrien had been put in charge of the lines of communication from Kroonstadt to Pretoria, and the different regiments were distributed along the railway. On Sunday, the 10th of June, the Gordons and ourselves reached Elandsfontein, the Suffolks and Cornwalls having been left at different points along the route. We remained there a couple of days, and were able to purchase some supplies, rice and oatmeal being bought out of the regimental funds—the most sensible use the money was ever put to, always excepting what was spent on the sick and wounded. Our next move was to Springs, which we entered, after two days' march, unopposed.

Springs is the terminus of the branch line running east from Johannesburg, and is an important coal centre. When Lord Roberts' column had passed through Germiston on its way to Pretoria, a large number of the enemy retired by rail to Springs, damaged the engines, and established a laager twelve or fifteen miles from the village. We remained at Springs until the 2nd of August, doing the regulation garrison

duties. Guards, outposts and patrols, standing to arms every morning before daylight, and plenty of trench digging occupied nearly all our time. The weather was cold, and Colonel Otter arranged with the owners of some buildings to get us housed. A concert hall, the school-house, and some detached buildings close by were utilized, and proved very comfortable quarters in many ways, especially as we had been without shelter for so long. Our stay at Springs was very uneventful. One or two false alarms, an attack which was easily repulsed, and a reconnaissance eight or ten miles to the east without any result, were the principal events out of the ordinary routine. That the Boers were hovering about in the neighbourhood was evident, as our scouts (some men of Loch's Horse) often exchanged shots with their patrols, and one of our men was killed. A Company lost a second officer, Lieutenant M. G. Blanchard, who died from the effects of shrapnel wounds received at Roodeval on June 8th. He had been invalided back to Bloemfontein when we reached Kroonstadt on our march to Pretoria, and having recovered sufficiently, was on his way up to rejoin the regiment, and had got as far as Roodeval, which was then railhead. Christian De Wet came along after defeating and capturing the Derby Militia at the destroyed Rhen-

oster bridge, three miles north of the station, and called on the 200 "details"—men of different regiments going north to rejoin, army post-office men with 2,000 bags of mail, and some of the Army Service Corps in charge of clothing and supplies—to surrender. The Boers had four guns and fourteen hundred men; the British were without guns and a good proportion of them non-combatants, but they refused to surrender. They fortified the solitary station building and the cars standing on the track with the bales of clothing and post-bags, and defended their position for six hours; but it was no good, the shell fire was too much for them, and they eventually had to give in. Lieutenant Blanchard was struck in several places by a shell during the engagement and succumbed to his wounds a week later, being buried at Kroonstadt. He was a painstaking and courageous officer; those who were with him on the 8th of June testify to his utter disregard of danger and plucky behaviour under most trying circumstances. His death was much regretted, especially by the members of A Company. Lieutenant A. H. Macdonell and his servant were also at Roodeval, and were taken prisoners by De Wet, marching about the country with him for some weeks before they were released.

The natives working in the different coal

mines got a half holiday from their employers, put on their war paint, and, armed with assegais and knob kerries, gave us a very interesting war-dance. They chanted songs in a monotonous voice, the purport of which, it was explained to us, was that they hated the Boers, were glad we had beaten them, and would like to fight them themselves. They had the usual Kaffir costume, supplemented by strings of beads and the Zulu bunches of horse-hair fastened below the knee and at the elbow. I had some idea of buying a few of these horse-hair appendages as a relic of South African barbarism, but I was called away to attend to some matter and the opportunity passed. A few days afterwards, in patrolling the railway, I went to Brakpan, and going into a store, saw some of these articles hanging up. I was rather surprised, and asked the storekeeper if he had them for sale. "Oh, yes, we sell them to the natives." "Why, where do you get them from?" I asked in astonishment. "From Chicago," he replied!

There was one feature of our stay at Springs that I would like to mention. As Colonel Otter was camp commandant, the adjutant had a good deal of executive work to do at the station, and Lieutenant Winter, of Ottawa, was made assistant adjutant, doing all the regimental work. I do not think there was a more popular

man in the regiment than Lieutenant Winter, and he gained his popularity simply by carrying out his duties in a strict but gentlemanly manner.

During the afternoon of the 2nd of August the seven companies (G Company being on the armoured train) suddenly got orders to entrain as soon as possible and proceed to Wolvehoek, a small station on the main line south of the Vaal, the junction of the short line to Heilbron. No one knew what it all meant. We had been daily expecting to get the news that we were to return to Canada, as we thought that as the hostilities proper were practically over, and the fighting had developed into guerilla tactics pure and simple, the regular army ought to be able to deal with it. We left Springs about 10 p.m., and travelled all night in open trucks. We reached Wolvehoek at nine o'clock the following morning, but there were no orders for us, so we unloaded the train and remained there until the following morning, when we were ordered to march towards Vredefort.

The extensive operations which had been carried on by Lieutenant-General Hunter, with the help of several columns, in the south-east of the Orange River Colony, had resulted in the surrender of General Prinsloo and 4,140 men in the Brandwater Basin on the 30th July.

Christian De Wet had been with Prinsloo when the cordon was first being drawn round the force, but before it could be completed, viz., on July 15th, he managed to escape with 1,500 men and five guns, accompanied by Mr. Steyn, and made for Lindley, followed by Broadwood's Cavalry and Ridley's Mounted Infantry. De Wet proceeded in a north-westerly direction, crossed the railway, and took up a strong position in the hills east of Reitzburg, Broadwood following to Vredefort. Not being strong enough to attack, he established himself there and waited for reinforcements.

A couple of days' marching brought us to the vicinity of Vredefort, where we remained the two following days. On the eighth we started off in a north-easterly direction, and the next day got to within three miles of the Vaal. We travelled with Ridley's baggage, and I was forced to the conclusion that there was altogether too much of it, considering the size of his column. If it always moved along at the same rate as it did that day, the pace of the Mounted Infantry was not any faster than that of the infantry proper. That same night we were roused up at ten o'clock, and had to march on to the drift, getting settled down again about 1 a.m.

