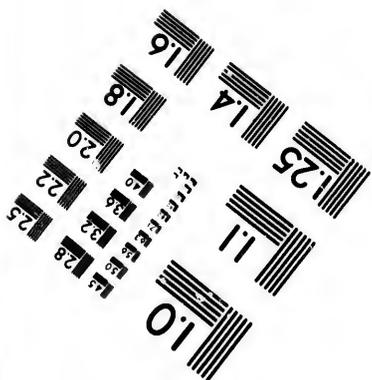
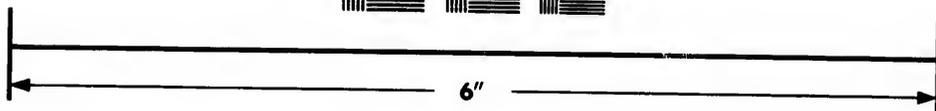
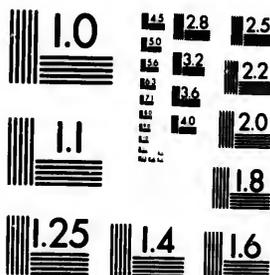


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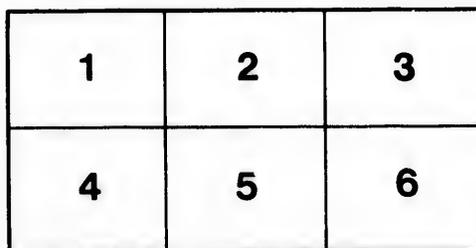
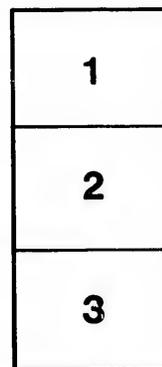
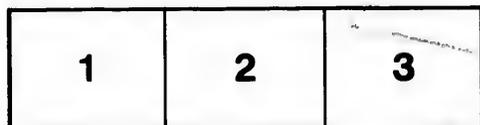
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**HISTORY**  
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**WAR**

FROM THE  
**BOER ULTIMATUM**  
TO THE ADVANCE OF  
**LORD ROBERTS**

BY  
**EDGAR SANDERSON**  
*Author of*  
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**FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS**  
COMMANDING THE IMPERIAL FORCES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

THE  
FIGHT FOR THE FLAG  
IN SOUTH AFRICA

A HISTORY OF THE WAR  
FROM THE BOER ULTIMATUM  
TO THE ADVANCE OF LORD ROBERTS

BY  
EDGAR SANDERSON, M.A.

AUTHOR OF  
"AFRICA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY"  
"BRITISH EMPIRE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY  
ETC., ETC.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *Origin and Outbreak of the War.*

Origin of the South African Republics—The Orange Free State—Convention of Bloemfontein—The South African Republic—The Sand River Convention—Early History of Boers in Transvaal—Formation of State in 1864—Affairs under Presidents Pretorius and Burgers—Annexation of Transvaal by Great Britain in 1877—Kruger Comes to the Front—Boer Protests against Annexation—The Act Maintained by British Ministers—Mr. Gladstone's Accession to Power—Foundation of the Afrikaner Bond—Aims of the "Thorough Dutch" Party—General Joubert's Declaration—The Revolt in the Transvaal—Mr. Gladstone's Surrender after Majuba—His Real Motive—The Discovery of Gold in Transvaal (1885)—Its Effects on the Country—The Uitlanders—Their Anomalous Position in Political Affairs—The Policy of the Boer Oligarchy—The "Jameson Raid"—The Boer Plot against British Supremacy in South Africa—Mr. Kruger in the Franchise Negotiations—The Successive Stages of Progress towards War—Attitude of Orange Free State—March of Boer Troops to Frontier—Boer Seizure of Gold—The Boer Ultimatum—Arrival of Refugees from the Republics on British Territory—Their Treatment by Boers—The Outbreak of War—Feeling in British Isles—Colonial Loyalty Strikingly Displayed—Large Forces Mustered and Despatched to South Africa—The Boer Armies—Largely Composed of Foreigners—The Powerful Artillery of the Foe—Foreign Officers Aiding Boers—The Difficulties Confronting British Armies—The Deficiencies in our Force—First Hostile Acts of Boers—The Armoured Train at Kraaipan.

THE important dates concerning the origin of the struggle between Great Britain and the two Republics of South Africa are 1836, 1852, 1864, 1880, and 1881. These States had their rise in the great "trek," or migration, which began in 1836 from the northern and eastern districts of Cape Colony, and was spread over many subsequent years. British policy in colonial affairs has been in no part of the empire so conspicuous for lack of wisdom and foresight as in South Africa, and it is in the perversity and folly of British statesmen and politicians that we find the chief causes of the serious trouble in which we are now involved.

In February 1848, Sir Harry Smith, the British Governor of Cape Colony, issued a proclamation declaring the whole of the territory bounded on the south-west by the Orange River, on the north by the Vaal, and on the east by the Drakensberg Mountains, to be British territory, as "The Orange River Sovereignty." The Boer leader, Pretorius, induced his followers to make an armed resistance, but they were severely defeated by Sir Harry Smith, in August, at the Battle of Boomplatz, south-west of Bloemfontein, and the Boers fled beyond the Vaal, their places being taken

by British or by other settlers from Cape Colony well disposed to British sway. By degrees a desire for self rule among both British and Dutch settlers weakened the authority of the Cape Government, and the home Government, rarely able to do the right thing in colonial affairs, resolved on abandoning the territory, instead of retaining it with the concession of some form of self rule. It was thus that, in February 1854, "The Orange Free State" arose. The measure was greatly opposed to public feeling in Cape Colony, and to that of many inhabitants of the territory, including some of the Dutch settlers, but the Convention of Bloemfontein was signed in the face of all protests, and a fine region, nearly as large as England, was renounced within six years of its annexation.

The South African Republic, popularly known as "The Transvaal," dates its political existence from 1852. The Boer leader, Pretorius, after the Battle of Boomplatz, was living to the north of the Vaal, a proscribed man with a reward of two thousand pounds offered for his arrest. The danger to British authority arising from simultaneous wars with the Basutos and the Kaffirs, and from a threatened alliance between the Boers and the able



*Photo. by Harwit & Bros.*

PRESIDENT KRUGER.

Basuto chief, Moshesh, induced Sir Harry Smith to reverse the sentence of outlawry. In January 1852, that fatal document, the famous Sand River Convention, was signed, and the independence of the Boers beyond the Vaal River was recognised. This arrangement was confirmed by Sir Harry Smith's successor, Sir George Cathcart, and by the home Government of Lord Aberdeen.

The State whose troops have been lately distinguished by signal treachery in regard to flags of truce marked its early history by gross and systematic violation of the clause in the Convention which laid down that "No slavery is or shall be permitted or practised in the country to the north of the Vaal River by the emigrant farmers." The South African Republic, starting on its political career with a population of about fifteen thousand Boers, or farmers, in a land well suited for most kinds of tillage and for pastoral life, showed small capacity for self government. At first there were four executive heads—one for each of the leading factions—and for a time there were four separate republics. This system caused a virtual anarchy, which drew to the territory the rascals of South Africa, and gave the Transvaal a bad name for cruel treatment of the natives. In 1860, the separate republics were united, and, after a civil war between the factions, peace was restored in 1864, under the presidency of Mr. M. W. Pretorius, with Mr. Paul Kruger as commandant or military chief.

There was no properly organised system of rule, and unsuccessful war with natives to the north from 1865 to 1868 left the State Treasury destitute of funds, and compelled the patching up of a somewhat ignominious peace. In social and political affairs, the conspicuous matters were dense ignorance of books and of all affairs outside a narrow local circle, the lack of bridges over rivers, and the want of money in the Treasury for the erection of public offices and for the payment of the paltry salaries of officials. The material

wealth of the country grew in flocks and herds, and in the produce of a fertile soil, and rude abundance existed on the Boer farms. In 1876, under President Burgers, war arose with a powerful native chief named Sekukuni, and an attack made by a Boer commando, led by the President in person, was repulsed with loss. The defeat was attributed by the orthodox to the leadership of the agnostic ruler, a man who had been formerly a minister, and had afterwards shown much ability in the Cape Colony law courts. As chief official of the Transvaal he was a failure, and, in presence of a successful native chieftain, the State found itself penniless and without an army.

It was in this position of affairs that Lord Carnarvon, British Secretary for the Colonies, decided upon annexation in the general interests of South Africa. He acted



*From a Photo. by Heath, Plymouth.*

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM BUTLER,  
Late Commander-in-Chief in South Africa.

on the advice of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, a man of unequalled experience and knowledge of South Africa. His reception in Pretoria, as special commissioner sent to make due inquiry into the wishes of the people, and his investigation of affairs, caused the British official, in April 1877, to proclaim the Transvaal to be British territory. The President, Burgers, who really favoured annexation, made a formal protest, and retired to Cape Town on a pension. The Executive Council declared the annexation to be an

petent leadership of British soldiers and a change of policy in Downing Street, to restore independence to the South African Republic.

A second deputation to England, consisting of Paul Kruger and Pieter Joubert, presented memorials against annexation signed by over 6,500 persons—practically the whole rural population. A new Secretary for the Colonies, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, plainly refused the withdrawal of British sovereignty, while he promised a form of self government for the Transvaal



*Photo by Neville P. Edwards.*

COMMISSIONER STREET, JOHANNESBURG.

“act of violence,” and at once despatched the Vice-President, Paul Kruger, and the Attorney-General to London, to plead for its reversal. Their application was met by a firm refusal. There was one matter, however, in which Lord Carnarvon and his instrument, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, were completely deceived. They knew really nothing of the feeling of the Boers in the country districts, the backbone of the Transvaal population, the men who furnished the bulk of the soldiers for the commandoes in time of war, the hardy class whose skill in the use of the rifle was, along with incom-

as “an integral and separate State” in a South African Confederation. No steps were taken by the British Government to draw up a new form of rule for the territory. Sir Bartle Frere, the High Commissioner for South Africa, and his successor, Sir Garnet Wolseley, gave positive assurances to the Boers that the Transvaal would remain under British sovereignty. In October 1879, however, Sir Garnet felt obliged to report to the Colonial Office that “the main body of the Dutch population are disaffected to our rule,” and at the close of that year, when a new Transvaal Government had

been constituted as that of a Crown Colony, with a nominated Executive Council and Legislative Assembly, the Boers, assembled in mass meeting, declared that they would not be subjects of the Queen.

British generals and soldiers in South Africa, and British voters at home, had been unconsciously paving the way to a disastrous issue. The soldiers and generals, by the overthrow of Zulu power and the defeat of Sekukuni, freed the Boers from all need of British help against neighbours with whom they could not cope. British voters, led astray by Gladstonian eloquence in the Midlothian campaigns, brought a new Minister to power with a vast majority at his back. He had denounced the annexation of the Transvaal in the strongest terms, and it was clear that his views concern-

ing the Boers of the Transvaal were adopted by a large number of his British admirers.

We must here turn aside for a moment to show why 1880 is a critical date in the history of South Africa. In that year the famous Afrikaner Bond was founded. An Afrikaner, in the present meaning of the term, is a white person, mainly of Dutch or Huguenot extraction, who regards South Africa as his country and permanent abode. The Afrikaner Bond started a new form of nationalism. One of its developments,



GENERAL PIETER JOUBERT.

embracing persons who look to Great Britain as the power which shall be supreme in South Africa, is such as we may well applaud, encourage, and work with for the common benefit. The other Afrikanerism is that against which we are now fighting, and are bound to fight unless we are ready to let the British Empire collapse. These Afrikaners, the thoroughly Dutch party, made skillful use of the annexation of the Transvaal, and the Afrikaner Bond was formed in order to give vitality to the idea of a United South

## The Fight for the Flag in South Africa



GENERAL PRETORIUS,  
Taken Prisoner at Elandslaagte.

Africa under a republican flag. At the time of the rebellion, General Joubert declared that he was fighting for a universal Dutch Republic from the Cape to the Zambesi, and it is certain that since 1881 the dominating idea in the counsels of Pretoria has been a resolve to get rid, at all costs, of British supremacy in South Africa.

The main cause of the present trouble must be sought, of course, in Mr. Gladstone's surrender to successful rebels after Majuba. His conduct of affairs in that crisis of South African history was such as no man has ever been able to understand on any principles of sound policy. The great Liberal statesman was wholly inconsistent with himself. Disapproving the annexation, he maintained the measure, rightly enough, when he succeeded to power, and declined to restore independence to the Transvaal. The Boers took up arms, inflicted some defeats on small bodies of British troops, and then found themselves face to face with Sir Evelyn Wood, backed by an army which would soon have made an end of them and all their pretensions. Then Mr. Gladstone, talking largely of "blood-guiltiness" and of a "policy of revenge," conceded, after defeat, what he had previously refused. The lives of hundreds of British soldiers

had thus been flung away, not for the first time in our history, through the conduct of politicians who were unable to be wise in time. It has since transpired that it was not righteousness, as he asserted, but craven fear, which caused Mr. Gladstone to give way. He dreaded the influence of the Afrikaner Bond; he shrank before a possible outbreak in Cape Colony. It is, at any rate, certain that, if such an event had occurred, British power could have dealt with it far more easily than with the formidable forces which now confront us in South Africa.

A new era for the South African Republic opened with the discovery in 1885 of the richest gold-field in the world, in the region whose centre is now the town of Johannesburg. The original Boer inhabitants of the country were swamped in numbers by the foreign settlers. These people, known as "Uitlanders" or "Outlanders" in Boer English, became objects of jealous suspicion to the Boers. The Dutch population remained sole possessors of political power. The new-comers were the creators of wealth, with the privilege of paying nineteen-twentieths of the taxes. The Boer oligarchy, possessed at last of the sinews of war, proceeded to use them, as we have found to our cost, in secretly providing vast armaments and munitions. Their system of rule became intolerable, and the only hope of redress lay in the granting of a franchise in a form, and



GENERAL CRONJE,  
A Boer Leader in the Last and Present War.

to an extent, such as to confer on Uitlanders a fair share of controlling power in the Volksraad, or Parliament. All such concessions were steadily refused by the selfish and corrupt oligarchy which held power by the gross violation of republican principles. The "Jameson Raid" of 1895 was a mere symptom of the diseased condition of affairs. It was not the cause of the Boer armaments, as the sympathisers with our country's foes aver. The accumu-

In briefly dealing with some matters antecedent to the outbreak of war, we purposely decline to have anything to say in detail concerning the diplomatic discussions as to the franchise. Mr. Kruger was throughout playing with Mr. Chamberlain, or thought that he was, since it is not exactly a matter of course that Mr. Chamberlain was deceived. The Boer war party never intended to make any real concession of the franchise, and, seeking to

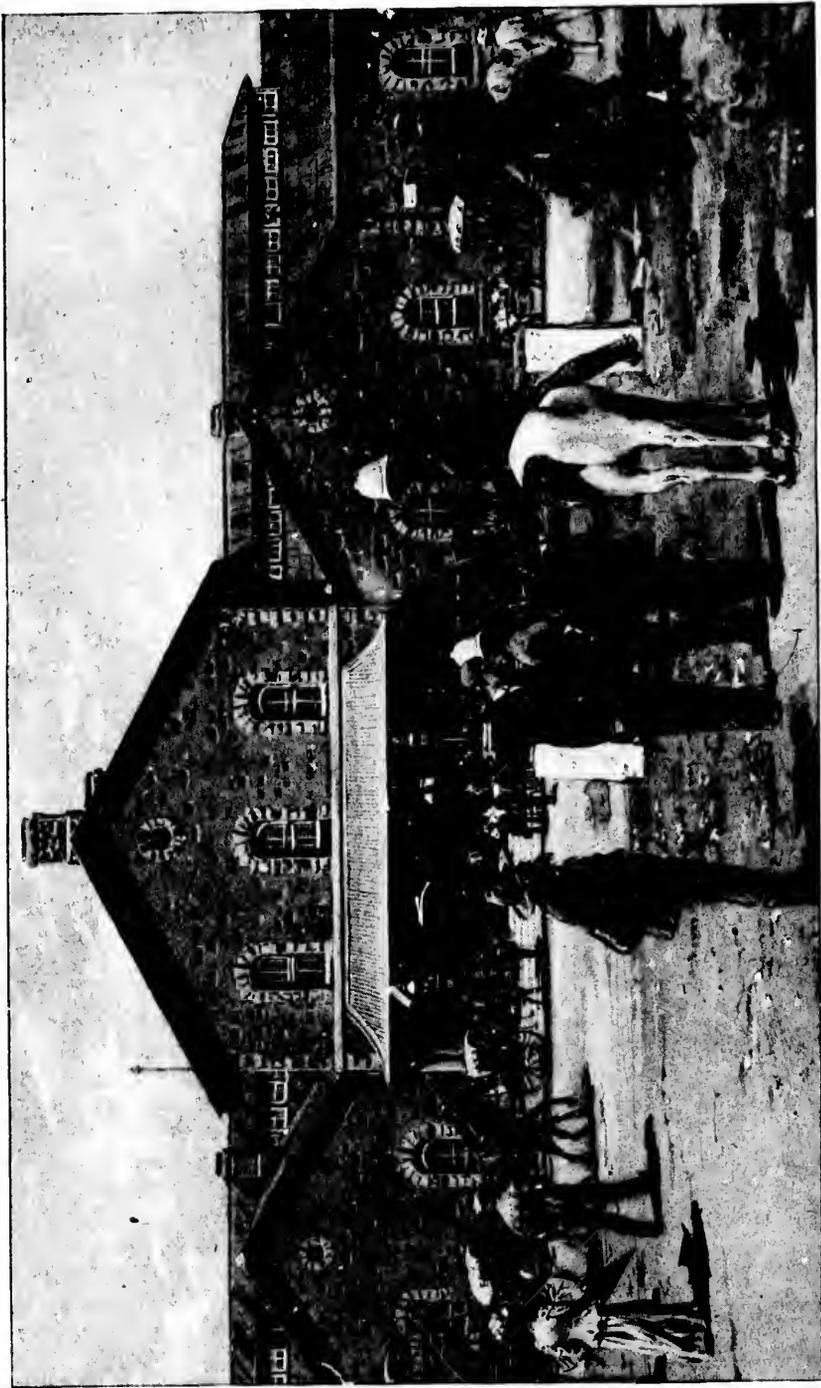


*Photo. by Neville P. Edwards.*

THE RAADZAAL, OR PARLIAMENT HOUSE, PRETORIA.

lation of the weapons of war had been begun long before the date of that hapless enterprise, and had been concealed with a success which was, at a later day, to give a very unpleasant surprise to the supporters of British supremacy in South Africa. When the curtain rose we had ample proofs of an unscrupulous and daring plot, long and carefully matured, directed against the continued existence of British power in that quarter of the world, and, by consequence, against the cause of real progress and civilisation.

gain time, hoping for European intervention, and looking to overt rebellion in Cape Colony, if not also in Natal, made offers which were utterly futile. We may note that on May 30th, 1899, Kruger and Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner, reached Bloemfontein for a conference on the franchise and on other matters concerning the interests of the Uitlanders. On June 5th the conference ended, and two days later official statements showed that the discussion had failed in its object. Diplomatic communications



*Photo. by F. W. Ferguson.*

RAILWAY STATION, BLOEMFONTEIN.



passed between the Transvaal Government and the British Colonial Secretary, and it became clear by degrees that a peaceful solution would be very difficult, if not impossible.

The British Government, with an eye to contingencies, reinforced the slender garrison in Cape Colony, and arrangements were made for the despatch of a contingent of Imperial troops from Bombay to Natal. On August 19th General Sir F. Forestier-Walker sailed from Southampton to assume charge of the forces in Cape Colony. On August 29th the state of affairs had become so menacing that Uitlander families began to leave Pretoria. In the course of September, the troops from India, about six thousand men of all arms, arrived at Durban. On September 28th the Raad, or Parliament, of the Orange Free State decided to support the South African Republic in the event of war with Great Britain. On October 2nd Boer troops began their journey from Pretoria and other quarters to the borders of Natal in the northern angle. Two days later the

Boer Government caused the seizure of about half a million sterling in gold from the Transvaal mail train for Cape Town.

A pause in the negotiations between Mr. Kruger and Mr. Chamberlain had come, and our Colonial Secretary was understood to be framing new proposals, when, on October 11th, the world was startled by the tidings of the South African Republic's famous "ultimatum." That remarkable document, received at the Colonial Office in London on the morning of October 10th, graciously accorded to the British Government the space of about thirty hours for consideration, the time limit expiring at five p.m. at Pretoria, or about three p.m. in London, on October 11th. The Boer forces were, at the time of the issue of the ultimatum, in threatening proximity to Mafeking, on the border between Bechuanaland and the Transvaal; to Kimberley, on the border separating Cape Colony and the Orange Free State; and to the narrow northern end of Natal, the triangle running up between the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The text



*Photo. by Neville P. Edwards.*

A BOER COMMANDO GOING TO THE FRONT.



*Photo. supplied by T. J. Swain.*

SIMONSTOWN NAVAL STATION, HEADQUARTERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SQUADRON.

of the ultimatum accused the British Government of "assuming a threatening tone" in the discussions concerning the franchise; denied the British right to interfere at all in that matter; complained of the presence of British troops "in the neighbourhood of the borders of the Republic" as a threat against its independence; suggested arbitration on all points of difference; and finally demanded, firstly, "that British troops on the borders of the Republic should be instantly withdrawn"; secondly, "that all reinforcements which had arrived in South Africa since June 1st, 1899, should be removed from South Africa within a reasonable time, to be agreed upon"; thirdly, that any British troops "now on the high seas should not be landed in any port of South Africa." Non-compliance with these demands before five p.m. on October 11th, or any further movement of British troops nearer to the borders, would be regarded as "a formal declaration of war." To this

document no reply whatever was given by the British Government except a statement that there was no answer. The die was cast; the Rubicon was crossed in ungainly fashion by the political representatives of the South African Republic. The most insolent of all ultimatums was the fitting climax to the most audacious and unprincipled of all conspiracies against the rightful supremacy of a great Power within her own colonial possessions.

Many thousands of refugees from the two republics had already arrived at Durban and Cape Town, and had become dependent, in countless instances, for support on the bounty which was freely provided by subscriptions in the British Isles. There were many, and some true, stories concerning the brutal ill-treatment of these hapless persons by Boers at the railway stations during the journey through the Republican territory. On the night of October 11th the British Diplomatic Agent in the Transvaal, Mr. Conyngham

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Greene, quitted Pretoria, handing over the care of such British subjects as remained within the borders of the South African Republic to the United States Consul. Sir Alfred Milner issued a proclamation declaring all persons who should abet the enemy in a state of war with Great Britain to be guilty of high treason.

The outbreak of war was received by an overwhelming majority of persons in the British Isles as presenting the only means likely to furnish a permanently peaceful settlement of affairs in South Africa. The same view was taken in the greater colonies, the Canadian Dominion and Australasia, and offers of contingents of troops from those regions were promptly made to, and accepted by, the home Government. At Ottawa, Montreal, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Wellington (New Zealand), Hobart (Tasmania), and other colonial centres, a spirit of the utmost loyalty was displayed, and volunteers for the contingents eagerly presented themselves in numbers vastly greater than could be then enrolled for active service.

We need enter into no details concerning the British Regular Forces of all arms despatched in succession to the scene of warfare. To mention the different regiments of infantry and cavalry, the batteries of Field and Royal Horse Artillery, and the transport, ambulance, engineering, telegraph, war balloon, and other corps, including a siege train and howitzers for field service, would be, apart from the troops serving in India, to transcribe the Army List. Most of the Regulars in the British Isles, with regiments from Malta and Gibraltar and other foreign stations, were included in the Army Corps of about forty thousand men which was soon despatched, to be followed, as the magnitude of the contest was revealed, by the mobilisation of Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Divisions, forming another complete Army Corps. As the struggle proceeded, the men of the Reserves were summoned and promptly joined the colours.

Militia battalions were sent abroad to reinforce the reduced garrisons of Malta and Gibraltar, and several battalions of the same auxiliary force volunteered for service in South Africa.

As regards the Boer forces who took the field, it is impossible to form an exact estimate. It had been supposed that the two Republics could mobilise about fifty thousand burghers in their various commandoes, but it is certain that the fighting force engaged against our troops greatly exceeded that number. Thousands of Uitlanders of divers nationalities—Germans, Americans, Frenchmen, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Hollanders, Swiss, Belgians, Italians—and many Cape Afrikaners, swelled the ranks of our foes. It soon became evident—to our surprise and our discomfiture in some instances—that not only was the Boer army supplied with abundant and powerful artillery of the newest pattern and longest range, and that the guns were served by skilled artillerymen, many of whom were well-trained foreigners, but that foreign officers of great experience and skill were aiding the Boer generals—Joubert, Cronje, Botha, and others—by their direction and advice in strategy, tactics, and engineering. We were thus engaged, not merely against a nation in arms—a great force of men whose style of fighting, as Mounted Infantry, was exactly suited to their equipment and to the nature of the country in which, at the outset, they were waging war—but against a European element in positions of command, whose presence was equivalent to a reinforcement of many thousands of men. These facts are almost of themselves sufficient to account for the checks and disasters experienced by the brave, and on ordinary fields of warfare, skilful and experienced officers and men who were sent forth to uphold the honour of the British flag in South Africa.

It must, however, be admitted that our forces were by no means amply supplied in two departments with the armament needful to ensure rapid success against



*From a Photo. by G. H. Tricker.*

THE MARKET PLACE, MAFEKING.

such foes as the Boers, aided as has been above indicated. We were deficient in light cavalry for the purposes of scouting and of rapid pursuit, and in Mounted Infantry as a force for coping with foes so numerous and so mobile as the Boers, capable of passing at speed from one end to the other of an extensive battle-field, and thus enabled, from time to time, to surprise, surround, and overwhelm detached bodies of infantry, unsupported by cavalry or by the swiftly moving guns of

the Royal Horse Artillery. It may be noted here that the British land forces were, from the beginning of the war, aided by Naval Brigades from the fleets at Simonstown (Cape of Good Hope) and at Durban, and that the naval guns in charge of the gallant British Tars rendered essential service against the long-range artillery used by the Boers.

Before entering on the first part of our subject, the earlier operations in Natal, we may record that the first act of war



*From a Photo. by G. H. Tricker.*

THE FORT, MAFEKING.

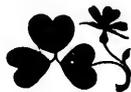


*Photo. by Cowell, Simla.*

GENERAL SIR GEORGE WHITE,  
Commanding in Natal at the Outbreak of the War.

committed by the Boer. was the seizure, on October 11th, of a Natal train proceeding from Ladysmith to Harrismith, a town about thirty miles by rail within the Orange Free State. On the afternoon of the same day, Natal was invaded by forces from the Transvaal, who occupied Laing's Nek, a few miles north of Majuba Hill, and were seen marching south towards Ingogo, on the way to Newcastle. All railway rolling stock was at once ordered

down to the south of Newcastle, and many of the inhabitants of that little town quitted the place rather than await the arrival of the foe. The first shots of the war were fired far away to the north-west, beyond the Orange Free State and the Fransvaal. On Thursday, October 12th, the enemy crossed the frontier into Cape Colony, and occupied the railway in force between Mafeking and Vryburg, a town about ninety miles to the south-west, on the way to Kimberley. An armoured train on its way from Vryburg to Mafeking was conveying two seven-pounder guns, sent from Cape Town to strengthen the Mafeking works. At Kraaipan siding, about forty miles south of Mafeking, the train ran off the rails, from removal of some of the metals by the Boers. There were fifteen men in charge of the train and its freight, commanded by Captain Nesbitt. A heavy fire was opened on the train from nine-pounder guns in position for the purpose, and from rifles. From midnight until five in the morning the brave little band of Britons kept up a return fire, inflicting serious loss on the enemy, but were taken prisoners when their leader had been severely wounded, and several of the men were disabled.



## CHAPTER II.

### *The Invasion of Natal.—Early Operations.*

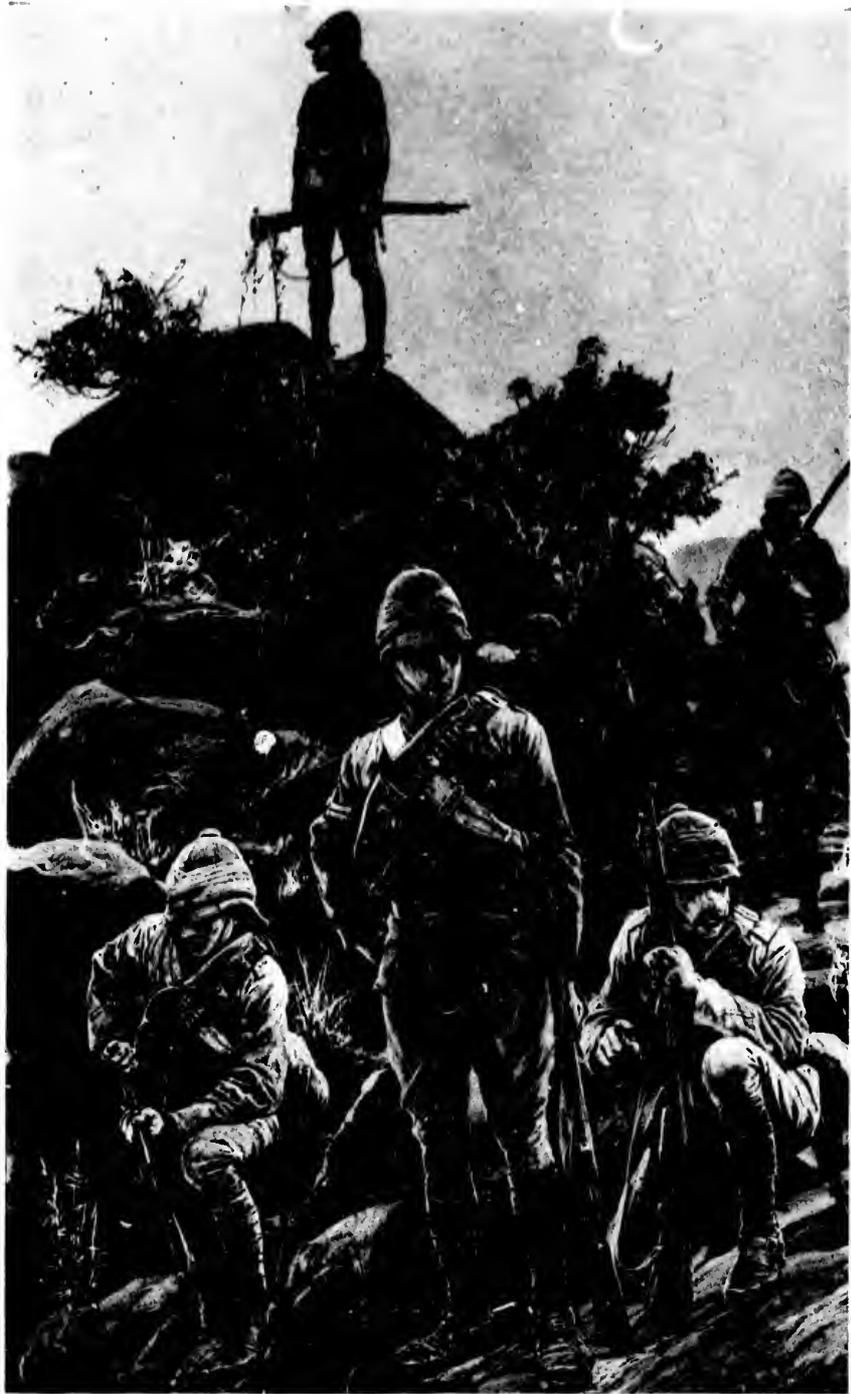
Invasion of Natal from North and North-West—Geography of the Scene of Action—The British Forces in the Field There—At Ladysmith—At Glencoe—Natal Troops—General Sir George White—Sir Archibald Hunter—The Boer Advance on Dundee—The Free Staters' Advance from the West—Smart Engagement at Acton Homes—The Battle of Glencoe (Dundee, or Talana Hill)—General Symons in Command—Boer Guns Silenced—Advance of British Infantry—Sharp Fire of British Guns—The Talana Hill Position—The Attack by our Infantry—Symons Mortally Wounded—The Men Pause under Cover—The Final Rush by the Rifles and Fusiliers—The Position Carried—"Tommyes" on Boer Ponies—Success not Complete—Boer Trickery—Capture of Hussars and Mounted Infantry—Great Loss of Officers—The Victory not of Permanent Value—Colonel Yule in Command—His Skilful Retreat to Ladysmith before Superior Forces—Glencoe and Dundee Occupied by Enemy—Their Advance on Ladysmith—The Battle of Elandsplaagte—The Scene of Action—General French's Able Tactics—Strong Boer Position—Arrival of Reinforcements from Ladysmith—General White takes the Command to French—Advance of British Linesmen and Imperial Light Horse—Picturesque Scene at Final Attack—Death of Colonel Chisholme—Incidents of the Fight—The Brave Boy Bugler—The Final Charge—Boers Driven over the Ridge—Work of the Lancers—Enemy's Officers Killed or Captured—The Trophies of Victory—British Losses—The Imperial Light Horse—Their Origin and Spirit—The Challenge Letter from the Boers—Colonel Chisholme Sketched Before he Fell—Sir George White among the Shell Fire—Colonel Dick-Cunyngham—His Wound and Order to the Men—Gallant Conduct of Lord Ava—Sir George White's Risky Position at Ladysmith—The Battle of Rietfontein—The British Force Gradually Enveloped—The Battle of Farquhar's Farm—The Disaster at Nicholson's Nek—The Overpowering Force of Boers—Capture of Gloucesters and Irish Fusiliers—Artillery Duel at Ladysmith—Fight at Tatham's Farm—Enemy's Camp Taken—Ladysmith Finally Invested—Telegraph Wires Cut—British Success near Colenso—The Mistake of Occupying Ladysmith—Its Serious Results.

While the Transvaal Boers were pouring across the frontier in the northern angle of Natal, their Free State allies invaded the colony on the north-west by way of Van Reenen's Pass and at other points, making for Ladysmith. The country is one singularly well adapted for the operations of such a military force as that directed by the Boer commanders, in the broken nature of the ground, with its countless hills and hollows, affording endless positions for defensive warfare, and abundant opportunity for concealment of troops in ambushades. The land, as usual in South Africa, rises in terraces from the sea. Durban being nearly at the sea level, Pinetown, only seventeen miles inland, is 1,100 feet above it. The capital, Pietermaritzburg, seventy miles by rail from Durban, stands at double that height, or 2,200 feet. Estcourt, seventy-five miles by rail north-west of the capital, lies at the height of 3,800 feet. Ladysmith, forty-four miles north of Estcourt, is some-

what lower, but stands well above 3,000 feet.

Beyond Ladysmith, on the west, the Van Reenen Pass over the Drakensberg Mountains into Orange Free State is at the height of 5,500 feet. From the Drakensberg, smaller ranges run across the colony to the east, the north-east, and the south-east, as the Biggarsberg hills, cutting off the northernmost corner—the Newcastle district—from the rest of Natal; the Mooi River heights, running north-east from the Giant's Castle, a mountain over 9,000 feet high on the Natal and Basutoland border, to the valley of the Tugela; and two other ranges, one running to the Lower Tugela, and the other in a south-easterly direction to the sea near Durban.

Natal has many rivers, the largest being the Tugela, which rises in the Mont aux Sources, on the Basutoland border, a mountain over 11,000 feet high, and flows for two hundred miles before it reaches the sea. In many miles of its



MOUNTED INFANTRY RECONNOITRING.

course it is a strong stream, passing through rocky ravines. Among its tributaries are the Klip River, passing by Ladysmith from the north, and entering the Tugela about ten miles north-east of Colenso; the Mooi River, running north-east about midway between Estcourt and Greytown; and Bushman River, passing by Estcourt, and, with a north-easterly course, through Weenen, and entering the Tugela at a point about twenty miles due east of Colenso. The railway lines appear on the map, the sections which concern this part of our record being the line running north-west and north from Pietermaritzburg to Ladysmith, especially the northern part from Estcourt to Ladysmith; and the railway north-east from Ladysmith to Glencoe Junction, with the eight-mile branch eastwards from the junction to Dundee and the coal-fields lying south of that town.

