

WITH THE FLAG TO PRETORIA.



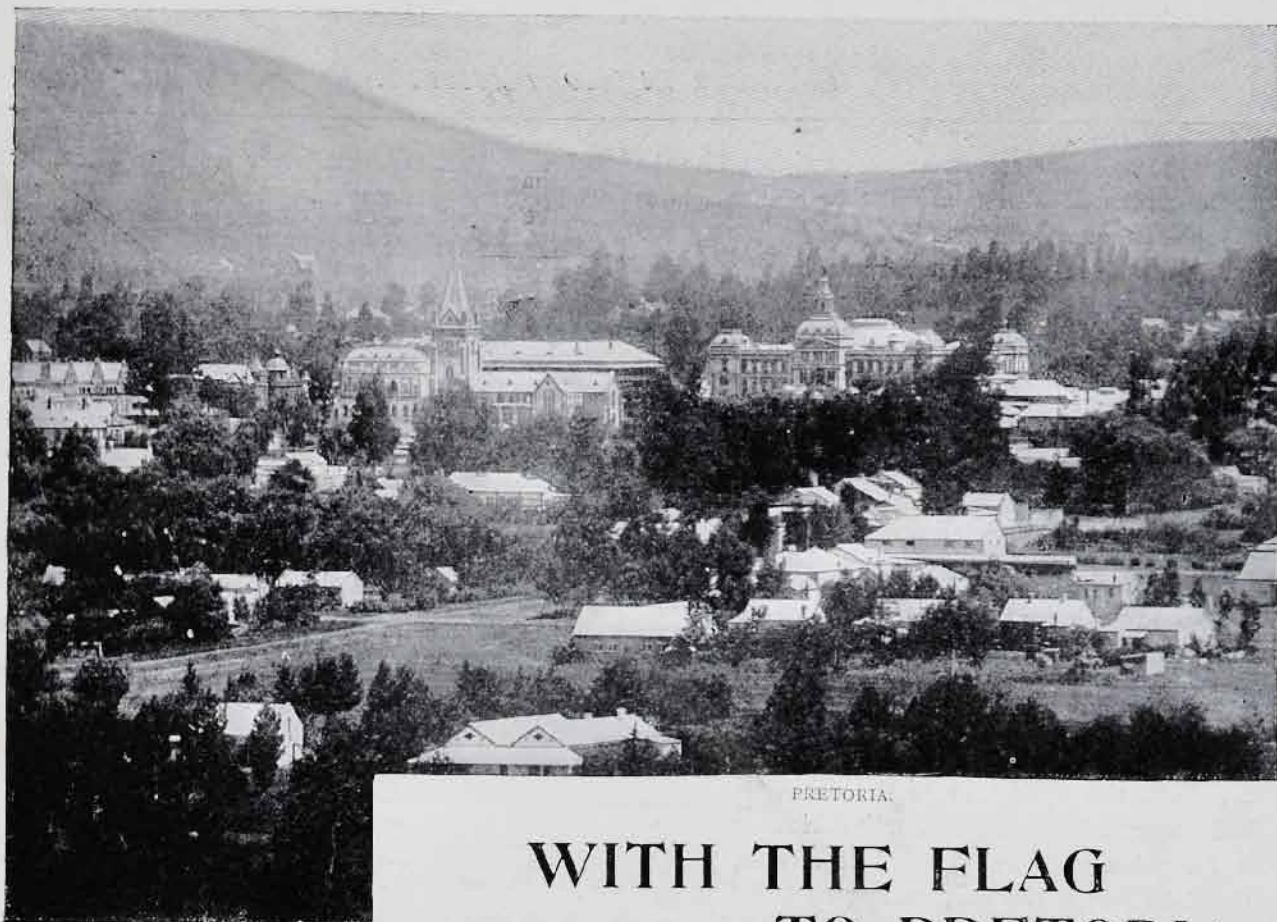
"He is out on active service,
Wiping something off a slate."—KIPLING.



From a photograph by Lawson.

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS OF KANDAHAR, K.P., V.C., &c.

Born at Cawnpore, India, 1832; son of General Sir Abraham Roberts, G.C.B.; educated at Eton, Sandhurst, and Addiscombe; Second-Lieutenant (Bengal Artillery), 1851; Lieutenant, 1857; Captain, 1860; Brev. Major, 1860; Brev. Lieut.-Colonel, 1863; Brev. Colonel, 1875; Major-General, 1878; Lieut.-General, 1881; General, 1890; raised to the peerage, 1902; Field-Marshal, 1905; D.A.Q.M.G. throughout the Indian Mutiny; served in Abyssinia, 1867-8; commanded the Kuram Field Force, 1870; Kabul Field Force, 1870-80; Kabul-Kandahar Field Force, 1880; in Afghanistan, 1880; in Burma, 1886; Commander-in-Chief (Madras), 1881; Commander-in-Chief in India, 1885-93; Commander of the Forces in Ireland, 1895; and in South Africa, December, 1899.



PRETORIA.

WITH THE FLAG TO PRETORIA.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXPLOSION.