De Wet had managed to cross the Vaal

River at De Wet's Drift, some distance west of Vredefort, and made off in a northerly direction, several columns converging from different points to try and catch him. In those days it was the usual thing for British infantry to chase Boer mounted men, and we were accordingly sent after him. At the Vaal River we were put into Major-General Fitzroy Hart's brigade — Northumberlands, Dublins, Derbys, and half battalion Somersets — and having crossed to the north, made a hard march of sixteen miles, the dust being particularly bad. The next day, August 11th, we covered eighteen miles, the dust still being very bad and the wind high; in fact, it was so painful to the eyes that the only way to get protection was to hang a pocket handkerchief in front of one's face and trust pretty much to luck to avoid holes and anthills. On August 12th and 13th reveille was at 1.30 a.m., and we marched off at three, the first day crossing the railway at Welverdiend and turning to the west. On the 14th we changed direction to the north, and had two reveilles in one day by way of a change— one at six a.m. and the other at 10.30 p.m. After the latter we marched from midnight until daylight, and covered about twelve miles; this made twenty-four miles in less than twenty-two hours. The next day we had it a bit easier, but on the

17th we were up at 12.30 a.m., and moved off at one, no coffee being cooked, as we were to get to a drift on the Elands River by sunrise and have breakfast then. The guide turned out to be wrong in his calculations, and we marched twenty miles before we reached the drift, not getting there until after ten o'clock. We were rear-guard that day, and the sides of the road for the last three or four miles were strewn with played-out men of the other infantry regiments, a good many of whom were asleep. I think they all caught us up after we halted. From this point we made our way to Krugersdorp—De Wet having got clean away to the north—arriving at our destination on the 22nd of August. It had been hard marching, but the weather was fairly cool, and full rations were issued all the time. For the last forty or fifty miles we were on the Mafeking-Krugersdorp road, the same that Jameson brought his force along in January, 1896. A few of us got together and sang choruses in the centre of the battalion whenever we were on decent roads, and it helped the marching a good deal.

Arrived at Krugersdorp, we received orders to leave Hart's brigade and entrain for Pretoria. We reached Pretoria, August 24th, at sundown, and bivouacked beside the station. The next morning we marched through Pretoria and out

to Eerste Fabrieken, twelve miles east, on the Delagoa Bay line. We passed the British Residency, the Commander-in-Chief's head-quarters, and Lady Roberts (Lord Roberts was away) came down to the street with her daughters and shook hands with Colonel Otter. We were in the middle of one of our choruses, and they seemed much interested in the singing as we swung past.

CHAPTER XVI

THE RETURN

WHEN we left Hart's brigade at Krugersdorp, we turned over our second line of transport, *i.e.*, the baggage waggons and mules, to the Army Service Corps Department, but retained the first line, ammunition carts and water-cart, and brought them with us to Pretoria. We were fully under the impression that orders to proceed home were awaiting us at headquarters, as the period for which we enlisted was drawing to a close. We reached Pretoria on the 24th of August. We were due in Canada on the 15th October. When we were with General Hart, Colonel Otter told us during a mid-day halt (August 14th) that he had reminded the authorities that our period of service would expire on the 15th October, at which date the regiment should be in Canada, and added, "I have no doubt the Chief of Staff will take the necessary steps to have the matter attended to when we get back to the railway." Colonel Otter certainly expected different instructions to

those he received when we got to Pretoria. A staff-officer at the station told him that we were to march out to Eerste Fabrieken the following day, and that our baggage would go out by train. Neither Lord Roberts nor Lord Kitchener were in town; in any event, Colonel Otter's communication might not have reached them. On the way out to Eerste Fabrieken we left three companies at Silverton, but later on one was withdrawn and three companies were sent farther up the line, A and B companies remaining at Eerste Fabrieken with headquarters. G Company was still on the armoured train.

Eerste Fabrieken was a good post. There was plenty of corrugated iron about—a favourite building material in many parts of South Africa where wood is scarce—and it did not take us long to fix up little huts and shelters for ourselves. A stream of water near by offered the best of bathing accommodation, and the duties, such as guards, outposts and patrols, while they came round to each man with frequent regularity, were not onerous.

Some stiff fighting was going on farther up the line and troops were passing daily, some on the railway, others on foot. The cosmopolitan character of the South African irregular corps was demonstrated one afternoon when a party

of the 2nd Brabants passed close to our bivouac and halted over night. Three men came over to our lines and we "swapped lies" with them, as we used to call it, for a couple of hours. One was a Canadian, the second an American, while the third was an Australian. The two former were much interested in some old Canadian newspapers we had, especially in the report of a prize-fight, the contestants apparently being well known to them. We were much amused at their descriptions of the amount of discipline maintained in their ranks. "Our captain," they said, "is a brother of the Earl of Airlie, who was killed at Diamond Hill the other day. He was out ranching in Texas for a few years, and is an ideal leader for fellows like us. When we fall in in the morning we never take our pipes out of our mouths, and the words of command we get through the day are of the fewest: 'Shake out on the left and take a look at that bit of country over there;' or, when the bullets begin coming we generally hear some such command as this: 'I think the —— are over on that kopje to the right front, boys. Come on and get 'em. Every man his own general.'"

These were the men who, with their sister regiment the 1st Brabants, some of the Cape Mounted Rifles and Kaffrarian Rifles, Driscoll's Scouts, and a few Royal Scots Mounted Infantry

and Royal Engineers (1,600 men altogether), under Colonel Dalgety, kept at bay for sixteen days 6,000 of the enemy at Wepener. When this small force was finally relieved and marched into Thabanchu, the British regulars turned out and presented arms to them as they marched through the streets.

I was detailed on the 20th September to take a couple of prisoners into Pretoria (father and son), and was somewhat struck by their conversation. "We didn't want to fight," they kept on telling me; "Kruger and the politicians in Pretoria are responsible for the war. We don't know anything about it and are sick of the whole business." One felt sorry for these men, but were they telling the truth? While in Pretoria I met a corporal belonging to Roberts' Horse and had a long conversation with him, in the course of which I mentioned the talk I had had with my two prisoners, and said what hard luck this war was on these farmers. My new-found friend disabused my mind somewhat of the train of thought I was indulging in, by recounting an experience he had when the war first broke out. He was an intelligent, well-set-up man who had been in the Kimberley police force for six years and had been working in the cyanide plant of one of the large mines on the Rand for some time before the war. When

hostilities appeared imminent, the workers in the mines were at first told that on taking an oath of neutrality they would be allowed to remain and continue work; but this arrangement was suddenly cancelled, and they were bundled out of the city on cattle-trucks and shipped south. There were over three thousand of these men, and long delays ensued in getting them away and across the border. By the time they got to Kroonstadt they were famished, the majority of the men having brought very little to eat with them. My friend, with a few others, took advantage of a long wait at Kroonstadt and went into one of the streets near the station to endeavour to obtain some supplies. Meeting a mounted man who proved to be a Field Cornet, they asked him what the chances were of buying some food, and he told them that he did not think they could get anything, as nearly all the food-stuffs had been commandeered; however, if they would wait where they were he would go and see the Landrost and let them know what could be done. The little party waited a short time and the Field Cornet reappeared, but instead of being accompanied by the Landrost, he had gathered up a squad of Mounted Free Staters, each armed with a whip, and they insultingly drove the famished men through the public street back to the cattle-

trucks. The Corporal, at parting, told me not to be misled by what the Boers might say under the altered conditions; that they were almost a different race of men from the insolent, domineering crowd who held sway before they saw they were beaten.