At the time of the invasion of Natal on October 12th, the British force numbered about fifteen thousand men. At Ladysmith, the force

of about nine thousand troops included battalions of the Liverpool Regiment and the Gordon Highlanders, the 1st Devonshires and 1st Gloucesters, the 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, the 5th Lancers, and the 19th Hussars; three field batteries, a battery of Natal Artillery, a mountain battery, and two guns of the Natal Naval Reserves—thirty-two guns in all, with several companies of Mounted Infantry, a hospital and veterinary corps, a company of Royal Engineers, and the Natal Mounted Volunteers. At Glencoe, a force of over four thousand men comprised the 1st Leicestershire, the 1st King's Royal Rifles, the 2nd Dublin Fusiliers, some companies of

Mounted Infantry, the 18th Hussars, some Natal Mounted Volunteers, a field hospital corps, and three field batteries. Some hundreds of colonial Volunteers were at Estcourt and Colenso; at Pietermaritzburg were the 2nd King's Royal Rifles and the Imperial Light Horse. The Natal colonial troops included, besides those mentioned above, the Home Guard Rifle Association (mounted), for the protection of the capital, the Carabineers, and the Natal Mounted Infantry. The last two bodies of men are described as remarkably smart and fit for work, fine riders, and excellent as rifle shots. The Imperial Light Horse, a splendid force, exceeded eight hundred men, and there was also a body of men known as the Border Mounted Rifles, useful as scouts and as supports of cavalry outposts.

The officer in command of all the troops in Natal at the outset was General Sir George Stewart White, V.C., G.C.B., G.C.I.F., G.C.S.I. This distinguished man, born in 1835, entered the Army

from Sandhurst in 1853, served during the War of the Indian Mutiny with the 27th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, and with the Gordon Highlanders in the Afghan War of 1878-80. He took part in the famous march from Kabul to Kandahar; was Brigadier-General in the Burmah War of 1885-6; and filled the high post of Commander-in-Chief in India from 1893 to 1898. His Chief of the Staff in Natal was Sir Archibald Hunter, K.C.B., born in 1856, entering the Army in 1874. He was wounded in Egypt at the battles of Gimmis, 1885, and of Toski, 1889. Governor of Dongola Province and Commandant of the Frontier Field Force from



THE LATE MAJOR-GENERAL  
SIR W. P. SYMONS,  
Mortally Wounded in Action.

## The Fight for the Flag in South Africa

1895 to 1899, he became, in the last year, Governor of Omdurman. Sir George White's subordinates were General Symons and Colonel Yule. The former was in command of the troops at Glencoe, aided by Yule, in command of a brigade.

Newcastle was occupied on October 14th by a commando of Boers under Commandant Ben Viljoen, and two days later a body

Ladysmith, and at Bester's station, on the railway about fifteen miles north-west of headquarters. About five hundred men of the Natal Carabineers and Border Mounted Rifles were engaged nearly all day against some two thousand of the enemy, and gave an excellent show of the quality of the colonial Volunteers. The Boers, adopting cunning tactics, constantly tried outflanking



A PRIVATE IN THE NATAL CARABINEERS, IN HEAVY MARCHING ORDER.

of the enemy was reported at Dannhauser station, about fifteen miles north of Glencoe Junction. An exodus of civilians began from Dundee to the south, and, in view of immediate hostilities, the Imperial Light Horse moved from Pietermaritzburg to the front. The first fighting in the Natal campaign occurred on October 18th, when Sir George White's outposts came into contact with the Free State forces at Acton Homes, a village about twenty-five miles west of

on right and left, and strove to draw the Natal men into traps. All these efforts were steadily and warily foiled, a Maxim gun being of great service in dealing with attempts to cut off parties of men and in stopping sudden rushes of the foe. The enemy's superior force at last compelled Major Ruthven, commanding the Mounted Rifles, to order a retreat, which was effected without difficulty. The loss was trifling on either side. Lieutenant Royston, of the

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*From a Drawing by F. C. Dickinson.*

THE BATTLE OF GLENCOE (DUNDEE, OR TALANA).



Rifles, gallantly aided the escape of a dismounted trooper, carrying him off in safety under a heavy fire. The party reached Ladysmith at three in the morning on October 19th, after being three days and two nights in the saddle, and foodless for twenty-four hours. More serious work was at hand in the neighbourhood of Dundee.

The first important action in the war was that variously known as the "Battle of Glencoe," or "Battle of Dundee," or "Battle of Talana (or Intalana) Hill," this last position being that stormed by the British troops. On October 20th the British force—about four thousand men—was encamped east of Glencoe Junction, north of the branch line to Dundee, under the command of Major-General Sir William Symons, K.C.B., a veteran of the Zulu War, of Burmah, and of the North-West Frontier in India, who entered the Army in 1863. His ability was recognised by Lord Roberts, and he rendered good service in India, as Assistant-Adjutant-General, in the reform of rifle practice. Himself one of the best shots in the service, he ever strove to make the men under his command good marksmen, and also took a deep interest in mounted infantry as a valuable species of force. He had the reputation of being cool, resolute, and prompt in command, and he displayed these qualities on the first—and, as it unhappily proved, the last—occasion of his appearance on the field of battle in the war.

At about half-past five in the morning, several Boer long-range guns posted on Talana Hill, about a mile to the north of Dundee village, opened fire and dropped shells into the British camp. The missiles did not burst and no man was hit by the earlier shots. Within a few minutes, three field batteries—the 13th, 67th, and 69th—manned by some of the finest gunners in the British service, were making effective reply. Shell after shell was planted right in the midst of the Boers, and their range and aim became rapidly worse. In half an hour several of the enemy's guns were

silenced—either disabled by our shells or deserted by their own gunners. Half an hour later their artillery ceased to fire, and General Symons issued orders in rapid succession for an advance of the infantry.

The Dublin Fusiliers moved towards the enemy's right flank on the hill, the King's Royal Rifles were in the central attack, the Royal Irish Fusiliers on their right, to assail the Boer left. The sky at this time became overcast, and mist began to settle on the sides of the hills. There were Boer columns menacing our position a few miles away to the south at Biggars-drift, and to the north, and the Leicester Regiment, the 18th Hussars, the Natal Volunteers, and the Mounted Infantry, were left on guard in and near the camp, with the 67th Battery. The other two batteries moved forward to cover the advance of the infantry over about two miles of broken ground, and the guns were unlimbered in the enemy's front just outside Dundee, to the east. For a full hour the gunners maintained a terrific and sustained fire upon the hill and upon the slope behind the crest where the Boers awaited attack. About eight o'clock, part of a Boer column from the north appeared on a hill to the west of the British camp, but the enemy were soon driven off by the fire of the 67th Battery. Meanwhile, the two battalions of Fusiliers and the Rifles were advancing in perfect order in skirmishing line, taking shelter under every bit of cover from the hail of rifle and Maxim bullets poured down on the plain.

Talana Hill rises about eight hundred feet above the level, the distance to the top being more than a mile. The first part of the ascent is gentle, over open ground, to a homestead known as Smith's Farm, surrounded by a wood broken up by clearings. Above the wood the ground is rough and rocky, and the ascent is steep. Half way up again from this point a thick stone wall runs round the hill, forming the fringe of a wide terrace of open ground. Above the terrace the ascent is almost perpendicular, and at the

top was the Boer position, on the flat so often forming the summit of South African hills. Such a position, defended by riflemen and Maxims, should have been impregnable, and it showed General Symons'

Majuba." If that be so, his object was most fully and nobly attained through the well-directed valour of the men whom he commanded.

As the infantry advanced, the order



*Photo. by Neville P. Edwards.*

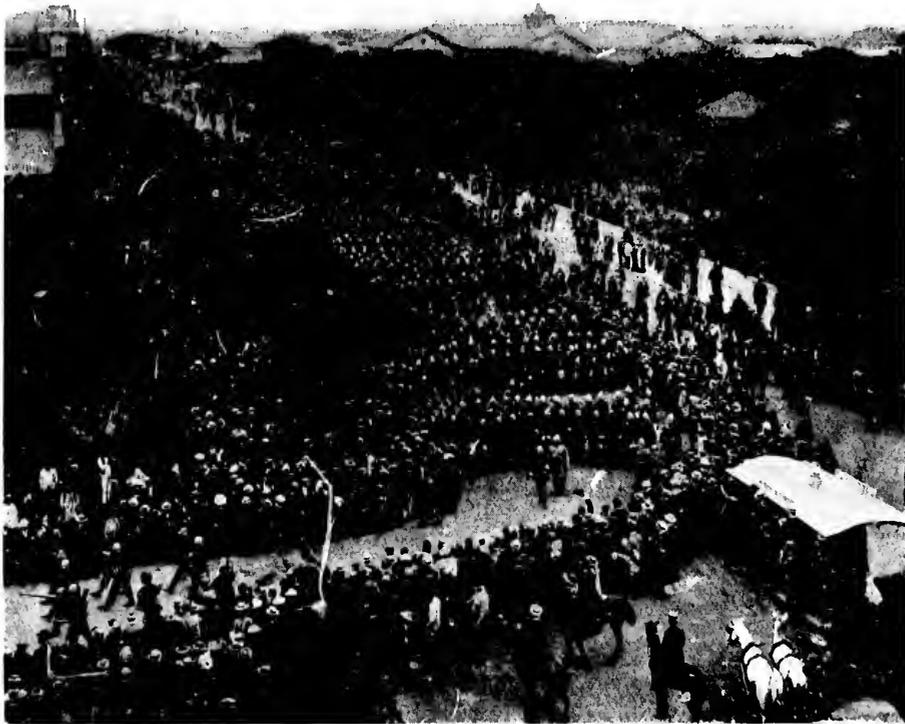
PAARDEKRAAL MONUMENT ERECTED BY THE BOERS TO COMMEMORATE THEIR SUCCESS IN THE LAST WAR.

extreme confidence in the skill and courage of his infantry that he ventured to send only two thousand men to storm it in the teeth of a terrible and sustained fire from superior numbers. It is alleged that the commander had resolved, as the opportunity had come, once and for all to "wipe out

came for the men to go at the "double" for Smith's Farm. That point was reached with very trifling loss, though the enemy's fire had now become a furious storm of lead. The two batteries now took up a fresh position to the south of Talana Hill, about two thousand yards

from the Boer firing line. In the wood around Smith's Farm, which for some time marked the limit of the advance, our officers and men began to fall fast, and it was here that the gallant and able leader received his wound. About half-past nine, General Symons, who had galloped up to tell his men that the hill must be taken, was hit in the stomach by a Mauser bullet,

infantry, that the men, creeping up yard by yard and seeking every scrap of cover from the incessant fire, reached the stone wall above described, and there for an hour or more further movement seemed impossible. As often as a man showed a bit of his head or body, the Boer marksmen "blazed away," and it was past noon when the linesmen, who had been engaged all those



*Photo by J. Wallace Bradley, Durban.*

ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS RETURNING AFTER OUTPOST DUTY AT GLENCOE.

and obliged to quit the field. His fate was a hard one in some respects. His first battle in South Africa was his last. That battle was a victory for the British arms, and the victor had to die, three days later, a prisoner of war in the enemy's hands. He was deeply and sincerely mourned by his Sovereign, his comrades, and all patriotic Britons.

It was about eleven o'clock, five hours from the time of the first advance of the

hours on empty stomachs, resolved on a final rush to make an end. Signals were made from the stone wall for our artillery to cease fire, and then the men, scaling the wall, dashed across the terrace of open ground, and began the almost sheer ascent of the last forty yards of the hill. Falling by scores, the brave Fusiliers and Rifles won their way and carried the position with a bayonet charge, which the Boers did not care to await. The ground was

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From a Drawing by Stanley J. Wood

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found covered with dead and wounded men, Mauser rifles, and ammunition cases. Boer ponies which had lost their owners were careering wildly to and fro, and the tragic and the comic elements were intermingled in the sight of British infantrymen riding about on captured steeds amidst the wreck of a battle lost and won.

The day of the Battle of Dundee was, however, by no means one of the complete success which might have been attained, and it closed with a small disaster to the British force engaged. The loss of our commander's services early in the day probably prevented full advantage being taken of the enemy's discomfiture at Talana Hill, and it is said that the Boers escaped destruction through the hoisting of a flag of truce, under pretence of an armistice for the burying of the dead. The delay thus occasioned enabled them to escape being surrounded on their right flank. The first accounts of the action stated the capture of six of the enemy's guns, but if that were the case, the weapons

were afterwards retaken, probably in connection with what befell the 18th Hussars and the Mounted Infantry. Before the storming of the hill, that force, quitting their position at the camp, where their services were no longer needed, made their way round to the enemy's rear, captured many of the ponies on which the Boers ride to battle, and stampeded many others. This was good work, but the matter ended badly through British lack of caution, and, it must be admitted, Boer cunning and tenacity in the hour of defeat. Our mounted men pursued rashly, and were caught in a trap, with the result that

many went as prisoners to Pretoria. This loss included a whole squadron of the 18th Hussars, about eighty officers and men, among whom were Lieut.-Colonel Moller, who had been twenty-six years in the regiment, Major Greville, and Captain Pollock. The Mounted Infantry officers taken by the enemy included Captain Lonsdale and three lieutenants of the Dublin Fusiliers, and a lieutenant of the Royal Rifles. Apart from this, the victory of Dundee was purchased by the loss, in addition to General Symons, of 32 officers (a very large proportion, due to the reckless courage with which the leaders exposed themselves, instead of seeking cover along with their men) and 182 men killed and wounded.

The Battle of Dundee was a tactical, but not a strategical, success; that is to say, the victory had no influence on the general issue of the campaign. It had made an end of Boer braggadocio concerning Majuba, and had displayed to those uncouth and ignorant warriors the real quality of the British soldier under

proper leading. After the disablement of General Symons, Colonel Yule, as Brigadier-General, succeeded to the command of the little army at Glencoe camp, and he quickly found his position untenable in presence of greatly superior forces. Indeed, if the Boer generals had acted in unison, and had shown in the field due enterprise and skill, they might have surrounded and destroyed, or forced to surrender, the whole of Yule's command. That officer saved his army by retreating from Dundee on October 22nd. Instead of taking the nearest course along the railway, he made a detour on the Helpmakaar road



*Photo. by Yeo, Plymouth.*

GENERAL J. H. YULE,  
Who took over General Symons' Command of  
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GENERAL TYLER'S COLUMN ON THE WAY TO LAIVSMITH.



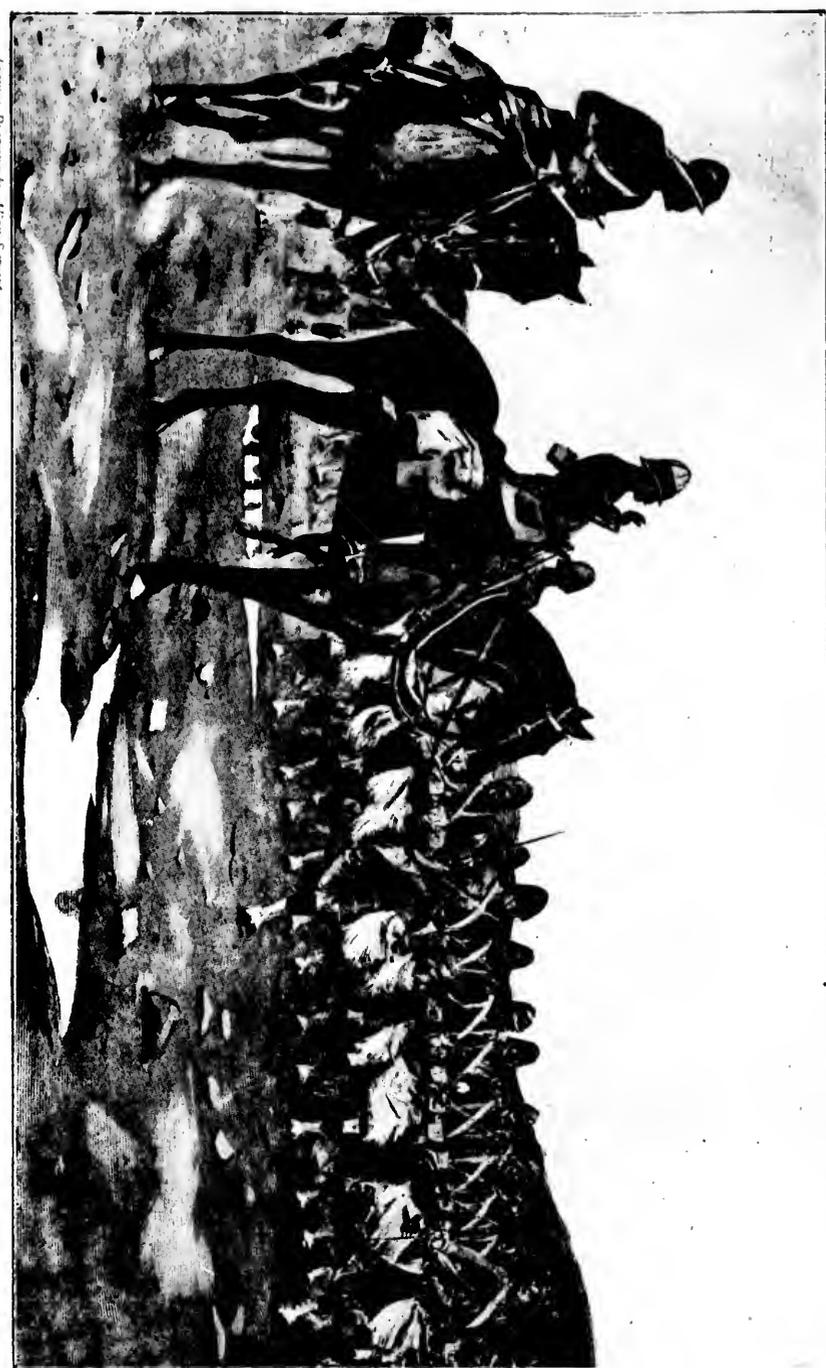


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*From a Drawing by Allan Searns.*

GENERAL IAN HAMILTON AND LIEUTENANT-COLONEL DICK-CUNNINGHAM AT ELANDSLAGTE.  
A Highland Regiment Advancing.



## The Fight for the Flag in South Africa



GENERAL KOCK,  
Who Died of his Wounds, after being Taken  
Prisoner at Elandslaagte.

The fresh men included a squadron of the 5th Dragoon Guards, armed with lances, and a British field battery of fifteen-pounders. At half past three General White arrived on the field, about the time when the main work of the day was beginning. With his usual chivalrous generosity, the superior officer declined to interfere, telling French "this is your show," and leaving to that able commander the whole conduct and credit of the day's operations. We may here state that the infantry were under the command of Colonel Ian Hamilton.

It was nearly four o'clock before the real work of the day was begun. At that time two of our field batteries went into action at a range of about four thousand yards. After fifteen minutes of their fierce fire of shrapnel the enemy's guns on the kopje appeared to be silenced, and the batteries directed their fire against the dismounted Boer riflemen, who were striving to check the advance of the infantry. A few shells sent them off in rapid retirement along the slopes of the rocky hill, and the British linesmen began to deploy for a general advance. The enemy's guns then re-opened with a vigorous fire, but with little effect, as the Devonshires steadily

made for the enemy's front, while the Manchesters, the Gordons, and the Imperial Light Horse, on the British right, moved against the Boer left flank. The battle-ground was a series of open slopes, crossed under a heavy rifle fire from the foe. The Devonshire men went on steadily, slope by slope, until they reached the precipitous face of the hill, where the Boers lay thick among the boulders that gave them shelter. In the meantime, the Gordons, Manchesters, and dismounted Light Horse swept across another ridge, more level, but rough enough for work amidst a hail of nickel and lead.

Two thousand Boers were in front when the time came for the final rush. The British guns were delivering their last shots of shrapnel in preparing the way, and the scene was grandly picturesque from the rear, as heavy thunderclouds, which had gathered about the hills, made a dark background for the thin wreaths of white vapour that followed the explosion of our shells, and for the livid green tongues of flame that darted in rapid succession from the muzzles of our guns. Heavy rain had begun to fall, drenching the khaki-clad infantry as they advanced before the final attack. As the British force closed with



COLONEL SCHIEL,  
Adjutant-General to Boer Forces, Taken Prisoner  
at Elandslaagte.

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*From a Drawing by R. Caton Woodville.*

#### BOER TACTICS.

The Abuse of the White Flag by the Enemy.

the foe, the Manchesters and the Gordons were at one point checked for several minutes by a fence of barbed wire, and the men fell thickly before it could be cleared. The Imperial Light Horse on their right were losing heavily, but there was no sign of wavering, and the mingled battalions pressed eagerly forward up the steep, some dropping down now and then to take deliberate aim from cover, others firing as they climbed on regardless of all precautions. It was then that Colonel Chisholme, commander of the Light Horse, fell dead with bullets through his head and heart, as he was waving a scarf with the colours of his old regiment—the 5th Lancers—as a signal for his men to follow him. Close by, one of the Gordons was hit, and died after crying to a comrade who caught him in his arms, “And me, a time-expired man!”

Some of the Light Horse came across a group of Boers, among whom was Colonel Schiel, badly wounded. When he learned that they were Sampson's men, he said, “Ah, we had him in our prison; now I expect he will have me in his.” He did not know that Major Sampson was lying, badly hit, a few yards away. At this moment occurred the well-known incident of the British boy bugler's call to victory. Our troops had gained the crest of the hill—the Devons on its steepest side, and the Gordons, Manchesters, and Light Horse were sweeping over its nearer ridge—when the men were amazed at hearing the “Cease fire” and “Retire” sounded by buglers. The signals came, beyond doubt, from Boers who had learned our bugle calls, and the trick may be described as worthy of men who, in this and other actions, fired deliberately on ambulance men at work among the wounded, and used flags of truce in order to slay British soldiers made harmless for the moment by the display of the waving white. The dastardly device of the false bugle call failed through the prompt courage of the young bugler of the Gordons. The men were beginning to fall

back when he cried, “Retire be d—d!” and rushing forward, gave the notes for the charge. The men moved on, and, with levelled bayonets, cheering as they went springing over the boulders strewn about, Devons, Manchesters, Gordons, and Light Horse drove the Boers, now firing wildly in aim, down the rugged steep behind the hill. The Battle of Elandslaagte was won, and nobly won, as darkness closed in. More daylight would have given greater success in loss to our foes, but the Lancers, sweeping round the hill, had time to fall upon a body of retiring Boers and to make many bite the dust by their terrible thrusts.

The loss of the defeated in killed and wounded is unknown, but must have been heavy. Among the Boer officers slain was Commandant Ben Viljoen, well known as bitterly hostile to British claims in South Africa. The captured officers included General Kock, who soon afterwards died of his wounds; Piet Joubert, a nephew of the Boer General-in-Chief; Commandant Pretorius; and, as we have seen, the German artillerist, Colonel Schiel, who was in command of a German corps. Our trophies of victory included three Maxim-Nordenfelt guns, the enemy's camp, transport, and commissariat, some hundreds of prisoners, and two flags captured by the 5th Lancers. One of these was a Transvaal standard, the other bore the colours of the projected South African Federation, or United South Africa under Dutch supremacy. The victory was bought by a loss of 257 officers and men, in the proportions of 42 killed, 205 wounded, and 10 missing. The loss of officers was very severe; 5 were killed and 30 wounded, the former including, besides Colonel Chisholme of the Light Horse, Major Denne and three lieutenants of the Gordon Highlanders. We close our narrative of the Battle of Elandslaagte with some interesting particulars concerning officers and men engaged.

The Imperial Light Horse are worthy of special mention in regard to the operations in Natal. This fine corps was



*From a Drawing by Stanley L. Wood.*

ARTILLERY ABOUT TO TAKE UP POSITION.

almost wholly composed of Uitlanders from the Rand, men who had lived and laboured in the Transvaal, and whose attitude towards the war was personal as well as political. That is why they were found at the front of the battle line at Elandslaagte, and were so eager to follow the leading of their gallant commander, Colonel Chisholme. Many of them had never been under fire until that day, but many had seen fighting in Matabeleland, and all were animated by remembrance of the humiliation which they, free-born British subjects, had endured as mere "helots" and "pariahs" at the hands of the insolent Boers of the Transvaal. Their two majors, Sampson and Karri Davis, had borne imprisonment for over a year rather than pay the fine to which Pretoria judges had sentenced them for their participation as Reform leaders in the Jameson Raid. Every man in the regiment was keen for fighting under a leader like Colonel Chisholme, who had left a coveted command in the Lancers to organise and lead the Imperial Light Horse,

had chosen his men from among those who offered their services, and whose personal qualities had endeared him to them all in the short time since he assumed command. All this would have been enough to make them eager for a chance of proving their quality, but another incentive was given before they left camp that morning in the form of a letter addressed to their senior major. The letter was from Johannesburg Boers and Hollanders with the commando at Elandslaagte, expressing a wish to meet the Imperial Light Horse in battle, and asking by what distinctive badge they might be recognised. The desire was quickly complied with, and in a way not gratifying to the foes who met the impetuous Light Horse.

Colonel Chisholme, during the skirmishing in the earlier part of the day of Elandslaagte, had a very narrow escape from a Boer shell, a fact which, during a pause in the engagement, he mentioned to a newspaper correspondent sitting beside Mr. Melton Prior, the famous



Sketched by Mr. Melton Prior.

COLONEL CHISHOLME.

special artist of the *Illustrated London News*. As he stood there in his green khaki suit and brown gaiters, Mr. Prior made a rapid sketch of the doomed warrior. "Mind you stick in my whistle," he cried, and then, as he bade good-bye, he said, "I must get the boys together for more

work." Three hours later Colonel Chisholme had passed away, shot dead when the fight was over and the victory won, killed almost within sight of the white flag fluttering from a carbine held by a bearded Boer. So ended, all too soon, the career of a fine soldier, of whom those who best knew him predicted great deeds. He was not fifty years of age, and his twenty-seven years of service had included very good work in the Afghan War of 1879.

Sir George White was in great danger as he moved with his staff to the left flank of the infantry brigade. The Boer shells fell thick about him, and one which burst in the midst of his escort of Border Mounted Rifles killed two horses without injury to the troopers who rode them. A Gordon Highlander tells us how Lieutenant-Colonel Dick-Cunyngham was wounded at Elandslaagte, and of his bitter regret at being for the time disabled from leading his men. When a shot wound compelled the officer to sit down, he cheered on his men, crying, "Forward, Gordons! The world is looking at you. Brave lads, give it

to the beggars, exterminate the vermin! Charge!" He then, in the soldier's words in a letter home, "started crying because he could not longer lead his battalion, and he would not retire from the field until the day was won."

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THE BATTLE OF RIETPONTEN.



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fate, is attached to an incident concerning Lord Ava, eldest son of the Marquis of Dufferin. He had reached Ladysmith, and, finding himself "unattached," was determined to see some fighting. He begged his friend, Colonel Ian Hamilton, to take him on his staff as "galloper." The colonel consented, but Lord Ava had no horse.

that he could hardly pass the word. Then "by way of rest after the morning's work, and as a nice quiet way of regaining his breath," as the colonel wrote who reported the matter in a private letter, Lord Ava joined the Gordons in their dauntless attack on the rocky ridge lined with death-dealing Boers. We shall see hereafter the



*Photo. by Knight, Altershot.*

ADJUSTING TELEGRAPHIC APPARATUS TO BALLOON AT LADYSMITH.

Not to be baffled, the British noble, who was in his thirty-sixth year, did his "galloping" on foot, rifle in hand, carrying orders to and fro through the heat of the day. His last instruction was to the Gordons as they were lying down on the veldt for shelter from an awful fire of Mauser bullets and shell. He brought the order for their advance, reaching them so out of breath

brave end made by this fine specimen of a British patrician.

Sir George White was being gradually enveloped by the foe in his position at Ladysmith. Not only were many thousands of the enemy pressing down from the north-east, but a large force of Free State Boers was close at hand on the north-west. The British general, knowing

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*Photo by August J. J. J. J.*

RUSSIAN ADVANCE GUARD DISCOVERING THE ENEMY.



## The Fight for the Flag in South Africa

nothing of the real route taken by General Yule in his retreat, and desirous of clearing the road for him in his assumed approach by way of Elandslaagte, and having ascertained by reconnaissance that Free State forces were moving eastward from Bester's station, about fifteen miles northwest of Ladysmith, in order to gain the road to Newcastle on the north of his position, resolved on an attack in the right direction. At five o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, October 24th, he moved out towards Elandslaagte with the Devons, the Gloucesters, the Liverpools, the 5th Lancers, the 19th Hussars, the Imperial Light Horse, Natal Mounted Volunteers, and three batteries. The enemy were strongly posted on the kopjes about a mile and a half west of the railway, near Rietfontein Farm. An action of six hours, known as the Battle of Rietfontein, was

chiefly one of artillery fire, our guns at last succeeding in driving the Boers from Pepworth Ridge and other positions commanding the Newcastle road. This engagement, which, without any fault of the British general, was absolutely useless, caused our force a loss of 109 officers and men, 13 being killed, 93 wounded, and 3 missing. The only officer killed was Colonel Wilford, of the 1st Gloucesters. Boer sharpshooters posted on the spur of a lofty hill made a special mark, with much success, of our staff officers and gunners.

For some days following the engagement at Rietfontein, the enemy were ever converging on Ladysmith in great force from the north and east, the men from the Transvaal being under the command of General Joubert. It became clear to Sir George White that a vigorous attempt



*Photo. by W. Nicholls.*

TIMELY ARRIVAL OF THE BLUEJACKETS AT LADYSMITH.

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*Drawn by W. G. Seppings-Wright, from a Sketch by Mr. Melton Prior.*

THE NAVAL BRIGADE AT THE BATTLE BEFORE LADYSMITH, OCTOBER 30TH.  
The 4.7 Gun, Mounted on Captain Scott's Carriage, in Action.

must be made to prevent the investment of his position, as the reconnoitring of scouts and observations from the war balloon of the Royal Engineers, fitted with the telephone and the searchlight apparatus, showed that the enemy were occupying hills within four miles of the town, and were dragging heavy artillery up the steeps. The main source of water was cut off by the foe, but the town was, happily, provided with other ample supplies, besides the wells.

On the night of Sunday, October 29th, the British commander sent out a mountain battery, drawn by mules, towards the north-west, with the Irish Fusiliers and the Gloucesters, to clear his left flank of the enemy there gathered. This well-intended move was to end, as we shall see, in the first of those disasters which were destined to try so sorely the patience and placidity of British patriots in all parts

of the empire. On the afternoon of Monday, October 30th, the troops had not returned to Ladysmith. It became known that the battery mules had "stampeded" with the guns during the night; beyond that, the fate of the two battalions was, for the time, a mystery. Meanwhile, the heavy bombarding guns of the Boers were on Monday morning replied to with good effect by the weapons of the Naval Brigade which had just arrived, and the Boer forty-pounder, styled "Long Tom" by our men, was silenced for a time.

On the same day a general action took place to the north and east of the town. There was much work done on each side with artillery, the guns of Boers and Britons being well matched. At four in the morning the British batteries opened against the enemy's left flank, and soon after five the Boers replied with shells from their forty-pounder, at a range of six thousand



CUTTING THE TELEGRAPH WIRES.

yards. At half-past seven, Boer reinforcements advancing along the Helpmakaar road attacked our right in considerable force, and the four batteries of Field Artillery which were holding that flank, along with infantry and cavalry, were compelled to retire and to take up a fresh position. At this point, two battalions of the King's Royal Rifles suffered heavily in advancing up the ridges of a kopje, and were recalled by Sir George White. A retreat on our part began, in presence of greatly superior hostile forces, checked from pursuit by the accurate fire of our batteries. The Battle of Farquhar's Farm, was, in fact, the inevitable failure of the British general's attempt to prevent his position from being

shut in by overwhelming forces. At every point he found his men out-numbered, and only the shells from our field batteries and the accurate and powerful fire of the naval guns kept the foe at bay. We turn now to the disaster at Nicholson's Nek, on the left flank of our position. The exact particulars of this event cannot be fully known until the holding of an inquiry, the date of which depends on that of the release of British prisoners at Pretoria. The following account, derived from letters sent by captive officers, and communications made to Mr. Winston Churchill, may be regarded as fairly trustworthy.

We have seen that, on the evening of October 29th, a small column of the Gloucester Regiment and the Irish Fusiliers started from Ladysmith to protect the British left flank by the occupation of a long saddle-back hill dividing the Boer position at right angles. The object of the movement was to cut off the Free State Boers from the main army. The force of about eleven hundred men was under the command of Colonel Carleton, and was accompanied by a mountain battery with one hundred and fifty rounds of ammunition on mules, and by mules carrying the reserve regimental rifle ammunition. The night march was successfully executed, and the hill was reached at two o'clock on the morning of October 30th.

The six companies of Irish Fusiliers who led the way, followed by the battery and ammunition mules, with the Gloucesters bringing up the rear, had got part of the way up the steep hill in thick darkness, when some mounted Boers galloped down amid clouds of dust and rolling stones. The mules carrying the mountain guns and spare ammunition started off, rushing down the hill, and knocking the men over in all directions. Great confusion ensued for a time, but the men reached the top of the hill and were re-formed before dawn. Destitute of guns for defence, and with no rifle ammunition save that in their pouches, the troops prepared as best they could slight *sungars* (breastworks) of loose

stones, of which only few fit for the purpose could be found. At dawn the British battalions were assailed by a skirmishing fire from small parties of Boers, but little loss was caused until half-past nine, when strong reinforcements arrived from the Boer left. The fight was maintained until half-past two, by which time the position was hopeless. Retreat was impossible, as our men were surrounded on all sides, and the ammunition was nearly exhausted. Colonel Carleton was intending

war. No surrender of British soldiers in such numbers had taken place since 1794, when the Duke of York, surrounded at Turcoing, north of Lille, by superior French forces, lost 1,500 men as prisoners.

On Tuesday, October 31st, there was more artillery fighting at Ladysmith, the practice of our Bluejackets being admirable against the enemy's big guns. By this time the Boers were well to the south of Ladysmith, and some fighting took place on November 1st near Colenso. On the



NATIVE DESPATCH RUNNER.

a defence to the last, ending with a bayonet charge after the last shot was expended, when a severely wounded officer ordered the white flag to be raised. A towel was tied to a rifle and displayed. The officers of the Gloucesters were uncertain how to act, thinking the sign of surrender was hoisted—as it assuredly was not—by Colonel Carleton's orders. Some companies fired their few remaining rounds, others ceased to resist and awaited the approach of the enemy, who came rapidly forward. About 250 men had fallen, and nearly 850, including 45 officers, became prisoners of

following day an attack was made on a camp of the Free State Boers at Tatham's Farm, near Bester's station, north-west of Sir George White's position, the troops engaged being Lancers, Hussars, the Natal Carabineers, and the Border Rifles, who left Ladysmith at dawn with a field battery. The large Boer camp was surrounded by waggons and other obstructions. Bester's Hill was well fortified, with guns in position. About nine o'clock, the British gunners began to pour shell on the enemy's camp, inflicting great loss, and throwing the Boers into a state of panic. The cavalry, who

had been steadily working their way up to the enemy's position, then burst in upon the camp, and the Boers made a hasty flight.

The isolation of Ladysmith was, however, by this time practically complete. The message conveying intelligence of the fight at Bester's was the last that came over the telegraph wires, which were shortly afterwards cut by the foe, and Sir George White's communications with the outside world were thenceforth to be carried on by "runners" who could make their way through the enemy's lines or by pigeon post, or, at a later time, by heliograph signals. Before leaving for the time the British general and his fine force of all arms, we may record a vigorous and successful attack made by them on Friday, November 3rd, when a force of guns and cavalry was sent out to outflank the enemy moving southwards on Colenso. The Boers were found posted with guns on Grober's Kloof Hill. The British artillery at once opened fire, while the Lancers and Dragoons skirted the foot of the hill, and placed themselves on the enemy's line of retreat. The Boers, suffering heavily from our fire, finally moved down to the open ground stretching to the river, and were there severely handled by the British horsemen.

This success, like all others gained by the British arms up to that point in the Natal campaign, was of no service to the main object—that of delivering Natal from the presence of the foe. The guns and cavalry returned to Ladysmith, where the whole army was for many weeks to be encompassed by a superior force of well-armed, wily, and obstinate

enemies. Relief could come only from a British force fighting its way to the rescue of the beleaguered men. For the general purpose of the campaign, nothing more unfortunate could be conceived than the occupation of Ladysmith. Without any fault of General White, who could not know the great number of men at the disposal of his antagonist Joubert, and in deference to the wishes of the Natal Government, who naturally wished to preserve the colony, as far as possible, from Boer possession and plunder, a great military mistake had been committed. The proper course, as all men soon came to see, was the abandonment of the northern part of Natal and the occupation of the line of the Tugela, which was defensible by British and colonial troops and guns, moving freely to the south of the river, against any force which the enemy could have brought against such a barrier. The occupation of Ladysmith not only put out of action ten thousand fine soldiers of all arms, and a very able and enterprising commander, but tied our military affairs in South Africa into a knot. On the last day of October, Sir Redvers Buller landed at Cape Town as Commander-in-Chief. He found himself hampered from the outset. There can be little doubt that he had arrived with the resolve to invade the Orange Free State and the Transvaal in force sufficient to draw away, by the most artistic and effectual mode of diversion known to military science, the Boer invaders of a British colony. This plan was already frustrated when he reached the front. General Buller's work at once became that of relieving Ladysmith, a task which he was destined to find one of the most arduous character.