The Boer Ultimatum—Intrigues against British supremacy—Great Britain's interest in the Dutch Republics—Common interests of the white peoples—Early history of Cape Colony—Unpopularity of the Dutch East India Company—British capture Capetown—"The Great Trek"—England recognises the Republics—Their attitude towards us—Sir Bartle Frere—Majuba—The Outlanders—The Jameson raid—Kruger—His character—Sir Alfred Milner—The Bloemfontein conference—Transvaal refuses England's demands—War.

ON October 11, 1899, began what was to prove the greatest struggle in which England has engaged since the peace that followed Waterloo. For at 5 p.m. on that day the forty-eight hours allowed by the Transvaal Government for a favourable answer to its ultimatum expired, and the forces of the two Boer Republics put themselves in motion to carry out their favourite threat of sweeping the English from South Africa into the sea.

Thus came the explosion—the culminating catastrophe of a decade of race-hatred in South Africa, the inevitable and certain result of British moral cowardice and surrender in the past. Twenty years back it had been foreseen and foretold by the prophets; for the last five years before the hour of conflict the British nation had felt instinctively that it was drawing steadily nearer; had watched with apprehension the enormous armaments of the Transvaal, and heard with rage and shame the story of the persistent oppression by the Boers of thousands of loyal British citizens.

All men had dreaded it; many had striven to avert it; many more had prayed that it might not come in their day. But it had come at last and found Great Britain utterly unprepared, still clinging against hope to the hope of peace, confused and distracted by false predictions that the Boers would never fight,



"A GENTLEMAN IN KHAKI."

Khaki, originally used in India only, but now universal in foreign campaigns, is a canvas-like fabric, cool in summer and warm in winter. It is precisely the colour of the dusty, yellow-brown veldt, and its name is derived from the Persian word for dust.

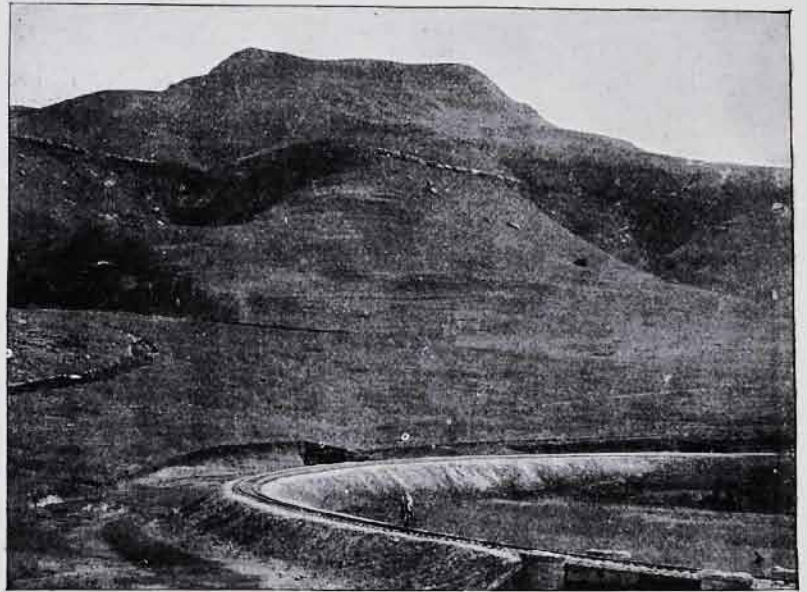
and by the ignorant assurance of partisans who declared that Britain must never resort to force, but must be contented with talk and threats alone, however grave her grievances.

Napoleon once said that France and England would never remain at peace;

**Intrigues against
British Supremacy.**

their peace would be only suppressed war. And it might as truly

be said of the Transvaal that, since the great betrayal of British interests which followed Majuba and which gave self-government back to the Dutch Republic, it had never been at peace with Britain, but had for eighteen years maintained barely concealed hostilities against all things British. It had armed, plotted, lied, conspired, intrigued, oppressed, prevaricated for the one great end of domination in South Africa at whatever cost. Like the upas tree of the fable, it had corrupted the soil of South Africa with its poison; it had blasted loyalty to Great Britain in the surrounding terri-



MAJUBA HILL.

The scene of the disastrous defeat which we suffered at the hands of the Boers on February 27, 1881. At that time there was no railway in this portion of Natal, and the country was even more sparsely populated than at present.

ories; it had become a centre and a rallying point for all that was most bitterly opposed to British supremacy and to the ideals which have made our race so great. The one principle upon which its power was founded was the inequality of the white races—the servitude of the Englishman to the Dutch.



FIGURE-HEAD
ROCK, MAJUBA.

**KAFFIR WOMEN
CARRYING
BEER.**

The natives make a fermented drink from mealies (Indian corn) which is known as Kaffir beer. It is carried from one kraal to another by strings of women walking in Indian file and carrying on their heads great yellow gourds containing their favourite drink.



The great principle upon which the British Empire has been built up is that all men are equal before the law, and that all civilised races stand upon precisely the same footing. As we profoundly believe, not that we English are the favoured people of God, but that so long as we are faithful to the noblest call of duty and to the highest instincts which are in us as a race, we are helping the cause of progress, which is the cause of God, we know that, whatever checks, whatever vicissitudes, whatever disappointments may befall, we march to victory. Our cause is the cause of liberty and of the right.