We heard nothing about the going home movement for some time. It appears that Lord Roberts, on hearing from Colonel Otter, had communicated with the Imperial authorities, and the latter asked the Canadian Government to allow the regiment to remain in South Africa until the end of the war, the reply received being to the effect that the question of future service rested entirely with the men.

On the 8th of September, 1900, the following telegram was received by Colonel Otter from Lord Roberts:

"Trust that as many as possible of the Royal Canadians will prolong their service until the end of the war. They have done such gallant service it would be a pity for any of them to leave, now that the end seems so near."

Unfortunately Colonel Otter took the wrong course in dealing with this matter. He knew the men were anxious to get home, now that their term of service was up, or he never would have reminded the authorities about the matter, or made the remarks he did on the 14th of

August. The Canadian Government made no mistake: "The matter must be left entirely to the men," they said; but to the men it was not left. Colonel Otter, "after consulting the officers at headquarters," sent the following reply to Lord Roberts:

"September 8th,—Replying to yours of yesterday, your wishes will gladly be complied with. Would ask permission for one or two officers and few men, whose cases are urgent, to be given leave to return at once."

Lieutenant-Colonel Buchan was in charge of a rest camp at Elandsfontein; Major Pelletier was with C, E and F companies at Groot Olifants River; G Company was doing duty on an armoured train, and D and H companies were at Silverton, so that the only officers at headquarters, besides Colonel Otter, were the surgeon, the adjutant, the quarter-master, and three company officers. One of the latter was in Pretoria when the meeting took place; a second was not asked his opinion, so that one company officer answered for all the men. The staff-officers naturally could not speak for them.

About the same time as the above took place, or to be more precise, on the 9th of September, the following telegram was sent by the officer commanding line of communication, Pretoria-Middleburg:

"War Office wires all men of Canadian regiment engaged to serve one year, whose services expire in October, and who do not voluntarily extend their services, are to be sent to Canada as soon as possible. Please ascertain, and report to me by telegraph, number of officers and number of men of your regiment who wish to proceed to Canada under this order, and, secondly, the number who desire to remain for further service in South Africa. Information required under both heads for the regiment under your command now at Elandsfontein, Silverton, Eerste Fabrieken and Olifants River. Repeated —Elandsfontein, Silverton, Eerste Fabrieken and Olifants River."

As soon as all the facts were before them, the rank and file naturally showed resentment at once, and said they would not stay. In the meantime Colonel Otter had received the following reply to his telegram of the 8th, from Lord Roberts:

"September 9th,—Many thanks for your satisfactory reply. By all means give leave to one or two officers and few men, whose cases are urgent, to return at once."

When the feelings of the men became known, Colonel Otter sent another message to Lord Roberts: "I regret to inform you, that owing to fear of loss of employment or business, the great

majority of officers and men, R.C.R., feel they cannot, with justice to themselves or families, re-engage for further service in the country, and desire their discharge in Canada on the 15th of October next, in accordance with the terms of their engagement, and I must therefore ask that such may be done."

Lord Roberts is nothing if not a statesman, and decided under all the circumstances not to take "No," as expressed in the above telegram, for an answer. He wired as follows to Colonel Otter: "September 13th,—I much regret the decision which the officers and men of the Royal Canadian Regiment have come to. It is unlikely that their services would be required much longer, and their going away now will prevent their taking part in the annexation ceremony I hope to hold at Pretoria, and being present at the parade I understand Her Majesty contemplates honouring by her presence on the return of the troops that have been taking part in this war. If, on receipt of this, you inform me that the officers and men still wish to return to Canada, the necessary transport arrangements will be made."

On receipt of this telegram the proper course was adopted, and the question left to the men, it being tacitly understood that the extension of time would not be for longer than the end of

October, Lord Roberts himself intending to go home then. A and B companies decided to comply with Lord Roberts' request. The reinforcements which had joined us during the campaign, and whose time was consequently not up, were not asked whether they wanted to stay or not, but were gathered up and formed into a new company called I Company. The other companies, with a few individual exceptions, decided to return to Canada.

Colonel Otter then sent the following telegram to Lord Roberts, September 15th: "About 300 non-commissioned officers and men of R.C.R., with proportion of officers under my own command, will gladly prolong service until end of war. The remainder regret that, for reasons already stated, they must ask for return to Canada in shortest time possible." In about a week's time the six companies, under command of Major Pelletier, went down to Cape Town and sailed for Canada on the *Idaho*.

It may seem strange to people who were sitting comfortably at home, quietly attending to their business at the time, whose only idea of the war was drawn from the newspaper correspondents' reports and highly-coloured pictures, and who imagine a campaign is like a prolonged spectacular sham fight, that the men of the Royal Canadian Regiment were anxious to

return home. It must be remembered that we were all civilians, and nearly all had business interests which were suffering more or less by our absence. We had volunteered for service when the war broke out, and had done our share up to the fall of Pretoria. After that the enemy had adopted guerilla tactics, and it was felt that the regular army ought to deal with the matter alone. We had enlisted for a year, and our time was up. We had not been in a decent engagement since the battle of Doornkop ; it was simply a case of either garrison work or chasing on foot men mounted on horses. The first Australian contingents were of the same mind as ourselves, and were clamouring to be sent back to Australia.

Of course, there was a certain amount of outside influence at work, notably in the case of the City Imperial Volunteers. They were sent home, and Lord Roberts told them, when bidding them good-bye in Pretoria, that the reason of their being sent back was because he knew they were all volunteers, and had left situations and employment which they were anxious to get back to. Our men naturally said, "And what about us? Surely we have as much right to be allowed to get back to our work as the C.I.V. We have been out here longer than they have, and our time of service is up, while theirs

is not. And if it comes to that, surely this quarrel is as much theirs as ours." I think the method adopted as to the Colonials, in regard to their time of service, was a mistake all through, and although some of us prolonged our service at Lord Roberts' request, we felt that we should never have been asked to do so. I think it would be a good plan in future not to expect volunteer regiments to remain on active service for more than a year.

When Major-General Smith-Dorrien heard we were leaving, he sent the following telegram to Colonel Otter:

"No words can express my disappointment at not seeing you and your gallant corps again. Please say good-bye to all ranks; wish them from me great good luck, and tell them that I feel that any credit I may have gained in this war I shall owe largely to the splendid way the Royal Canadians served me. I shall always hope for the time when I may have the honour of commanding them again. There are no finer or more gallant troops in the world."