### CHAPTER III.

#### *The Invasion of Cape Colony.—Central Scene of Action.—Operations of General Gatacre and General French.*

Invasion of Cape Colony South of Orange River—Seizure of Norval's Pont, Bethulie Bridge, Colesberg, etc.—Free State Commandant's Appeal to Colonists—President Steyn Annexes British Territory—Cape Colony Government Proclaims Martial Law in Certain Districts—General Gatacre's Arrival at Naauwpoort Junction—General French also Takes the Field—Antecedents of the two Commanders—French's Escape in Time from Ladysmith—Further Advance of Boer Forces—Rebels in the Colony—Enemy Occupy Stormberg—British Seizure of Corn and Flour at Molteno—Boers at Dordrecht, Steynsburg—Damage Done to Railway Lines—Arrival of Reinforcements for Gatacre at Sterkstroom—His Repulse at Stormberg (December 9th)—The Retreat and Pursuit—General French at Arundel—His Skilful Operations—New Zealanders in a Trap—Their Cool Courage—Gatacre's Command—Work of Mounted Infantry under Captain Montmorency—Rescue of a British Party by Captain Goldsworthy—Brilliant Work of General French near Colesberg—The Boer Advance Stopped—Reinforcements for French—More Fighting—The Boers Repulsed—The Disaster to the Suffolks near Colesberg—Severe Loss in Prisoners—Spies and Traitors at Work—Further Fighting near Colesberg—French's Need of Reinforcements—Repulse of Boer Attack by New Zealanders and Yorkshires—Australian Party Cut Off by Boers—General Gatacre's Troops Attacked at Molteno—Enemy Well Repulsed—More Food-stuffs Seized by British at Molteno Mills.

THE invasion of Natal was followed, about three weeks later, by an inroad of Free State Boers across the Orange River into Cape Colony. On Wednesday morning, November 1st, the bridge at Norval's Pont was attacked by the enemy, with the capture of a few men of the Mounted Police and some storekeepers. The point of invasion lies just where the Orange River turns eastwards after a long course from due north-west. The telegraph station was seized and the wires were cut. Norval's Pont railway station, on the line running north-east from Naauwpoort Junction to Bloemfontein, was also captured, and the foe were fairly planted, in this new quarter, on British territory. On the next day (November 2nd) a body of Boers crossed the river at Bethulie Bridge, about forty miles east of Norval's Pont, on the railway running north-west from Albert Junction, in Cape Colony, to Fauresmith, in Orange Free State. There were no British troops then on the scene, and the enemy marched slowly southwards, occupying Colesberg, south-west of Norval's Pont, and Burghersdorp, south of Albert Junction, by the middle of November.

At Colesberg, on November 15th, a demonstration of Free State troops, about seven hundred strong, was made in presence of

the colonial farmers in the district, who had been summoned to attend. The commandant, in an impassioned appeal, adjured the colonial burghers to join the Boer cause, and to throw off the yoke of English tyranny. "War," said this vindicator of righteousness and truth, "had been forced upon the Free State, and it was God's will that they should fight for their liberty. Those who failed to respond would be answerable to Him. The Boer arms had been hitherto everywhere victorious." A proclamation from President Steyn was then read, addressed to the inhabitants of Cape Colony. This document stated that the Free State Boers had no enemy to fight except Her Majesty's troops, and the colonial burghers would continue to enjoy freedom of property and person so long as they displayed no hostility. Supplies which were requisitioned would be paid for, or a receipt given in full. The commando then began to forage in the town, and commandeered waggons, carts, and supplies from the storekeepers in Colesberg and the farms in the district. Aliwal North, on the Orange River, in Cape Colony, about forty miles east of Bethulie Bridge, was also occupied. The Cape Colony Government proclaimed martial law in the districts of Colesberg, Steynsburg,



*Photo. by Bourne & Shepherd, Calcutta.*  
GENERAL GATACRE.

Albert, Molteno, Aliwal North, Queens-town, and other regions in that quarter. The loyal inhabitants were anxiously awaiting the arrival of British troops from the south, or from De Aar in the west, on the line to Kimberley. It was not long before aid arrived.

On November 20th General Sir William Gatacre reached Naauwpoort by train from De Aar with a thousand men, and General French, with a force of three thousand, was at Hanover Road, a station about midway

between De Aar Junction and Naauwpoort. Major-General Sir William Forbes Gatacre, K.C.B., holding the chief command in this part of the scene of warfare, was born in 1843, and entered the Army in 1862. After service in Burmah in 1889, and, six years later, in Chitral, he commanded the British Brigade in the Sudan during the advance to the Atbara in 1898, and there acquired from his men the nickname of "General Backacher," from the amount of work which he exacted. He is a man of indefatigable energy, and claims, no doubt with justice, that he asks no more from any of his subordinates than he is prepared to do himself. At the Battle of Omdurman General Gatacre was in command of the British Division.

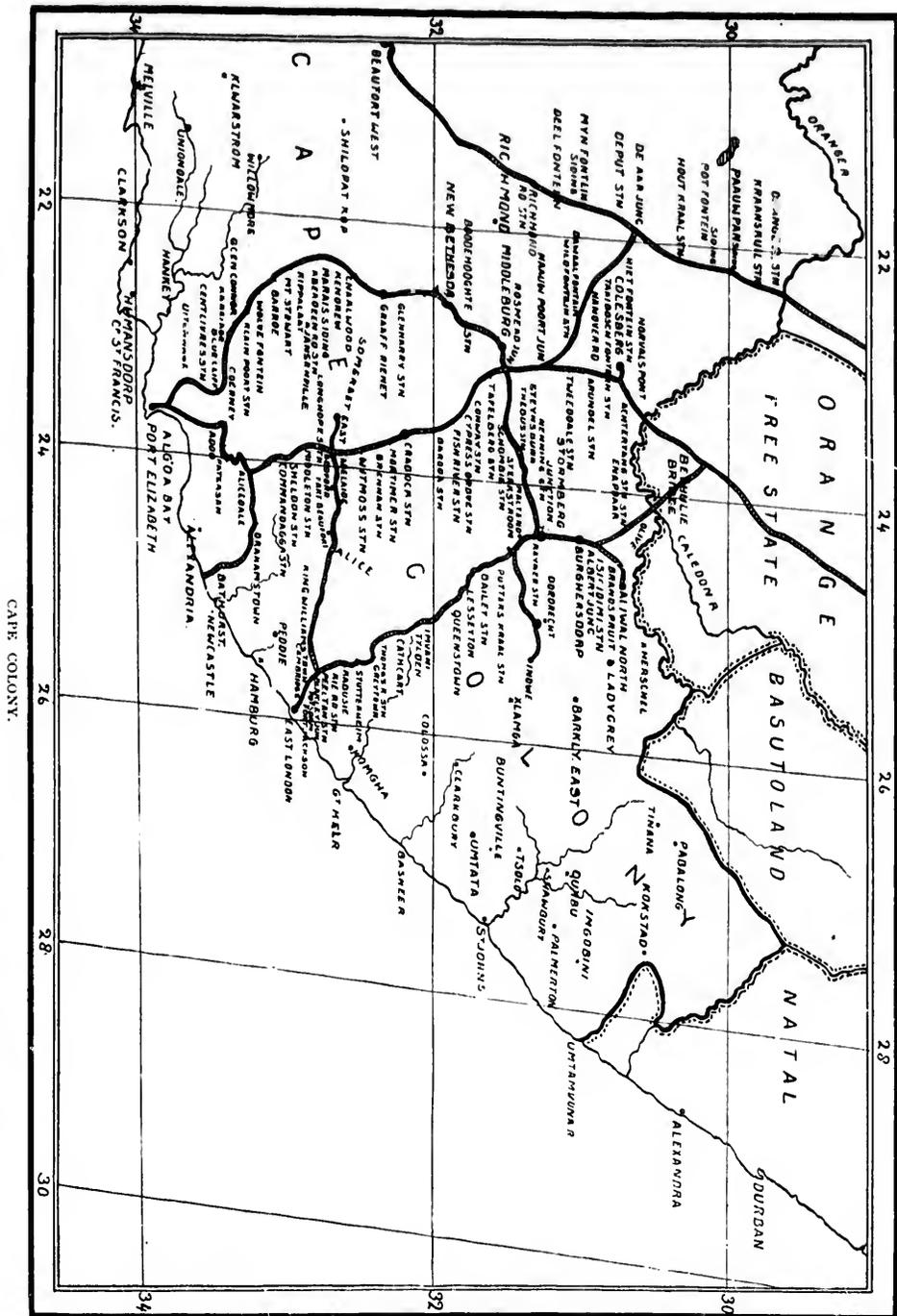
Major-General French has a very high reputation as a cavalry leader, and it was by the casting vote of Sir Redvers Buller that he was selected for his command in South Africa. He belongs to a modern school of British officers which includes Babington and Brabazon, with Brocklehurst, for the present shut up in Ladysmith; Lord Dundonald, commanding General Buller's cavalry on the Tugela; Lord Airlie, heading the 12th Lancers on the Modder River; and Colonel Broadwood, late the dashing young leader of the Egyptian Cavalry, now at the head of a fine corps of irregular



*Photo. by Jackson, Colesberg.*

VIEW OF COLESBERG.

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*Photo, reproduced by the kind permission of "SOUTH AFRICA,"*  
PRESIDENT STEYN.

cavalry in Cape Colony. As major of the 19th Hussars, one of the finest regiments in the service, perfect in outpost duties and reconnaissances, French accompanied Sir Herbert Stewart's expedition across the Bayuda Desert in the Nile Campaign of 1884-85, and took part in the fierce actions at Abu Klea and Metemmeh. At Elands-laagte, General French had displayed, as we have seen, the mastery with which he could handle the three arms—cavalry, infantry, and artillery—in combination, and this clear-headed, patient, prompt, sound-judging officer was the very man for the work in hand against the invaders of Cape Colony. By good luck French had just been able to escape from Ladysmith by the last train that got through for Durban. Four miles from Colenso the train was fired on by the Boers, but none of the passengers suffered injury.

For some time no events of importance occurred in the new scene of action. The Boers were active in cutting telegraph wires and destroying railway line, and they occupied the towns of Ladygrey and Barkly East, in the eastern region near the borders of Basutoland. A rebellious feeling among the Dutch colonists was manifested in injurious action, and on November 22nd, before the enemy's arrival at Barkly East, seventy farmers of the district seized the magazine at that town, containing three hundred Martini rifles and four thousand rounds of ammunition. Wearing orange-coloured puggarees, they made a great demonstration of their Boer sympathies, and ended with the vulgar act of riding through a bar and billiard-room in the town. On November 25th a reconnoitring party of the British forces, consisting of a hundred and fifty picked men of the Mounted Infantry, cavalry, and New South Wales Lancers, went by train northwards from Naauwpoort Junction to repair the line broken up near Arundel. On the following day the Boer invaders occupied Stormberg, an important railway junction, to the number of a thousand men, and spread through the district on the work of enlisting colonial recruits.

On Wednesday, November 29th, General Gatacre, having his headquarters at Sterkstroom, despatched a force to Molteno, which made a valuable seizure of a thousand bags of wheat and a great quantity of flour, in danger of being commandeered by the enemy. The British generals, however, still lacked force to cope with the invaders, and on December 2nd the enemy entered Dordrecht, about forty miles due east of Stormberg Junction. On the following day, Steynsburg, about thirty miles west of Stormberg, was entered by the Boer invaders, and the Thebus Bridge, a substantial structure, was destroyed with dynamite. In all directions damage was done to railway lines by an enemy in too great force to be checked. On December 5th General Gatacre, at Sterkstroom, was able to welcome the arrival of reinforcements,

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*From a Drawing by Geoffrey Strahan.*

ASSAULT OF STORMBERG BY GENERAL GATACRE.

including two field batteries, an arm in which he had been sorely deficient. The enemy, in considerable force of men and guns, held a very strong position at Stormberg, and General Gatacre resolved to approach them.

At this time the British commander's headquarters were at Putter's Kraal station, south of Sterkstroom, and on Saturday, December 9th, he left by train for Molteno, and thence advanced by a forced march of twelve miles to Stormberg with about four thousand men, including the 2nd Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Rifles, about eight hundred Mounted Infantry, and two field batteries. The movement seems to have been intended as a reconnaissance in force, to be developed into a night attack if opportunity served. The British troops, leaving Molteno at nine at night, marched by the light of a bright moon until half-past eleven, when the moon went down. The road was rough and stony, partly blocked at intervals by huge boulders which had rolled from the hillside, and the men were glad to strike off into the veldt for softer footing. The utmost caution was used after darkness fell, no light being used, and directions being given in a whisper by the officers. The force was, unhappily, marching into a trap, and, intending a surprise, was itself taken terribly unawares. It is likely enough that spies and colonial traitors, who have been ever the bane of British officers and troops during the war, had informed the enemy of the line of approach. It seems certain that the Boer position was being neared in the wrong quarter, and General Gatacre attributed this to the mistake of his guide, a local policeman.

However that may be, at a point within two miles of Stormberg the marching British column was suddenly assailed by a terrific fire right ahead and on the right flank. The Irish soldiers, who were in the van, at once sought cover behind a kopje near at hand to the left, followed, in good order, by the artillery and the Northumberlands. The Mounted Infantry,

by a circuitous movement, forced on them by the nature of the ground, reached the same place of supposed safety, when the whole body found itself suddenly under the fire of a powerful artillery. The British field batteries took up another position half a mile away, and did splendid work in covering the inevitable withdrawal of the infantry to cover, whence they could reply to the enemy's fire. The Mounted Infantry moved northwards, in order to get on the right flank of the Boers, and the infantry again moved to encounter a strong commando of Boers approaching from the north. Our men were met by the heavy fire of machine guns placed in good positions, and General Gatacre was forced to order a retirement on Molteno. The enemy followed closely along the ridges of hills, harassing the force with artillery fire, which, owing to the skilful management of the officers, caused trifling loss.

The retreating force reached Molteno about eleven o'clock on the evening of Sunday, December 10th, after thirty hours' hard work, including a hot engagement lasting three hours. The loss in this second reverse to the British arms during the campaign was severe, not in killed and wounded, but in prisoners. The movement of the Irish Rifles and the Northumberland Fusiliers to encounter the new Boer force coming from the north ended in the cutting off and capture of nine officers and about six hundred men. Many who were at first reported "missing" afterwards returned to camp, but the Battle of Stormberg was, beyond doubt, a serious discomfiture for the British arms.

On December 13th there was some warm work near Arundel, when a strong force of Boers, with guns, advancing southwards towards Naauwpoort, was encountered by the British cavalry and a battery of Royal Horse Artillery. The fighting was at long range, and the enemy were driven back with some loss. General French, gaining experience of the region in which he was acting, reported the district as being "very suitable for mounted troops," and that "the

enemy were afraid to leave their positions if even a small detachment of cavalry were near." These observations reveal the fact that the Boers, so effective and bold against infantry on ground and under circumstances wholly favourable to their peculiar method of warfare, are liable to attacks of "nerves" when they are exposed to the action of mounted men, and when mobile foes show that the republican fighters are not to have all things their own way. We shall see that French was the man to drive the lesson well home, in warfare of a worrying kind for his foes. On December 18th, in a reconnaissance made by the general, with a battery of Royal Horse Artillery and an escort of New Zealanders, a detachment of the antipodean colonials was suddenly caught between a terrific cross fire from kopjes near at hand. The men retired steadily, returning the fire under cover of the guns, which shelled the Boers away from the hills. The New Zealanders earned the warm praise of General French for their cool courage under fire.

On Sunday, the last day of 1899, there was an incident which strongly showed the value of mounted men in warfare. On Saturday, December 30th, Captain Montmorency, with about one hundred and twenty troopers of Brabant's Horse, made a reconnaissance northwards from Dordrecht, a town lying about thirty miles north-east of General Gatacre's headquarters at Sterkstroom. About noon the enemy were sighted in occupation of a good position on a precipitous ridge three miles from the town, and outflanking movements compelled them to retire. Then the Boers were reinforced by the arrival of six hundred men, with two guns, while the British were strengthened by a party of a hundred Cape Mounted Police. The enemy's artillery fire, including that of a big gun which had been brought into action, compelled a retirement of the British force, which was executed with the utmost steadiness. The mounted men were led with great "dash" by Captain Montmorency, and the foe, pursuing in

vastly superior force, were perplexed and kept in check by frequent demonstrations against their flanks. It was found, however, that a party of the British, detached early in the day, had been left behind. Lieutenant Milford Turner and twenty-seven men had taken shelter in a hollow, where they could not be reached by the enemy's fire. When they failed to return to Dordrecht on Saturday night, it was feared that they had been captured by the Boers. On Sunday morning, December 31st, a relief party of one hundred and ten men, with four guns, started at daybreak under Captain Goldsworthy, and, after a smart brush with the enemy, who had both men and horses killed, nearly the whole party was brought back in safety, with but four men wounded in the relieving force.

We turn to the work of General French, and find him also marking the close of one year and the beginning of another by brilliant work in the field. At five in the afternoon of December 31st, the British commander left Arundel with five squadrons, half of the 2nd Berkshire, eighty Mounted Infantry carried in waggons, and ten guns. A detour was made to avoid observation, and, after a halt for four hours at a farmstead, the force, at half-past three in the morning of January 1st, occupied a kopje overlooking Colesberg from the west. The Boers were in the hills extending for six miles at a short distance south of the town. At daylight the British guns opened fire, enfilading the right of the enemy's position. The foe replied with a very hot discharge from a fifteen-pounder British gun, with Royal Laboratory ammunition, with a Hotchkiss, which caused much annoyance, and with other guns. At last the artillery on the enemy's right flank was silenced, and the Boers, with severe loss from our shells, were forced to flee, leaving the Hotchkiss gun behind. The enemy, on the first attack, had been completely surprised. The Berkshires seized a hill in the dark, driving off the Boer pickets and securing an excellent sheltered position for the British Royal Horse Artillery guns. General



GUARDING A TUNNEL IN CAPE COLONY.

French ended by a demonstration with cavalry and guns to the north of Colesberg, occupying the enemy's line of retreat by way of the road-bridge across the Orange River.

On the next day (January 2nd) it was found that the enemy, strongly reinforced, had re-occupied the positions from which they had been driven by our artillery on the preceding day, and they made their presence known by an accurate fire from guns sending shells which did not explode. The whole British loss in the two days amounted to four killed and a few wounded. The Boers on January 1st undoubtedly

suffered severely from our fire. All this operation of war had been conducted with admirable skill in the dispositions of the British general, and though the result was of no decisive character as regarded the expulsion of the foe from British territory, the work, done with trifling loss to our troops, was very harassing to the invaders. Their progress southwards on the much-vaunted promenade to Cape Town was effectually stayed at an early period of the campaign, and it was demonstrated that British forces of the right stamp, ably led, were their masters in that scene of warfare.

On January 3rd, General French, at

his special request, was reinforced by the brigade of Household Cavalry, the 1st Essex, and a battery of Field Artillery. He needed this addition to his troops. On the next day the Boers made a determined attempt to get round the British left flank. There were about a thousand men in the commando, who occupied a line of small kopjes and opened a hot fire with four guns on a position held by two companies of the Berkshires and half a battalion of the Suffolks. As the enemy advanced, the fire of four British guns drove them off to cover, and the attack was finally disposed of by cavalry and guns, who threatened the enemy's right flank, supported by infantry pouring in a severe fire. After long, desultory fighting between the Berkshires and the Boers, occupying respectively the western and eastern ends of a range of hills, and a hot fire of our guns against the enemy in other positions, the foe retired across the plain towards the Orange River road. Then the British cavalry was let loose. The fire of two of the enemy's guns from a small ridge on the plain was silenced by the

British artillery, and the Boers lost about fifty killed and wounded. The Mounted Infantry, charging one position, took nineteen prisoners. During the pursuit, Major Harvey, commanding the 10th Hussars, was killed at the head of his men. The British losses were otherwise small.

This success was followed by a somewhat serious disaster to a battalion of our infantry. On the morning of Saturday, January 6th, General French, at the urgent desire of Colonel Watson, in command of the Suffolks, allowed an attempt to be made for the seizure of a grassy hill which formed part of the enemy's position at Colesberg. The kopje lay two miles to the north-west of the town, and was well worth an effort for its possession, seeing that it commanded the whole plain to the north and north-west of Colesberg, as well as a great part of the town itself. There is no doubt that information of the intended attack was at once conveyed to the Boers. At midnight Colonel Watson set forth with four companies of his regiment, the men wearing canvas shoes or marching in their socks



From a Drawing by W. B. W. 1899.

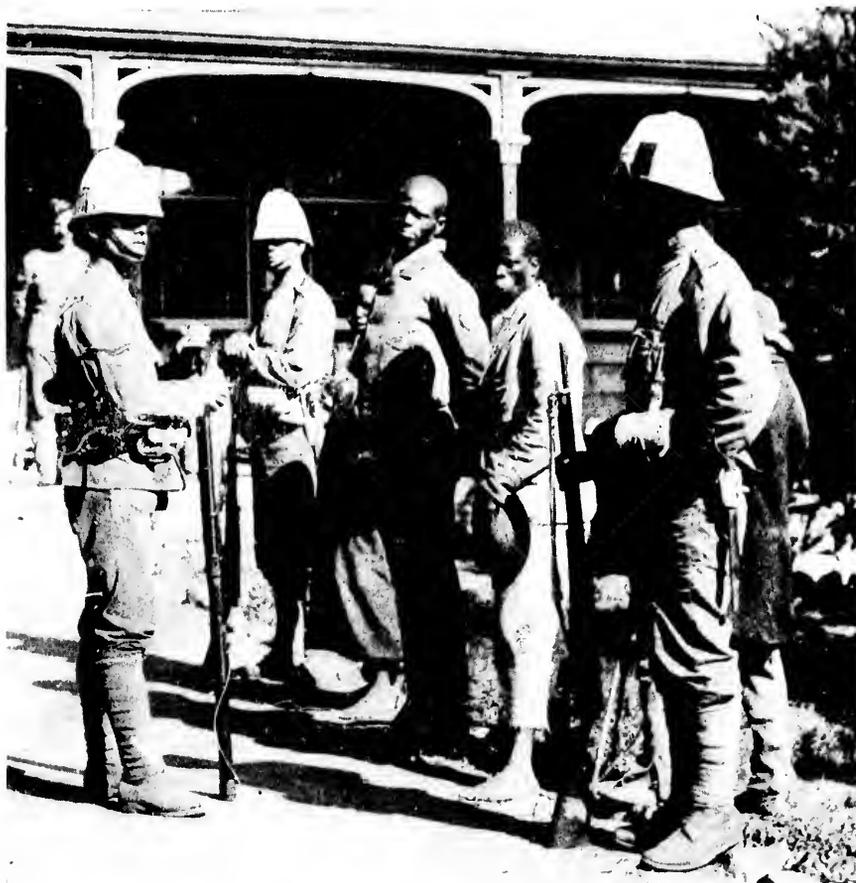
ADVANCING ON A KOPJE.

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## The Fight for the Flag in South Africa

The night was very dark, and the way was rendered difficult by boulders and rocks. When the summit of the hill was reached, Colonel Watson, Major Brown, and the adjutant passed over the crest to reconnoitre. The enemy were lying, finger on

other officers, and many men. One of the companies, under Captain Brett, moved to the right, and charged into the Boer position, when a shout of "Retire!" came from the enemy, and the two rear companies, deeming it to be the order of



KAFFIR SPIES, IN SERVICE OF BOERS, AWAITING TRIAL.

trigger, behind a high *schanz*, or stone-work, in the rear of the crest.

The men of the Suffolk companies had come into somewhat close order during the ascent, and the leading company was only a few yards behind the group of officers when a terrific fire was suddenly opened, killing Colonel Watson, the adjutant, two

the British leader, moved to the rear. Nearly a hundred officers and men of the two companies in advance had fallen, and Captain Brett, with two other officers and sixty-nine men, became unwounded prisoners, while four officers and forty-four men were captured after disablement. Four officers and twenty-six men were

killed in this lamentable affair. The defence behind which the Boers were lying was doubly loopholed, and so artfully concealed that it could only be discovered from a balloon or by an advance to close quarters. It was too high to be stormed from the front, except by the use of scaling-ladders. The Boer position was shelled by our guns for five hours after the failure of the attack, and many waggons and ambulances were seen carrying off dead and wounded men. The misfortune of the Suffolk Battalion illustrated one of the chief difficulties with which our troops have had to contend during the war—the presence of Boer spies and colonial traitors in camp. The movement of Colonel Watson took place only three hours after the attack had been arranged, and yet the enemy were found fully prepared, and, as in other instances, an intended British surprise became a death-trap for our brave men.

On January 10th General French resumed active operations in the way of reconnaissances of the enemy's positions, seeking means of surrounding them at Colesberg. A small party of the Carabineers found about eight hundred Boers in laager about five miles south-east of the town, and went up close enough to hear the enemy "talking and swearing to each other," as a news



*Photo. by Newman, Sydney.*

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. BURNS,  
Commanding the New South Wales Lancers.

despatch expresses it, both in Dutch and English. As our men withdrew, their presence was discovered, and a heavy fire was opened, which caused no loss. Colonel Porter, of the Carabineers, then carried out an enveloping movement with the 6th Dragoon Guards, two squadrons of Household Cavalry, the New Zealand and New South Wales contingents, and four guns. A strong position five miles east of the enemy was occupied by our artillery, cutting off retreat for the Boers on that side. Colonel Porter's force was, in fact, commanding the main road to Norval's Pont and menacing the foe's line of communication and receipt of supplies. An attack of the Boers on a kopje commanding the British position was promptly foiled by the guns.

By this time Colesberg was invested on three sides, all the British camps being connected by the field telegraph and helio apparatus. The enemy, however, were strongly reinforced, and General French needed more men to carry out his designs against Colesberg. On January 15th the Boers, who were being constantly harassed by active work done with cavalry, Horse Artillery, and Mounted Infantry, made an attack on the British right flank, in order to capture some heights held by New



MAJOR ROBIN,  
Commander of the New Zealand Contingent

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Zealanders and a company of the Yorkshire Regiment. About eleven in the morning the enemy worked their way upwards towards a point held by the colonials, at the same time compelling the Yorkshires, by a hot fire, to keep closely in cover behind a stone wall. The advancing foe crept onwards, and made a final rush, when the Yorkshires, leaving cover, charged down with the bayonet, and Captain Maddox, with a few New Zealanders, arrived in aid from the right. The Boers fled, under a fire at close range, leaving twenty-one men

New South Wales Lancers, fell into an ambush in mounting a kopje already occupied by the enemy. The Australians, taken between two fires, made a good running fight, but were finally overwhelmed. On that evening only two returned to camp. Another patrol, visiting the spot on the next morning, found one of the party dead and one wounded. On the ground were four dead Australian and seven Boer horses. On the same day another of the party returned to camp: the rest, eleven in number, had become prisoners.



THE HELIOGRAPH AT WORK

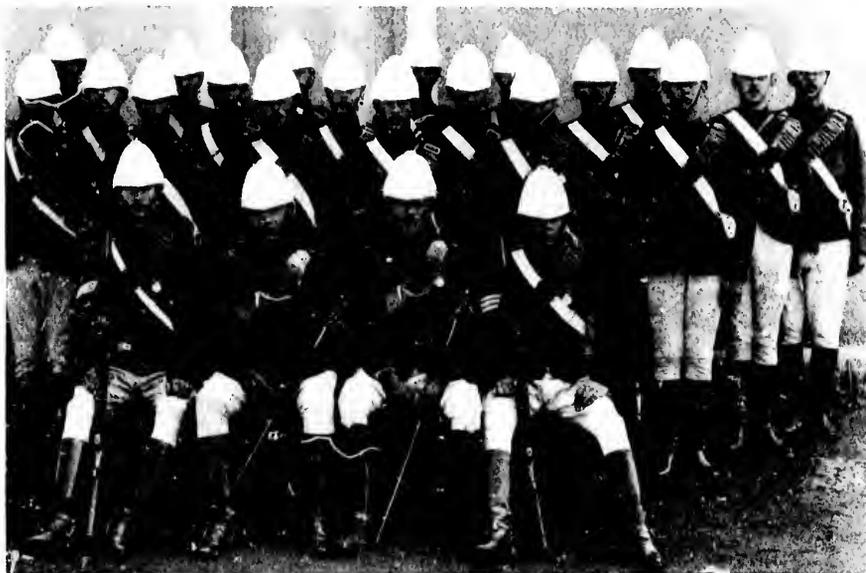
dead and many wounded on the field. Many of the Yorkshires were under fire for the first time, and the conduct of all engaged was excellent. The British loss was only six killed and five wounded, the latter including Captain Orr, of the Yorkshires. Warm praise was accorded by General French to Captain Maddox, who took charge of affairs when the British leader was disabled, and gave the word for the bayonet at the critical moment of the fight.

The next incident was one unfortunate for the brave colonials from Australasia. On January 16th a patrol of sixteen men, composed of South Australian Horse and

When we turn to General Gatacre, whose headquarters were at Sterkstroom, on the railway about thirty miles south-east of Stormberg Junction, we find the Boers, on January 3rd, assailing Molteno, between those points, in considerable force. About five hundred men entered the town and then attacked the Cape Police, two hundred and fifty strong, in their camp, two miles to the south. Large bodies of the enemy, with some guns, were on an adjacent hill. A determined resistance was made by the Police, who were soon reinforced by sixty Kaffrarian Rifles and a hundred Mounted Infantry of the 2nd Berkshire from a British

camp at Bushman's Hoek. The fighting became hot when a second commando of the enemy worked round to the east of Molteno and opened fire with a heavy gun. General Gatacre arrived from Sterkstroom in the course of the morning, with half a battalion of the Royal Scots, a hundred Mounted Infantry, and a field battery. The force slowly wound its way up the corkscrew road towards Bushman's Hoek, the Boers keeping up a steady rifle fire from the heights. At noon the Royal Scots began to

pelled the enemy to withdraw with their big gun. No attempt could be made to outflank the foe, for lack of cavalry. There were no losses among the British troops in this quarter. The attack on the Police camp was repulsed, and the enemy finally retreated on Stormberg. On January 8th, General Gatacre sent out a strong reconnoitring party, consisting of the Derbyshire Regiment, two field batteries, four hundred mounted men of the Cape Police and Berkshires, and the Kaffrarian and Frontier



*Photo. by D. Taylor, Majoring.*

SOME OF THE CAPE MOUNTED POLICE.

advance across an undulating plain, to the left of which lay the little town of Cypherghat, the inhabitants of which had fled in terror when the fight began. The enemy had shelled Cypherghat station, cut the telegraph wires, looted the stores, and done other damage. An armoured train between Cypherghat and Sterkstroom kept the foe at bay with Maxim fire, and stayed a further advance to the south along the line.

As the British infantry approached the enemy's hill beyond the plain near Cypherghat, our artillery had taken a commanding position to the left of the Boers, and, opening fire at half-past two, in ten minutes com-

mitted the Boers were found to be still in strong occupation of two miles of the Stormberg range. On the return to headquarters, another visit was made to Molteno Mills, and all the remaining food-stuffs—meal and flour—were removed, and the vital parts of the machinery detached. On January 16th there was some skirmishing with the Boers near Molteno, the British force engaged being Montmorency's Scouts and a detachment of the Cape Police. The stock of a colonial rebel's farm was captured during the day, and the force returned to Molteno with many horses, mares and foals, and oxen.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *Investment and Siege of Ladysmith.*

The Investment of Ladysmith—The Force under Sir George White—Means of Communication with Outside—The Bombardment—Assault on November 9th Repulsed—Enemy Outwitted by Rifle Brigade—Smart Work of the Manchesters—Boers Fire on Hospitals—Enemy's Successful Raid on Draught Oxen—British Losses by Bombardment—More Hostile Firing on Hospital: Patients, Nurses, and Doctors Killed and Wounded.—The Brilliant Sortie of December 7th—Enemy's Guns Destroyed at Lombard's Kop—Praise of Work from General White—Another Fine Sortie on December 10th—Destruction of Boer Howitzer at Surprise Hill—Sharp Fight on British Return to Camp—Illness in Ladysmith—Great Heat—The Bombardment: Narrow Escape of Sir G. White—Christmas Cheer—Shells in Officers' Messes: Severe Loss—Incidents of Siege—A Garden Wrecked by "Long Tom"—Coolness of Ladies under Fire—Private Soldier Describes a Dust-storm—Fun with the Rebel Farmer's Pigs—British Mare's Behaviour under Fire—The Young Lady and the Shells—Fierce Assault on British Lines—Description of British and Boer Positions—The Great Fight of January 6th—Anxiety Caused by Sir George White's Earlier Messages—Death of Lord Ava—The Crisis of the Battle—Bold Attack by Boers on Cesar's Camp—Good Work of Natal Troops Below the Hill—Final Charge by Devons—Complete Victory—British Losses—Colonel Dick-Cunyngham Killed—The Thanksgiving Service for Victory.

We have now to deal with events in and closely around Ladysmith during the long period of its investment, bombardment, and assault by the Boer army under Schalk Burger. We may begin by stating the composition of the force under Sir George White's command. The infantry battalions were the 1st Gloucesters, 1st Leicesters, 1st Devons, 1st and 2nd King's Royal Rifles, 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 2nd Gordon Highlanders, 1st Liverpools, 1st Manchesters, 2nd Rifle Brigade, and Natal Volunteers. The cavalry comprised the 5th Dragoon Guards, 5th Lancers, 18th and 19th Hussars, Special Corps Mounted Infantry, and Corps of Imperial Light Horse. The artillery consisted of six batteries of Royal Field Artillery and naval guns, with a Naval Brigade to work them.

The news received from the beleaguered force was of an intermittent character, dependent chiefly, in the earlier stages of the investment, on the success of native runners carrying official despatches or intelligence from newspaper correspondents in evading the Boers on passage through the hostile lines. As regards bombardment, few particulars need be given save of special instances of damage done. The enemy fired, off and on, on most days during the

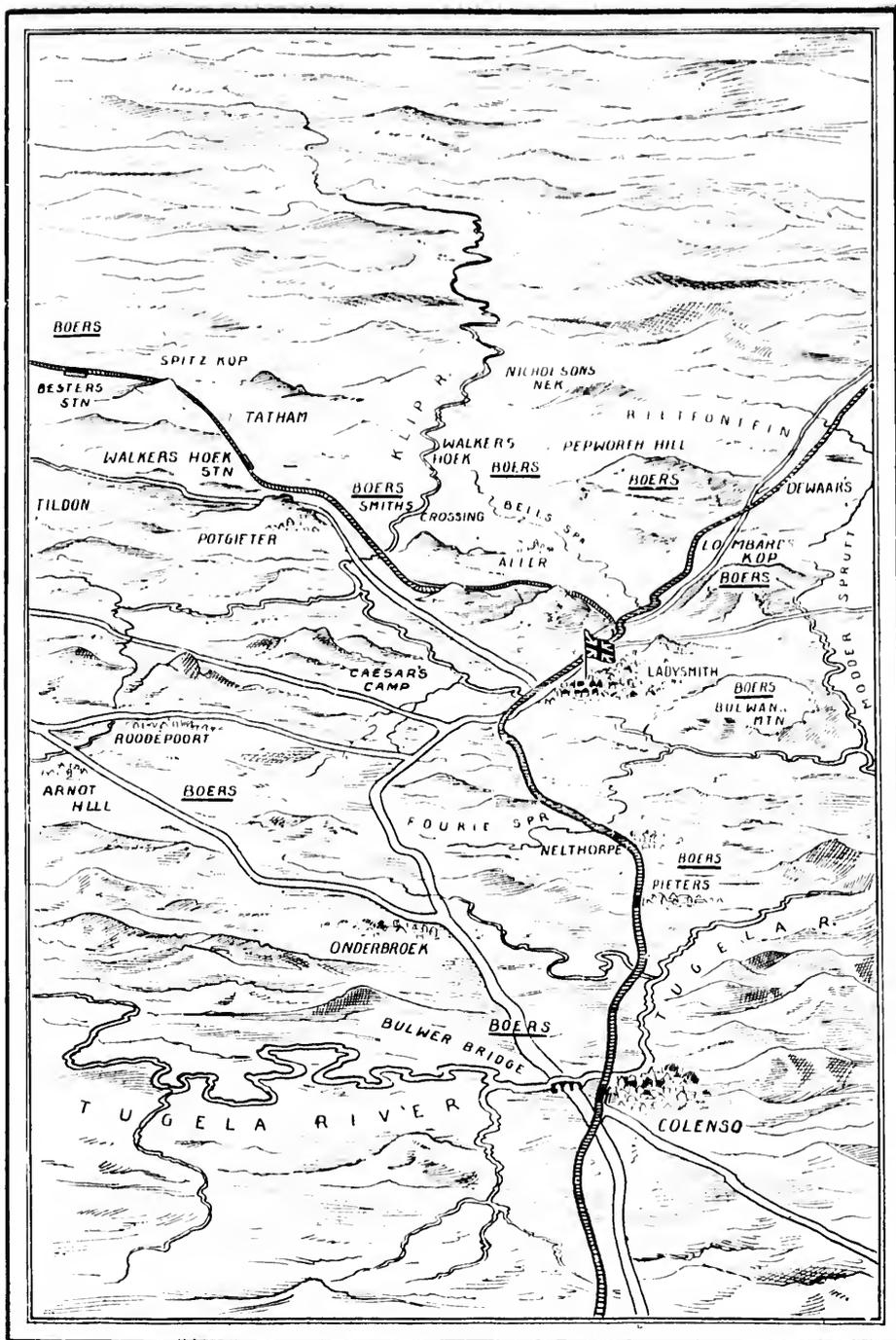
siege, having heavy guns of long range, against which the naval guns, most skilfully served by the "Tars," were of admirable service to the safety of the position. On November 8th there was heavy firing from the enemy's guns, and on Thursday, November 9th, at four in the morning, the Boers made a determined attack, under cover of their big guns, on the ridges and kopjes occupied by the British outposts. Our men, reinforced from the camp, replied hotly, in skirmishing order, to the Boer rifles. The attack threatened all sides of the town, but the main assault was delivered in the angle where the Free State and Newcastle railway lines diverge.