If we look at the map of South Africa as it stood in the days before the war, we shall observe that in the centre of British territories, cut off from all access to the sea, lay two states, one independent of England—the Orange Free State; the other, the Transvaal, in a position of quasi-independence. For a few miles, it is true, the Transvaal boundary on the east is continuous with Portuguese possessions; indeed, it approaches very close to the magnificent harbour of Delagoa Bay.

But with this exception the two Boer States are closely shut in by British colonies. Hence of necessity the British Empire must always have been profoundly

interested in the internal condition of these two Dutch republics. Had they been peaceful and orderly States, as was the Orange Free State



O'NEILL'S HOUSE.

Temporary hospital for wounded 1881 brought from Majuba; the house where the Anglo-Boer Convention was held in 1881 and the treaty signed.

Republics, the other to the west and south-west, were many thousands of Dutch, closely connected by family and by race with the inhabitants of those republics. It was the one desire of the Government of the Transvaal to unite these Dutch against the English, and to sap their loyalty, though they had no grievances and had been given in every respect the same privileges as the Englishmen.

No other theory will explain the conduct of the Transvaal. It had assumed the title of "South African Republic," and taken to itself a four-coloured flag as emblem of the future union of Transvaal, Orange Free State, Cape Colony, and Natal under its sovereign influence.

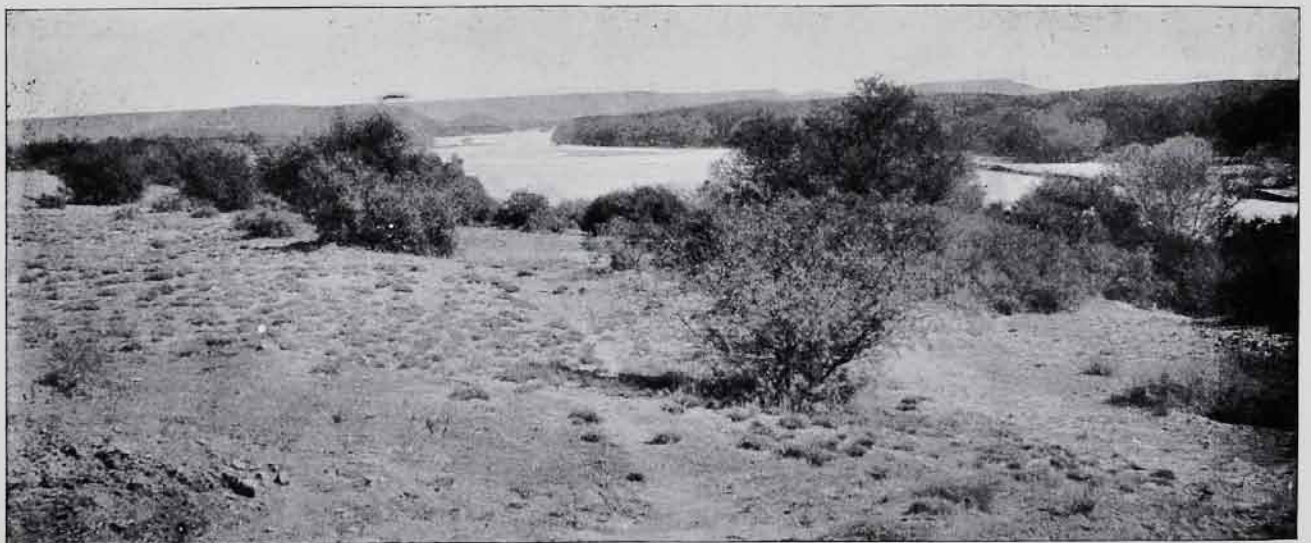
Great Britain's Interest in the Dutch Republics. up to that evil day when it became demoralised by the gold lavished from the Transvaal secret service funds, they might have existed in perfect amity. Had they been content to accept things as they were, there could have been no quarrel.

In the British colonies of Natal and Cape Colony, the one to the south-east of the Boer



O'NEILL'S HOUSE.

The room in which the Convention of 1881 was signed.



VIEW ON THE ORANGE RIVER, FROM THE RAILWAY BRIDGE.

The Orange River divides Cape Colony from the Orange Free State. This view is taken from a railway bridge connecting the two, and looking up stream. The Orange River is one of the few South African rivers that rarely, if ever, dries up.

The conflict of races in South Africa was complicated by the presence of the Bantu peoples, who gradually overcame the original inhabitants of South Africa, the Hottentots and Bushmen, and are

themselves a conquering race, who increase in numbers with the peace which civilisation brings, and who do not suffer, as do many dark-skinned peoples, from the white man's vices and diseases.*

Though accurate statistics of the proportion of English and Dutch-speaking inhabitants in the various

**Common Interests of
the White Peoples.**

South African states cannot be obtained, it is probable that in British and Dutch South Africa there were, in 1899, 400,000 Englishmen or men of English descent, 500,000 Dutch, and 3,500,000 Indians, Malays, Hottentots, and natives of the various Kaffir tribes. In Cape Colony and the Orange Free State of the white races the Dutch preponderated; in the Transvaal, Natal, and Rhodesia, the British. Instinct should have united the white peoples, for, dwelling amidst a vast number of Bantus, warlike by nature and intelligent above the common run of negro, both white peoples were



OLD DUTCH HOUSE IN PAPERDORP IN WHICH THE CAPITULATION OF THE CAPE FROM HOLLAND TO GREAT BRITAIN WAS SIGNED IN 1805.

face to face with a common danger—a danger which the many fierce struggles with the great tribes of the Zulus, Matabele, and Basutos, had in the past proved to be a very real and ever-present one.