On the 25th of October we went into Pretoria and took part in the formal annexation ceremony. Lord Roberts entered the square at the head of his staff, the Royal Standard was hoisted, and the band played the National Anthem; then General Maxwell, military governor of Pretoria,

read the formal proclamation, after which Lord Roberts decorated some men with the Victoria Cross, and a general march past took place, every branch of the service being represented. The ceremony was witnessed by a large number of people, notable amongst them being a group of Basuto chiefs, who had come up with Sir Godfrey Lagden, the Commissioner of Basutoland, to see the formal annexation of their old enemy's country to the British Empire.

A few days afterwards we entrained for the Cape. If there is one recollection of our experiences in South Africa more pleasing than any other, it is the good fellowship which existed between ourselves and all the regiments, British and colonial, we came in contact with; and this remark applies particularly to the regiments in the 19th Brigade. It was a great piece of good fortune for us that we were brigaded with three such gallant regiments, under a general who made one of the reputations of the campaign. It would be quite impossible to speak too highly of the soldierly friendliness extended to us by the Cornwalls, Shropshires, and Gordons, and I doubt very much whether any brigade serving in the campaign contained four regiments which pulled so well together as we did. We saw more of the Gordons than of the other two regiments, but this was due to force of

circumstances. Whenever we were in bivouac, we were always on the left of the line and the Gordons next to us, consequently we were more in touch with them.

Major-General Smith-Dorrien is a man with a distinguished record. He has a breast-full of medals; is a member of the Distinguished Service Order, and has already received signal promotion for his successful work during the South African campaign. He took the keenest interest and pride in his "Colonial" regiment, and lost no opportunity of showing it whenever occasion offered. He was always a good friend to us, and we thoroughly appreciated his many excellent qualities. Although we had not expected to see him again when he sent the telegram already quoted, he arrived in Pretoria before we left, and came out to where we were bivouacked to see us, being received with such ringing cheers by all the men that he could have had no doubt of our feeling towards him.

May he have long life and a still more distinguished career before him; and may the Cornwalls, the Shropshires and the Gordons add many laurels to their splendid fame.

Arrived at Cape Town, we immediately embarked on the *Hawarden Castle*, and sailed the following day for England. We were fortunate in our travelling companions, the Household

Cavalry and A Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, being on board with us. All three regiments got on very well together, and as the men were left alone and not worried with a lot of duties, the voyage, though slow, passed off very pleasantly.

The rivalry existing between British regiments was very apparent on the *Hawarden Castle*. As everyone knows, the Life Guards consider themselves as being quite apart from and superior to any other corps, while the Horse Artilleryman, especially if he belongs to the Chestnut Battery, as our friends were called, considers himself to be the very salt of the earth. Each regiment kept entirely to itself, but both were most willing to chum up with our men. On one occasion I remarked to an Artillery sergeant that the Guardsmen were a very decent lot. "Oh, yes," he replied, "they're all right, but we don't take much stock in those lady-killers."

Strathcona's Horse were in the same column with A Battery for some time, and I inquired from a stalwart gunner his opinion of the corps, and got the following dry response: "Well," he said, "we could always sleep with our boots off when they were doing the scouting."

We landed at Southampton on the 29th November, and a record of the doings of the

Royal Canadian Regiment while away from Canadian shores would hardly be complete without a reference to the reception accorded us in England. That we expected we should be heartily received is not to be denied, but our most sanguine expectations were more than realized. From the time we got out of the train at Addison Road station, in London, until the *Lake Champlain* sailed from Liverpool, everyone we came in contact with seemed to vie with the other in welcoming and entertaining us in the most hearty manner.

We reached Addison Road at half-past two, and as the train pulled into the station the band of the Scots Guards played the National Anthem, followed by "The Maple Leaf" and "Sons of the Empire." On the platform to meet us were Major-General Trotter (commanding the Home District), accompanied by his staff; Lord Strathcona and some Canadians; Lord Onslow, Under-Secretary of the Colonies, and many others. Preceded by a troop of the Royal Horse Guards, the Scots Guards' band, and the drums and fifes of the Coldstream Guards, we marched to Kensington barracks through streets packed full of cheering people, our rear being brought up by an escort from V Battery, Royal Horse Artillery. Marching through the streets of London behind a good band was a

new experience after slouching eleven hundred miles over the veldt, and none could appreciate it more than ourselves. The cheering at times was so loud that the men in the first section of fours could not hear the band. At the barracks we were received by the Duke of Abercorn, Chairman of the Colonial Reception Committee, and other members, and everything possible was done to make us comfortable.

The next day we went down to Windsor by special train. Windsor was quite as enthusiastic as London, if not more so. The Grenadier Guards' band played us up to the Castle through decorated streets and cheering crowds, and we formed up in the great quadrangle. Almost immediately afterwards Her Majesty appeared in a private carriage, accompanied by Princess Henry of Battenburg and Princess Alice of Albany, and we received her with the "Royal Salute." It was an impressive ceremony, saluting the great Sovereign whom we all loved and revered. The inspection of the Royal Canadian Regiment was one of the very last public acts performed by Her Majesty. We marched past the carriage in sections of fours to the tune of "Vive la Canadienne," and on re-forming the Queen addressed us in a strong clear voice, welcoming us to England, thanking us for our services, and wishing us a safe return to our homes,

to which Colonel Otter made a suitable reply. The inspection over, we gave three hearty cheers, and Her Majesty's carriage was driven to the St. George's gate so that we could again march past, proceeding to the riding-school, where we had dinner. At three o'clock we marched to the station, the crowd being so dense and enthusiastic that our formation was broken up and the third company had a hard job to get into the station. Several people were injured, and some women fainted, but no serious damage was done. We left Windsor feeling that we would treasure for the rest of our lives the happy memory of the gracious reception accorded us by our Queen.

The next day some general sight-seeing was indulged in, followed by a reception at the Guildhall by the Lord Mayor, and on Sunday a church parade to Westminster Abbey was held, where Canon Wilberforce preached us a special sermon.