The position was held by the Johannesburg Volunteers, the King's Royal Rifles, and the Rifle Brigade. After a first repulse, the Boers retired beyond a deep trench which they had made in the open ground in front of our lines. The Rifle Brigade, advancing at the double, took possession of this trench unobserved by the enemy, and when the Boers returned with the horses which they had gone to fetch from distant places of shelter, they were received, almost at the edge of the trench, by volley after volley from the Rifles, who sprang suddenly to their feet. For once the crafty enemy were

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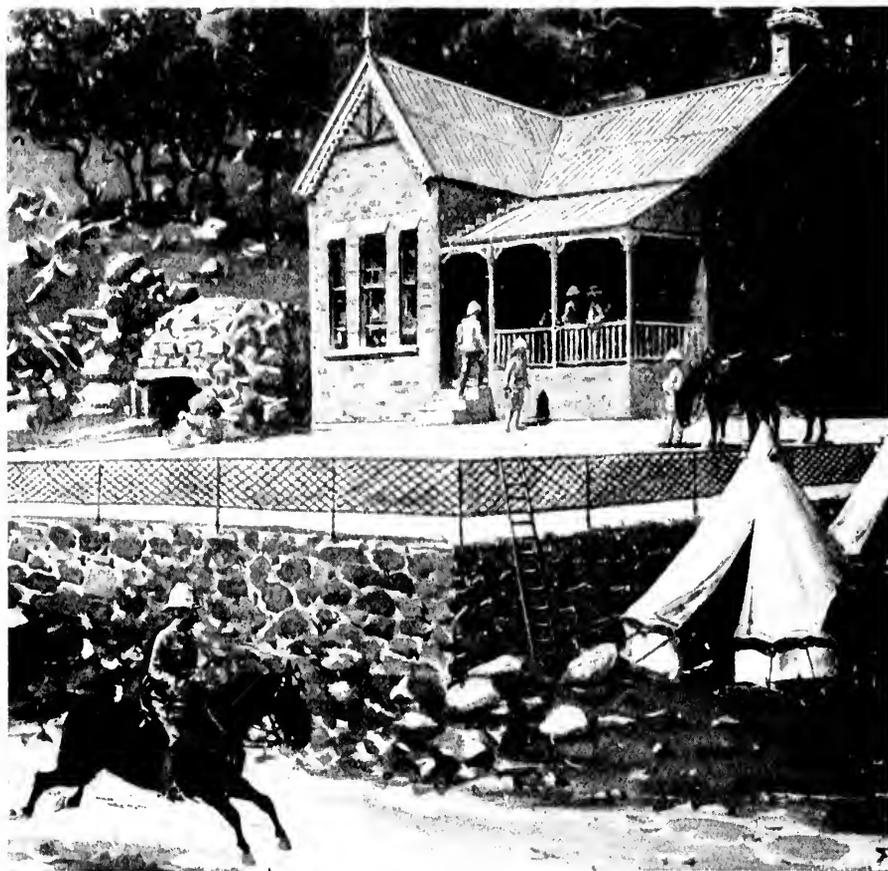


LADYSMITH AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY.

themselves outwitted, and the effect was staggering. With heavy loss they broke and fled across the flat open ground, severely scourged by shell from the British guns. About this time a mortar throwing big shells was brought into action by the Boers, but our artillery fire, after a lengthy

point, and, in the words of a correspondent within the town, "Ladysmith was now (so far as concerned assault on the British lines) left severely alone."

As the siege went on, the Boer bombardment was at times severe, and Sir George White had to complain of shell being fired



SIR GEORGE WHITE'S HOUSE AT LADYSMITH, SHOWING "DUG-OUT" (ON THE LEFT), CONSTRUCTED FOR HIM, BUT WHICH HE REFUSED TO USE.

duel, forced its abandonment. On the south side of the British camp the Manchesters did good work, under cover of our guns, in getting within easy range, unobserved, of some hundreds of Boers posted in a ditch. The British unexpected fire caused heavy loss. The morning's work ended in the repulse of the enemy at every

at the hospital and other buildings flying the Red Cross flag. On November 24th the enemy, by throwing shell among cattle grazing in plains west of the camp, headed the animals towards their own lines. A body of Mounted Infantry, sent out with a gun to recapture the herds, was received with a heavy fire of shells and rifle bullets

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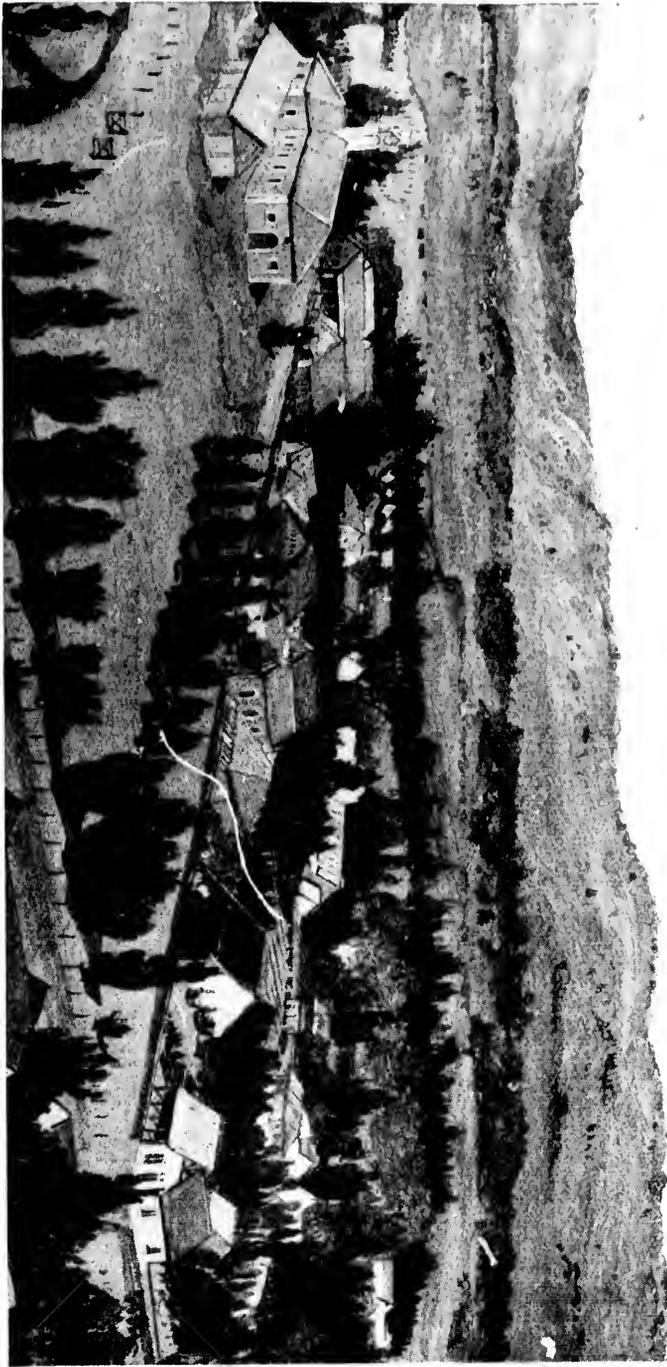


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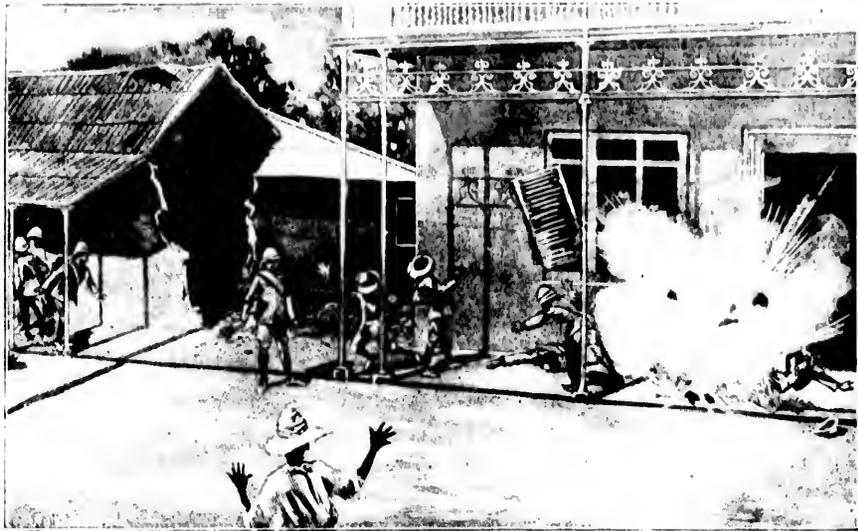
*View from a Street in Tins C. M. Tatham.*

LADYSMITH, SHOWING THE TOWN HALL, NOW A HOSPITAL.



from strongly posted foes, and compelled to retire. The Leicesters and the Mounted Infantry made repeated efforts, but were outnumbered at all points, and the enemy captured about two hundred draught oxen. In the evening a heavy bombardment was opened, and one shell did much damage in the Royal Hotel, where several officers had formerly lodged. They quitted the place for a comparatively quiet life under tents in camp with the men. From time to time losses in killed and wounded, not of a serious kind, were caused among the

at Little Bulwaan Hill, near Lombard's Kop, of the Town Hall in Ladysmith. The Red Cross flag flying on the tower indicated its use as a hospital, and the building was clearly visible from the enemy's position. The Boer gunners could plainly see their first two shells bursting to right and left of the hospital, and yet they persisted in their cowardly action. Many of the patients had been removed into a tunnel excavated near at hand, when a third shell crashed through the wall of the main building, killing one patient, and wounding



BURSTING OF THE SHELL WHICH KILLED DR. STARK, AT THE ROYAL HOTEL, LADYSMITH.

garrison by the hostile fire. Naval guns were mounted all round the British camp, which was, by degrees, strongly defended by forts and entrenchments. The most commanding position of the Boers was the high table mountain, Bulwaan, towards the east. Up to November 24th, the total British loss by bombardment was eighty-three persons killed and wounded, including a scientist, Dr. Stark, who was killed on November 18th by the explosion of a shell in front of his hotel.

On Thursday, November 30th, just indignation was aroused by the Boer bombardment, from a new 6-inch gun mounted

nine other persons, including two medical officers. This barbarous violation of the usages of civilised nations had no possible excuse, seeing that the Town Hall was not in the direct line with any important camp or defensive work.

A few days later the British garrison was enabled to retaliate on the foe, not in his fashion, but with legitimate work, in a bold enterprise planned and brilliantly executed by Sir Archibald Hunter. About eleven o'clock on the night of Thursday, December 7th, that general left camp with a hundred Imperial Light Horse, under Colonel Edwards, a hundred Natal Cara-

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*Engraved by J. Paterson from a Sketch by Mr. Milton Prior.*  
 BOERS FIRING ON AN AMBULANCE.

biners, four hundred Border Mounted and Natal Rifles, and detachments of Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery. They were divided into three parties, two hundred being under the personal command of General

Hunter. A march of five miles brought the sortie party to the foot of the hill known as Lombard's Kop, which was reached at two o'clock in the morning of Friday, December 8th. A force of cavalry and artillery, under

General Brocklehurst, marching towards Pepworth Hill, and another body engaging the attention of the enemy on the road to Bulwaan Hill, covered the movement. The night was so dark, and the country so rugged and broken by deep *dongas*, or clefts, that it was needful to make several halts in order to count off the sections and ascertain that all were present.

Major Henderson, staff officer for the enterprise, with fourteen guides, took charge of the storming parties. The Imperial Light Horse, dismounted, were on the left flank, and the Carabineers on the right, as they went up the precipitous boulder-strewn heights. About half way up, a Boer outpost gave a challenge, and, receiving no answer, cried to their friends above, "English on us—shoot!" The rifles were fired, and the explosive bullets flashed flame as they struck the rocks. A hurried fire came from the crest of the hill, replied to by the British force with a single volley, and then our men, with ringing cheers, went upwards as fast as the ground permitted. As the brow was reached amid victorious shouts, the cry of "Cold steel" passed along the lines. There were, of course, no bayonets in use by such a force, but many of the men had fixed knives to the end of their carbines. There was little need for such weapons. The Boers retreated in a kind of panic, and three guns, when a light was shown, were found in our possession. These were a Maxim, which was taken back to Ladysmith, a 6-inch Creusot gun (a very powerful weapon), and a 4.7-inch howitzer. The Royal Engineers, under Captain Foulke and Lieutenant Turner, took charge of the two larger weapons, and destroyed them with guncotton, the breeches being conveyed as trophies to camp. The whole loss of the assailants in this fine exploit was one man killed and three wounded among the Light Horse, with Major Henderson, of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and four of the guides, slightly wounded. On the return to camp, General White, at special parades in the afternoon, gave warm praise and

hearty thanks to all the officers and men engaged, with particular mention of the Natal men as "a credit, not only to their own colony, but to the empire."

The inspiring effect of this success was quickly manifested in a similar enterprise, again illustrating how well Sir George White understood his duty of not being content with a merely passive defence of his position, and also displaying the mettle of the soldiers under his command. On the night of Sunday, December 10th, another sortie was undertaken by Colonel Metcalfe, of the 2nd Rifle Brigade. With five hundred men of his battalion he made a dash out of Ladysmith against the height called Surprise Hill, where the Boers had a 4.7-inch howitzer. The crest of the position was reached without discovery, and, the gunners and guard being driven off, the formidable weapon was destroyed by guncotton, under the direction of Lieutenant Digby Jones, R.E. News of the attack had been swiftly conveyed to neighbouring laagers of the enemy, and the British force on the way back to camp found its road barred by the foe in considerable numbers. After a fierce fight, in which our men made a free use of the bayonet, the Rifles cut their way through, with the loss to us of one officer and eleven men killed, and three officers and forty-one men wounded. Six men who remained behind in charge of their wounded comrades were made prisoners. The price paid for the destruction of the howitzer was heavy, but against it must be set the saving of life which would have perished through its action, and the moral effect produced by such daring and brilliant work against a besieging force.

As the time wore on, the besieged force suffered rather severely from enteric fever, one of the victims being Sir George White, who, happily, soon recovered, and from dysentery. The weather became intensely hot, so that, on December 20th, the thermometer showed 104 degrees shade temperature. The enemy's bombardment increased in severity, and on Thursday, December 21st, during a heavy fire, several



*From a Drawing by W. Hatherell.*

DESTROYING THE ENEMY'S GUNS. A SURPRISE BY GENERAL HUNTER

shells in succession fell near the general's house. One of the missiles completely wrecked a room near that where Sir George lay ill. No personal injury was caused, and headquarters were promptly removed to another part of the camp. The worst day of the siege, as regarded the Boer artillery fire, came on December 22nd, when six

men of the Gloucesters were killed and nine wounded as they sat at breakfast, and five officers of the 5th Lancers were slightly wounded. The British gunners retaliated with some effective shots from a battery of Royal Horse Artillery and with howitzer fire.

Amidst these troubles it was pleasant for readers at home to learn that the town

had "plenty of provisions," and that, in readiness for Christmas Day, the "men had been served with plum puddings and cigars." On the day of the severe bombardment (December 22nd) there was some sharp fighting, due to a British reconnaissance made by the three arms, causing us a loss of eight men killed and fifteen wounded, the latter including five officers of the 5th Lancers. On December 26th there was severe shell firing from the foe, and one missile from the Creusot gun on Bulwaan (or Bulwana) Hill dropped in the officers' mess of the Devons at Junction Hill, killing two lieutenants, and wounding five officers of that regiment, as well as two officers of the Inniskilling Fusiliers and Royal West Surrey. Christmas Day had been "passed delightfully with athletic sports and other amusements," and a message from the Queen was received, we read, "with terrific cheers and demonstrations of the eagerness of the men to prove their worthiness in fighting." The time was approaching when their desire was to be gratified in full measure.

Among incidents of the siege we notice the falling of shells in the beautiful English garden of Mr. Fortescue Carter, the best known of the Ladysmith townsmen, as author of "History of the Boer War in 1881." He had scarcely left his home, next door to the headquarters of the Intelligence Department, when the missiles from "Long Tom" began to burst among his roses, hollyhocks, verbenas, dahlias, and other familiar English blooms cultivated by him with loving care, in contrast to his neighbours' oleanders and other South African shrubs. Two shells soon afterwards struck the house, and, bursting inside, shattered to atoms the dainty contents of several rooms. Meanwhile, in a picturesque vine-trellised cottage not fifty yards away, ladies were attending to their domestic duties, seeming heedless of all danger, and one might be seen quietly knitting in the cool shaded verandah, her busy needles stopping only for one moment when a shell burst in the roadway close at hand.

Another picture came to the outside world in a letter from a private soldier, denouncing Ladysmith at this time as a "dirty, filthy hole. Nothing but dust-storms—roofs blown off houses. All the tins had been collected and placed in stacks. These began to have a race across the camping ground in the night, chased by helmets, boots, and light articles of clothing, with heavier things, such as blankets, waterproof sheets, etc., in the rear." Another writer describes what he calls "a little merriment in Ladysmith." "To-day the men of our battalion had some fun and excitement in chasing some pigs. They had belonged to a farmer in the country around here, a Natal Boer who had left his farm and gone over to the enemy. Our men caught sixteen of his pigs, and to-night they are cooking them and eating them by the wood fires. They sit around the fires eating and telling tales amid jokes and roars of laughter." A farrier-sergeant tells how little the horses minded the noise of the exploding shells. "They take no more notice of them than we do. I was shoeing an officer's horse in a space of open ground behind the stables of the hotel. I had already got two or three of the nails in, when I heard the screaming of a shell in the air. It burst about five or six yards away. The bits and splinters came whizzing all round me and the horse, but did not touch either of us. When the dust and smoke had cleared away, and I had got back my presence of mind—the whole thing, of course, didn't take twelve seconds—-I found the mare had still got her foot on my apron, and was waiting for the rest of the nails."

A young lady in the town, writing to her sister at Port Elizabeth, says: "Just after breakfast another shell came from 'Long Tom,' and landed just over the other side of the paddock. I saw some soldiers running to where it struck, and off I scampered to get a piece as a memento. The first soldier I came to said, 'Come with me; I can warn you in time to clear before another shell comes.' So I went

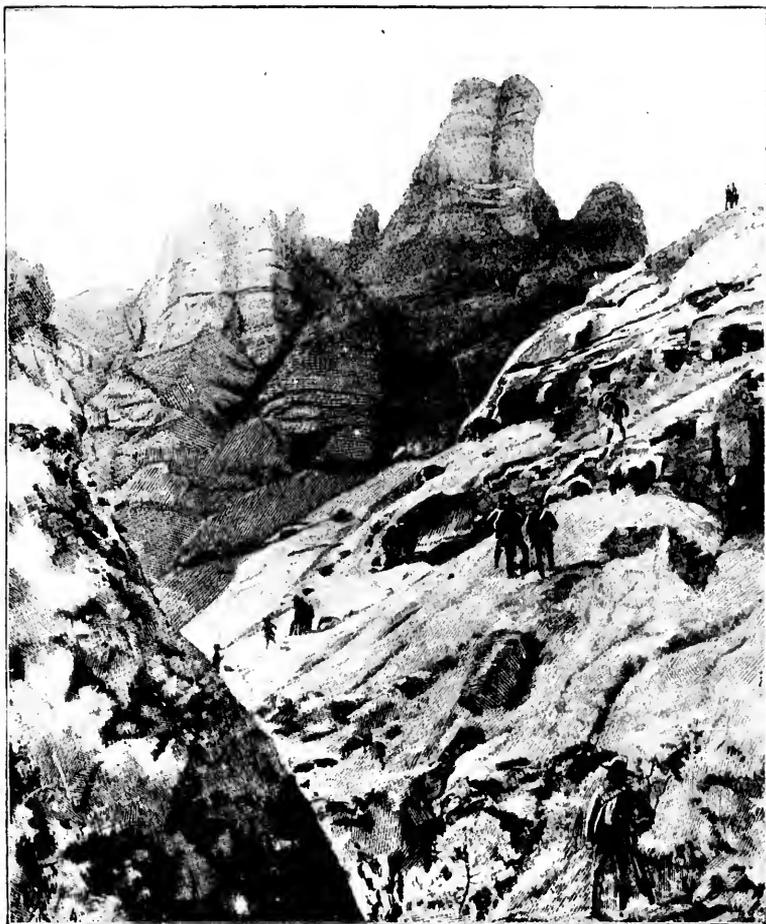
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*From a Paragraph by R. Gordon Houston*

A NIGHT ATTACK.





DRAKENSBERG PASS.  
One of the Boer Lines of Retreat from Natal.

gaily on, talking away. Another soldier cried, 'Here comes another'; and before we had time to think, the awful booming and sh'eking came, and I wish you could have seen your youngest sister. I just shut my eyes tight and clung to a barbed wire fence and whispered 'Good God!' It exploded about twenty feet away, and the earth shook under me, and my legs felt shot all over. The last thing I saw as I shut my eyes was men rolling on the ground and running away in all directions, and a mule rushing by me. After it was over I wanted to get a piece of that shell, and

then fled home with three lumps. I smelt all over of the shell stuff, and of course the pieces were quite hot when I got them. . . . Fancy me with my hair down, fringe in pins (the fright had taken all the curl out, and they said I was white to the gums), on the front verandah, sewing a tape on a Carabineer's 'puttee.' Somehow you don't care what you do in war time."

Such were some phases of life under fire in Ladysmith. The day came at last when the gallant general and his brave men were to have Boers to deal with in a new capacity—that of bold assailants in a vigorous and



*From a Drawing by Geoffrey Strahan.*

ATTACK ON LADYSMITH.

determined attempt to make an end by storming the British lines of defence. A description of the two positions will make matters clearer for the reader. The interior British position at Ladysmith formed an oval stretching over ten miles from north-west to south-east, enclosed on the west, south, and east by the much-curving Klip River, and on the north and north-east by the railway running westwards to Harri-smith. The armed positions in the oval were solely on the north side, comprising, from west to east, the King's Post Hill, a detached signal station held by the King's Royal Rifles; due east of that, Cove Hill, held by the Rifle Brigade, with a redoubt, and at the eastern end a battery with one 4.7-inch naval gun; east of that again, Junction Hill, held by the Leicesters and a naval quick-firing twelve-pounder. Most easterly of all, bringing us up to and beyond the railway (thus taking in some ground outside the oval), were Tunnel Hill, Cemetery Hill, and Helpmakaar Hill, held by a naval battery in a redoubt, a 4.7-inch gun, a battery of Field Artillery, two companies of Gloucesters, the Liverpool Regiment, and the 1st Devons. We go outside the oval again to mention a kopje to the north-east, also held by our troops.

The other outer defences of the British were, on the west, just beyond the Klip River, a detached signal station, called Rifleman's Post, held by the King's Royal Rifles; south of that, Rifleman's Ridge, in charge of men of the same force; southwards again, Range Post Ridge, defended by two companies of the Royal Irish Fusiliers. On the south, beyond the river, lay hilly and woody ground, not held by troops, the defensive positions being farther out, four miles from the river. The line of these, going from west to east, consisted of Waggon Hill, Caesar's Camp, and Maiden's Castle, one continuous range, held by the Manchesters, the 2nd King's Royal Rifles, and one battery, with the Gordons in support.

The Boer positions on the north were Surprise Hill, mounting two howitzers;

Rietfontein, better known as Pepworth Hill, with "Long Tom" at its eastern end, and General Joubert's headquarters in the rear, to the north; Limit Hill, mounting two guns; and Lombard's Kop, with two heavy guns. On the east the enemy had, south of Lombard's Kop, among the scrub on low ground, two guns, one on each side of the high road to Helpmakaar; south again, the long Bulwaan Hill, bearing, among other heavy guns, that known as "Puffing Billy," posted nearly five miles from Ladysmith. On the west side, from three to four miles away from Klip River, the enemy had guns on Thornhill's Kopje to the north and on Telegraph Hill to the south. On the south side, completing the circle of investment, were Middle Hill, with two guns, facing our Waggon Hill at its western end, and a long range of unnamed positions carrying some guns facing our Caesar's Camp and Maiden Castle, and separated from them by undulating open ground with scrub.

It was on the morning of Monday, January 8th, that the general British public were made anxiously aware of the Boer assault, through heliograph messages transmitted to General Buller. Sir George White reported attack, in briefest terms, as begun at a quarter to three on the morning of Saturday, January 6th. Successive messages gave "Attack in considerable force," "Everywhere repulsed, but fighting continues," "Attack continues, and enemy reinforced from south," and finally, at a quarter past three p.m. on the same day, "Attack renewed; very hard pressed." Then the sun was obscured, and all intelligence ceased. On Tuesday morning, January 9th, we had the joyful tidings of complete victory in a desperate engagement of seventeen hours' duration, with a few intervals for bringing up fresh forces, renewing supplies of ammunition, and "taking breath." The most resolute and persistent offensive operation ever undertaken by a Boer force had for its main object the capture of Caesar's Camp, the chief British position on the south side of Ladysmith. The men engaged were

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*From a Drawing by A. D. McCormick.*

THE BOERS ON THEIR DEFENCE.

three picked commandoes, led by the veteran Commandant De Villiers, of the Harrismith corps. One temptation to an assault was the enemy's knowledge that our Royal Engineers and the Bluejackets were engaged in getting a Hotchkiss automatic gun and some naval pieces into position on Waggon Hill. If the attack had succeeded, and this artillery had been seized, our own guns would have been turned on the town and British camp with disastrous effect.

At half-past two on Saturday morning, January 6th, the Hotchkiss had not been got into position on the top of Waggon Hill, and the fatigue parties were taking some rest after long and heavy toil. Some distance below the crest of the hill, a picket, hearing a noise, called out, "Who goes there?" The men on the crest distinctly heard the reply, "Friend," and the next moment the British sentry fell, shot through the head. The event was a complete surprise for our men. The Hotchkiss was set at work firing down the slope in the darkness, but the enemy seemed to have halted, and to be receiving no harm from the shells sent at random, and the gun was withdrawn within a *sangar* (stone-work) hastily thrown up. Then the Boers came racing up the hill, and were close upon the Hotchkiss when it was removed. Our nearest guard had hurried up when our picket was shot, and, lining the crest, they fired steadily down the slope. There were at first only thirty men of the Imperial Light Horse, eight of the King's Royal Rifles, and a dozen Gordon Highlanders, and they were soon hotly engaged with superior numbers. The firing was point blank at a few yards' distance, both sides aiming at the flash of each other's rifles. In the earlier stage of the fight, Waggon Hill was in charge of young Lieutenant Mathias, who showed abundant readiness and courage.

Several times the enemy were met with the bayonet on the hill top. At dawn the Boers dashed against a party of the Light Horse, but reinforcements came up

to the hard-pressed British, and Gordons and Royal Riflemen made at the foe, pouring in heavy volleys, and holding them back until more men hurried to the front of our position. About half-past five the Boers began to withdraw down the hill under a heavy fire, and the Riflemen and Highlanders, with some Devons who had come up, advanced to some kopjes nearer the enemy, and a further contest came, in which by seven o'clock many of our officers and men had fallen, including Lord Ava, one of the heroes of Elandsplaagte, who now received a mortal wound. The enemy's loss at this point of attack was also heavy. Commandant De Villiers, who had been in every quarter cheering on his men and exposing himself with reckless courage, had been shot dead, with three of his officers. A large number of the dead and wounded Boers, many of whom were pierced with the bayonet, lay on the crest of Waggon Hill. At half-past seven the Boers had disappeared, but a rifle fire showed that they were in cover amongst kopjes to the south, covered with scrub. At long range, firing was maintained between these repulsed foes and our troops throughout the day.

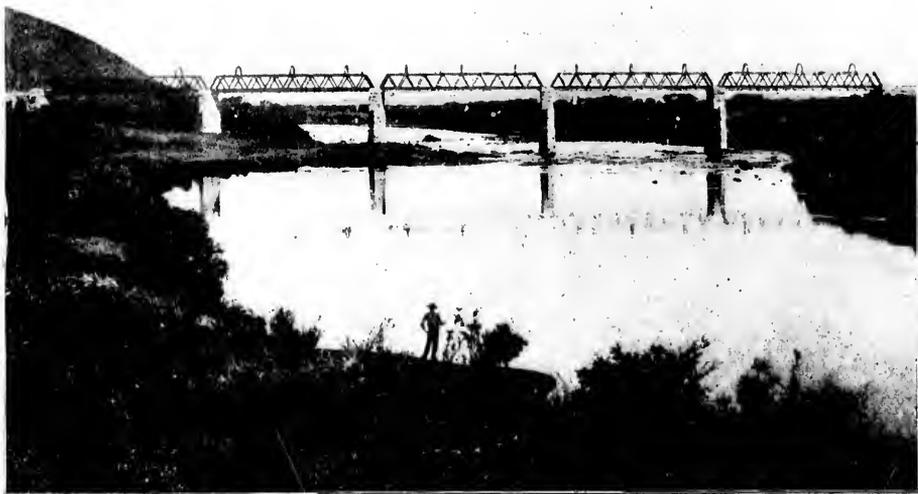
At Caesar's Camp, adjoining Waggon Hill to the east, a long and sanguinary battle was fought. Our troops had there also been surprised, and the position was held with some difficulty until Brigadier-General Ian Hamilton arrived with strong reinforcements. A crisis in the battle came at half-past three in the afternoon, when the hills were shrouded in mist, and a tremendous thunderstorm burst over Ladysmith. The Boers then made a last great effort to capture Caesar's Camp. Our pickets were quickly driven in as the enemy came up the heights delivering a well-aimed fire. Not to be stopped by shell and bullets, the advancing foe reached the crest of the hill, but then the British bayonet, wielded by the Gordons and Devons, came into play. The Boers, with the butt end of their rifles, were no match for the "king of weapons" at close quarters,

and they were driven down the slope in disorder. The victory in that quarter was completed by a down-charge of the Devons, led by Colonel Park, forcing the enemy into a wild and rapid flight. Not a shot more came from their batteries or lines.

The defence of Caesar's Camp had been maintained at the eastern point by the Manchesters, the Border Regiment, some Mounted Rifles, the Gordons, and the Rifle Brigade. In the centre were the Naval Brigade and the Natal Naval Volunteers, with two big guns. At the western end fought the Imperial Light Horse, the Devonshire men, the King's Royal Rifles, a naval detachment, and some Gordons. Good service was rendered on the flats already described as below Caesar's Camp at the eastern end by the Natal Police, Carabineers, and Mounted Rifles, who kept off the Boers from Bulwaan Hill, and, in spite of their utmost efforts, prevented them from joining their friends attacking from the south. There was one point of the

British position captured early in the day and continuously held by the Boers until, in Sir George White's words, "at dusk, in a very heavy rainstorm, they were turned out at the point of the bayonet in the most gallant manner by the Devon Regiment, led by Colonel Park." The fighting had been of a desperate character, some of the British entrenchments being, as the general reported, three times taken and re-taken.

This brilliant victory, demonstrating to the Boers the vast difference between firing from cover on British assailants and attempts to storm positions held in force by our troops, cost the army at Ladysmith 420 men in killed and wounded. The proportion of men slain on the spot was remarkable and was due, no doubt, to the close fighting. Thirteen officers were killed, including the Earl of Ava, who never recovered consciousness after receiving his wound, and Colonel Dick-Cunyngham, of the Gordons, whom we have seen wounded at El Magate. Twenty-eight officers were



COLENZO RAILWAY BRIDGE.

wounded, while the non-commissioned officers and men killed numbered 135, and the wounded 244.

On Sunday, January 7th, the day following the battle, a solemn service of thanksgiving was held in the Anglican Church. There was a crowded congregation, chiefly military, which included Sir George White and Sir Archibald Hunter, with Colonel Ian Hamilton and other staff officers. Archdeacon Barker, in an eloquent discourse on the event of the previous day, justly declared that the British Army had again demonstrated its possession of all the

old qualities which had made it famous in the history of the world. At the conclusion of the sermon, General White and his staff, on the invitation of the Archdeacon, walked to the altar rails and there stood during the chanting of a Te Deum. The impressive service ended in the singing of "God Save the Queen" by the whole congregation. At this happy point in their fortunes during their lengthy trial of endurance and courage, we leave the Ladysmith beleaguered garrison and townsmen, and deal with the efforts made for their relief.

## CHAPTER V.

### *Operations for the Relief of Ladysmith.*

Boer Advance to Colenso—The Town Occupied—Skirmishes with Enemy—British Forces Concentrate at Estcourt—Good Work of Dublin Fusiliers at Fort Wylie—Generals Hildyard and Clery: Their Antecedents—Our Armoured Train Wrecked and Captured near Chieveley—Mr. Winston Churchill's Cool Courage—The British Loss—Mr. Churchill's Capture and Subsequent Escape—Sergeant Tod's Brave Act in the Fight—Boer Advance Towards Estcourt—Work of our Naval Gun—Enemy Reach Mooi River, Plundering on the Way—Boers Arrive Within Forty Miles of Pietermaritzburg—Smart Fighting near Mooi River—Arrival of Sir Redvers Buller—His Previous Services—Retirement of Boers—The British Success at Beacon Hill—The Yorkshires Storm the Position—British Advance to Frere—Boers Destroy the Fine Railway Bridge—A Lull in the Contest—Royal and Natal Engineers Make New Bridge—The Advance to the Tugela—The Strong Boer Works to North of River—The Battle of Colenso (or the Tugela)—General Buller's Frontal Attack Fails with Severe Loss—Capture of British Guns—Incidents of the Struggle—Colonel Long's Fatal Eagerness—Brave Attempts to Remove the Guns—Lieutenant Roberts Mortally Wounded—The Generals in Danger Under Fire—Heavy British Losses in the Action—The Care of the Wounded—Sir W. MacCormac's and Mr. Treves' Aid—British Lyddite Guns Destroy Colenso Road-bridge—Christmas Day in Camp—Arrival of Sir Charles Warren at the Front—His Previous Services—Sixth Division Arrives from England—Chieveley Camp at the End of the Year 1899—Review of the Whole Situation in South Africa—The Three Defeats Within Six Days—Reception of News at Home—The Reaction after First Effects of Reverses—The Uprising of the Empire—New Arrangements Made by the Government—Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener to the Front—Their Speedy Arrival at the Cape—The Movement of Patriotism at Home—The Militia Embodied—The Volunteers—The Yeomanry—"Imperial Yeomanry" Corps Formed—Patriotic Aid from Large Employers—Universal Offers of Help in British Isles—The Corporation and Citizens of London—The "City of London Imperial Volunteers" Enrolled—Enthusiastic Loyalty of Colonials—Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Canada—The Princes of India—The Queen's Subjects in Ceylon—Splendid Munificence of Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal—The Great Reinforcements of Men and Guns Sent out from British Isles—The Fifth Division—The Sixth Division—The Seventh Division—The Fresh Artillery.