Here were the very conditions which should have produced peace and amity—two kindred white races of the same faith, and almost of the same blood, confronted by hourly peril from the blacks.

Why, then, was it that Englishmen and Dutchmen could not dwell in peace? Hereafter we shall have to follow the whole sad story out in detail; in this place it may suffice briefly to recapitulate the most essential facts.

Capetown was first occupied by the Dutch East India Company in 1652 as a naval station on the road to India.

men were allowed to settle outside the



PRETORIA NACHTMAAL.

Four times a year the country Boers come into Pretoria for Nachtmal (Holy Communion). They outspan their waggons on the Church Square, camp out for a week with their wives and families, and do their shopping for the ensuing three months.

At first it was only a military post; five years later a dozen men were allowed to settle outside the limits of the Dutch fortress, buying and selling

**Early History of Cape
Colony.**

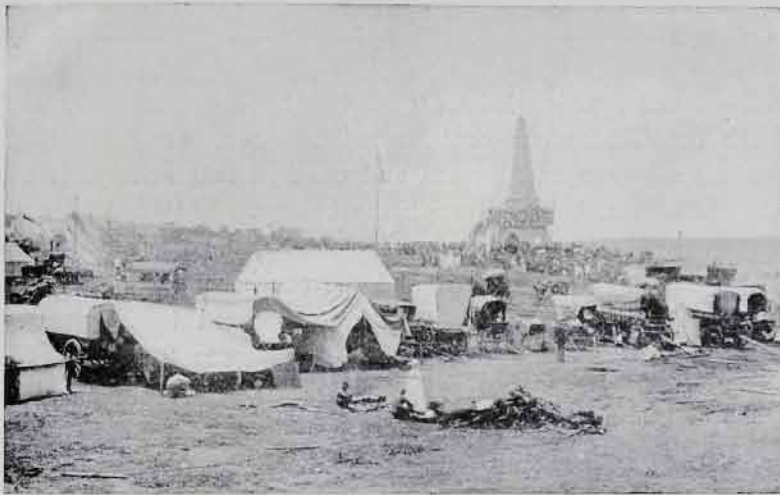
under most stringent regulations laid down by the Company. The Dutch forcibly took the land from the Hottentots where they could not obtain its cession for a consideration. Gradually they increased in numbers and spread inland; at the close of the seventeenth century they were reinforced by a number of Huguenots, exiled from France on account of their religion, and for the most part men of high birth and noble character. The new comers attempted to keep their tongue and identity, but in 1709 the Dutch Company forbade all use of French in



BATTLEFIELD OF BRONKHORST SPRUIT.

The scene of the battle between the Boers and the English in 1881, when a detachment of the 7th regiment was surprised by a party of the enemy in ambush and nearly annihilated.

*Bantu is the generic name for the native tribe, of which the Zulus, Swazies, Amatongas, and Matabele are the off-shoots. There are no pure Bantus left in South Africa, but it is the root-race from which all the more warlike tribes have sprung.



THE PARDEKRAAL COMMEMORATION.

The Paardekraal (Horsepound) Monument erected near Krugersdorp by the Boers to commemorate their independence. Periodically great meetings are held here, when prayers are offered and patriotic speeches made. Beneath the monument is a sort of cellar, into which every Boer in passing throws a stone as a token of his visit.

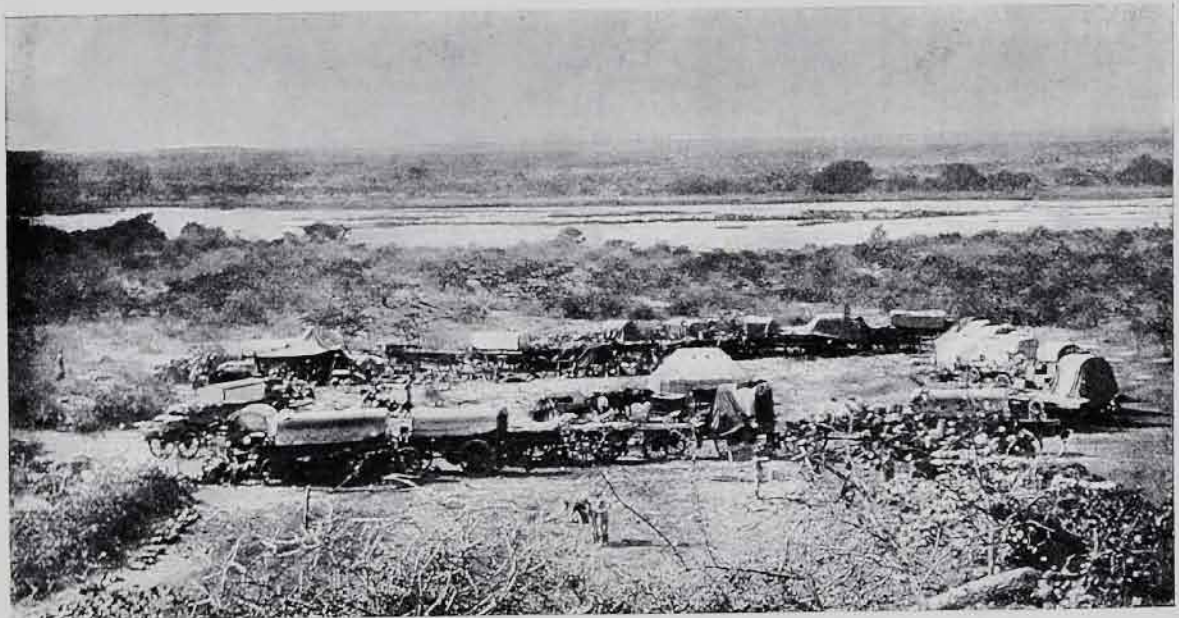
its utter isolation escaped the soothing influence of civilisation, and in which every man, as far as he could, did that which was right in his own eyes.