On Monday we went to Buckingham Palace, and were taken round the Royal Gardens and Royal Mews, all the State carriages being drawn out for our inspection and a good many of the horses paraded in the square. We then proceeded to Chelsea barracks, and in the afternoon we were reviewed with the Household Cavalry by the Prince of Wales at the Regents Park

Cavalry Barracks, Albany Street. We hardly recognised our old friends of the *Hawarden Castle* in those scarlet and blue figures, surmounted by steel and brass helmets and waving plumes, but they were the same old lot and welcomed us to their barracks most heartily. His Royal Highness was accompanied by the Princess of Wales, the Duke and Duchess of York, the Princess Victoria of Wales, the Duke of Cambridge, Lord Wolseley, Sir Evelyn Wood and other members of the Headquarters Staff. The First and Second Life Guards and Royal Horse Guards were reviewed first, and then our turn came. Marching on to the parade ground we presented arms to the Prince of Wales, while the Second Life Guards' band played the National Anthem. A close inspection was then made by His Royal Highness and officers of the Headquarters Staff, two German military attachés asking permission to accompany the cortège following the Prince, and appearing to be very much interested in us. The inspection over, we marched past, and re-formed in front of the Prince, who, accompanied by the Princess, came forward and made a short address of welcome and congratulation. Three cheers brought the proceedings to a close. The evening was devoted to theatres, as all evenings were, the management of the leading play-houses always

kindly sending plenty of complimentary tickets up to the barracks.

Tuesday, the 4th, saw the regiment at Portsmouth, conveyed there by special train, and the visit was certainly of the greatest interest, especially the inspection of the famous gunnery establishment on Whale Island. There were types of every kind of warship in the harbour, and these were visited, cheers being exchanged with the bluejackets as we put off from the various vessels. The Mayor of Portsmouth received us at the station, while at the dockyard we were met by Admiral Pelham Aldrich and a large staff of officers, lunch being served in the military gymnasium. Admiral Sir Charles Hotham, Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, was among those assembled at the station to see us off on our return journey to London.

The next day we visited the Houses of Parliament. On all these journeys about London, and to and from the theatres in the evening, we were driven in special "brakes," each holding about thirty men. At the House of Commons we were met and welcomed by Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, who conducted us through the House and explained the features of interest connected with its arrangements and procedure. We were then conducted to the House of Lords by three ex-Governors-General

of Canada—the Duke of Argyll, the Marquis of Lansdowne, and the Earl of Aberdeen. When we were seated on the benches, the Marquis of Lansdowne delivered a short address, in which he humorously remarked that he had rarely seen the House so well filled.

On the conclusion of our visit to Westminster, we returned to the barracks, and at one o'clock marched across to Kensington Palace to take luncheon with Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, and the Duke of Argyll, the Princess having come down from Scotland on purpose to entertain us. Covers were laid for three hundred in the King's Chamber, the Blue Hungarian band playing during the luncheon in an anteroom. The Duke of Argyll in proposing Colonel Otter's health referred to the palace as an old Dutch house, it having been built by Dutch William, who was a very good Britisher. He said he hoped it was a sign of the times, and that their present opponents in South Africa would in time become as good Britishers as William III. had. He paid a high tribute to Canadian institutions, and Canada's model constitution, founded on the basis of justice and freedom, and trusted we would see those great principles flourishing in a short time from the Cape to the Zambesi. We then sang "The Land of the Maple," and Colonel Otter thanked

the Princess Louise and Duke of Argyll on his own behalf and on behalf of the regiment for the kind manner in which they had received us, assuring them that our visit to Kensington Palace would be one of the happiest recollections of our stay in London. Colonel Otter was certainly the right man in the right place at the head of the regiment in London. His gentlemanly and courteous bearing made him eminently fitted to fulfil the many and onerous duties which fell to his lot, and everyone voted him a great success. After the luncheon we were escorted through the Palace by our hosts, and shown the many items of interest, including the room where the Queen was born and the toys and doll's house she played with in her childhood.

A visit to Brighton was scheduled for Thursday, the 6th, but the "wearing" effects of a round of banquets, entertainments and receptions were beginning to tell, and only sixty men could be mustered under Major Rogers to go down on the special train which conveyed us from Addison Road. The reception was as enthusiastic as it could be, and the streets were packed with people. It would simply be repetition to keep on saying that we were received enthusiastically everywhere we went—that must be understood. It always seemed like a trium-

phal procession. After luncheon, which was served in the Royal Pavilion, Major Rogers explained that the exceeding kindness of the English people had accomplished what Mauser bullets and enteric fever had failed to do—it had decimated the ranks of the Royal Canadian Regiment.

On Friday we were the guests of the Government at Woolwich arsenal, and after being shown all through the extensive and interesting works, had luncheon in the artillery barracks. In the evening the Mayor, Sir H. S. King, M.P., and Corporation of the Borough of Kensington entertained us to a banquet in the Kensington Town Hall, the hall being appropriately and tastefully decorated with Imperial emblems and Colonial flags. After the banquet the officers of the brigade of Guards gave a concert in our honour.

Saturday morning was devoted to general sight-seeing, and we went in the afternoon to the Queen's Park and witnessed a football match between Notts County and the Corinthians. On Sunday morning we attended St. Paul's Cathedral, and this practically brought our London programme to a close. The next morning we entrained for Liverpool. Only a few of the principal entertainments have been mentioned; we received so many invitations, both public and

private, that it was impossible to accept them all. The reception and farewell at Liverpool formed a fitting climax to our English visit, and we left the shores of the Motherland with the highest possible appreciation of the thorough-going manner in which all classes, from our august Sovereign to the humblest inhabitant of the land, had welcomed and befriended us.

On arrival in Canada no time was lost in the disbandment of the regiment, and we betook ourselves to our different homes, there to enter again into those civilian pursuits and peaceful occupations which we had left a little over a year before to take our share in the common defence of the Empire. Unfortunately, all those who went with us did not return. No body of men can take their proper share in a great campaign and expect to come through without suffering casualties. The Royal Canadian Regiment was no exception to the rule. Some of our best men fell victims to the shot and shell of the enemy; others to that dread disease* which filled so many graves. But what better death can a man die than to lay down his life for the honour of his country? If their relatives and friends need any consolation, it is surely only necessary to assure them that these heroes

* See Appendix E.

died the most glorious of all deaths. The foundation on which will be reared the splendid edifice of an Imperial British Empire is cemented by their blood, and their names will be handed down to posterity as an undying example of Canadian patriotism. They bore the brunt of the campaign; they are its Heroes. To them be the honour and the glory.

EPILOGUE

THE BOER RIFLEMAN'S SONG

Lay my rifle here beside me, set my Bible on my breast,
For a moment let the wailing bugles cease;
As the century is closing I am going to my rest—
Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant go in peace.
But loud through all the bugles rings a cadence in mine ear,
And on the winds my hopes of peace are stowed;
The winds that waft the voices, that already I can hear,
Of the rooi-baatje* singing on the road.

Yes, the red-coats are returning; I can hear the steady tramp,
After twenty years of waiting lulled to sleep,
Since rank and file at Potchefstroom we hemmed them in their camp,
And cut them up at Bronkhorst Spruit like sheep.
They shelled us at Ingogo, but we galloped into range,
And we shot the British gunners where they showed.
I guessed they would return to us—I knew the chance must change,—
Hark! the rooi-baatje singing on the road.