AFTER the investment of Ladysmith, the Boers, in considerable force, advanced southwards on their enterprise of conquering Natal. Indeed, on the morning of that day, their guns were shelling Colenso, the fire being directed against Fort Wylie, the work defending the Tugela Bridge. There

was only a small British force in the town, and the enemy were judged to number five thousand men, in commandoes from the Transvaal and the Free State. After a sharp skirmish to the north of the town, where the enemy strove to cut off an outpost of the Durban Light Infantry, and

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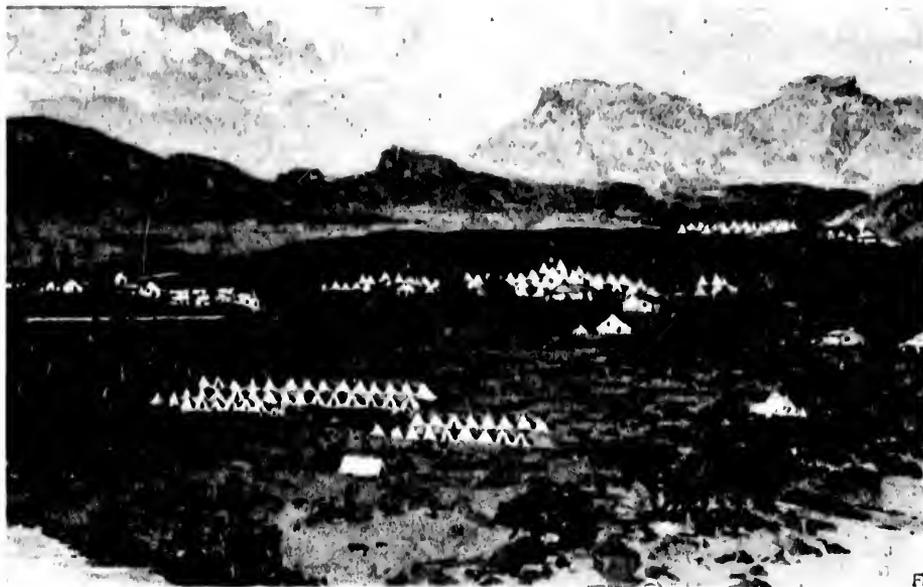
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*From a Copyright Photograph by Gregory & Co., Strand.*

SIR REDVERS BULLER ON HIS CHARGER.



BRITISH CAMP AT COLENZO BEFORE ITS EVACUATION.

were repelled with the loss of a dozen men killed, the little British garrison was compelled to withdraw, in presence of the enemy's long-range guns, to which they had no means of replying. The women and children crowded the trains to Pietermaritzburg and Durban, while the troops, including the Durban Light Infantry and a detachment of the Dublin Fusiliers, left by train at night with most of the stores and the tents and kits. The Boers then entered the town and began to "loot."

The British forces concentrated on Estcourt, twenty-seven miles south of Colenso, near the confluence of Bushman's and Little Bushman's Rivers, the former crossed by a railway bridge of five spans. The Orange Free State Government at this time issued a proclamation annexing the district of the Upper Tugela to their territory. Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson, Governor of Natal, thereupon issued a counter-proclamation, declaring the Free State document to be null and void, and called out for active service the men of five rifle associations in the Durban division of the colony. On

Sunday, November 5th, a brilliant little piece of work was achieved by two companies of the Dublin Fusiliers, under Captain Romer, who went forth in an armoured train to reconnoitre towards Ladysmith. Close to Colenso, the enemy, in considerable force, were sighted near the line, and the Dublins opened a brisk fire, to which the Boers replied. They were forced to retreat over the road-bridge, and then a strong detachment of the British entered the town, while the train slowly steamed towards the station. The troops went to Fort Wylie and brought back four waggons-loads of shells, provisions, and other stores.

We here note that the officers then in command of the troops in Natal, apart from Ladysmith, were General Hildyard and General Clery. Major-General H. J. Thoroton Hildyard, C.B., had gone out from command of the 3rd Brigade at Aldershot. After serving in the Royal Navy for five years, this officer entered the Army in 1867: he served in the Egyptian Expedition of 1882, being present at the Battles of Kassassin and Tel-el-Kebir,

and was Commandant of the Staff College from 1893 until 1898. Major-General Sir Francis Clery, K.C.B., had a great reputation as a theoretical tactician, being Professor of Tactics at Sandhurst from 1872 to 1875. His active service included work in the Zulu War of 1878-79, and in Egypt and the Sudan from 1882 to 1888. In 1896 he became Deputy-Adjutant-General to the Forces. He was soon to have in Natal an opportunity of applying his knowledge of tactics to practical work of the most important character for the relief of Ladysmith.

On Wednesday, November 15th, there occurred a few miles south of Colenso a striking episode of war in connection with an armoured train. It was reported on Tuesday, November 14th, by patrols of the Mounted Infantry that small parties of the enemy were approaching Estcourt from the direction of Weenen and Colenso. The Estcourt armoured train was prepared for a reconnaissance as far as Chieveley station, and started on its mission at half-past five in the morning. The train was made up of an ordinary truck carrying a seven-pounder muzzle-loading gun, served by four sailors; an armoured car, loopholed, and carrying part of a company of Dublin Fusiliers; next came the engine and tender; and then two more armoured cars with more Fusiliers, a company of the Durban Light Infantry Volunteers, and a small civilian "break-down" gang; and, lastly, a truck conveying tools and materials for repairing the road. There were in all one hundred and twenty



Photo by F. T. Cumming, Aldershot.

GENERAL SIR C. F. CLERY.

men, under the command of Captain Haldane, D.S.O., an officer who had been on Sir William Lockhart's staff in the Indian Tirah Expedition, and was lately recovered from a wound received at Elandsplaagte.

Frere station was reached in about an hour, and there a patrol of the Natal Police reported that all seemed quiet in the neighbourhood. Captain Haldane then decided to push on cautiously for Chieveley. As the train reached the station, clear signs of hostile presence came into view. About a hundred Boer horsemen were cantering southwards a mile from the line. The telegraphist wired back to Colonel Long

at Estcourt, and the train was ordered to return to Frere station. On the return journey, within two miles of Frere, a body of the enemy was seen on a hill commanding the line at a distance of six hundred yards. The little expedition was quickly under fire from two large field guns, a Maxim firing a stream of small shells, and from riflemen lying on the ridge. The iron sides of the armoured trucks rang with the patter of bullets. The driver put on full steam amidst a shower of shells, swung round the curve of the hill, ran down a steep gradient, and then dashed into a huge stone placed by the enemy on the line. The first truck in front of the engine on the return, the one containing the materials and tools of the break-down gang, was flung into the air, and fell, bottom upwards, on the embankment. The next, an armoured truck with the Durban Light Infantry, after rushing on for twenty yards, was thrown over on its side, scattering the men in a shower on the ground. The third got wedged across the track, and the rest of the train kept on the metals. The Boer guns, having changed their ground, re-opened at a range of about twelve hundred yards, and then began a gallant little struggle against overwhelming force.

The train carried as part of its freight Mr. Winston Churchill, the brilliant son of a brilliant sire, Lord Randolph Churchill. He was travelling as war correspondent of the *Morning Post*, and, as one who had seen the last Sudan Campaign, was used to war and war's alarms. He displayed conspicuous coolness and courage amidst the confusion and danger of the time. A few spirited words from his lips induced the engine-driver, a civilian not paid, as he bitterly cried, "to be killed by bomb-shells," to climb back into his engine cab instead of running off to shelter. Vain efforts—vain from the scattering of the tools—were made to clear the line of the wrecked trucks, so that the engine and the two cars might escape. The enemy's fire from their guns came fast. Mr. Churchill most bravely exerted himself in the efforts made to clear the line, but only the engine could be saved, steaming slowly away with as many wounded men as could be piled thereon. The fire of the Boers increased in severity as part of their prey seemed about to escape, and a quarter of the British force was soon disabled.

The remaining infantry, running down the line after the engine, made for some houses near the railway station about eight



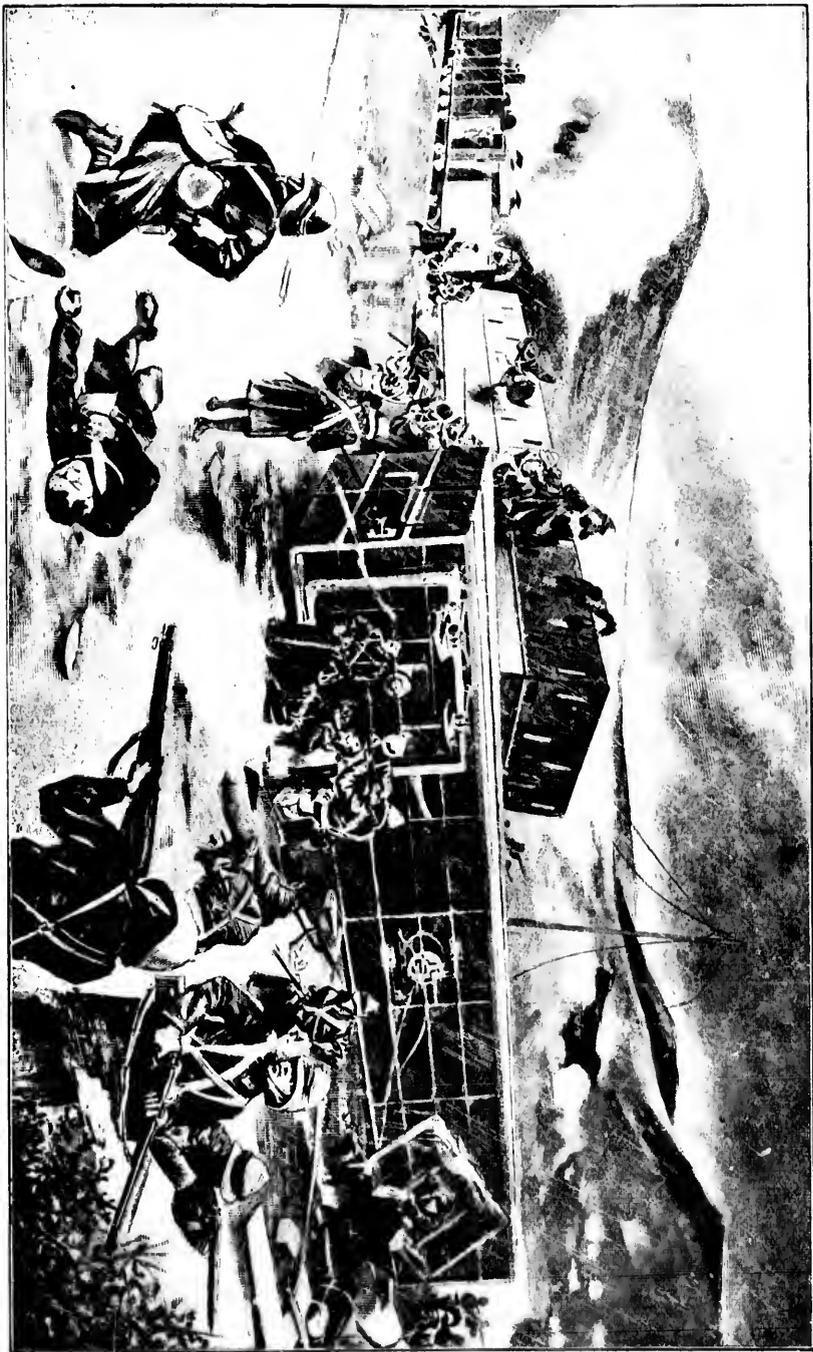
ROAD-BRIDGE AT COLENZO

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*From a drawing by Knud Bull.*  
THE ATTACK ON THE ARMOURD TRAIN; CHEVELEY, NOVEMBER 15TH, WHERE MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF.



hundred yards away, when a wounded soldier, in direct disobedience to the positive order that there was to be no surrender, waved a pocket handkerchief. The Boers immediately stopped firing, and, riding down from the hills, called for a surrender, though some of the British soldiers, knowing nothing about the "white flag" being shown, were still firing. At close quarters against such odds there could

escape, and finally fell into the hands of the Boers.

We may here state that he was carried to Pretoria, whence he escaped on December 12th, and after six days of adventure—hiding himself under coal-sacks in a Boer goods train, lurking in water-courses by day, toiling on by night, with only chocolate as his food, and again concealing himself under great sacks in a



THE CAMP AT MOOI RIVER.

be no chance of successful defence, and most of the men gave up their arms and became prisoners of war. Some, farther away from the mounted enemy, continued running, and were shot or hunted down in twos and threes, some, however, making good their escape. Mr. Churchill owed his capture to his own courage and self-devotion. He was steaming away in safety on the engine, when he thought that only wounded men should be carried there. He jumped on to the line for a chance of

truck—he reached Delagoa Bay, and on December 26th was in the British camp at Chieveley. About sixty men were taken prisoners, Captain Haldane being also captured, shot through the shoulder early in the engagement. We must record one other instance of courage during the struggle. When Captain Wylie was hit and lying helpless under the enemy's fire, Orderly-Sergeant Tod, of the Durban Light Infantry, seeing his danger, ran up and made a shield of great boulders round the officer, and

lay down beside him for a few seconds to cheer him up. A Boer shell afterwards landed on the little fortification, and scattered the rocks without further injury to the wounded man.

After the destruction of the armoured train and the capture of the British survivors from the fight, the Boers advanced towards Estcourt from the north-west, in several bodies some hundreds strong. On November 18th, one party of about one hundred and fifty men, moving towards the railway bridge half a mile north-west of the town, was driven to precipitate flight by a shell from one of our naval guns at five miles' range. The missile burst in the middle of a crowd of Boers, and an instant later several horses were seen galloping away riderless. About this time a fine body of Mounted Infantry, Bethune's Horse, five hundred strong, mostly men from the Johannesburg district, arrived as a welcome reinforcement. The enemy, however, came on in force, and advanced on Mooi River, south-east of Estcourt, foraging and pillaging houses and stores, and driving off cattle. On November 21st the Boers had arrived near Nottingham Road, a summer resort on the railway about thirty-five miles south-east of Estcourt, and were actually within forty miles of Pietermaritzburg. Their guns were shelling the British camp on Mooi River, but on November 19th a considerable body of the enemy in that district engaged in raiding were cleverly flanked and almost surrounded by Major Thorneycroft, with three companies of the valuable "Horse" called by his name, aided by some Natal Carabineers, and two Maxims. Smart fighting was kept up from four p.m. until dark, when the enemy retired, the British force having only two men wounded.

A new leader for the British now arrived on the scene of action in the person of General Buller, Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, who landed at Durban on Saturday, November 25th, and at once with his staff went to the front. Sir Redvers Henry Buller, G.C.B., K.C.M.G.,

had gone out from his command at Aldershot, assumed in 1898. Born in 1839, he entered the 60th Rifles in 1858, and acquired a great reputation for skill and resolution in the Ashanti War of 1874 and the Zulu War of 1878-79, serving at home as Adjutant-General from 1890 till 1897.

On November 26th news came in that General Joubert was falling back from Mooi River towards Ladysmith. Some smart fighting had already occurred near Estcourt, which was still held by our troops under General Hildyard. On Wednesday, November 22nd, he made a sortie against the Boers in position on Beacon Hill with entrenchments and four guns. The attacking force was composed of three battalions—West Yorkshire and West and East Surreys—with a field battery, two naval guns and detachment, and about seven hundred mounted troops of the Natal Carabineers, Bethune's Horse, and Natal Mounted Police. The enemy's chief post, Beacon Hill, rises to the height of 1,500 feet, and their forces held the rough, stony country, interspersed with hills, beyond it for a distance of seven miles south of the town. The enemy were, in fact, blocking Hildyard's communications with the south, and it was imperative that they should be "shifted."

The British attack was well conceived and finely executed. The main body, keeping touch with the railway, reached Willow Grange station, and with great exertion the naval gun and field battery were dragged up steep hills to commanding positions for service. At this time, about three in the afternoon, a terrific storm, with rain in torrents, and at times great hailstones, burst over the scene, and continued for some hours. When the weather cleared, about six o'clock, some shots were exchanged between the enemy's artillery and our guns, and the Yorkshires, climbing the heights on one side of Beacon Hill, did some firing against the enemy's line. The day's operations closed with more heavy rain. Before daybreak our troops were standing to arms, and the Yorkshire Battalion, working stealthily on from

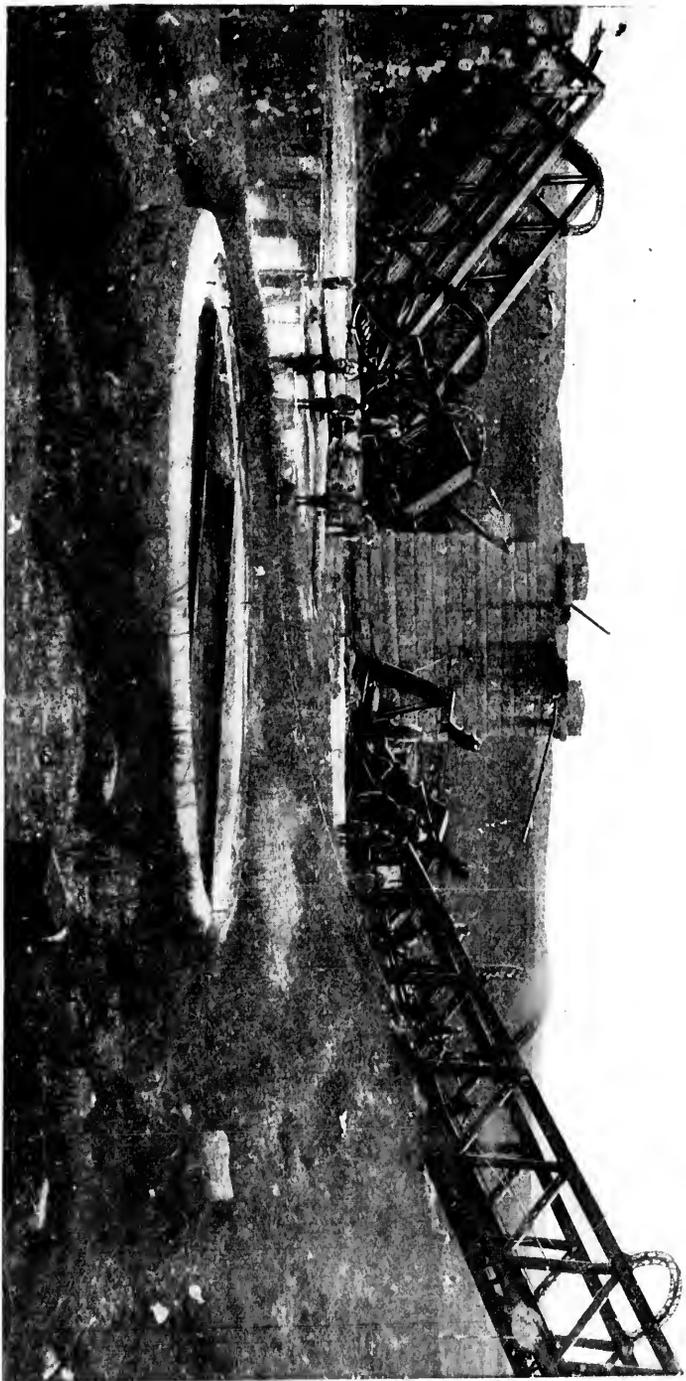


*From a Drawing by John H. Bacon,*

THE NIGHT ATTACK BY WEST YORKSHIRE REGIMENT AT WILLOW GRANGE.

cover to cover against the enemy, were almost at close quarters, when one of our men in nervous excitement fired a rifle-shot, which gave warning to the foe. The Boers "bolted," while the British dashed on, storming the position just as day broke, with ringing cheers. The enemy rallied, and, with unusual courage, charged as if to ride down their assailants, but a fresh

assault with the bayonet drove them off, with the loss of rifles, ammunition, blankets, about thirty horses, and a few prisoners. Our naval guns had done good work in smashing the carriage of a Boer cannon. The British loss was about seventy, including fourteen killed. It was, no doubt, this vigorous onslaught of General Buller's, coupled with the knowledge that strong



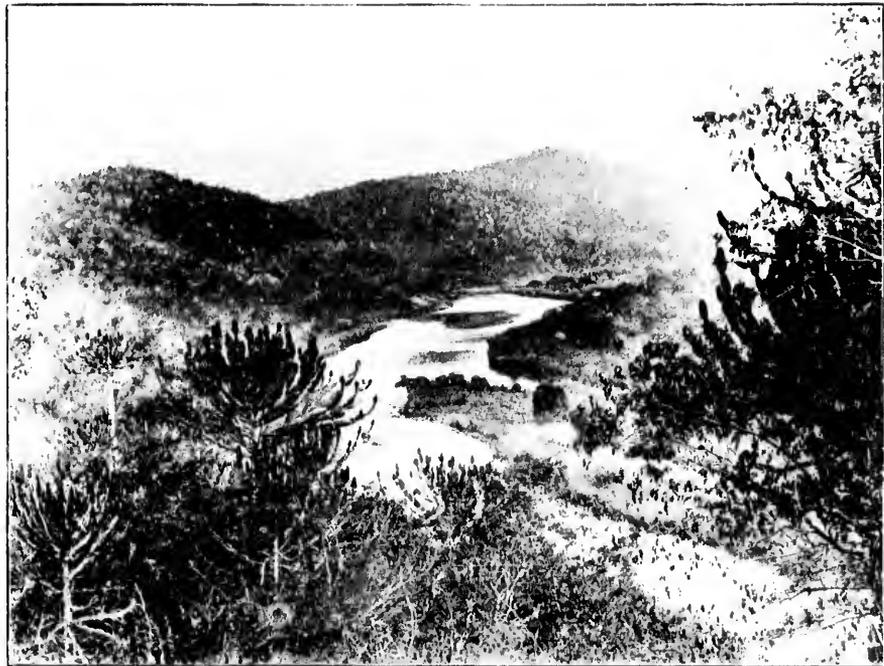
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reinforcements were daily coming in from Durban, which caused the enemy's withdrawal, and enabled our Railway Corps to repair the broken line to the south and north of Estecourt.

On November 26th an advance of the British troops to Frere station, towards Colenso, was made, and it was found that the bridge of six arches, taking the railway across a wide stream, had been completely

the railway, and constructing a strong new trestle-bridge across the stream. A general advance for the relief of Ladysmith was at hand, and the troops in Frere Camp were excited by the prospect. The positions of the enemy around Colenso were ascertained through frequent reconnaissances of mounted men, and it was known that they occupied posts of great natural strength on kopjes near the town, and especially in



THE VALLEY OF THE TUGELA  
The Scene of General Buller's Operations.

wrecked by breakage in the centre. For some days nothing of importance occurred, Sir Redvers Buller being busily employed in arrangements for guarding his line of communication, and in personal inspection of the country beyond Chieveley, under the protection of clouds of Light Horse patrols. By December 17th the Royal Engineers, with their usual promptitude and skill, seconded by the Natal Government engineers, had restored communication to the north of Frere by diverting

great entrenchments beyond the Tugela River. The British troops were enjoying themselves in camp, thronging the banks of a *spruit*, or stream, from morning till night, and bathing, in the gayest of spirits, at what they styled "Margate Sands." Their hilarity was soon to be exchanged for the depression caused by disaster and defeat.

General Buller, at his headquarters in Chieveley Camp, between Frere and Colenso, had been forming the resolve and making the arrangements which

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*From a Picture by R. Cahn, Heidelberg.*

THE ATTEMPT TO REGAIN THE GUNS AT THE BATTLE OF COPPERS.



brought about, on December 15th, the Battle of Colenso, or Battle of the Tugela. The general position of the enemy was known, but their strength in men and guns was, beyond doubt, underrated, and their wiliness in devising obstacles for assailants was to become matter of painful experience for the British leader and his brave officers and men. An attempt was to be made, by a frontal attack, for the capture of a position of strength impregnable to all assaults except those of a great force, or to an attack in front combined with outflanking movements by large bodies of men aided by many guns. At four o'clock in the morning of Friday, December 15th, General Buller moved out of his camp at Chieveley with his whole force, intending to make the passage of the Tugela at one of the two fordable places, which were two miles apart. The hills where the enemy were believed to lie had been previously bombarded for two days without drawing a single shot in reply, and the lyddite from our naval guns had been, to a great extent, thrown away. The Boers had quitted the high ground, and entrenched themselves near the banks of the river and on low-lying kopjes to the north. The consequence was that British infantry marched in quarter column to the very mouth of the enemy's rifle-pits, and two batteries of artillery advanced to within a few hundred yards of entrenchments, hidden by scrub, on the south side of the river.

The left drift, or ford, was attacked by infantry under General Hart, the right by General Hildyard's force, while General Lyttelton, in the centre, was ready to support either in case of need, and General Barton, with the cavalry and mounted infantry, was to seize and hold Hlangwana Hill on the British right front and to protect the flank in that quarter. The incidents of the struggle which took place were many; the battle itself was sharp and short, ending in a decided and disastrous repulse for our men. When Hart, with his brigade, approached the Tugela Bridge drift, about

two miles up river, or westwards, from Colenso, he was met at eight hundred yards' range by a storm of shrapnel and rifle bullets. The deluge of lead, the torrent of bullets, that dropped on the hard dry veldt, parched by the sun, whose noontide heat was most trying to our troops, caused the dust to rise as bubbles of water seen on the surface of a pool under tropical rain. The veteran campaigner, Mr. Bennet Burleigh, who was on the field, exclaimed, "I have never seen anything like it in my life." The Dublins and Royal Irish, some of whom dashed across the river, could see no Boers, but found themselves under a fire in which nothing could live, and were forced to withdraw. General Hart's attack had thus completely failed.

General Hildyard's task was to move directly in front to the Colenso road-bridge, and to occupy Fort Wylie. His leading regiment, the East Surrey, occupied Colenso station and the houses near the bridge under a heavy fire, and carried a Boer trench with a rush. Beyond that point it was impossible to go, in face of the enemy's shell and bullets, and our men could only cling to what they held until the order to withdraw was sent by General Buller after the chief disaster of the day—that which befell the guns. Colonel Long, in command of the 14th and 66th Field Batteries and six naval twelve-pounder quick-firing guns, had been ordered to open fire at two thousand yards' range, in order to cover the advance of the infantry brigades. In his desire to get within a more effective distance, Colonel Long took his field guns towards the southern bank of the Tugela, wholly unaware of the fact that Boer riflemen were entrenched among the scrub at close quarters. A storm of bullets from rifles and a Maxim-Nordenfeldt gun at once slew or disabled almost all the horses, and knocked over most of the gunners, so that the batteries were, in military phrase, "put out of action" before many shots could be fired. One gunner's body was found with sixty-four wounds. The poor remnant, with wonderful courage after such a terrible

reception, made every effort to save the guns, bringing up waggon-teams under a deadly fire. Captains Congreve, Reed, and Schofield, with Lieutenant Roberts, of the King's Royal Rifles, hurried across a field to a cleft, and endeavoured to bring a detachment with some horses to the guns, under a terrific fire. Two guns of the 66th Battery were ultimately saved, ten were, perforce, abandoned to the foe as prize of war. It was during this effort that Lieutenant Roberts, only son of the famous field-marshal, received a mortal wound in the stomach.

On the right of the battle-field, Lord Dundonald, with his mounted men, made an attempt to take Hlangwana Hill, but, being unsupported by artillery, failed. Thorneycroft's men and the Natal Carabineers suffered severely from the fire of Boers in hidden trenchments. The attack, in fact, failed at every point. The troops behaved

with their usual courage, the Fusilier regiments and the Connaught Rangers being the chief sufferers, while the Devons and East Surreys showed exceptional bravery when they were ordered to the support of the field batteries. General Buller and some of his staff had very narrow escapes, and General Clery's staff had three horses killed or hit under the officers who rode them. The loss of Lieutenant Roberts was especially lamented by his comrades

and by the British public. He was under twenty-eight years of age, smart, brave, and beloved by his comrades. His distinguished father and Lady Roberts had, with visible pride in their soldier son, taken leave of him a few weeks before at "Waterloo," in London, as he started for Southampton on his way to the front. The previous service of Lieutenant Roberts had been in India, with the Waziristan Expedition of 1894-95,

and the Chitral Relief Force in 1895. The serious reverse at the Tugela cost General Buller's force over 1,000 men, of whom 137 were killed, 702 wounded, and 203 missing, many among them being known to be prisoners.

On the following day (December 16th) there was an armistice until midnight for the burial of the dead. The British wounded were admirably cared for. About twelve hundred coolie bearers carried them, sometimes under fire, from the field to the ambulances, and thence the

sufferers were borne on stretchers to the field hospital at Chieveley, seven miles distant. Sir William MacCormac, the eminent surgeon, who, along with Mr. Treves, of the London Hospital, had gone out to the scene of warfare, putting the best of skill and experience at the service of our stricken men, testified to the high efficiency of the doctors and nurses, and of all the appointments and apparatus, the best which money could buy. It was



Photo. by Chancellor, Dublin.

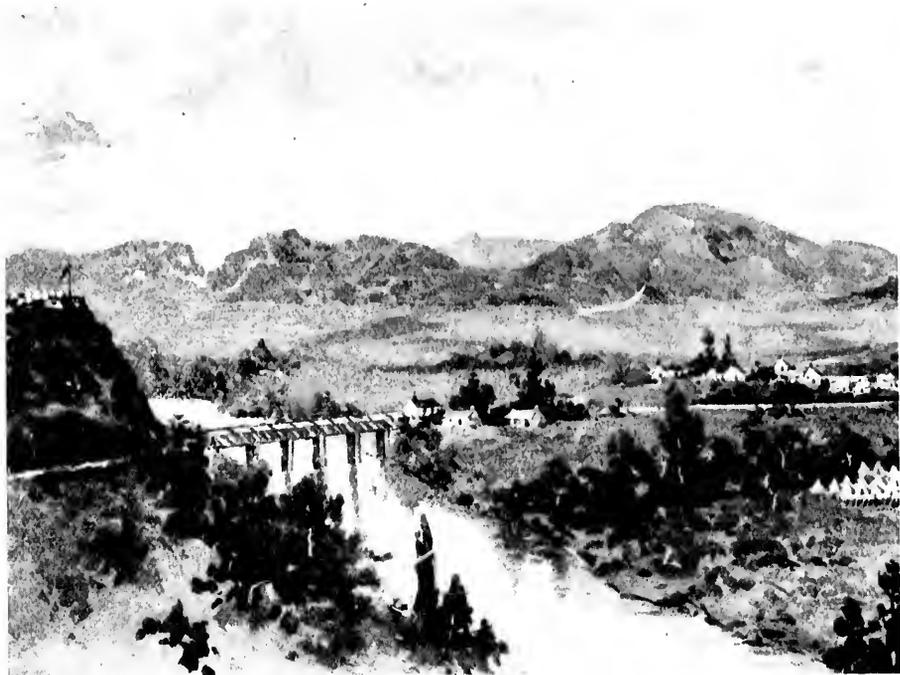
LIEUTENANT THE HON. F. ROBERTS.

a striking fact, about this time, testifying at once to medical and nursing skill and care, and to the nature of the climate, that of two thousand men who had gone to Durban and Cape Town for tendance after wounds, seven hundred were, within a few weeks, back at the front, facing the enemy in renewed vigour and high spirits.

On December 19th two British guns

sports under a broiling sun, and enjoyed a good dinner at night. The Naval Brigade, with the usual hilarious spirit of British Tars "on the spree," pulled effigies of John Bull and President Kruger through the camp on a gun-carriage to the music of popular airs.

On December 27th Sir Redvers Buller was joined at the front by Sir Charles Warren, commanding the Fifth Division,



*Drawn by F. C. Dickinson.*

BRIDGE OVER THE TUGELA AT COLENSO.

firing lyddite shells opened on Colenso road bridge, an iron structure, at about eight hundred yards' range, and in three hours' time had practically destroyed it by knocking out one span. The weapons were handled by the Naval Brigade and some of the Natal Naval Volunteers. The enemy's strong position beyond the Tugela was bombarded for some hours on the following day with lyddite shell, but no response was made by the Boers. On Christmas Day the troops in Chieveley Camp held athletic

about ten thousand men, which had arrived out during the month at Durban and Cape Town. The new arrival, Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Warren, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., was born in 1840, and entered the Royal Engineers in 1857. He was well acquainted with the scene of warfare, having been Civil Commissioner in South Africa in 1876-77, in command of the Diamond Fields Horse in the Kaffir War and Griqualand West during 1878, and in the same year leading troops against the Bechuanaland

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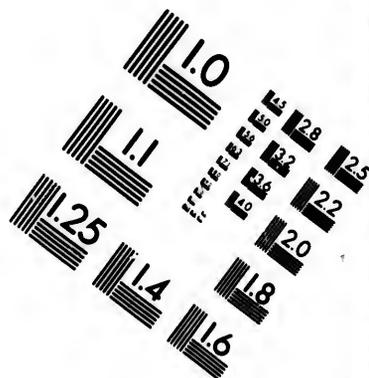
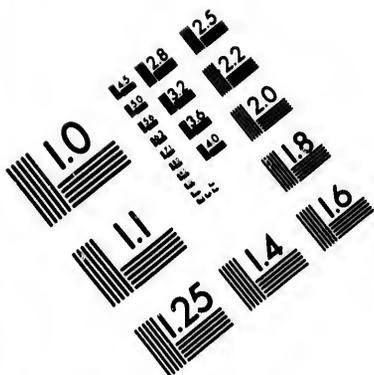
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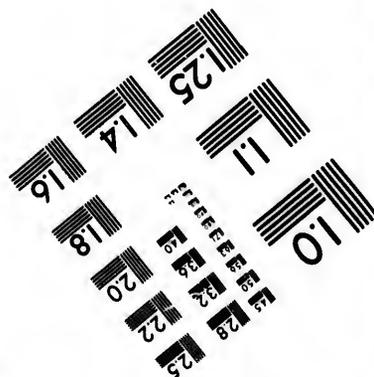
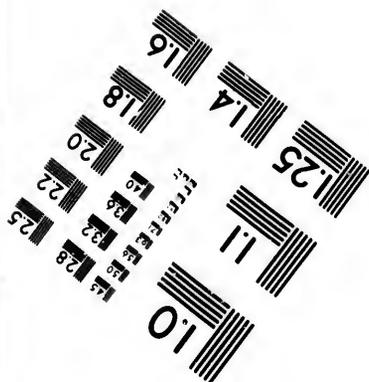
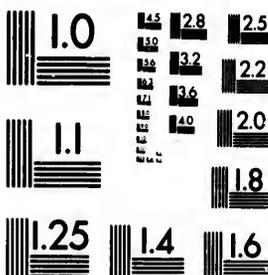
*Photo by Harman, Capt.*

LORD KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM,  
Lord Roberts' Chief of Staff.





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*Photo. by Elliott & Fry, Baker Street, W.*

GENERAL SIR CHARLES WARREN, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,  
Commanding the Fifth Division.

rebels. In 1879 he led the Northern Border (Rhodesia) Expedition, and in 1884-85 was in command of the Bechuana-land force. We may here note that a Sixth Division was sent out in December to South Africa, under the command of Major-General Kelly-Kenny, an officer born in 1840, who entered the 2nd Foot in 1858, served in China in 1860, and in the Abyssinian War of 1867-68; in 1897 he became Inspector-General of Auxiliary Forces and Recruiting.

We close this account for a time, during

the pause which succeeded General Buller's repulse, by noting that the men in Chieveley Camp were at the close of the year 1899 in good health and cheerful spirit, daily engaged in cricket and football matches, and that on the night of December 26th a train of six waggons, conveying provisions to the Boers from some Natal Dutch rebels, was captured by our troops and taken into Frere Camp.

We purpose here taking a brief review of the situation of affairs in South Africa in December 1899 before dealing with the extraordinary demonstration due to the events of the earlier part of that month. There were three scenes of warlike operations. In the centre, General Gatacre, stemming the tide of Boer invasion in Cape Colony, had received, as we have seen, a severe check at Stormberg on December 10th. In the west, as will be described in detail hereafter, Lord Methuen

was advancing to the relief of Kimberley, and he, after some successes, was defeated on December 11th at Magersfontein, and brought to a complete stand. On December 15th Sir Redvers Buller was sharply stopped in Natal. Three defeats of British generals, one in each of the chief scenes of conflict, had occurred within a week. No such series of reverses to our arms had been known during the long reign, or, indeed, during the century. It is needless to describe the venomous exultation of the worse class of people in

## Operations for the Relief of Ladysmith

91

Continental nations. For those manifestations of malignity the British public throughout the world-wide empire was fully prepared, and heeded them, in truth, not at all.