The colonists were perpetually in conflict with the hated Dutch East India Company; they were in open revolt when in 1795 a British force appeared off Table Bay and captured Capetown.

**Unpopularity of the
Dutch East India
Company.
British capture Cape-
town.**

There was at first no antagonism between the conquerors and the colonists. When the Cape was re-occupied in 1806, it having been restored to Holland in the peace of 1802, Sir Home Popham was able to trust very largely to the colonists for the defence of the place. He lays emphasis on their dislike for the

Dutch Company and on their loyalty to the Union Jack.



A LAAGER, SHOWING THE LONG CAPE WAGGONS USED IN A "TREK"

When Boers are trekking, or travelling from one place to another, they outspan their waggons at night and put them end-on in the form of an oblong. The cattle are tethered in the centre, and the interstices of the wheels filled up with wacht-een-beitje or wait-a-bit thornbush.

It was not until England began to interfere with the treatment of the natives by the Dutch colonists that Dutch discontent first showed itself. The prohibition of the use of the Dutch language in official documents and in the law courts, the abolition of slavery in 1834—for which most inadequate compensation was made by England—and the meddling in the government of the colony by

official communications, and the language rapidly became obsolete.

A homogeneous Dutch community grew up in this remote region—for the Cape was, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one of the least-explored and most out-of-the-way parts of the earth—which knew no literature but the Bible, which preserved the manners and traditions of the seventeenth century, and which from its frequent disputes with the Dutch East India Company's tyrannical government imbibed a rooted aversion to all laws and restraints.

It was a strong, old-world community, which retrograded rather than advanced as time went on, which in

doctrinaires in England who knew and cared little or nothing for the peculiar circumstances, familiar to the men on the spot, caused general irritation amongst a people always averse to law and order, and by nature inclined to nomadic habits.

The abolition of slavery was the immediate cause which led to "the Great Trek" in 1837, when many hundreds of Dutch colonist-farmers or "Boers," as they now came to be called, went forth with their waggons and women and children and belongings into the vast, unknown, mysterious, remote lands which then bordered upon the colony. They settled down in what is now Natal, the Orange Free State, and the southern Transvaal.



"STUCK" ON THE DRAKENSBERG.

The Drakensberg Mountains form the northern boundary of Natal, dividing that colony from the Orange Free State. The passes are of a difficult and often dangerous nature for waggon-transit.

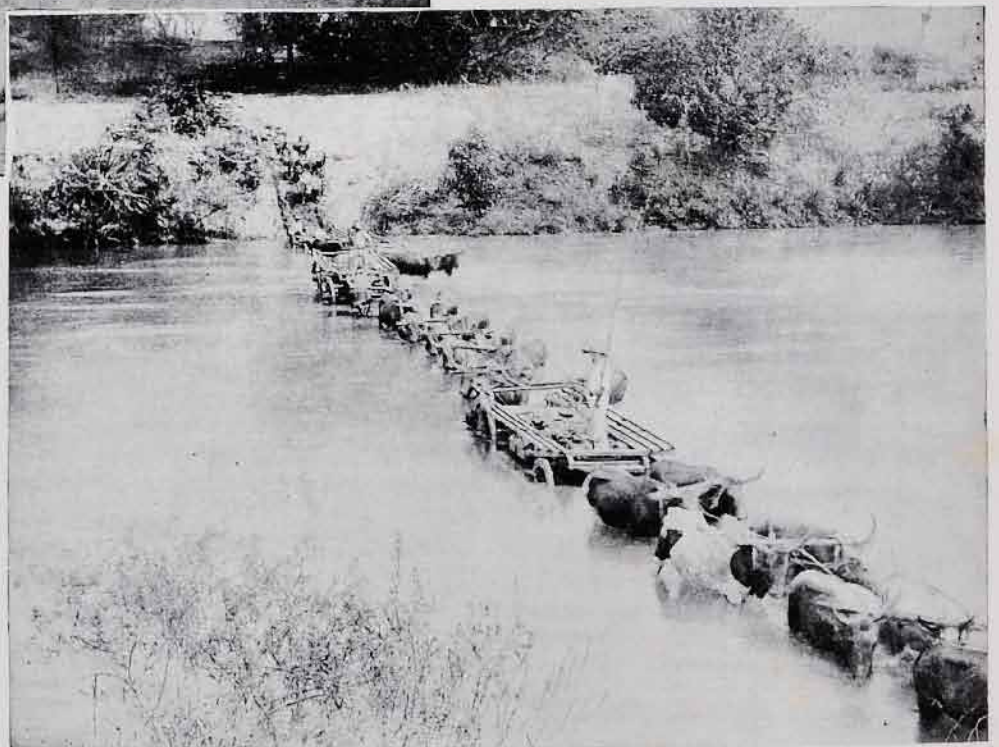
permitted within the territories of the Republic.