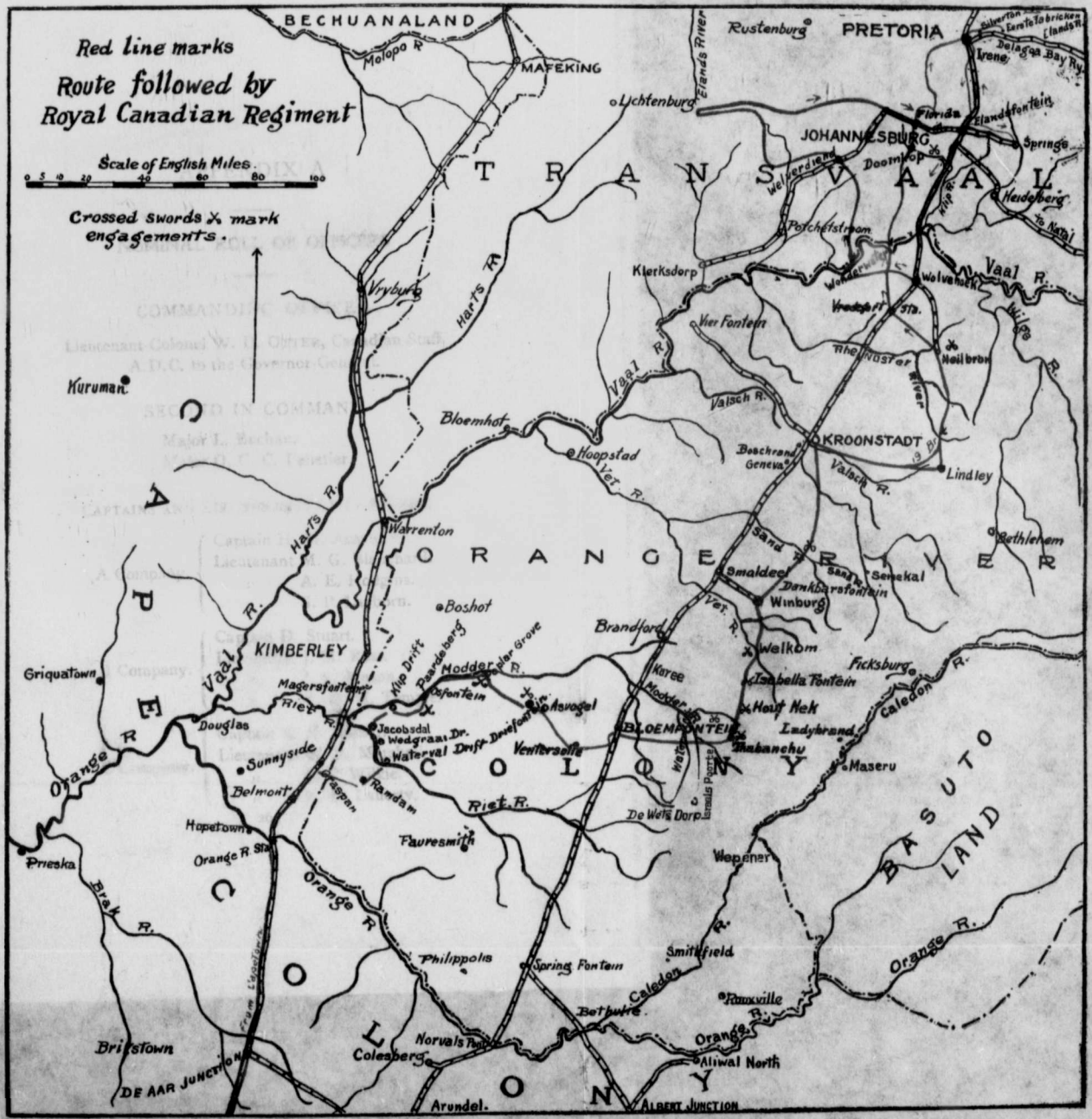
* Rooi-baatje is the name given by the Boers to the red-coated British soldier.

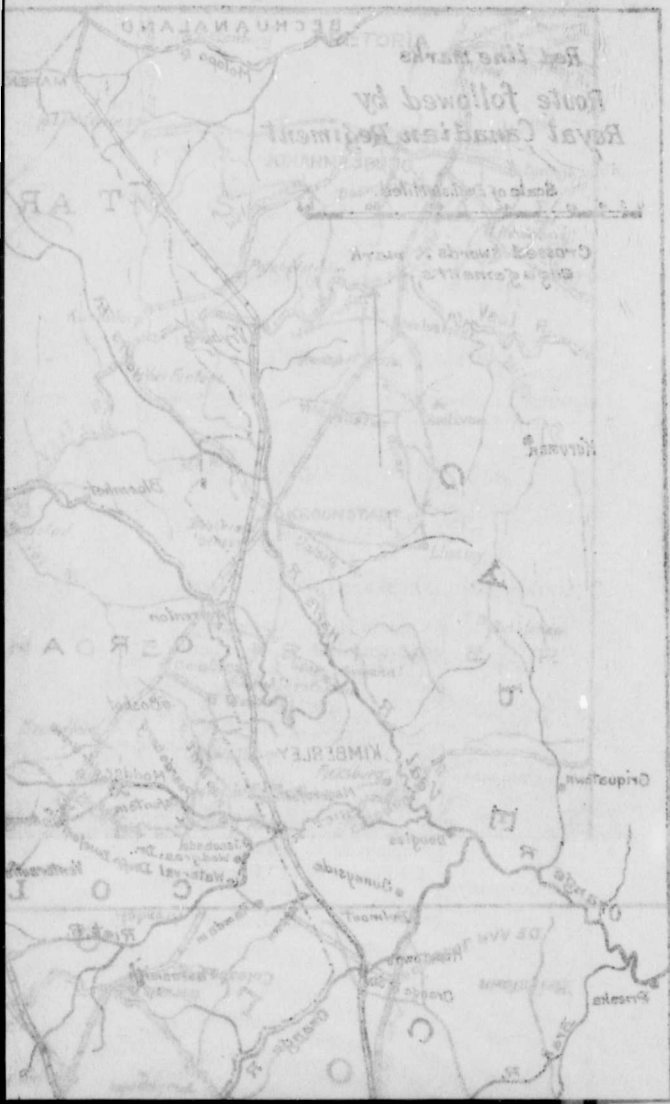
But now from snow-swept Canada, from India's torrid plains,
From long Australian outposts hither led,
Obeying their Commando as they heard the bugle's strains,
The men in brown have joined the men in red.
They come to find the colours at Majuba left and lost;
They come to pay us back the debt they owe;
And I hear new voices lifted, and I see strange colours tossed,
'Mid the rooi-baatje singing on the road.