It would be in vain to deny that we were at the outset staggered by such a succession of blows. Then came the vigorous reaction in which, as a friendly and sensible Russian critic who knows us

the pride of the proudest people in the world. They had, as they were soon to learn, aroused a whole vast empire in a contest which could have only one end—the political annihilation of the two Boer States.

The days which followed the arrival of the news of events in South Africa during the "Black Week" ending on Saturday, December 16th, were marked by a national



*Photo. by Neville P. Edwards*

AT CAPE TOWN.

well lately declared, "the Briton, when he meets with disaster, sets his teeth and squares his shoulders." Those British subjects who, in their own souls, and from our whole history as a nation and an empire, know the moral stuff of which we are made, took a cheerful view of affairs. The Boers had, by their very successes, sealed their own doom. They had done more than they knew, or could imagine, at Stormberg, at Magersfontein, and at the Tugela. They had wounded

and imperial uprising without parallel in our history. The tidings of General Buller's failure, with the loss of guns, reached the War Office in London between one and two o'clock on the morning of December 16th. Lord Salisbury, fully alive to the serious nature of the position, promptly summoned a meeting of the Committee of National Defence, and after consultation with Mr. Goschen, Lord Lansdowne, the Duke of Devonshire, and Mr. A. J. Balfour, resolved to call to the aid of the empire

the talents and experience of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener. The hero of the "March to Kandahar" was appointed to the supreme command of the forces in South Africa. The victor in the Sudan became his Chief of the Staff. It was known that these distinguished men were prepared for cordial co-operation in those capacities, and the news of their being placed in charge of affairs at the scene of war was hailed with joy by patriotic Britons.

No time was lost by the men chosen for the task of turning the tide in our conflict with the brave, skilful, and stubborn foe. Lord Roberts, ever ready at duty's call, but grieving, as his countrymen grieved, for the loss of his only son, sailed from Southampton for Cape Town on Saturday, December 23rd. Lord Kitchener, who was up the Nile at Shellal when the evil tidings arrived, reached Alexandria with his aide-de-camp, Major Watson, on December 21st, leaving Colonel Sir Francis Wingate, the recent victor over the Khalifa, in charge as Acting Sirdar. Embarking in the cruiser *Isis* for Malta, Kitchener and Watson were thence conveyed in a swift man-of-war to Gibraltar, in order to meet Lord Roberts on board the mail steamer for the Cape, which specially called on this occasion at our great fortress in Spain. Lord Roberts and his staff, with Major-General Kelly-Kenny, in command of the Sixth Division, arrived at Cape Town in the *Dunottar Castle* on January 10th.

Britons at home, and their fellow-subjects in the greater colonies, made an immediate and noble response to the demand upon their energy and patriotism. A moment of dismay and disgust was followed by the stern resolve to "sit tight," and to work and fight harder than ever. With a very few disgraceful exceptions, the whole empire rose up in a magnificent outburst of loyalty and devotion to the common cause. At home the auxiliary forces of all ranks were enthusiastically forward. The embodiment of forty thousand Militia for garrison duty at home and abroad was attended by the

voluntary offer of thousands of that force for service at the front. An appeal to the Volunteers for aid was met in such a spirit that the orderly-room of every regiment linked to a line battalion in the South African Field Force was flooded with offers from men anxious to join the selected companies. The War Office authorities were asking for about nine thousand men to reinforce the Regulars. Four times that number of the rank and file were eager to take the field, and the officers were ready to go to the front, as it seemed, almost to a man.

The Yeomanry, a body including many whose services as Mounted Infantry or as cavalry, had already been offered and declined, found their opportunity at last, and "Imperial Yeomanry" were speedily enrolled in large numbers. The need of men equipped as Mounted Infantry appealed at once to the fighting, sporting, adventurous, and patriotic instinct, taste, and spirit of thousands of young men in all classes of society, and the eagerness which was displayed to bear the burdens and to face the hardships and perils of war was a triumphant proof that the manhood of the nation was as sound and vigorous as ever, and a complete answer to the timid who had croaked about the country being corrupted and enervated during a lengthy period of prosperity and peace. Rich and poor alike were conspicuous in this time of test and trial. Clerks and artisans were ready, without a second thought, to surrender posts of service on the chance of re-appointment on return, if return there were for them, from South African warfare. As for the spirit shown by the employers of such men, one great firm, Messrs. Marshall and Snelgrove, informed all Volunteers in their employment that in the event of any of them being called out for active service, or for garrison duty, they would each be presented with a cheque for six months' salary in advance, and their situations would be kept open until their return. Sir Blundell Maple, hearing that some of the young men employed by the firm of Maple and Company



*Photo. by Street, Winnipeg.*

DEPARTURE OF THE MANITOBA CONTINGENT OF THE CANADIAN BATTALION FOR SOUTH AFRICA.  
The Canadians have had some Smart Fights with the Rebels.

wished to join the Imperial Yeomanry, expressed his readiness to present fifty pounds to each rider towards the purchase of a horse and the needful accoutrements, provided he were accepted to go out to the scene of warfare. The directors of the Company undertook to keep open the situations of such men, and of any Volunteers, until the end of the war.

From every quarter of Great Britain tidings poured in of Volunteers and Yeomanry coming forward in scores and hundreds at the country's call. At the Inns of Court, in North London, and in the Surrey suburbs, in the Home Counties, in the West of England, in Wales, in Lothian, and in Aberdeen, on Tyneside and on the Channel coast, the same enthusiasm in the cause of the empire was displayed. Hundreds of men of wealth and leisure were found eager to abandon all the safety, ease, and comfort of existence at

home in exchange for the trooper's saddle and the rain-swept veldt.

The Corporation and citizens of London



*Photo. by Kennedy, Toronto.*

COLONEL OTTER,  
In Command of the Canadian Contingent.

were eagerly and joyously forward in the time of stress and strain. Before the lapse of ten days from the repulse of Sir Redvers Buller's force, that great municipality and the City Companies and merchants had voted and subscribed the sum of £75,000 for the equipment of a regiment of fourteen hundred fighters, including six hundred mounted men, styled "The City of London Imperial Volunteers," dressed, like infantry of the line, in khaki. The London Scottish and the Inns of Court Volunteers furnished at once a proportion of this force.

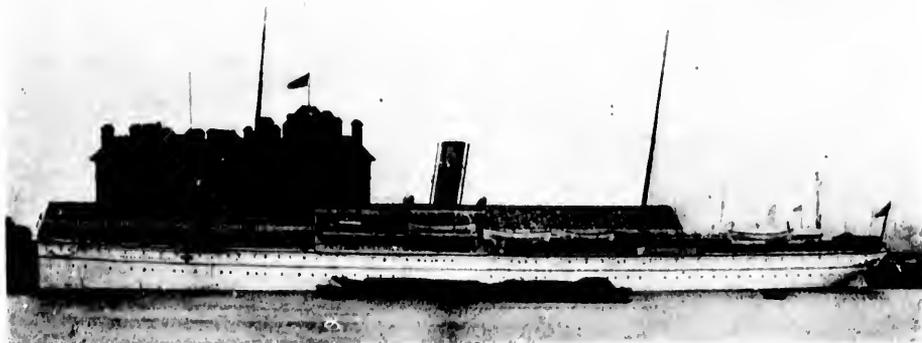
The people and Governments of the greater colonies quickly showed their appreciation of the needs of the empire. The five Australian colonies and Tasmania prepared a new contingent of Mounted Infantry, numbering eleven hundred men, in addition to half a field hospital (sixty men) and a field battery with one hundred and eighty men. New Zealand soon despatched a force of about two hundred and forty men with four Hotchkiss guns. The Cabinet of the Dominion of Canada voted a second contingent, consisting of three field batteries, each of six twelve pounder breech-loaders, and four squadrons of Mounted Rifles, making about twelve hundred and fifty men of all ranks. Of the Rifles, two squadrons were composed of the North-West Mounted Police and "cowboys" or ranchmen. The other two were selected from the Royal Canadian Dragoons (Regulars) and the Militia Cavalry of the Dominion. The enthusiasm throughout the vast regions under the Queen's rule in North America was unbounded, and the Militia Department was overwhelmed with offers for service in South Africa. Such was the attitude, such were the efforts, of loyal subjects of the British Crown at a time of need in the contest waged against the corrupt Boer oligarchy of Pretoria and their allies of Orange Free State.

We turn to India. Some of our Continental critics had, no doubt, looked for trouble there at a time when the Imperial Army had been diminished in strength. No trouble for the Empress of India, or

for her loyal subjects, arose in that quarter. The native princes were eager to assist us. The rulers of Kashmir and Jodhpur offered to send troops and horses to South Africa. The Maharajah of Marwar (Jodhpur) placed every horse in his State at the disposal of the Government. These offers were accepted to a reasonable extent. Indian Volunteers daily expressed the keenest desire to embark for the Cape, and the war fund in India soon amounted to many thousands of pounds. In Ceylon a corps of mounted Volunteers, including many planters, was formed for service in South Africa, and large contributions were made to the Mansion House Widows and Orphans' Fund.

We must give special notice to the loyal munificence of Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, G.C.M.G., Agent-General for the Canadian Dominion in Great Britain. This venerable and eminent millionaire, well known in Canadian political history as Sir Donald Smith, raised, apart from the Canadian Government contingents, a force of four hundred mounted men and officers, armed, equipped, and conveyed to the scene of warfare, entirely at his own expense. This body of men, raised in Manitoba, the North-West, and British Columbia, consisted entirely of single men, expert marksmen, at home in the saddle, thoroughly efficient as rough-riders and scouts. The Militia Department aided in the selection, armament, and general equipment of this valuable reinforcement, the horses being all procured from the North-West Territory.

As regards the reinforcements from the British Isles sent out before and after the crisis of mid-December, we may note that the Fifth Division (Sir Charles Warren's command) was composed of the 1st South Lancashire, the 2nd Royal Lancaster, the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, the 1st York and Lancaster, the 1st Yorkshire, the 2nd Royal Warwickshire, the 2nd Dorset, and the 2nd Middlesex, as infantry; with the 14th Hussars and the Composite Regiment of Household Cavalry; and two batteries Royal



From a Photograph by Elliott & Fry, Baker Street, W.

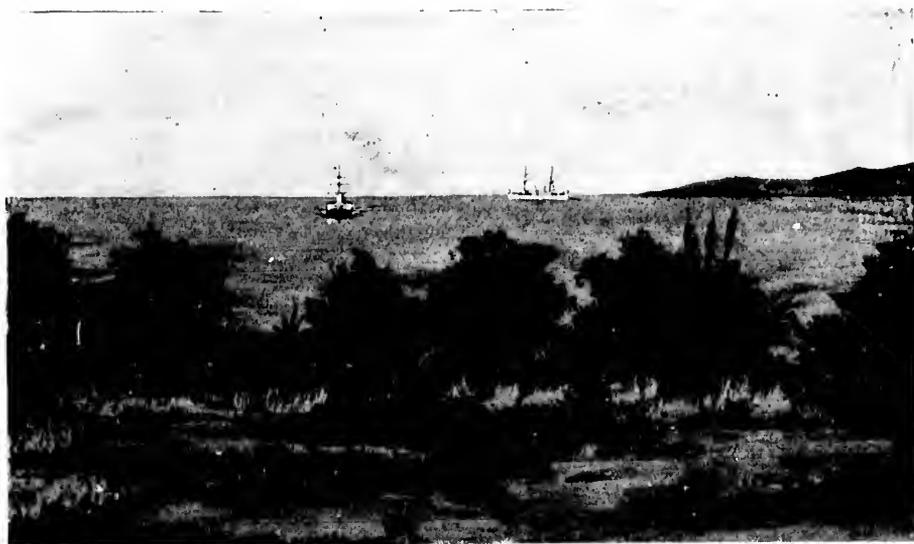
THE PRINCESS OF WALES HOSPITAL SHIP.

Equipped by the Red Cross Society for Bringing Home Wounded Soldiers.

Field Artillery and one howitzer battery. The Sixth Division (Lieutenant-General Kelly-Kenny's command) was composed of the 2nd Bedfordshire, 2nd Royal Irish, 2nd Worcestershire, 2nd Wiltshire, 2nd East Kent, 2nd Gloucestershire, 1st West Riding, and 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry, with three batteries Royal Horse Artillery. The Seventh Division, under Lieutenant-General Tucker, comprised the 1st King's Own

Scottish Borderers, 2nd South Wales Borderers, 1st Lincolnshire, 1st East Lancashire, 2nd Norfolks, 2nd Cheshire, 2nd Hampshire, and 2nd North Staffordshire, with three batteries of Royal Field Artillery.

The extent of the force in the field—by far the greatest ever despatched from British ports in the same space of time during our history—may be estimated from the fact that, in addition to all men hitherto



BRITISH WARSHIPS IN DELAGOA BAY ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR CONTRABAND OF WAR.

mentioned, there were serving in South Africa, in January 1900, 15 companies (5 Fortress, 8 Field, and 2 Railway) of Royal Engineers, the First Division Telegraph Battalion, a troop Bridging Section, a Balloon Depot and Sections, 36 companies of the Army Service Corps, 19 companies of the Army Medical Corps, and 6 companies of the Army Ordnance Corps, and that, in addition to all the above, there were also in South Africa, or nearing the shores, the 7th Dragoon Guards, the 8th Hussars, and the 17th Lancers, a siege train and 1,136

officers and men of Royal Garrison Artillery, a howitzer brigade Royal Field Artillery, 11 battalions of Militia, Volunteer companies, Imperial Yeomanry, colonial contingents from Canada and Australasia, and strong reinforcements for various corps from the Reserves. To crown all, the War Office in the last days of January despatched to the scene of warfare a needed reinforcement of artillery, comprising 72 field guns (18 howitzers), with 3,710 men and 2,210 horses, the largest contingent of artillery ever sent off in ten days from any part of the world.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *The Beleaguered Towns of the North and West: Kimberley, Mafeking, Tull, Kuruman.*

Kimberley, Description of—A Tempting Prize for Boers—Means for Defence of Town—The Neglect of Colonial Government—Energy of De Beers Company—Arrival of Mr. Rhodes—Feeling Against Mr. Schreiner—Lieutenant-Colonel Kekewich as Commandant—Preparations for Defence—Vryburg and its Fate—Suicide of Major Scott, the Commandant—The Place Occupied by the Enemy—Kimberley Invested by the Boers—Adventures of an Emissary to De Aar—The Garrison of Kimberley—Loyalty of the Townsfolk—22 of October 24th—The Enemy Routed—Mr. Rhodes' Steadfast Spirit—The Town Bombarded—Small Effect of Boer Shells—Fighting Outside—Death of Major Scott-Turner—The Boers Shooting Springbok—Matters During December—"All Well" in January 1900, After Three Months' Siege—The De Beers Company's New Gun—Their Good Work in the Town—Excellent Management by Military Authorities—Heavy Bombardment at End of January—Mafeking, Description of—The Bechuanaland Border Police—Colonel Baden-Powell, Commandant at Mafeking—His Services and Character—The Garrison—Preparations for Defence—Boer Forces Seize the Railway—Their Explosion of Dynamite to their own Damage—Perry, the Brave Engine-Driver—Sharp Fighting to North of Town—Ladies with Rifles Against Enemy—Baden-Powell's Chaff to Boer Commandant—Boys Take Part in Defence—A Concert at Riese's Hotel—Baden-Powell's Messages to General Cronje—Heavy Bombardment Begins—Dodging the Shells—Boer Assault Repulsed—Gallant Sortie of Garrison—Fine Work of British South Africa Police in Defending Fort—Another Sortie—Baden-Powell's System of Defence—A Good Stratagem—Boers Again Repulsed—Confidence of Defenders in their Commandant—The Harassing Effect of Bombardment—Departure of Cronje with Many Boers—Baden-Powell's Irritating Letter to General Snyman—British Sortie Repulsed with Heavy Loss—Enemy Warned Through Treachery—Christmas Day Under Siege—Bombardment Renewed—Women's Laager Shelled—News Down to Middle of January—Tull, Description of—Colonel Plumer and his Garrison—Not Seriously Pressed by Enemy—Fighting Outside Town—Retirement of Boers—Colonel Plumer Invades Transvaal—Returns from Want of Water—Kuruman, Description of—The Boer Attack—Brave Defence—The Enemy Repulsed—Bombardment Begun—Enemy Retire—Siege Resumed in December—Bombardment Renewed on New Year's Day—Garrison Forced to Surrender after Heavy Loss.

KIMBERLEY, a town of Cape Colony since the incorporation of Griqualand West in 1880, owes its existence and rapid rise to importance, as all the world knows, to the discovery of diamonds in 1869. In 1871 the British flag was first hoisted; the place

now contains in peaceful times over thirty thousand people, of whom nearly one-half are whites, the others being chiefly natives employed in the diamond mines. The town, almost wholly dependent on the great De Beers Company, with its capital of

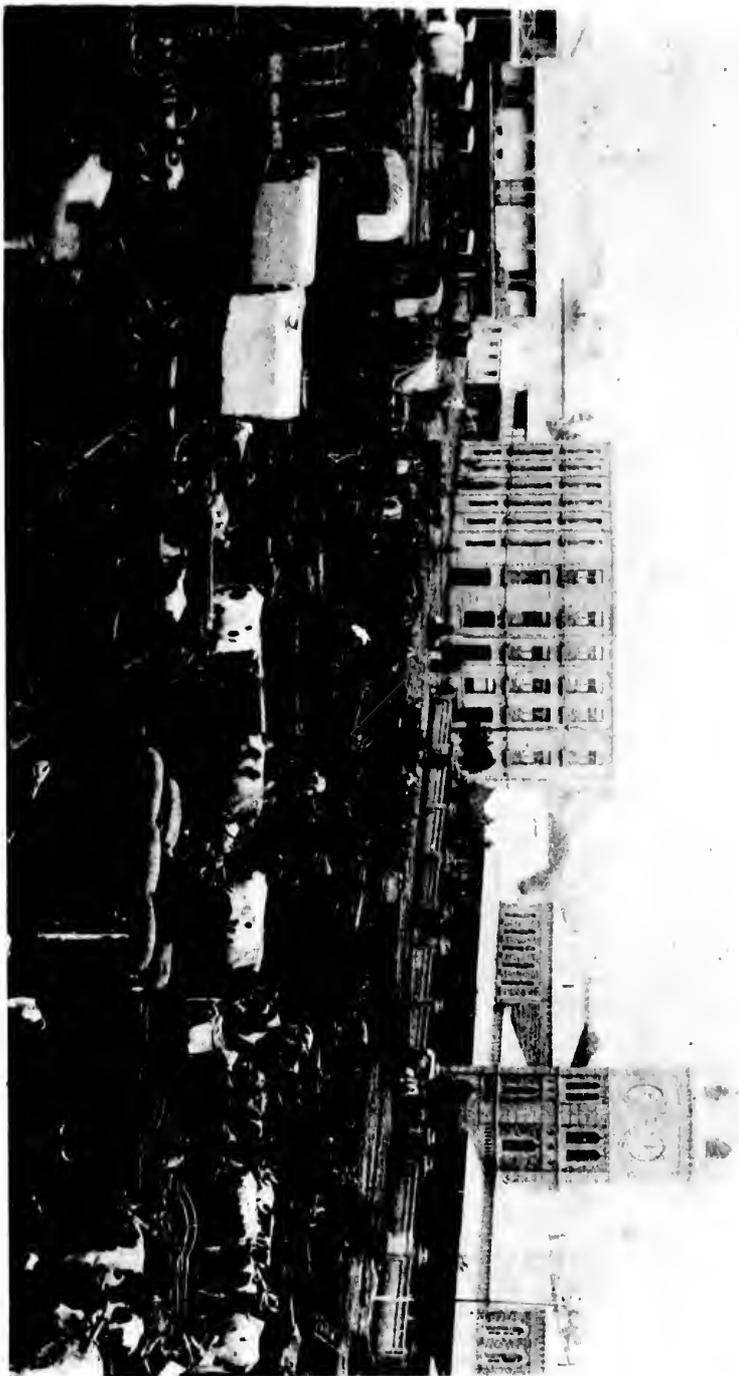
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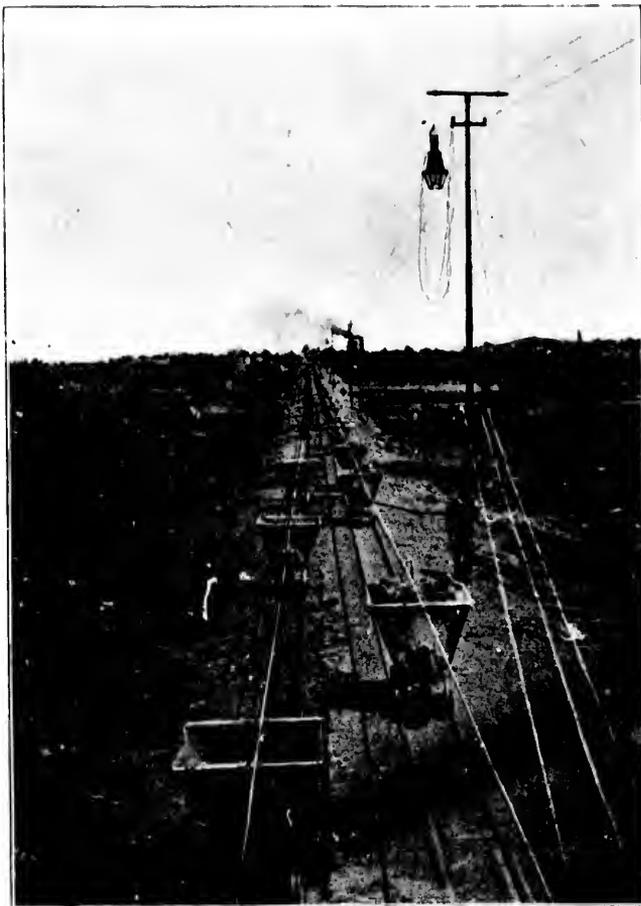
MARKEE PLACE, KIMBERLEY.



many millions sterling, is important, apart from the diamond works, to travellers and "up-country" traders as the emporium and starting-place for the interior. The public buildings include a hospital of three hundred and sixty beds, specially useful to the mine-workers, and a sanatorium; a library, containing one of the best collections of books in South Africa; a handsome Town Hall, post-office, High Court, club, and Masonic temple; Anglican, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic churches. The wants of civilisation are provided for by trams, cabs, and daily newspapers; a park with cricket and football fields, botanic gardens, and waterworks, constructed at a cost of nearly half a million sterling, bringing an abundant supply from the Vaal River, about seventeen miles away to the north-west. A short distance to the east lies Beaconsfield, practically a suburb, with a population of about ten thousand, half of whom are whites, around the mines of Du Toit's Pan and Bultfontein. Kimberley is about six hundred and fifty miles from Cape Town by the railway through De Aar Junction, and two hundred and thirty miles, on the same line, south of Mafeking. Lying close to the western border of Orange Free State, the town was, from its proximity, its enormous wealth and importance, and, not least, from Mr. Cecil Rhodes' great financial interest in its industry, most tempting to our Boer foes as a possible prey.

It was therefore made an object of immediate attack, and within a day or two of the ultimatum there were some thousands of burghers on the adjacent border, with some field guns.

The defence of Kimberley had been rendered possible only by the fact that the inhabitants had refused to be lulled into false security by the attitude and advice of Mr. Schreiner, the Cape Colony Premier, and in spite of derision they deliberately made preparations against a day of need. The initiative in the matter was taken, of course, by the De Beers Company. Months before the outbreak



*Photo. by Neville P. Edwards.*

DE BEERS MINE, SHOWING COUNTRY AND ENDLESS HAULAGE ARRANGEMENT.

of war, repeated application was made to the colonial Government for weapons wherewith to defend the town and the mines. Mr. Schreiner sneeringly replied that, so far as he knew, Kimberley was in no danger. Guns that were known to be in the country, and to be intended for the Diamond Fields Artillery, were kept for weeks hidden away at some obscure railway siding, and it became clear that it was useless to expect help from the colonial Cabinet. The De Beers Company, formed, as all know, by Mr. Cecil Rhodes, at once set about secretly arming the thousands of white men in their employment, and diamond-digging, washing, and sorting were varied by industrious drilling. Guns, large and small, were obtained, and not only was a complete battery of artillery formed, but cannon were planted on the heaps of *débris* from the mines which surround the town. This stuff, accumulated at a good distance from the buildings, was ready for the formation of excellent redoubts and entrenchments, and the place was soon well fortified.

Mr. Rhodes made his final atonement for the Jameson Raid by throwing in his lot with his own people during the risks of a siege, and arrived in the town on the night of October 12th. The Cape Premier, who had allowed rifles and ammunition to pass through to Orange Free State for employment in making British widows and orphans at Kimberley, was enjoying the comforts and luxuries of the capital. There was a strong feeling at the Diamond Town that since Mr. Schreiner and his colleagues contended, till the very last moment, that nothing was to be feared from the Boers, in this declaration they were either speaking as men utterly deceived, or had deliberately lied, and that in either case they were unfit to be longer trusted with the rule of Cape Colony.

Lieutenant-Colonel Kekewich was entrusted with the direction of the defence, and this officer showed the utmost energy and great ability in his responsible position. After the erection of defences on all sides,

trees were felled, and the bush cleared, so as to give a good field for firing, and in the earliest days, before any attack was made, the artillery were making excellent practice at dummy forces at a range of 2,500 to 3000 yards. With the rifle, recruits who had newly joined the town guard were doing well for aim at distances of 300 and 700 yards. On October 17th Colonel Kekewich divided the town into four sub-districts for the maintenance of internal order, and solemnly warned the people against communicating with the Queen's enemies. Rations of meat were limited to one pound daily for each man, all roads out of the town were absolutely closed against all exit or entrance save for persons with a permit or proof of good faith, and the sentries received orders to shoot all persons attempting to force the barricades and other obstructions. The defences were daily strengthened, the townfolk cheerfully joining in the work, notwithstanding loss of sleep and the decay of business. Miles of barbed wire were placed around the town; an armoured train patrolled the line of railway to north and south. The Boers, meanwhile, were surrounding the place, "lifting" cattle in various quarters.

We may here note matter concerning the town of Vryburg, the capital of British Bechuanaland, with a population of about five thousand, lying one hundred and forty-five miles north of Kimberley by rail. The fate of this place was soon decided, with tragical result to the British commandant, Major Scott, who had faithfully served in the colony for twenty-two years. He had received instructions to resist the Boers, but resistance was found to be quite impossible. The majority of the inhabitants were Dutch, with strong Krugerist sympathies, and before the arrival of the enemy, soon after the middle of October, the magistrate announced to a large crowd, consisting chiefly of farmers of the district, that the police had decided to retire, that the Volunteers would be disbanded, and that any one who might choose to accompany the police would be allowed to do so.

People friendly to the British cause were soon fleeing west, north, and south in vehicles, on horseback, and on foot. Major Scott, worn out already with anxiety of mind, toilsome days, and sleepless nights, addressed the police and Volunteers, and asked those who were willing to remain and fight to step forward. Only six men responded to this appeal, the police expressing the opinion that they had no chance against artillery. The police then rode out of the town, and about midnight, when the little column had halted for a brief rest, the silence of the camp was broken by the sound of a pistol-shot, and it was found that Major Scott had ended his life by a bullet in the forehead. The body of the hapless officer was buried in the veldt, between two spreading thorn-trees, and after the last rite, his successor in command, while the men stood "at attention," said a few fitting words concerning the loss sustained by the colony and the service.

The Boers had now entered the town, hoisted the Transvaal flag, and issued a proclamation declaring Bechuanaland to be a part of the South African Republic. Colonel Kekewich, on receiving the news, retorted with a proclamation warning all the Dutch in Bechuanaland and Griqualand West that their status as British subjects was unchanged, and that if they joined the Transvaal or Orange Free State Boers, or aided them in warlike operations, they would be treated as rebels. We return now to the fortunes of Kimberley.

Before the last week in October the place was closely invested by the enemy, and news was with difficulty sent to the outer world. In the afternoon of October 23rd a haggard man on a brown horse crawled into the little town at De Aar Junction, made his way to the commandant's office, delivered a document, and then fell fainting to the ground. The brave and loyal fellow soon revived under care, and told his adventures since he left the beleaguered town. Viewed by Boer scouts when he was a bare mile outside, he was hotly pursued, but escaped by hiding in some thick

bush. At a lonely farm, whose occupant was supposed to be "friendly," he sought a fresh mount, but the farmer was afraid, though willing, to help him. The despatch rider then made his way across country to another farm in his own district, where his sweetheart was living. She came out to him with news that armed Boers were at that moment in the kitchen. He was forced to push on southwards until his worn-out horse fell and rolled upon him. In struggling to his feet he tore off two fingers of his right hand, which bled profusely until the poor fellow bound it securely with his puggaree. Toiling slowly on until daylight, he obtained a fresh horse, by a bribe, from a farmer, and finally reached De Aar, exhausted from hunger and loss of blood. His news was that at Kimberley "all was well" and the people cheerful; Mr. Cecil Rhodes, dressed like an Afrikaner farmer, "moved about saying very little to any one."

The little defending force comprised four companies of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, two machine guns, a battery of Royal Garrison Artillery, with six seven-pounder mountain guns, a large party of Royal Engineers, and a detachment of the Army Medical Staff, with complete ambulance, the whole under the command of Colonel Kekewich, of the North Lancshires. The wind and dust on the exposed plateau were found very trying by those unaccustomed to life on the veldt. The goodwill of the townsfolk to the troops was strongly marked, a typical incident being that which occurred to one of Colonel Kekewich's clerks, who, dining at a hotel near the headquarters, found that his score had been settled for him by a kindly citizen who had slipped away without waiting for any thanks. The defence of the mines and the costly machinery was entrusted to about two thousand carefully organised employés of the Company under the command of Mr. Scott, V.C., a hero of the Zulu War, superintendent of the De Beers convict station. Eight Maxims were in position on the ramparts formed out of the huge grey

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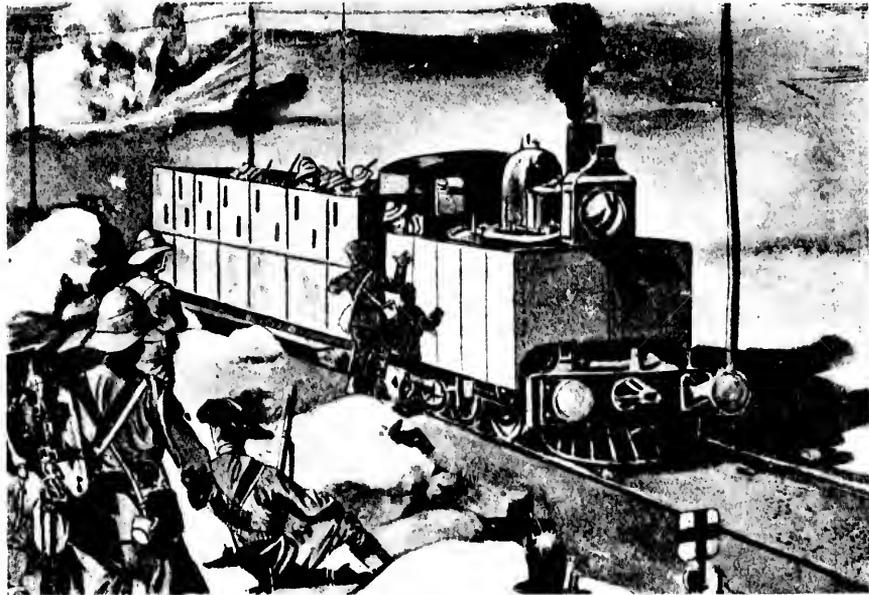
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THE AAR, SHOWING RAILWAY TO KIMBERLEY.



heaps of *débris*. The Volunteer Artillery had a battery of six seven-pounder "screw" guns, and were aided by drafts of Royal Artillerymen. The defending force was completed by one hundred and twenty Cape Police, fine, bronzed, hardy men, admirable for scouting, patrolling, and outpost work. Every night the whole country was lighted up for miles around by powerful electric searchlights. Thus prepared, Kimberley calmly awaited hostile attack, and was also ready for offensive work.

was turned to the north by the Volunteers, and when the foe were falling fast and evidently staggering under the assault, the Lancashires made a fine charge, and cleared the kopje with the bayonet, driving the Boers in headlong flight. The enemy's loss was very heavy, and their leader, Commandant Botha, was killed, shot in the left breast from a Lee-Metford rifle at one thousand yards' range. This little victory, gained after four hours' fighting, cost the British force only three men killed and



AN ARMoured TRAIN.

On October 24th a vigorous sortie was made by a force comprising two hundred and seventy Volunteers under Major Scott-Turner. On the way to Macfarlane, the second station on the line to the north, the British force encountered about seven hundred Boers, occupying excellent positions on the hills with well-served artillery. Two armoured trains aided our men, and they were soon reinforced by a hundred and fifty of the Lancashires, and by two guns, two Maxims, and seventy mounted men under Colonel Murray. The Boer guns were soon silenced, the enemy's flank

twenty-one wounded. Many hundreds of the townspeople witnessed the engagement, crowding the trenches and eagerly awaiting the return of the troops.

Mr. Rhodes was of great moral service to the defenders of Kimberley in his unruffled serenity, bidding an anxious resident, eager to get away, to "sit tight, as I do." As the centre of the social life of the town, he daily gave little dinner-parties at the De Beers offices, with abundance of iced champagne, and showed his contempt for the enemy's efforts and his confidence in a successful defence by starting to plant an

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*From a Drawing by Geoffrey Strahan.*

A SORTIE FROM KIMBERLEY.

avenue a mile long at the suburb of Kenilworth, to be called "Siege Avenue," composed of a double row of orange trees, with espaliers for vines, on each side, with a background of pepper-trees. On November 1st a tremendous explosion heard outside was due to the enemy blowing up the Company's dynamite stores, seven miles away, near Macfarlane's Farm, the scene of the sortie fight. About thirty-five tons of the explosive, worth £3,500, were thus destroyed.

As the siege progressed, the place was bombarded from time to time with little effect, and there were many skirmishes outside the line of defence. The Boers, whose numbers were unknown, but assuredly large enough for bolder work than they engaged in, showed no desire for an assault, and confined themselves to "lifting" horned cattle and donkeys near the town. One day the enemy's shells, mostly falling harmless on the *débris* heaps and open spaces in the outskirts, broke a large cooking-pot in the town, causing an auction of the broken pieces, with a brisk market at two pounds for choice specimens. As a siege, the affair was almost a farce. At the end of November, on the fortieth day, the enemy were still engaged in a merely harassing fire and in raiding cattle. On November 25th there was some smart fighting outside, chiefly of artillery, during a strong reconnaissance made by the garrison. The enemy suffered considerable loss in killed and wounded, and eight prisoners were taken. On the British side, Major Scott-Turner, having his horse shot under him, was wounded by a bullet traversing the fleshy part of his shoulder, and some of our men were severely hurt by Martini bullets. On November 30th the defenders had to mourn the death, from another wound received on the previous day, of Major Scott-Turner, commanding the Light Horse. This gallant Scot was as kindly with his men as he was brave and energetic. Among minor incidents early in December, we hear of the Boers "shooting large numbers of springbok," the beautiful antelope of those

regions, on the neighbouring farms, and of several of those graceful creatures being seen at Kenilworth, attracted thither by the British searchlight.

There was nothing to report during December except reconnaissances, drawing much useless fire from the enemy, and the fact that "all was well in Kimberley." In the middle of January 1900, we learned, "by heliograph, *via* Modder River," that the enemy had heavily bombarded the place from all their positions from dawn of January 16th until the next morning, directing their fire chiefly against the redoubts. After three months the Boers were, as it seemed, no nearer to the capture of the diamond mines or of their much-desired prey, Mr. Cecil Rhodes, than when they started on the enterprise.

A new weapon was brought into action for the defence of Kimberley through the enterprise of the De Beers Company. The dependence of the town upon that great organisation is seen in the fact that on January 19th news arrived of their assistance to the food supplies by the distribution of soup in large quantities. The relief works started under their control employed four thousand natives in making roads and general improvements in the town at a weekly cost of over £2,000 in wages alone. The whole sanitary work of the place was undertaken by the Company after the failure of the former contractors through the enemy's capture of mules and carts. When the main water supply was cut off by the Boers at the intermediate reservoir, the Company provided fresh supplies. They raised a large corps of mounted men, made shells, and at last manufactured a thirty-pounder gun, which was christened "Long Cecil," and was quickly doing excellent work, Mr. Rhodes himself sending off several shells. The whole wage-earning community of the Company, having become soldiers instead of diamond-diggers, received the same pay as before, as well as gratis food, the employes numbering six thousand men from Natal.