England recognises the Republics.

Two years later England abandoned the Orange Free State for no reason whatever, except her dislike for onerous responsibilities.

All this while war with the Kaffir tribes had continued, in which British soldiers did most of the work and the

British people paid most of the cost. All this while, too, one able man after another was going out from England to govern South Africa, and, because his ways were not the home government's ways, was returning in disgrace. Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Sir Harry Smith, Sir George Grey, all walked the same sad road; all did what was wise, far-sighted, and just; all gained the respect of the English and the Dutch in the colony, and all alike were over-ruled, interfered with, or recalled. Jerusalem stoned the prophets; England preferred not to listen to them: either had in the end to pay bitterly for this refusal to hear and learn the truth.



FORDING A RIVER IN THE TRANSVAAL.

Except after heavy rains all the rivers are easily crossed at the different drifts or fords, and after a long, dusty trek the team of sixteen oxen enjoy the coolness of the water, and linger in the stream for as long as their drivers will permit.

SOUTH AFRICA

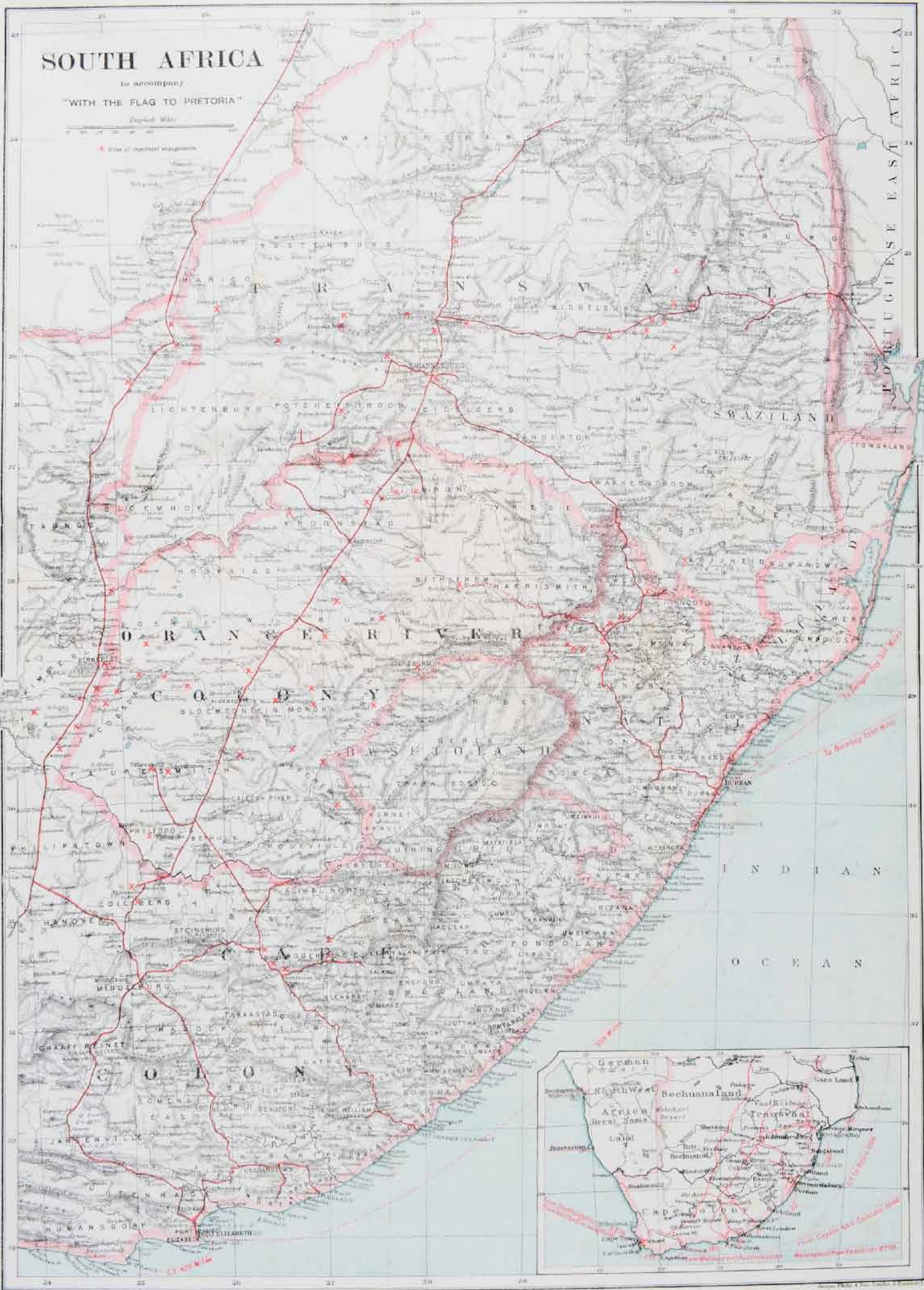
to accompany

"WITH THE FLAG TO PRETORIA"

English Miles



▲ Sites of important engagements



And thus there grew up in South Africa two independent Dutch communities, outside the pale of our Empire, and this, too, in a country which nature clearly meant to be one organic whole.