The old, old faiths must falter, the old, old creeds must fail;
I hear it in that distant murmur low;
The old, old order changes, and 'tis vain for us to rail;
The great world does not want us—we must go.
And veldt and spruit and kopje to the stranger will belong;
No more to trek before him we shall load;
Too well, too well I know it, for I hear it in the song
Of the rooi-baatje singing on the road.

—*Anon.*

PRETORIA
JOHANNESBURG
KROONSTAD
KIMBERLEY
Vaal R.
Vaal R.
ORANGE FREE STATE
TRANSVAAL
NATAL


Red line marks
Route followed by
Royal Canadian Regiment
Scale of English Miles.
0 5 10 20 40 60 80 100
Crossed swords ⚔ mark engagements.
BECHUANALAND
Molopo R.
MAFEKING
Lichtenburg
Eland's River
Rustenburg
PRETORIA
Silverton
Irene
Delagoa Bay Ry.
Florida
Klandsfontein
JOHANNESBURG
Springs
Doornkop
Heidelberg
To Natal
Potchefstroom
Klip R.
TRANSVAAL
Vryburg
Harts R.
Klerksdorp
Wolvehoek
Vaal R.
Vredefort Rd. Sta.
Vaal R.
Vaal R.
Valsch R.
Kuruman
Bloemhof
Hoopstad
Vet R.
KROONSTADT
Boschrand
Geneva
Lindley
Valsch R.
Warrenton
Harts R.
ORANGE RIVER COLONY
Bethlehem
Smaldeel
Senekal
Winburg
Boshot
Brandford
Vet R.
Welkom
Ficksburg
KIMBERLEY
Griquatown
Vaal R.
Magersfontein
Modder R.
Paardeberg
Klip Drift
Riet R.
Douglas
Jacobsdal
Waterval Drift
Sunnyside
Belmont
Ramdam
Riet R.
Orange R.
Hopetown
Orange R. Sta.
Prieska
Brak R.
Fauresmith
Orange R.
Philippolis
Spring Fontein
Caledon R.
Bethulie
Orange R.
Aliwal North
Brigstown
DE AAR JUNCTION
Colesberg
Norvals Pont
Arundel.
ALBERT JUNCTION
Karee
Isabella Fontein
Heilbron
Rhenoster River
Ladybrand
Caledon R.
Maseru
BASUTO LAND
Wepener
Smithfield
Rouxville
Orange R.



APPENDIX A

NOMINAL ROLL OF OFFICERS

COMMANDING OFFICER

Lieutenant-Colonel W. D. Otter, Canadian Staff,
A.D.C. to the Governor-General.

SECOND IN COMMAND

Major L. Buchan.
Major O. C. C. Pelletier.

Captains and Lieutenants of Companies

A Company.	Captain	H. M. Arnold.
	Lieutenant	M. G. Blanchard.
	"	A. E. Hodgins.
	"	S. P. Layborn.
B Company.	Captain	D. Stuart.
	Lieutenant	J. M. Ross.
	"	J. C. Mason.
	"	R. H. M. Temple.
C Company.	Captain	R. K. Barker.
	Lieutenant	W. R. Marshall.
	"	C. S. Wilkie.
	"	F. D. Lafferty.

D Company.	Captain S. M. Rogers. Lieutenant W. T. Lawless. " R. G. Stewart. " A. C. Caldwell.
E Company.	Captain C. K. Fraser. Lieutenant A. E. Swift. " A. Laurie. " C. J. Armstrong.
F Company.	Captain J. E. Peltier. Lieutenant H. A. Panet. " L. Leduc. " E. A. Pelletier.
G Company.	Captain W. A. Weeks. Lieutenant F. C. Jones. " J. H. Kaye. " C. W. W. McLean.
H Company.	Captain H. B. Stairs. Lieutenant H. E. Burstall. " R. B. Willis. " J. C. Oland.

REGIMENTAL ADJUTANT

Major J. C. MacDougall.

BATTALION ADJUTANTS

Lieutenant A. H. Macdonell.
" J. H. C. Ogilvy.

QUARTER-MASTER

Captain S. J. A. Denison.

Appendix A

Medical Officers

Surgeon-Major C. W. Wilson.
Surgeon-Captain E. Fiset.

O. C. Machine Gun Section

Captain A. C. Bell (Captain Scots Guards).

Reinforcements

Lieutenant A. J. Boyd to A Company.
" A. E. Carpenter to B Company.
" C. F. Winter to F Company.
" J. A. MacDonald to G Company.

APPENDIX B

BATTLE HONOURS

The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Dettingen.	Salamanca.	Peninsula.	Sebastopol.
Dominica.	Pyrenees.	Waterloo.	Lucknow.
Roleia.	Nivelle.	Punjaub.	Egypt, 1882.
Vimiera.	Nive.	Mooltan.	Tel-el-kebir.
Corunna.	Orthes.	Goojerat.	Nile, 1884-85.

The King's (Shropshire Light Infantry)

Nieuport.	Pyrenees.	Sobraon.
Tournay.	Nivelle.	Punjaub.
St. Lucia.	Nive.	Goojerat.
Talavera.	Toulouse.	Lucknow.
Fuentes d'Onor.	Peninsula.	Afghanistan, 1878-80.
Salamanca.	Bladensburg.	Egypt, 1882.
Vittoria.	Aliwal.	Suakim, 1885.

The Gordon Highlanders

Mysore.	Pyrenees.	Charasiah.
Seringapatam.	Nive.	Kabul, 1879.
Egmont-op-Zee.	Orthes.	Kandahar, 1880.
Mandora.	Peninsula.	Afghanistan, 1878-80.
Corunna.	Waterloo.	Egypt, 1882-84.
Fuentes d'Onor.	South Africa, 1835.	Tel-el-kebir.
Almaraz.	Delhi.	Nile, 1884-85.
Vittoria.	Lucknow.	Chitral.
	Tirah.	

APPENDIX C

LIST OF CASUALTIES AT PAARDEBERG,

February 18th, 1900

KILLED

Sergeant W. I. Scott	A Company.
Private W. E. Jackson	"
" A. Maundrell	"
" J. Todd	"
" J. H. Somers	"
" R. Smith	B Company.
" J. A. Donegan	"
" W. White	"
" J. H. Findlay	C Company.
" W. T. Manion	"
" Z. R. E. Lewis	D Company.
" O. T. Burns	"
" C. E. E. Jackson	"
Corporal R. C. Goodfellow ..	E Company.
Private C. Lester	"
" A. McQueen	"
" C. H. Barry	"
" R. D. Taylor	G Company.