The military authorities showed wisdom

## The Beleaguered Towns of the North and West 105

and forethought in the regulation of supplies, not permitting any shopkeeper to take advantage of the siege, and thus enabling the community to live at normal prices, so far as the absolute necessities of life were concerned, although fowls, eggs, vegetables, and fruit were, of necessity, at famine prices. Towards the end of January (the despatch was undated) the Boers opened a heavy

Bechuanaland and the centre of traffic with the interior, is the northernmost town of Cape Colony, lying on the Molopo River about seventeen miles south of the border, and about ten miles west of the frontier of Transvaal. By the railway it is eight hundred and seventy miles from Cape Town, and about two hundred and thirty from Kimberley. The smart little place has a



WITH BADEN-POWELL AT MAFEKING: A NIGHT RECONNAISSANCE.

bombardment, which caused little damage, as most of the shells fell harmlessly on the De Beers' diamond floors. The town guns made a vigorous reply. The last news received before this record closed was that the garrison and other inhabitants were in good health, "going about their tasks cheerfully, and bearing all their troubles patiently."

Mafeking, the chief town of British

cricket ground and a racecourse, the "Surrey," and other hotels, English, Dutch, and Wesleyan churches, and is the headquarters of the Bechuanaland Border Police, a well-trained force of about four hundred and fifty men recruited chiefly from the young farmers of the east of Cape Colony, men of versatile powers, enabling them to construct their own little forts and barracks, to sink wells and make roads, to act both as

## The Fight for the Flag in South Africa

cavalry and as mounted infantry, and to manage the six field guns in action.

In her isolation, and her need for defence against superior numbers of a pertinacious, though not very enterprising foe, Mafeking was very fortunate in the commandant of her little garrison. Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, lieutenant-colonel of the 5th Dragoon Guards, was born, like Cecil Rhodes, son of an English rector, and first saw the light of day in 1857. In 1876 he entered the 13th Hussars, and saw active service in India, Afghanistan, and South Africa. In the Ashanti War of 1895, Baden-Powell commanded the native levies, then he acted as Chief of the Staff in the Matabeleland Campaign. Wielding the pen of a ready writer, and devoted to sport as a yachtsman, a hunter, and a polo player, a big-game shooter, and a "pig-sticker," he is also a painter, etcher, actor, and stage-manager on occasion. This wonderfully energetic and versatile man is the author of works on hog-hunting, reconnaissance and scouting, vedette, and cavalry instruction. The naming of a man by his initials only is usually a sign both of widespread fame and of popularity, and as the King of Cricketers is universally recognised as "W. G." so the commandant at Mafeking, one of the brightest and cheeriest of mankind, is known to his friends, and of late to the British world, as "B. P."

Among the defenders of the town—lying open in a flat and only guarded by entrenchments and some redoubts—were Colonel Hore's force of irregular cavalry about five hundred strong, two hundred Cape Mounted Police, the British South Africa Company's Mounted Police, and sixty Volunteers, with two seven-pounders and six machine guns. Some hundreds of townsmen and a coloured force were also raised in due time. In preparation for attack, a number of houses were turned into hospitals, and the sisters of the convent, on receiving a telegram from the Roman Catholic Bishop permitting them to leave, all chose to stay and nurse the wounded. A number of ladies also

volunteered to remain for nursing, with the offer of providing delicacies for the sick. The women and children remaining in the town were placed for shelter in a laager two miles to the west. The streets were barred with waggons, and every able-bodied man in the place carried a rifle. The defenders, before the beginning of hostilities, were reinforced by the arrival of some heavy guns, a large detachment of police, and half a battery of the Kimberley Artillery.

On Wednesday, October 11th, the Boer forces under General Cronje, in pursuance of the ultimatum, crossed the frontier, and on the following day the communication to the south was cut off by the seizing of the railway. On the same day the Boers caused themselves a heavy loss by the destruction of two truckloads of dynamite which had been stored in the station yard, and were, under the commandant's order, pushed out by an engine to a distant siding. It was a most dangerous task for Perry, the brave engine-driver. At a mile or two out he came across some of the enemy, who opened fire, when he wisely uncoupled his engine, and ran back full speed for the town. The enemy had closed in on the trucks, thinking to make prize of an armoured train, when one of their bullets, penetrating a case of dynamite, exploded the whole freight and wrought havoc in their ranks. Perry was about a mile and a half distant at the time, and his engine was almost lifted from the rails, while he was forcibly flung against the side of the "cab."

On October 14th there was some sharp fighting. About half-past five in the morning the patrol under Lord Charles Bentinek, to the north of the town, was engaged with the Boers, and the armoured train was sent out to his aid. It was found that the enemy had retired before Bentinek, but they returned in force, and soon after six o'clock the train, conveying British South Africa Police and Railway Volunteers, with two Maxims and a Hotchkiss, one on each of the three cars, came into action. The Boers, about six hundred strong, were on

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From a Drawing by R. Caton Woodville.

COLONEL R. S. BADEN-POWELL,

The Gallant and Clever Defender of Mafeking, in the Uniform of the Corps Raised by him in British Bechuanaland.

the right front, and the Maxim fire from the leading truck was replied to by their quick-firing guns and their pounder Maxims. The firing was very hot. The enemy soon retired, and the train steadily advanced. When the Boers resumed fire from their guns, their gunners were worried as to the proper range by the train's moving to and fro on the line. Colonel Baden-Powell, wishing the train to return, sent out Captain Fitzclarence with a squadron of men to cover the retreat, and a sharp engagement soon occurred. The Boers made persistent efforts to turn the British flank, and Fitzclarence was soon hampered by wounded men, whom he would not leave. A message was sent to Mafeking by the phonophore attached to the railway telegraph, and Captain Lord Charles Beitinek was sent out with his squadron to disengage Fitzclarence. The enemy retired before midday, and all the British wounded were brought in by the train, on which only three men had been slightly hurt. The spirit of the defenders of the place was shown by the fact that amongst the railway detachment helping to man the lines to the north were two ladies, the wife and daughter of a railway employé. They absolutely refused to take shelter in the women's laager, and wielded their own Lee-Metfords with skill against the foe.

This first engagement with the enemy, in which the conduct of all concerned was highly praised by the commandant in a general order, raised the spirits of the defenders. On October 16th a flag of truce came in from General Snyman, of the Boer army, with a message hoping "that a surrender would be made in order to save further bloodshed, and stating that we might now, if we wished, leave off firing." Baden-Powell's reply was to the effect that "as far as leaving off was concerned, we had not yet begun." The truce lasted until 4.45 p.m., and the inhabitants of the beleaguered town emerged from the shelter of sand-bags, redoubts, bomb-proofs, and cellars, to do a brisk trade in pieces of shells picked up in the streets, sold at from

three shillings to four shillings a piece. Some of the boys in the town did active service in the defence, one playing a man's part well at the loopholes of one fort with his rifle, and another loading the machine belts for a gun. On the night of Thursday, October 19th, there was an impromptu concert at Riesle's Hotel, where men in top-boots, breeches, and shirts, amidst a party of ladies, joined in the chorus of merry songs.

Correspondence between Baden-Powell and General Cronje formed at times a feature of the siege which made the British public smile. In reply to a letter from the Boer general confessing his inability to carry the town by storm, and declaring his intention of bombardment from a siege gun which was soon to arrive, the British leader informed him that the town was surrounded by mines, some arranged to explode of themselves and others connected with headquarters. The gaol, he said, was chiefly occupied by the general's own countrymen, and over this a yellow flag was placed, to enable him to avoid firing on it. He further pointed out that, if the Boer general insisted on shelling a town containing inoffensive women and children, his action would afford a precedent for the British forces when they invaded the Transvaal.

The Boer commander did shell the town, and heavily, with siege guns. On October 24th they opened fire, and at two o'clock a hundred-pounder sent a shell shrieking into the market square. About five shells per hour were sent in from this weapon, and the intervals were filled up by the fire of twelve-pounder Maxims, Nordenfeldts, Hotchkiss, Krupps, and other guns. One of the great projectiles wrecked three rooms at Reisle's Hotel. The enemy were entrenched at about two thousand yards distance, beyond effective rifle range, and the garrison and inhabitants, unable to reply to the heavy large guns, had to dodge the enemy's shells as best they could, aided by certain signals given by horns blown from look-out places. On October 24th and the following day about three hundred shells

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*From a Drawing by Geoffrey Strahan.*

BOMBARDMENT OF MAFEKING: A SHELL IN THE TRENCHES.

## The Fight for the Flag in South Africa

were dropped in the town without doing serious damage. On this last day, under cover of the fire, the enemy attacked the town from all sides, their riflemen coming in very close, and were received with rifle fire, Maxims, and the explosion of mines, retiring at last with heavy loss.

On October 27th a fine attack on the enemy's trenches was made by a squadron of the Protectorate Regiment under Captain Fitzclarence, supported by the Cape Police under Lieutenant Murray. The sortie was made at night, and the British troops got in well with bayonet work. With a loss among the assailants of six men killed and nine wounded, the enemy were strongly checked in pushing forward their entrenchments, and a considerable moral effect was produced by the cold steel. During a truce of two hours after this exploit, for the recovery of the British dead who were lying within the enemy's trenches, the Boer commander was pleased to speak in enthusiastic terms of the gallantry of the men who made the charge.

On October 31st a gallant feat of arms was performed during the hours of the morning twilight by Colonel Walford and his detachment of officers and men of the old British Bechuanaland Police, now renamed the British South Africa Police, but still an Imperial force. These men held a small and almost unprotected fort, on a rising called Cannon Kopje, against the advance of the enemy, made under cover of four heavy guns and a hundred-pounder. It was the Boer intention, after getting their guns and attacking force into position during the night, to storm the British post at day-break, and thence to bombard the south-east part of the town and capture it with a large force. The men under Colonel Walford, under a cross fire of artillery, not only held their position, but inflicted such losses on the enemy as compelled them to retreat. The British were assisted by the timely and well-directed fire of a seven-pounder under Lieutenant Murchison, and so discomfited the Boers that they did not again come near the position. The British

had to deplore the loss of the Hon. Douglas Marsham and Captain Kerr Pechell, two officers described by Baden-Powell in his order of the day as "of exceptional promise and soldier-like qualifications."

On November 3rd Captain Goodyear, commanding an excellent squad of "Cape Boys," made a sortie and recaptured from the enemy a position in the Brickfields, from which their sharpshooters had made things very unpleasant in the town. It was the general policy of Colonel Baden-Powell during his able direction of the defence to be continually making attacks with the view of pushing back the enemy's rifle fire, and so freeing the garrison and inhabitants from every danger except that arising from bombardment. On November 7th a successful stratagem was carried out by a force under the direction of Major Godley comprising Captain Vernon's squadron of the Protectorate Regiment and some guns under Major Panzera. The British force, advancing under cover of night to the enemy's laager on the west of the town, fired half a dozen rounds, and then retired on their own lines. The Boers, believing that our men had withdrawn in confusion, came on within rifle range of our trenches, and were met at a short distance with a heavy fire, which drove them off in disorder, leaving their dead and wounded to be picked up later on under the Red Cross flag. Only two men were wounded in the British force. The Bechuanaland Rifles under Captain Cowan took part in the engagement—their first "brush" with the foe.

We may here quote a despatch from Mafeking concerning the British commander. "We have a man than whom we could have none better. The colonel is always smiling, and is a host in himself. To see 'B.P.' go whistling down the street, deep in thought, pleasing of countenance, bright and confident, is cheering and heartening, better than a pint of dry champagne. Had any man in whom the town placed less confidence been in command, disaster might have befallen Mafeking, and if we are able to

## The Beleaguered Towns of the North and West 111

place the name of Mafeking on the roll of the Empire's outposts which have fought for the honour and glory of Britain, it will be chiefly because Baden-Powell has commanded us."

The people and garrison were from time to time severely tried by the bombardment, not so much from actual loss of life as from the harassing necessity of living in bomb-proofs and keeping continual watch for missiles when they were obliged to leave shelter. On November 18th there was some relaxation of pressure in the siege, through the departure of General Cronje with a third of his command. Early in December Baden-Powell greatly irritated General Snyman, the Boer commander, by a letter to the burghers pointing out "the inevitable result of their remaining longer under arms against Great Britain. The British forces were arriving in large numbers; there would be no hoped-for foreign intervention. Mafeking could not be taken by sitting down and looking at it, as there were ample supplies for several months. They had better think of their families, their farms, and their own safety. His advice to them was to return to their homes without delay. His force would probably soon take the offensive."

"B.P." fulfilled his promise of making another sortie, but unhappily without success, though the effort was most honourable to the British force engaged. On December 26th an attack was made on one of the enemy's forts to the north, with the object of pushing back the line of investment. The Boers had, as seemed certain, been warned of what was intended. During the night they had strengthened the works and doubled the garrison. The British force consisted of two squadrons of the Protectorate Regiment, one of the Bechuanaland Rifles, and three guns, assisted by an armoured train with a Hotchkiss and a Maxim, also conveying twenty men of the British South Africa Police. The men took up their position under cover of the darkness, and fighting began at four in the morning with firing from Major Panzera's seven-pounders and the machine gun. The

fighting line then advanced towards the fort under a heavy fire of bullets, only to find the place impregnable except to heavy battering guns. The parapet was loop-holed in triple tiers and roofed with a bomb-proof protection. There was only one entrance at the front, and this was mostly underground, and only large enough to admit one man at a time. The walls were too high for scaling, except by ladders, and the men suffered terrible loss as they swarmed round in vain efforts to effect an entrance. It was absolutely needful to retire, the assailants, out of eighty men, having had twenty-one killed and thirty-three wounded, the former including Captains Vernon and Sandford and Lieutenant Paton.

This disaster followed close on a Christmas Day celebrated with dinners and sports, a pleasant feature being the children's party and Christmas tree, at which two hundred and fifty little ones were present, and, as a despatch remarks, "a tremendous quantity of Christmas fare was consumed." New Year's Day found the enemy vigorously bombarding the town, six nine-pounder shells being sent into the women's laager, with the effect of killing a little girl and wounding two other children. On January 4th the British guns, in a prolonged duel, completely silenced the Boer artillery for the time. A despatch of January 6th said: "We are making up our minds to stick this out as long as need be, and have food for another three months. The whole garrison is enraged at the enemy's dastardly violation of the rules of civilised warfare in continued firing upon the women's laager." A few days later, when Colonel Baden-Powell sent a remonstrance about the shelling of the hospital, the Boers at once replied by again firing twice at the same building. On January 10th, the latest news we can here report was that the garrison was more determined than ever not to let the enemy in, and that the only bad thing was the supply of whisky running short—tidings received, let us hope, with sympathetic sorrow by countless patriotic Britons, and even in the Emerald Isle.



*From a Drawing by R. Caton Woodville.*

IN THE TRENCHES AT MAFEKING: A GOOD SHOT.

## The Beleaguered Towns of the North and West 113



Tuli—known in earlier days as the British South Africa Company's Fort Tuli—is a small place in Rhodesia near the River Shashi, a tributary of the Limpopo River, forming the northern boundary of the Transvaal, from which the town lies about twenty miles distant. The fort and town were held by Colonel Plumer, who arrived there on October 11th, and a brave little band of mounted irregulars. The place was never seriously pressed by the invading Boers, who formed a camp with some hundreds of men near at hand, but were kept at bay by Colonel Plumer and his men. On October 31st the commander returned from an extended reconnaissance westward along and near the Limpopo, greatly reassuring the natives, after frequent raids by the Boers, by his appearance at Maklutsi Junction. On November 3rd a British camp to the west was shelled by the enemy, with the effect of stampeding all the horses and mules of Colonel Spreckley's squadron, without injury to any trooper. There was desultory fighting at various points. Early in the same month about eighty of the British were attacked at a post in the west by a large force with two big guns, and bombarded for the whole day. The enemy pressed the attack until night, killing many horses, but doing no other damage. During the night, the British force stole through the Boer lines on foot, and tramped back to Tuli, a distance of thirty-five miles.

On December 1st Colonel Plumer, with a strong reconnoitring party, left camp, the enemy having by this time retired to the south, and two days later they entered the Transvaal territory at the point where the Maklutsi River joins the Limpopo, to the south-west of Tuli. This invasion of Boer territory was a new and refreshing matter for British readers, wearied of Boers being, as it seemed, fixed on British colonial ground without any present prospect of being "shifted." After crossing the river, the British force marched through the veldt to a point on the coach road fifty miles north of Pietersburg. The reconnaissance

could not be pushed farther owing to the extreme drought. No Boers were seen at any point, and the party returned to Rhodes' Drift. The little column then took up a strong position at Pont Kopje on ground lately held by a large force of the enemy. A new advance to the south was intended, but it was stopped by a great rise in the waters of the Limpopo, and the force returned to Tuli. The Boer forces in that district had left the region, and Tuli and Maklutsi were still garrisoned by Colonel Plumer, whose patrols were constantly reconnoitring in the Transvaal to watch for the enemy's return.

Kuruman, the smallest of the places in the north which were assailed by the Boers, has not the least honourable record among them for a brave defence. The little village, in the British Bechuanaland portion of Cape Colony, lies out in hilly country about eighty miles due west of Taung, which is near the railway about the same distance north of Kimberley. Until a few years ago, before the construction of the railway, Kuruman was the best-known settlement in the Bechuana region, being a missionary post favoured with an un-failing supply of water. In this district, and in that of Taung, the native population is largest, the Europeans being chiefly found in and about Vryburg and Mafeking. In November the Free State burghers began to commandeer for recruits and supplies, and favourers of the British cause hastened southwards with all their effects that could be removed.

The mission station, which was formerly the centre of the famous Dr. Moffat's long work among the natives, was the point of resistance to the enemy's attack. When the Boer commandant informed the magistrate, Mr. Hilliard, of his intention to occupy the place, that official replied that he had orders to defend it, and forthwith gathered twenty natives and thirty half-castes. The mission chapel was barricaded. The Boers advanced to within a mile of the little town, near a small redoubt on the east held by eleven men under Denison, of

the Intelligence Department, and Corporal Gast. On their approach to the town, the enemy received a volley which inflicted some loss, and caused their hasty retirement. They afterwards returned, and kept up a heavy rifle fire during the whole day, being reinforced by nearly a thousand men. The Union Jack, when the summons to surrender was refused, had been hoisted amid great cheering, and a stout resistance was made at all points. A redoubt to the west of the British camp was attacked, but the Boers were met with a severe fire, under which their commandant fell.

On November 14th it was found that the foe had strongly fortified themselves in commanding positions during the night, and firing was kept up till after dark, the enemy losing a few men. The next two days were quiet till night-time, when the British fired for the purpose of inducing the Boers to waste their ammunition. On November 17th they opened with a well-directed fire, riddling the town buildings and the camp. The bombardment was resumed on the

next day, the British guns not replying except when there was a visible mark. After six days of siege the enemy retired, having lost a good many men killed and wounded. The little garrison behaved with great courage, volunteers carrying out water and rations to the redoubts under a heavy fire. The siege was renewed in the following month, the news on December 28th being that "Kuruman was still holding out, with a hundred and twenty-three Britishers keeping at bay Boers numbering eight hundred." It was impossible, however, for the garrison to resist continued bombardment, which was resumed on New Year's Day, chiefly aimed at the police barracks. The fight lasted until six in the evening, and, when many of the defenders were killed and wounded, a surrender was inevitable. Four captains—Hilliard, Bates, Dennison, and Magte—and eight subalterns, with about a hundred men, including seventy natives, thus became prisoners, after a defence most honourable to all concerned.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *The Western Scene of Action.—Advance to Relief of Kimberley.*

Lord Methuen's Advance Towards Kimberley—His Antecedents—His Order as to Officers' Dress—Fighting Before his Arrival—Death of Colonel Keith-Falconer—The Battle of Belmont—Brilliant Work of British Infantry—The Guards and the Northumberlands—British Loss—Incidents of the Fight—The Battle of Graspan (or Enslin)—Sharp Artillery Duel—Boer Positions Stormed—Brave Conduct and Severe Loss of the Marines—The Bluejackets in Action—British Loss—The Battle of Modder River—The British Force Engaged—The Modder River Described—The Boer Positions—The Scene During the Advance—An Artillery Duel—Attack by the Guards—A Long Rifle Duel—The Rain of Boer Bullets—The Struggle on the British Left—The Good Work of our Guns—The River Crossed—Lord Methuen Wounded—The Ten Hours' Battle Ends—Incident of the Fight—Heavy British Loss—The Boers Abandon their Positions During Night—The Boer Loss—Fight of the Northampton with Boers in our Rear—New Railway Bridge Made over Modder—Arrival of Canadians and Australians—The Enemy's Position at Magersfontein—The Battle There—Terrible Losses of Highland Brigade—Caught Unawares in Close Order—Death of General Wauchope—The Barbed Wire Fences—Failure of Guards on the Left—Work of British Guns—The War Balloons—Bayonet Work at Some Points—Officers Killed—The Funeral of General Wauchope and Some of his Men—His Successor in Command, General Macdonald—Incidents of the Battle—Suffering of Wounded Lying Long on Field—Boers Firing on Wounded—Lord Methuen Withdraws to Modder River—A Dead Stand in Operations—Colonel Pilcher's Fine Achievement at Sunnyside—Queenslanders and Canadians in Action—Their Excellent Conduct—Boer Laager Captured—Slight British Loss—Douglas Entered by British and the Loyalists Removed—The Return to Belmont—Invasion of Orange Free State—Destruction of Houses—Good Work of Lancers—A Post Established on Enemy's Territory.

EARLY in November arrangements were made for an advance in force to the relief of Kimberley, and the troops were placed under the command of Lieutenant-General

Lord Methuen, who left Cape Town for the north with his staff on November 10th. Paul Sanford, third Baron Methuen, K.C.V.O., C.B., C.M.G., was born in



1845, and entered the Scots Guards in 1864. After serving in the Ashanti and Egyptian Wars, he commanded Methuen's Horse and the Field Force in Bechuanaland in 1884-85, and became Deputy-Adjutant-General in South Africa in 1888. His command included a brigade of Guards and the Northumberland Fusiliers, the Yorkshires and the Northampton, and a Naval Brigade. In consequence of the serious loss of officers in previous actions of the war from Boer marksmen, Lord Methuen promptly issued an order making the dress of the officers in action very nearly like that of their men.

There had been some sharp work before the British commander reached the front. On November 10th Colonel Gough made a reconnaissance from Orange River, near Hope-town, to the north, with two squadrons of the 9th Lancers, a battery of Field Artillery and some Mounted Infantry. He found about

seven hundred Boers with a gun in a laager on a great semi-circular ridge three miles west of Belmont, a station on the line to Kimberley. Three hours' fighting ensued, mostly at long range, and in the course of the contest the Mounted Infantry endeavoured to get round the enemy's left flank and to see the laager. The result was

very unfortunate. The force came under a heavy and unexpected fire from a few skirmishers, and Lieutenant Wood, of the 1st Loyal North Lancashire, and Lieutenant-Colonel Keith-Falconer were killed. Two lieutenants of the Northumberland Fusiliers

and two privates were wounded. Keith-Falconer, an officer of the Northumberland Fusiliers, had received brevet-rank as colonel for his services in the Sudan Campaign of 1897-98. Lieutenant Wood was under fire for the first time. These earliest victims of the advance to Kimberley were buried by the Orange River at a pretty spot below a kopje overlooking the camp, their graves being marked by a cairn of white stones.

This opening of the campaign in the west was to be followed by a series of actions, two of which were sharp enough, one very long and fierce, and one of a disastrous character for the British force engaged. The en-

gagement known as the Battle of Belmont on November 23rd really took place mostly at Kaffir's Kop, some ten miles to the east of the line at Belmont station. On Tuesday, November 22nd, Lord Methuen moved out with his force, about seven thousand men, to Witte Puts station, nearly half way to Belmont. By dawn on the following day the



*Photo. by Elliott & Fry, Baker Street*

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LORD METHUEN, C.B., C.M.G.

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*From a Drawing by Geoffrey Stathan.*

DEATH OF LIEUTENANT-COLONEL C. E. KEITH-FALCONER NEAR BELMONT.

troops were drawn up opposite the enemy's lines, extending along a series of hills covering ten miles of ground. The position was a formidable one, strongly entrenched, commanding the road north towards Kimberley. Towards seven o'clock an artillery fire, maintained for two hours in a desultory way, ceased altogether, and then the British guns, quickly finding the range, opened with battery after battery on the Boer entrenchments, in order to cover an advance of the infantry.

The Grenadier Guards and the Northumberland Fusiliers led the way under a heavy fire and carried the enemy's first line with a rush, the Grenadiers using the bayonet. The Boers fought with good courage, their guns being splendidly and doggedly served, until forced to withdraw. On a second kopje to the rear, the same resistance was made, but the hill was stormed with "deadly earnestness," in the words of a Canadian journalist who was present, by our infantry. The third hill saw the most determined stand of the Boers, who, after a heavy shrapnel fire from our guns had prepared the way for an assault, poured in a terrible fire as the British went up. Officer after officer was struck down, and men fell fast, but the enemy were driven off by the final rush, fleeing wildly after five minutes' taste of the bayonet. The victory would have been more decisive if cavalry had been at hand in good force for pursuit. The "dash" of the British infantry had been as fine as was ever displayed in war, the men constantly cheering as they pressed forward amid a hail of bullets. The Scots Guards went into action with the band playing, and mounted the second line of kopjes to stirring strains.

The enemy's loss, as usual, could not be estimated, the greater part of the killed and wounded being conveyed away by their comrades; but the victors buried a good number of Boers, and took about fifty prisoners, including some officers, along with numbers of horses and horned cattle and sheep. Much ammunition was destroyed

in the enemy's laager. The British loss amounted to about two hundred and twenty, including twenty-four officers killed and wounded, the chief sufferers being the 3rd Grenadier Guards, the 1st Coldstreams, the 1st Scots Guards, and the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers. Among the incidents connected with the fight were that of a wounded soldier, limping along from Belmont station to the hospital, who, asked if he had any "loot," replied, "Yes, in my leg!" and that of the wounded Boer prisoner who, to a question, "What he thought of our bayonet charge," replied with surprise, "Almighty! Do you think I waited for that?"

Two days after Belmont, on November 25th, came the Battle of Graspan, also called Battle of Enslin. The enemy had taken up a fresh position at Graspan, six miles north of Belmont on the railway, to bar the advance to Kimberley. They were posted on kopjes mostly over two hundred feet in height, furrowed with trenches, and having the ground in front carefully measured and marked for the fire range. The armoured train advanced slowly in front of the British column, and was already in action when the troops reached the battle-field. Lord Methuen deployed his cavalry on the flanks, while the artillery took up positions to shell the Boer trenches. The action began at six in the morning, and the enemy's position was assailed with shrapnel. The Boer guns, finely posted, were well served, and shell after shell burst over our batteries, but the men stuck bravely to their work. Then the guns were withdrawn a little in order to disturb the enemy's marksmanship, and the artillery duel was resumed.

The infantry then moved forward, the Northamptons working round to the right, where they were joined by the Northumberlands and Yorkshires. About nine o'clock a general assault was delivered, the men swarming forward in splendid style under a scourging fire. As the British went nearer they took cover as they could, returning the enemy's fire, and, going

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*Drawn by J. Finlayson, R.A. from a sketch by Lester Ralph.*

THE BATTLE OF GRASPAN (OR ENSLIN).



steadily ahead, drove them from their first position. During their retreat across the plain, the Lancers pursued a body of Boers, and overtook their rear close to another kopje alive with the foe, whose bullets forced the horse to retire. At the second line of kopjes a fierce contest was fought out, the heaviest work falling on the Marines. Their officers were going down, but the men clambered fearlessly up and over the huge boulders, and the Boers again fled to the plain; but the 9th Lancers were now unable to pursue from the wearied condition of their horses.

At an early period of the battle, our rear was attacked by some hundreds of Boers, but they were driven off by the Guards' Brigade, who also protected both flanks. The Marines, acting with the Naval Brigade, were under the command of Flag-Captain Prothero, and suffered the severe loss of two officers killed and one wounded out of five, while six men were killed and eighty-two wounded out of two hundred and six. The Bluejackets lost two officers killed and one wounded out of a total of twenty-one, and two men killed and thirteen wounded out of a total of two hundred. The chief honours of the day thus rested with the Marines and sailors, the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry and the 1st Lancashire also gaining special distinction. The total British casualties were nearly two hundred, of which more than half befel the Marines and the Naval Brigade, including, among those slain, Commander Ethelston, of the *Powerful*, Captain Senior, of the *Monarch*, and Major Plumbé, of the Marines, with Midshipman Huddart, of the *Doris*. The real loss of the Boers was, as usual, unknown. About twenty of their dead were buried by the British, and they were known to have about fifty wounded.

Three days later, on November 28th, occurred the fiercest engagement up to that time during the war—that known as the Battle of the Modder River. At half-past four in the morning an advance was made, with the Coldstreams, the Scots

Guards, the Grenadiers, and the freshly arrived Argyll and Sutherland Regiment on the right, and the 9th Brigade on the left, comprising the Yorkshire Light Infantry, the Northumberlands, the Northampton's, the Loyal Lancashires, the Mounted Infantry, and the 9th Lancers. Field batteries and naval guns aided the brigades. After a march of four miles or more, a long, thin fringe of trees was viewed, marking the course of the unseen Modder River, a stream from twenty to thirty yards wide, at the bottom of the deep bed which it has cut in the level veldt—a huge canal, invisible till the edge was reached, that edge being now barred against the British force by three miles of Boers, lying in entrenchments. On hills about two miles beyond the river the enemy's heavy guns were posted, and on both the north and the south banks the Modder River village was occupied in force, the Boers being hidden away amongst the buildings erected mainly for the convenience of pleasure-seekers from Kimberley. On the east of the railway, to the British right, the Riet River, after flowing from south to north, makes a turn west and joins the Modder.

As the four-mile British line went on, hares scurried away, a flock of bustards rose in a clumsy flight, and the little birds called "thick-heads" shot up, cried "Hui!" and dropped back among the sage-plants. It was a brilliant summer morning on the veldt. The battle began about seven a.m., when the British Mounted Infantry chased some hundreds of Boer horsemen on our extreme right, and were met by a fire from a concealed gun beside a little mudhouse, which brought the British 18th Battery into action. An artillery duel at once began along the four or five miles of line on each side, and the Guards Brigade, in the usual extended order, went carefully on towards the river. Many men fell under a heavy fire, and the Maxim detachment of the Scots Guards is described, in Lord Methuen's report, as being "completely wiped out." The Riet River prevented any further advance, and with the British troops lying

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*From a Drawing by F. Paterson.*

WITH LORD METHUEN'S FORCE: THE ENGAGEMENT ON THE MODDER RIVER.



down in fairly good cover, the battle in this quarter became nothing but a rifle duel, continuing, with two brief intervals, from ten in the morning until past six o'clock in the evening.

Each of the British Guardsmen started out with one hundred and fifty to one hundred and sixty rounds, and many boxes and bags of cartridges were sent creeping to them during the afternoon. An attempt was made to cross the river and outflank the enemy's left, but the fire was too hot and the water too deep. The enemy's rain of bullets was such that many of the British wounded, being crippled, lay flat on the ground for hours, not daring to crawl back for help. If the head or a hand were raised for a moment, it became a mark, and it was impossible for stretcher-bearers to get near disabled men. We must now see what was passing on the left of the struggle.

The Northumberlands advanced along the east side of the railway, supported by half a battalion of the Argyll and Sutherlands, while the Yorkshires, with the rest of the Scottish battalion, were on the west of the railway, with the Lancashires prolonging the line to the left, seeking to cross the river and threaten the enemy's right flank. The advance of the Brigade was checked by the fire from an outcrop of rocks and small kopjes on the northern bank of the Modder, much in advance of the enemy's main position there, and by that from a farmhouse and kraal to the east, covering the dam and the drift, or ford, at the west end of Modder village. The 75th Battery and three guns of the 18th, with the heavy pieces of the Naval Brigade, were of great service at this part of the battle, and at about half-past two some of the Yorkshires, Highlanders, and Northumberland Fusiliers got across the river and drove out the enemy in the west of the village. The Lancashires at the same time stormed the kopjes and rocks on the extreme left, and the Boer right flank was thus turned. It was about half-past five in the afternoon when Lord Methuen received a flesh wound in the right thigh, which disabled him for some days,

and he gave over the command to Major-General Colville.

The ten hours' battle ended at dusk with the sheer exhaustion of the combatants. The British artillery, of twenty-two guns after the arrival of a fresh field battery at three o'clock from Orange River, had fired on an average two hundred rounds per gun. The Guards, the Yorkshires, and the artillery, in particular, had been under a terrific fire all day without food or water except what they carried with them into action. At nightfall the enemy were still in possession of most of the village. A touching incident of the struggle was that connected with Captain Earle, of the Grenadier Guards, after he had been thirteen hours at work, under fire most of the time, and without food. He then saw a riderless horse, which he recognised as that of his brother, Captain S. Earle, of the Coldstreams. Overcome by the sudden shock of what this sight portended, and exhausted by his exertions in the terrible heat, he was just able to call on his company to charge before he fell senseless. His brother had, as he feared, been killed.

The total British loss in the Battle of Modder River was four hundred and seventy-five. Sixty-eight non-commissioned officers and men were killed, three hundred and seventy-seven wounded, and seven found "missing." The four officers killed were Colonel Northcott, of the staff, Colonel Stopford and Captain Earle, of the 2nd Coldstreams, and Lieutenant Long, of the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry. Nineteen officers, including Lord Methuen, were wounded. The regiment most severely injured was the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who had, as we have seen, only just reached the front. With two officers wounded, they lost in all one hundred and twelve men. The 2nd Coldstreams, with two officers and ten men killed, and a third officer and fifty-six men wounded, came next on the list of casualties.

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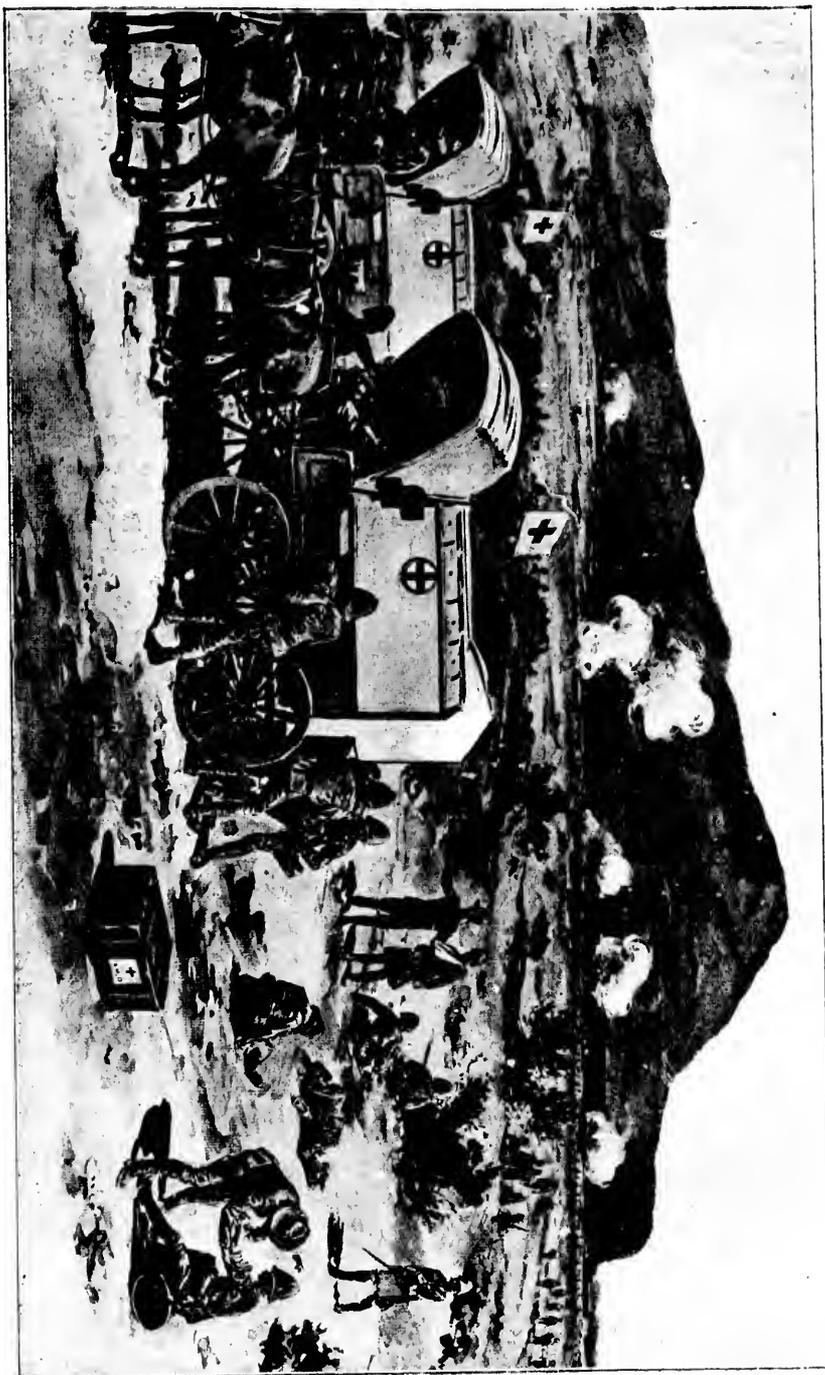
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*Drawn from a Sketch by Mr. Fred. Wallers*

THE BATTLE OF MAGERSFONTEIN.



countrymen at home, returned his loss at eighteen dead. The battle ranks fairly as a British victory, as the enemy abandoned the field during the night. At five o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, November 29th, the British guns fired three shrapnel shells into the village. No response was made, and a company of the North Lancashires and the Lancers entered the place and found it empty. The British troops accounted for about a hundred and sixty dead Boers, and there can be no doubt that other bodies were carried away by the enemy or down the river. In one trench forty-three dead were found, and for two days after the engagement our men were busy burying Boers whom they found along the banks and in the river.