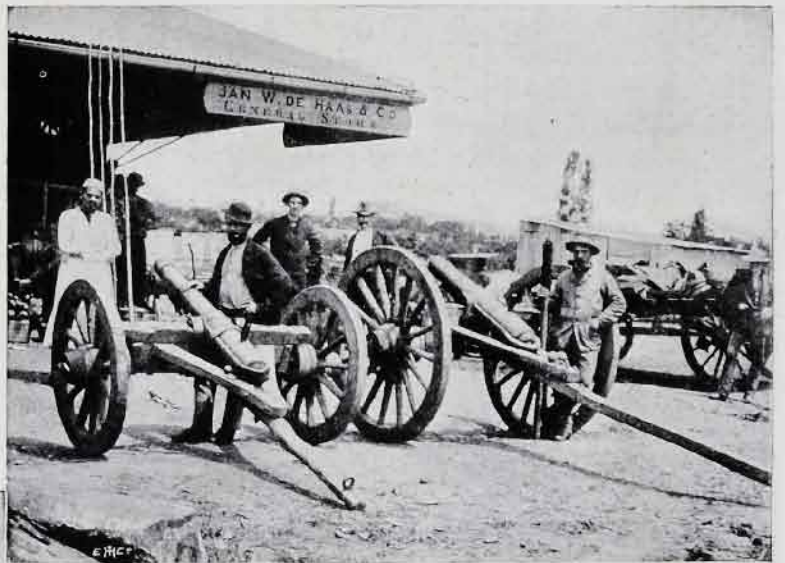
These two republics differed much in their attitude to England. The Orange Free State was always on friendly terms; the Transvaal always more or less hostile. The Orange State was reasonably well governed; the Transvaal became an anarchic, loosely compacted, lawless, bankrupt country, where decent government was unknown. Its chequered existence ended for a time in 1877, when, with treasury empty, and threatened on the one hand by Cetewayo and the Zulus and on the other by the Bantu chief Secocoeni, it was annexed in the name of Great Britain by Sir Theophilus Shepstone.

Having taken over the Transvaal, England proceeded to break up the power of the Zulus and to subdue Secocoeni. Trade revived, and everything looked well, though there was still a good deal of veiled discontent, due to the British failure to grant self-government, when for party purposes, to eject Lord Beaconsfield from office, Mr. Gladstone began to declaim against the "invasion of a free people," as he called the annexation of the Transvaal. He was followed by Mr. John Morley and Mr. Leonard Courtney, and by most of his party in this kind of talk.

Never have rash and foolish words so swiftly come home to harass the speakers, as in this case. Mr. Gladstone achieved his object, and attained power for what afterwards proved to be the most disastrous and humiliating period in British history. His speeches had been reprinted in the Transvaal, and



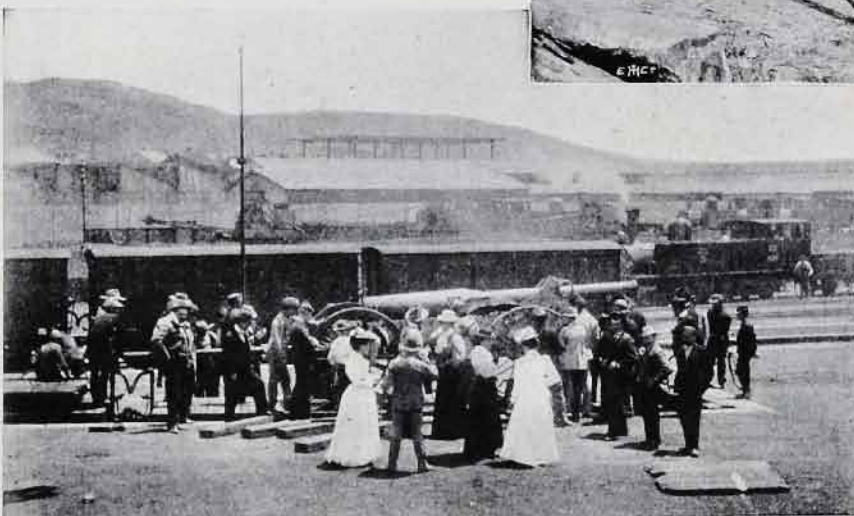
A BOER COMMANDANT IN FIGHTING KIT



BOER CANNON USED IN THE WAR OF 1881.

These are old Boer cannon made by inexperienced workmen, and said to be fashioned from the iron rims of wheels taken off the British waggons captured at Bronkhorst Spruit. They form a remarkable contrast with the modern guns with which the Boers are now armed.

had inspired hopes which the Boers now expected him to fulfil. They were disappointed. On June 8, 1880, he wrote to a Transvaal deputation, "Our judgment is that the Queen cannot be advised to relinquish the Transvaal," and that "obligations have been contracted which cannot now be set aside."