DIED OF WOUNDS RECEIVED FEBRUARY 18TH

Captain H. M. Arnold ..	A Company,	Feb.	23rd.
Private P. H. McCreary.	G "	"	19th.
" G. Johnstone ...	H "	"	27th.

WOUNDED

A COMPANY

Corporal A. O. Lohman.....	Dangerously.
Private H. J. D. Andrews	Severely.
" A. C. Beach	"
" F. Finch-Smiles.....	"
" C. C. Thompson	"
" C. W. Duncafe	Slightly.
" H. MacKenzie	"
" H. E. Niebergall	"
" J. H. Dixon	Very slightly.

B COMPANY

Lieutenant J. C. Mason	Severely.
Sergeant J. Shreeve	"
Corporal J. Smith	"
" L. Power	"
Private A. E. Paddon...	"
" John Kingwill.....	"
Sergeant G. R. B. Sippi.....	Slightly.
Private C. D. McLaren	"
" A. H. Wheatcroft	"
" V. F. Marentette	"
" W. J. Green	"
" E. Baugh.....	"
" J. B. Corley	"
" J. Day	"

Appendix C

C Company

Private J. Kennedy	Severely.
" S. M. Ward	"
" R. H. McLaughlin	"
" J. F. H. Usher	Not serious.
Corporal M. M. Stewart	Slightly.
Private W. Vanderwater	"
" W. L. McGivern	"
" J. H. Sutton	Very slightly.
" E. C. Day	"

D Company

Colour-Sergeant C. H. Thompson	Severely.
Private J. L. H. Bradshaw	"
" C. P. Clarke	"
" A. Macaulay	"
" A. Laird	Slightly.
" J. D. Coleman	"
" C. A. Gibson	Very slightly.
" W. J. Ritchie	"

E Company

Private A. C. Shaw	Severely.
" J. F. Gorman	Not serious.
Corporal T. D. Moore	Slightly.
Private W. McIver	"
" A. P. Thomas	"
" A. J. Turner	"
" G. P. Robarts	"
" D. R. McGill	Very slightly.

F COMPANY

Sergeant F. W. Utton	Severely.
Private J. A. Scott	"
" W. L. Hunter	Slightly.
" W. LaRue	"
" J. A. A. Hudon	"
" H. P. McLaughlin	"

G COMPANY

Private B. Gifford	Not serious.
" J. N. Johnston	"
" J. F. Waye	"

H COMPANY

Private G. D. McCollum	Severely.
" W. J. Regan	Not serious.
" W. F. Adams	Slightly.

SUMMARY

Killed	18
Died of wounds	3
Wounded	60
Total	81

APPENDIX D

LIST OF CASUALTIES AT PAARDEBERG

February 27th, 1900

KILLED

Private F. C. Page	C Company.
Corporal A. Withey	F Company.
Private G. Orman	"
Corporal F. W. Withers	G Company.
Private J. B. Scott	"
" J. M. Johnston	"
" W. A. Riggs	"

DIED OF WOUNDS RECEIVED FEBRUARY 27TH

Corporal W. S. Brady	D Company,	27th Feb.,	1900.
" C. T. Thomas	"	"	"
" F. J. Living	"	"	"
Private F. Wasdell	E Company,	"	"
" A. Roy	F Company	"	"
" J. G. Sievert	"	2nd March,	"

WOUNDED

Major O. C. C. Pelletier ..... Slightly.

C Company

Private J. R. Vickers ..... Severely.
" H. Cozzens ..... Very slightly.
" N. F. Gray ..... "
" C. W. Allen..... "

D Company

Private C. Holland ..... Slightly.
" J. F. McConnell..... "
Corporal G. G. Hulme..... Very slightly.

E Company

Lieutenant C. J. Armstrong..... Slightly.
Corporal T. E. Baugh..... "
Private J. A. Theriault ..... "

F Company

Corporal J. A. Macdonald ..... Severely.
Private A. Bajot..... "
" H. Proulx..... Not serious.
" A. Sutherland ..... "
Sergeant W. Peppiatt..... Slightly.
Private O. Matheson..... "
" Charles Harrison..... "

G Company

Private M. J. Quinn ..... Dangerously.
Corporal F. W. Coombs..... Severely.
Private H. E. Durant ..... "

G COMPANY—*Continued.*

Private	A. Pelkey	Severely.
"	A. Simpson	"
"	H. Leavitt	"
"	W. W. Donohoe	"
"	J. A. Harris	Not serious.
"	F. W. Sprague	"
"	H. Fradsham	Slightly.
"	W. C. Unkauf	Very slightly.
"	N. T. Brace	"

SUMMARY

Killed	7
Died of wounds	6
Wounded	30
Total	43

APPENDIX E

LIST OF NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN WHO DIED OF DISEASE

Sergeant	A. Beattie.	Bloemfontein	April 14,	1900
"	P. Clunie	England	July 6,	"
Private	E. DesLauriers	At sea	Nov. 3,	1899
"	M. C. Chappell	Belmont	Dec. 13,	"
"	J. E. Farley	Orange River	Feb. 5,	1900
"	J. J. Purcell	"	" 11,	"
"	D. L. Moore	"	" 14,	"
"	J. Adams	Jacobsdal	Mar. 1,	"
"	W. J. H. Ross	Wynberg, C.C.	" 6,	"
"	H. Forrest	Bloemfontein	" 31,	"
"	R. Harrison	"	April 14,	"
"	W. S. Blight	"	" 15,	"
"	W. G. Adams	"	" 16,	"
"	J. Curphy	"	" 18,	"
"	E. Purcell	"	" 22,	"
"	H. B. Barr	Naauwport	" 30,	"
"	E. Zong	Bloemfontein	May 1,	"
"	R. Liston	"	" 2,	"
"	W. Haines	Johannesburg	June 6,	"
"	W. F. Whitley	"	" 19,	"
"	G. H. Bolt	Naauwport	" 1,	"
"	A. F. Van Norman	Bloemfontein	" 7,	"
"	J. Rasberry	"	May 24,	"
"	E. Mullins	Kroonstadt	June 11,	"
"	L. La Rue	Wynberg, C.C.	" 24,	"
"	W. Duhamel	Norval's Pont	" 27,	"
"	R. Irwin	Bloemfontein	July 1,	"
"	G. P. Farrell	England	Sept. 16,	"
"	*R. Lecouteur	Worcester, C.C.	" 30,	"

* Accidentally killed (fell from train).