For some days after the battle, Lord Methuen was receiving reinforcements and supplies for a further advance, and establishing posts on his lines of communication. The Boers were troublesome for a time in his rear, having blown up railway culverts near Graspan station. On December 7th the Northhamptons garrisoned Enslin, and fell back on the railway station at Graspan when the enemy opened fire on the pickets. The Boers, about a thousand strong, with one gun, then advanced and took up a position commanding the British camp round the station on all sides, checked only to the eastward by a company of the British regiment strongly posted on a kopje. The enemy's rifle fire and that of their gun were very accurate, and only the solidity of the stone-built station house protected the garrison. A telegram brought up the 12th Lancers and a field battery, who, after covering twenty-one miles of ground, arrived before midnight and forced the enemy to retire by a well-directed fire and an advance of our horse.

On December 7th a new railway bridge across the Modder River was completed, with a needful deviation of the line, and Lord Methuen's headquarters were established in Modder River village, the whole line of the river previously held by the Boers being strongly fortified and armed

with guns. The British force had now been joined by men of the Canadian and Australian contingents, who were zealous in forming sidings and erecting platforms, in addition to the usual routine work of a camp. The enemy had by this time occupied a strong position at Magersfontein, to the north-east, and their trenches there were bombarded on December 10th by our howitzer battery and a 47-inch naval gun firing lyddite, shrapnel, and common shell. The Boers replied from about a dozen guns, and the artillery duel was very lively for a time. It could be seen that the enemy's position was very strong, being semi-circular, with the horns pointing towards the Modder. The main position was to the east of the railway, with lines of strong shelter trenches constructed at the base of a high range of hills having several walls higher up the slope. Such was the scene of the action of December 11th, a black day in the annals of the British Army, and especially in the records of the gallant Highland Brigade.

The Battle of Magersfontein was rather a butchery than a fight, and, for the Highlanders, was more disastrous than any event in their whole history in the British service since that of Ticonderoga, in North America, in 1757, when the 42nd Regiment (Royal Highlanders, or Black Watch), fighting against the French under the able General de Montcalm, afterwards Wolfe's antagonist at Quebec, left behind five hundred men out of eleven hundred who went into action. On the evening of Sunday, December 10th, the Highland Brigade moved out of camp to the north-east towards a spur on the enemy's left. They were over three thousand strong, under General Wauchope, comprising the 2nd Royal Highlanders (Black Watch), the 1st Highland Light Infantry, the 1st Gordons, and the 2nd Seaforths. They moved cautiously through the darkness in quarter column, with orders passed in a whisper along the ranks, and nothing else heard except the brushing of their feet in the veldt grass, and the deep-drawn breaths of the marching men. About

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three o'clock on Monday morning a soldier tripped over the hidden wires laid down by the enemy. In an instant the searchlights of the enemy fell on the ranks of the Highlanders, still in close order, within fifty yards of the nearest Boer trenches, and a deadly fire at that point-blank range opened on their front and right flank. Two hundred men or more were at once mown down, including General Wauchope, riddled with bullets. The gallant chieftain, already bleeding to death, struggled upon his hands and knees, cheered his men forward, and fell over, to rise no more.

The brigade at once broke into open order, and charged with a yell heard in the British camp below. The men were caught round the legs by the wires, and floundered and staggered, always under the deadly fire, until they were forced to fall back, leaving hundreds of dead and wounded men on the ground. Much of the best chivalry of Scotland had fallen, the loss of officers in the brigade reaching the awful total of fifty-three, of whom twelve were killed, thrice that number wounded, and five found "missing." Meanwhile, the Guards in the centre, and the cavalry and Mounted Infantry on the left, with the howitzer battery, had met with no better success, without incurring the same terrible loss. The flanks were protected by the field guns. Nothing whatever could be done towards capturing a position held by foes who could not be seen, but only felt in the shape of bullets and shells, against whom our men could advance only over open ground.

The British guns, beyond doubt, exacted a heavy toll on the hill and in the valleys



*Photo. by Horsburgh, Edinburgh.*  
 THE LATE GENERAL WAUCHOPE, KILLED AT THE BATTLE OF  
 MAGERSFONTEIN.

beyond from Boers reached by shrapnel from the field guns and by the lyddite shells of the naval gun, fired in accordance with signals made from the war balloons floating above the scene of action. The Guards at one point in a brilliant charge reached the enemy's trenches and slew many men with the bayonet, but were then obliged to retire by the bullets and shell from the heights above them. In another trench, forty-seven Boers were killed in the same way by the Highlanders. Apart from the Highlanders, two British officers were killed, twelve wounded, and one was taken prisoner. The list of slain included Major

the Marquis of Winchester, of the 2nd Coldstreams, Colonel Coode, commanding the 2nd Black Watch, and Colonel Goff, of the 1st Argyll and Sutherlands. Of the whole British loss, reaching nearly nine hundred, six hundred and fifty had fallen in the Highland Brigade.

The funeral of General Wauchope, one of the bravest and most lovable of mankind, was a most impressive and affecting sight. He was laid to rest as the sun was sinking on December 13th, in a spot three hundred yards in rear of the little township at Modder River. Close by a long shallow grave prepared in the veldt, lay fifty of his dead Highlanders, dressed as they had fallen on the field of battle, in the plaids of every Highland clan. The pipes announced the approach of the chieftain's body, attended by the remnant of the brigade in full costume, moving with slow and solemn tread to the strains of "The Flowers of the Forest." There were looks of defiance towards the foe, mingled with heaving breasts, hot tears, and choking sobs. The dead commander was succeeded in his post by Brigadier-General Hector Macdonald, C.B., a hero risen from the ranks, a "Gordon" distinguished in the Afghan Campaign and the former Transvaal War, in Egypt, and in the Sudan, of recent fame for his tactical skill and noble constancy displayed in command of an Egyptian brigade at the Battle of Omdurman.

A few incidents may be here given illustrating the cool courage of British officers and men, and the sufferings of the wounded on the field. At Magersfontein, a commanding officer, wishing to ascertain the position of the enemy, mounted a Maxim gun and leisurely made his observations under a perfect hail of bullets. A corporal of the Seaforth Highlanders, taken prisoner, was disarmed and placed by his captors in the trenches in charge of one of their comrades. When his captors had retired, the "Scottie" suddenly drew the bayonet from his own rifle in the hands of his guard, gave him a "dig," seized the rifle, and escaped back to the British lines.

A letter from Lieutenant R. D. Granam, of the Argyll and Sutherlands, written to his father, Colonel Graham, of Cheltenham, contains matter of painful interest. "While I was lying on the right of the line, I was hit. The bullet went in at my left side above the hip, and came out at the right side a little lower down. I was lying down firing at the time, and so it did not touch me in front. I was quite numbed, and could feel nothing, so some time after, when I came to, I saw Captain Cowan, in the Seaforths, lying next to me, and asked him to have a look and see where I was hit. He found the place in my side where the bullet went in, and on the other side where it came out. . . . It must have touched my spine, as that is where I suffer pain; it cannot, however, have done me any permanent injury, as I can move my legs all right.

"We had a very bad time of it, as I was hit about half-past five on Monday morning, the 11th, and we had to lie out there till after midday on Tuesday (thirty-one hours) before we were picked up by our ambulances, which the Boers allowed to come out. There we lay in the broiling sun all day, and it took all the skin off my legs. I tried once to pull my hose up, but there was such a hail of bullets from the Boers directly a finger was moved, I gave it up. While I was lying there with my rifle across my front, the thick butt in front of my head as a sort of protection, a bullet or a piece of shell came and carried away quite four inches off the top of my rifle. That was a bit of a shave, was it not?"

After the repulse at Magersfontein on December 11th, Lord Methuen withdrew to his entrenched position on the northern side of the Modder River, awaiting reinforcements and strengthening the works. Few incidents occurred during the lull in hostilities in this quarter which followed the British reverse. On December 15th the enemy sought to check our further advance by blowing up two culverts on the railway about a mile and a half north of

the Modder. Cannon fire was exchanged between the two positions, and on December 20th a British naval twelve-pounder planted a shell amidst a group of Boers, inflicting severe loss. In this part of the scene of warfare, matters had come to a dead stop. The enemy, in one impregnable position, barred the way to Kimberley; the British force, in another impregnable position, barred the way south. Christmas Day was pleasantly spent in our camp, where the men were in good health and spirits, and eager for further work which was not afforded them.

On New Year's Day a fine piece of work on a small scale was accomplished by a force under the command of Colonel Pilcher, of the Bedfordshire Regiment. The loyal part of the population of Douglas, a pretty little town lying away about forty miles north-west of Belmont station, had been for many weeks exposed to insults and threats from the rebels of the district, supported by the presence of a Boer commando in a laager at Sunnyside, about ten miles south-east of the town. The British commander was resolved to "look up" the enemy and endeavour to change the state of affairs for the Queen's faithful subjects in that district. At mid-day on December 31st the men selected left Belmont and marched westward, covering twenty miles before sunset, and encamping at Cook's Farm, where they received an enthusiastic welcome.

The mounted force consisted of two hundred Queenslanders under Colonel Ricardo; the Toronto Company, a hundred Canadians under Captain Barker, with two guns and a horse battery under Major de Rougemont; forty Mounted Infantry under Lieutenant Ryan, of the Munster Fusiliers; and the New South Wales Ambulance, under Surgeon-Major Dodds. Two hundred of the Cornwall Light Infantry followed on foot, and passed the night in an entrenched position. At six o'clock in the morning of January 1st the force advanced towards the point where a Boer and rebel laager had been reported. Colonel Pilcher found

the enemy's position to be on a line of strong kopjes, with the laager situated at the foot of a hill. De Rougemont's men and guns, with the Mounted Infantry, were sent off to make a turning movement on the north to the right, while the commander, with the Queenslanders, advanced slowly towards the southern end of the enemy's position. A patrol of four men, under Lieutenant Adie, of the Queensland Mounted Infantry, moving to the east, came suddenly upon a dozen Boers, whose fire severely wounded the leader. A man named Butler gave up his horse to carry his officer away, and another man named Rose, whose horse bolted, bravely returned to help the lieutenant, receiving a bullet in his leg, while his horse was killed.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Ryan, of the Mounted Infantry, whose work was admirable throughout the day, reported the veldt to the north, on the enemy's left, to be clear of foes, and Major de Rougemont at once took his guns at a trot to within fifteen hundred yards of the laager. In two minutes two shells were planted among the tents. The surprise for the Boers was complete, and they were seen streaming up the kopje, whence they opened a well-aimed fire on the guns. The Toronto Company, receiving the order to advance at the double, greeted it with a deep-drawn joyful exclamation, "At last!" and rushing forward to within a thousand yards of the enemy, opened a hot fire, completely subduing that of the Boers. The Canadian guns were maintaining an accurate delivery of shells, and Ryan, with his Mounted Infantry, worked completely round and attacked a few of the foe hidden among some bushes.

All this time, Colonel Pilcher, with the Queenslanders, was working steadily and quickly, keeping under cover, towards the enemy, the men firing only when they could see a mark for their bullets. This kind of advance was trying severely the nerves of the men assailed, and the direct attack of a company led by Colonel Ricardo completed their discomfiture. The laager was finally captured with forty prisoners,

the whole casualties among the victors being only three killed, three wounded, and one missing. It was a clean, complete, and beautiful little achievement, and is described here at greater length than its actual importance may seem to justify, partly because the operations well illustrate how Boers may be beaten by proper tactics, and partly on account of the admirable conduct of our colonial cousins, the men of Canada and Australasia.

The Toronto Company remained in the laager and joined the main body on the morning of January 2nd, bringing the whole of the Boer tents and the other "loot" in waggons. The Cornwalls under Major Ashby arrived after a splendid march across the veldt, and the force under Colonel Pilcher entered Douglas after another march, and raised the British flag amidst the cheers of the loyalists among the population. The rebels, who had for six weeks been governing the country with the help of a Free State commando, had been entirely dispersed. A quantity of ammunition was captured and burned. As it was impossible for the British troops for military reasons to remain in occupation of the town, the loyalists on January 3rd departed for Belmont with their goods, under guard of the troops and in the military waggons. The escort of Canadians carried the babies and enlivened the march with merry songs, the guns and Mounted Infantry bringing up the rear. In this successful little expedition, on the first day the force marched twenty-one miles; on the second twenty,

Boers; on the third fifteen miles; and on the fourth twenty-four. Horses and men lived on the country, paying all loyal men for food and forage, and punishing the disloyal colonists by consuming their goods.

On January 9th the Orange Free State was invaded by British troops for the first time during the war. The force, numbering nearly two thousand men, was made up of the 9th and 12th Lancers, Mounted Infantry, and a battery of Royal Artillery under Major-General Babington, starting from Modder River; the Canadians and Australians under Colonel Pilcher, from



*Photo. by Elliott & Fry, Baker Street.*  
GENERAL HECTOR MACDONALD, C.B., WHO SUCCEEDED GENERAL WAUCHOPE.

## General Buller's Second Effort to Relieve Ladysmith 129

Belmont; and a third party under Major Byrne, consisting of the Munster Fusiliers, the Lancashires, and the Scots Greys. This last body advanced to within four miles of Jacobsdal, when the pickets were fired on by the enemy. The Victorians made their way without meeting any foe for twenty miles inside the Free State Border. The men under Babington destroyed some houses belonging to the commandant in the Jacobsdal district which had been used for storing the enemy's supplies. The country was found to be well suited for the movements of mounted men, and the work done by the Lancers displayed the excellent training given by the

commanding officers—Lord Airlie, of the 12th, and Major Little, of the 9th Lancers. Open country was found towards Bloemfontein, and the whole reconnaissance paved the way, it may be hoped, for an invasion in force at a future day. On January 5th a post had been established, for the first time during the campaign, in the enemy's country, in the occupation of Zoutpansdrift, in the Free State, just beyond the Orange River, by General Wood with a force of all arms. Some later news concerning Lord Methuen's force informs us that on January 22nd his guns were bombarding the Boers with lyddite shell.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### *General Buller's Second Effort to Relieve Ladysmith.—Concluding Review of Affairs. Buller's Third Effort.*

General Buller's Force in January 1900—The Infantry—The Cavalry—Lord Dundonald's Antecedents—The Artillery—British General's Position at Frere Camp—The Boer Position on the Tugela—Its Extent and Strength—Buller's Turning of Right Flank—The Tugela Crossed—The Boers Hurry Up from the East—Buller's New Headquarters—Lord Dundonald in Action—Feeling Roused at Home by Tidings—The Work of Our Guns on Mount Alice—Warren's and Lyttelton's Men in Action—Early Successes—Buller's Encouraging Telegram—The Key of Boer Position: Spion Kop—Second Telegram from Buller—The Desperate Fighting of January 23rd and 24th—The Ground Won Untenable by British—Aid of Lyttelton's Men Vain—Want of Water—Ammunition Fails—The Ground Abandoned—Forces Withdrawn Across Tugela—Great British Loss—Final Review of Affairs—General French Still Active—A Cable Tram at Work Up Hill—Reconnaissance in Force—Wiltshires in Action for First Time—Kimberley Heavily Shelled—Cowardly Conduct of Boers—Making Cheerful—Affairs at Ladysmith—Lessons of the War up to Date—Failure of the Boers to Attain their Ends—Beaten in their Sieges—Stopped in the Advance to the Sea—The Position of Ladysmith—Anxiety at Home and in Colonies—Disappointment of Garrison—Buller's Third Advance—Advance of Lord Roberts.

In January 1900, the force under General Buller was composed of (1) Major-General Hildyard's brigade—the 2nd West Yorkshires, 2nd East and 2nd West Surreys, and 2nd Devonshires, Naval Brigade, and Natal Volunteers; (2) Major-General Lyttelton's brigade—2nd Scottish Rifles, 1st Durham Light Infantry, 1st Rifle Brigade, and 3rd King's Royal Rifles; (3) Major-General Barton's brigade—the 2nd Royal Scots, 2nd Royal Irish, 1st Royal Welsh, and 1st Royal Dublin—all Fusiliers. The above formed Lieutenant-General Clery's division. Sir Charles Warren's division included the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, 1st and 2nd Middlesex, 2nd Royal Lancasters, 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st South Lancashires, 1st Border Regiment, Thorney-

croft's Mounted Infantry, and Imperial Light Infantry. There were other infantry battalions, among which may be named the 1st Derbyshire, 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Somerset Light Infantry, 1st Connaught Rangers, and a detachment of the 1st Gloucesters.

The cavalry—Lord Dundonald's brigade—comprised the 1st Royal Dragoons, two squadrons of the 13th Hussars, the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, two squadrons South African Horse, and some Imperial Light Horse. Their commander, Colonel the Earl of Dundonald, is worthy of notice here. Born in 1852, he succeeded his father, as twelfth earl, in 1885. In 1870 he entered the 2nd Life Guards, served in the Nile Expedition of 1884-85, and has now for five

years been in command of his regiment. He is grandson of the famous admiral, the tenth earl, who won fame as Lord Cochrane in 1809 by his attack on the French fleet in the Basque (Aix) Roads, and was afterwards distinguished in the South American War of Independence. The artillery under Major-General Marshall was composed of six batteries of Royal Field Artillery, part of the 65th Battery (howitzers), some naval guns, and the 4th Mountain Battery Garrison Artillery.

General Buller's headquarters at Frere Camp, south of the Tugela, in the early days of January 1900, were twenty-two miles as the crow flies, twenty-nine miles by railway, distant from Ladysmith. At Colenso, held by the Boers, the river is about half-way between Frere and Ladysmith. North of Frere, just half-way to Colenso on the railway, lies Chieveley, Buller's position in advance of his headquarters. The enemy's front, mostly along the north—but, in the extreme east and west, to the south of the Tugela—extended from Mount Hlangwane on the east (south of the river) nearly to Springfield on the west, some miles south of the Tugela, and just north of its tributary the Little Tugela. Their position covered in this way an extent of about twenty-four miles. It had been proved that their entrenchments, daily strengthened since General Buller's repulse in December, could not be forced by a frontal attack. Could they be turned? This was the problem to be solved by the British commander.

On Wednesday, January 10th, a momentous operation of war began. After a thorough reconnaissance of the country to the west, Lord Dundonald with the Cavalry Brigade, and Major-General Hart with the Dublin Fusiliers, Connaught Rangers, and Border Regiment, marched out north-west for Springfield, about fifteen miles away. The "going" was very bad from the heavy rain, and as a train of waggons some miles long accompanied the force, the infantry did not reach Springfield until January 12th. The high ground commanding the ford,

called Potgieter's Drift, across the Tugela, was occupied by Lord Dundonald, and defences were thrown up to strengthen the position. At this point during the following days, Lyttelton's brigade crossed to the north of the Tugela, while Sir Charles Warren with his division moved farther west to the ford known as Waggon, or Trichard's, Drift, and crossed the river on a pontoon bridge, about eighty yards long, thrown by the Engineers. A battery of Field Artillery and some howitzers were taken over with General Lyttelton's force, and at half-past five on the morning of Wednesday, January 17th, the enemy were being shelled by these guns and by naval guns and howitzers on Mount Alice, a commanding position just south of the river.

The Boers had been surprised in our crossing of the river, and little opposition had been made. They hurried up, when the news arrived, in force from the east, bringing many guns of various kinds, and began to entrench themselves in strong positions on kopjes between the British points of crossing and Ladysmith, the great object of the movement, lying to the north-east. General Buller had transferred his headquarters to Spearman's Farm, between Springfield and the Tugela, taking with him a strong force, and leaving General Barton to watch the enemy in their position at Colenso. So far all was well. Lord Dundonald, with his mounted men, had on the morning of Wednesday, January 17th, pushed northwards to the Ladysmith road, and encountered the enemy with success near Acton Homes, eight miles north of Trichard's Drift, the crossing-point of Sir Charles Warren, and about sixteen miles west of the beleaguered garrison at Ladysmith. He was thus in a position cutting off the Boers from the passes westward into Orange Free State. The public at home and the Queen's loyal subjects in all parts of the empire were highly elated by the tidings of the successful passage of the Tugela and the turning of the enemy's right flank, and were looking forward with hope, and even with some confidence, to

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*From a Drawing by Geoffrey Strahan.*

#### THE BATTLE OF SPION KOP.

Our Men Charging from the Trenches with the Bayonet, after their Ammunition was Exhausted.

the relief of Sir George White and his brave garrison. We were soon to be bitterly undeceived, and to be called upon to endure disappointment as keen as any which we have had to experience for many a year.

It is impossible yet, from lack of full information, to give a complete account of the operations to the north of the Tugela, nor is there any need to dwell on the details of what had a disastrous issue. All that man could do was done by our splendid infantry, and by the gunners who from Mount Alice maintained a hot fire from the naval pieces and howitzers in order to clear the way for assaults to be made by Sir Charles Warren's and General Lyttelton's men. Soon after daybreak on Saturday, January 20th, fighting began when General Clery, with part of Warren's division, engaged the enemy towards Acton Homes. Ridge after ridge was taken by our troops, and on Monday, January 22nd, a telegram was received from General Buller with the words, "I think we are making substantial progress." General Lyttelton was at the same time actively engaged near the Tugela, aided by a tremendous fire from our heavy guns and the howitzers.

The key of the enemy's position, the barricade that must be forced in order to have any chance of clearing the road to Ladysmith, was a mountain called Spion Kop, a name of ill sound now in British military records, and the adjacent kopjes. The northern side, that assailed by Sir Charles Warren, had bare slopes without cover for advancing infantry, and, unhappily for the British, was so precipitous in the highest part of the ascent as to prevent the taking up of any guns. Three of the adjacent kopjes were taken by our men, aided by a terrific shrapnel fire from the batteries, and at five in the morning of Sunday, January 21st, Warren's infantry advanced along the irregular mountain formation called Taba Myama, the eastern end of which is known as Spion Kop. On January 23rd ground had been gained by our men, and General Buller telegraphed

from Spearman's Camp, on the evening of that day, "Warren holds the position he gained two days ago. In front of him, at about fourteen hundred yards, is the enemy's position west of Spion Kop."

The crisis of the contest was at hand. On January 23rd there was fighting all day, and a position which was thought to be the summit of Spion Kop was reached by the troops, who drove before them a small body of Boers. The brave British infantry were really only at the beginning of their task. There were higher ridges in front of them, occupied by the enemy with a great force of riflemen, aided by Maxims and other guns of deadly service at moderate range. During the whole of Wednesday, January 24th, the ground won was maintained only by fierce fighting, in which Major-General Woodgate, a hero of Abyssinian, Ashanti, and Zulu warfare, was dangerously wounded. Our men could find no water on the ground they held, and no advance could be made against the enemy's fire. General Lyttelton sent the 2nd Cameronians and the 3rd King's Royal Rifles to attack the eastern end of the mountain, and they made their way up, with heavy loss, along the steepest side. The end was, however, close at hand. As far as is now known, it was on the night of January 24th that, under incessant Maxim and rifle fire from the enemy, and after a close attack by the Boers, when the British ammunition had given out, the ground gained was finally relinquished by our forces. Sir Redvers Buller arrived in Sir Charles Warren's camp at five in the morning of Thursday, January 25th, and decided that a second attack on Spion Kop would be useless.

The enemy's right was proved to be too strong to be forced, and the British commander resolved to withdraw his men to the south of the Tugela. This operation, involving the movement of the great waggon train, was accomplished without any loss of men or stores by eight in the morning of Saturday, January 27th. The fact of no interruption of the retreat being

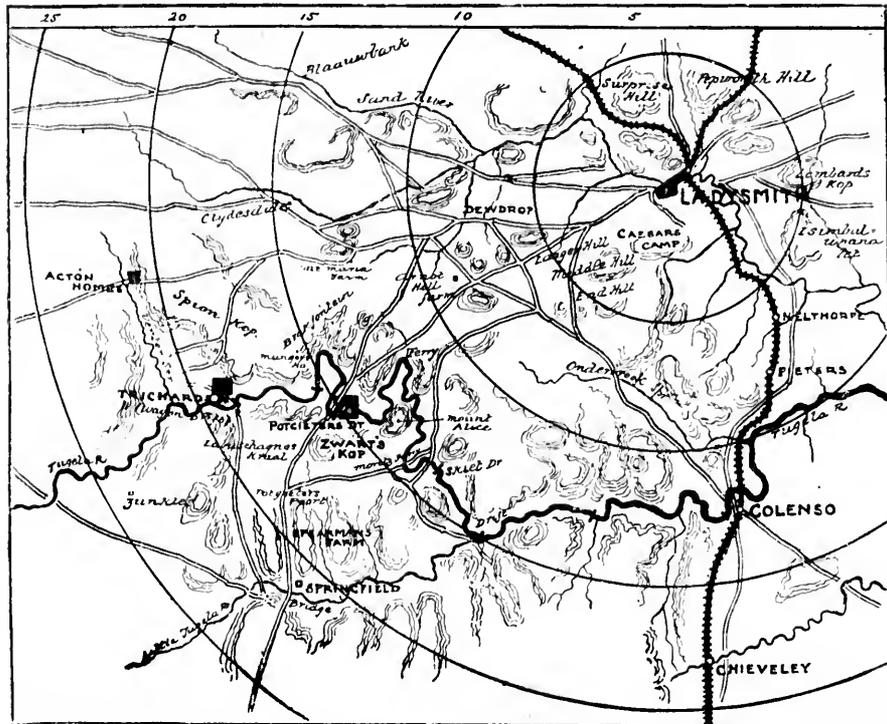
## General Buller's Second Effort to Relieve Ladysmith 133

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attempted by the Boers may be fairly taken as proof that, in spite of our ill success, the enemy's own loss had been extremely heavy, and that the courage of our troops had made a great impression. The second attempt to relieve Ladysmith had thus finally and decisively failed. The whole loss probably exceeded a thousand, that of officers being fearful

of the Household Cavalry, the Carabineers, and the New Zealanders, supported by four guns, on January 19th to the north-east, and by a movement of the Remington Scouts two miles nearer to Norval's Pont. The new positions were secured without fighting. A lyddite howitzer was shelling the Boers round Colesberg, and on January 20th a cable tram to the top of Coleskop



This Map is Reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of "THE LONDON LETTER."

### MAP OF THE DISTRICT WEST OF LADYSMITH,

To Illustrate the Capture of Spion Kop by Sir Charles Warren, and to Show Distances from Ladysmith of Important Positions.

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In Warren's and Lyttelton's forces together there were twenty-seven officers killed, thirty-three wounded, and six missing. Of the killed, six fell of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, with four officers wounded in the same force.

On taking a final review of the scene of warfare, we find General French still actively at work endeavouring to encompass the enemy at Colesberg by an advance

was in working order, conveying ammunition, stores, and water to the British gunners on the hill. On January 24th, General French in person made a strong reconnaissance with a force of all arms on his extreme left flank, threatening the Boer communications with the Orange River by approaching their position at Rietfontein, nine miles beyond Colesberg on the Waggon Bridge road. The enemy were shelled by howitzers and

field guns, their return fire of guns and rifles causing our force a loss of one officer and eight men wounded, and one man killed in the Wiltshire Regiment. The Wiltshires, in action for the first time, behaved with great coolness under a heavy fire, to which they delivered a hearty response.

During the last days of January, beginning on the 23rd, Kimberley was severely shelled, most of the missiles being wasted in a vain attempt to wreck the sanatorium, where Mr. Rhodes had been staying. On January 24th and 25th the bombardment continued, causing the deaths of two women and two children, with severe injury to several others in their laager. In three days a thousand shells were scattered broadcast in the place by the cowardly foe, afraid to close with their opponents, and indulging their wrath against the garrison by the slaughter of helpless persons. As a contrast to this, we record that on Friday, January 26th, while the British guns were shelling the enemy's positions, some Boer women and children were seen to quit a laager and our gunners at once stopped firing.

At gallant little Mafeking on January 20th all was well. News from Ladysmith on January 21st informed us that, since the great fight on the 6th, the fortifications on Waggon Hill and Cæsar's Camp had been greatly strengthened, and the whole of the lines made impregnable to assault, that the weather was dry and fever abating, the number of convalescents returning from the hospital camp exceeding that of the patients sent thither. The supplies, owing to excellent management during the siege, were "spinning out splendidly," all the troops having a sufficiency of wholesome food. The heat was terrific, with the thermometer at 107 in the shade.

The conduct and progress of the war have proved, amongst other things, the matchless quality of the British regimental officer and linesman, and the perfect fitness of their colonial kinsmen as their comrades in the field. The British soldier has shown the vast improvement effected by years of

careful training in his shooting and his use of cover for advancing against foes armed with the breechloader. We have learned also that the rude Boer, destitute of culture, devoid of "sweetness and light," is, aided by foreign experience and skill, by the nature of the region in which he is fighting, and by his peculiar mode of warfare as a mounted infantryman, the most formidable of foes. We have to admit that, up to the present time, after nearly four months of contest, the British arms have been fairly beaten in efforts to oust the enemy from occupation of British territory. We have met with serious repulses and other reverses.

It is neither just nor wise, however, to take a gloomy view of the present position. The enemy have also met with utter discomfiture in the attempt to realise their avowed aims. They have ignominiously failed, up to the end of January 1900, in the sieges of Mafeking, Kimberley, and Ladysmith. The Boers at one place have been mocked by Baden-Powell, at another they have been defied by Kekewich and Cecil Rhodes, at a third victoriously repulsed by Sir George White. They were to have marched in triumph to Durban and Cape Town. They cannot, do what they will, pass the Modder River on the west, dispose of Gatacre and French in the centre, or get past Buller in the east. The whole of Cape Colony was to rise in their favour, and the last Englishman was to be driven into the sea. Cape Colony rebels, such as there are, are well under the control of British troops; loyal Cape Colonists are fighting in thousands for British supremacy.

At home and in the colonies, British hearts have indeed been of late sorely tried. The eyes and thoughts of the whole civilised world were concentrated on Ladysmith, that little South African town lying amid the hills of Upper Natal, beleaguered by exultant foes, and past, as it seemed, all hope of rescue. Then arrived the news of General Buller's daring and skilful move against the enemy's right flank, of the passage of the Tugela by Dundonald, Warren, and Lyttelton. Our men were, as

## General Buller's Second Effort to Relieve Ladysmith 135

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

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

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

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

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

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

outflank our positions. In these little engagements, Australians and Tasmanians displayed great activity and courage. At the end of January "all was well" at Kimberley and Mafeking. We turn now to the western scene of action.

On Saturday, February 3rd, General Macdonald, with the Highland Brigade, the 9th Lancers, and a field battery, started on a reconnaissance to the west of Modder River Camp, and marched about fourteen miles to Koodoosberg Drift, driving the enemy from certain positions. On the following days some sharp fighting took place, in which the Highlanders had the advantage, Macdonald displaying much tactical skill. The British force then returned to camp, recalled by an event of great importance in the development of the campaign. On Friday, February 9th, Lord Roberts arrived at Modder River amid the enthusiastic cheers of the troops there assembled.

The new Commander-in-Chief and his able colleague, Lord Kitchener, had arrived at Cape Town on January 10th, and were for some time engaged in organising the great force at their disposal, and making better use of material hitherto frittered away to little purpose. Lord Roberts, becoming aware that a sore feeling existed among the loyal part of the colonists from a lack of due recognition of their goodwill and their power to aid the empire in the struggle against the Boers, promptly displayed his possession of admirable tact. A force of colonials was chosen as his bodyguard, and a colonial division was formed under the command of Colonel Brabant, a local officer of great distinction and experience, with the rank of brigadier-general. Having noted the arrival of Lord Roberts at Modder River as his assumption of the personal direction of new operations against the enemy, and as the opening of a new phase in the campaign, we conclude with some notice of the antecedents of the two distinguished men whose abilities and exertions will, it may well be hoped, soon put a new aspect on the military position in South Africa.

Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, P.C., K.P., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., V.C., was born at Cawnpore in 1832, son of General Sir Abraham Roberts, G.C.B. He entered the Bengal Artillery in 1851. During the Indian Mutiny war, he served throughout the siege of Delhi in 1857, fought in many actions, and aided in the relief of Lucknow, the defeat of the Gwalior contingent at Cawnpore, and the siege of Lucknow. He was engaged in the Abyssinian Expedition of 1867-68, and in the Lushai Expedition of 1871-72. In the Afghan War of 1878-80, Lord Roberts won fame in his operations round Kabul, and especially by the famous march to Kandahar. In 1881 he became Commander-in-Chief of the Madras army, and was Commander-in-Chief in India from 1885 to 1893, rendering inestimable service in that capacity by his strengthening of the north-western frontier, and winning the affection of the troops as "Bobs," the kindly and skilful deviser of methods for the physical and moral benefit of the private soldier. Prior to the Afghan Campaign, Roberts had won many medals and clasps, with the distinction of the Victoria Cross, and had been mentioned twenty-three times in despatches, a record rarely paralleled in the history of the British Army.

Lord Kitchener, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., was born in 1850, and entered the Royal Engineers in 1871. In 1882-84 he was in command of the Egyptian cavalry, and served in the Sudan Campaign of 1883-85. In 1886-88 he was Governor of Suakin, and became "Sirdar," or Commander-in-Chief, of the Egyptian Army in 1890. His recent achievements in the Sudan need no mention here. As an "organiser of victory," by patient preparation and by forethought embracing every detail, Lord Kitchener, Chief of the Staff to Lord Roberts, is the ideal man in that post, from whose genius and unremitting toil, combined with the great experience and matured skill of his chief, the empire now confidently expects great results.

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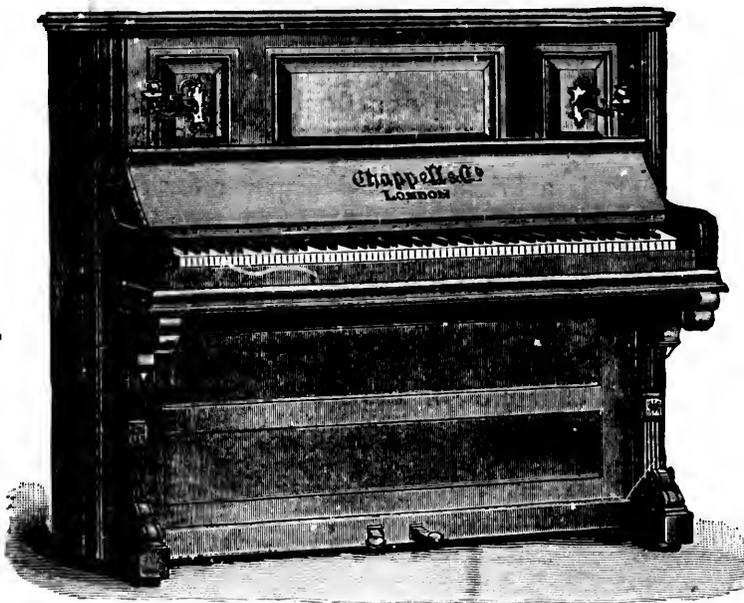
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