A BOER "LONG TOM" AT PRETORIA STATION, EN ROUTE FOR THE SCENE OF WAR.

This powerful weapon, a Gruson gun of 5.9 inches calibre, has a range of 10,000 yards. It was christened "Long Tom" by our men at Ladysmith, where one of these guns was disabled in a night sortie. With equal aptness a Boer gun whose shells constantly fell short was nicknamed "Weary Willie."

But though outwardly Mr. Gladstone's attitude was the attitude of a strong man, he took no precautions to meet Boer discontent. The

warnings of Sir Bartle Frere, the British governor at the Cape, were unheeded. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had thrown him over once because he had not been able to prevent the Zulu war; Mr. Gladstone now recalled him at the very time when a brave, loyal, far-sighted, single-hearted man, such as Bartle Frere undoubtedly was, was most needed in South Africa. Abandoned by both parties, betrayed, and treated with a contumelious contempt which his noble services had never deserved, he turned his face sadly towards England. Two months later the Transvaal rose in revolt.

In quick succession three checks, or positive defeats, were inflicted upon a

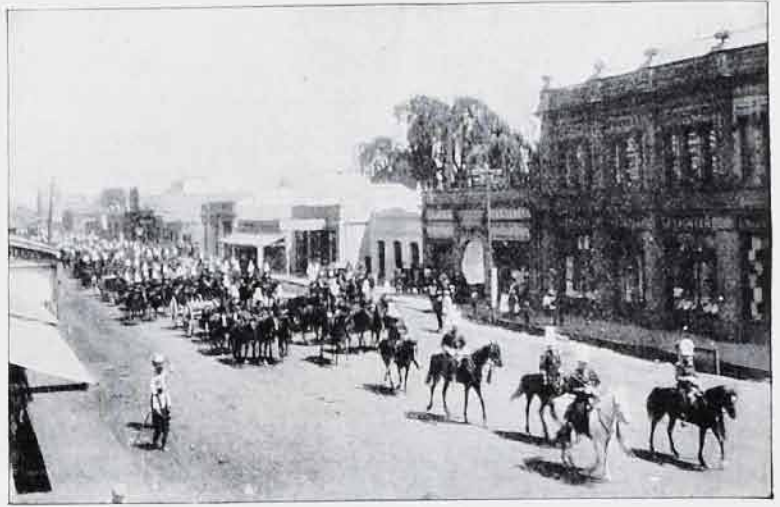
small British force, the most serious that of Majuba. The British government had announced that, come what might, it would suppress the insurrection, but losing heart and terrified by the prospect of a Dutch rising in the Cape, it conceded to the insurgents a limited measure of self-government, and strove to delude the world by talk of magnanimity. It explained that there was real nobility in receding from its pledges and giving way to a small but victorious force of Boers. Many people at the time doubted this nobility, and by an explicit statement of Lord Kimberley on November 14, 1899, the surrender is now known to have been due to cowardice, and to cowardice alone.

A settlement based upon cowardice could never last, could never prove satisfactory. The Transvaal

Government used Mr. Gladstone's fears as a lever to extort a fresh convention and get fresh concessions. Its attitude to England was almost openly hostile.

And now the discovery of gold brought immense

wealth and a large British population into its midst. The rights of that British population, known as Uitlanders or Outlanders, had been very inadequately guaranteed by Mr. Gladstone, who foresaw nothing, and thus failed hopelessly in the greatest department of statesmanship. The Transvaal Boers remained what



FREE STATE ARTILLERY AT BLOEMFONTEIN.

The standing armies of both the Orange Free State and the Transvaal consist of a few hundred State Artillery, largely recruited and officered by Germans and Hollanders. This picture shows the Orange Free State Artillery in gala uniform on the way to parade. They are commanded by Major Albrecht, a German.



SIR BARTLE FRERE (the centre figure at the table), STAFF, CHAPLAIN, AND SECRETARY OUTSIDE THE BRITISH RESIDENCY IN PRETORIA, 1880.

they had been in the days of the Great Trek and in the early forties. They kept all the power in their own hands and made of the English—from whose wealth, however, and from whose energy they took



JOHANNESBURG.

Up to September 1886 there was not a single house on the site of the now flourishing town of Johannesburg. It owes its existence entirely to the discovery of gold, of which a reef 130 miles long runs through the town and district.

ample toll—a subject race, excluded from all voice in the management of affairs, deprived of the rights of free speech and of free press, unable to obtain justice in the Boer courts, openly insulted and outraged without hope of redress. Corruption was rampant in the governing circles.

The tone of the Dutch Parliament or Raad reflected the temper of the whole Boer community, which may have been suited to the seventeenth century, but was wholly out of place at the close of the nineteenth. Pillar-boxes were effeminate; locusts were a plague sent from God, and might not be interfered with; railways had not the divine blessing and brought all manner of calamity; the firing of bombs to bring down rain was impious profanity; the size of neckties ought to be regulated by the authorities. At every turn there were fierce expressions of hatred for England and Englishmen. Foreigners were called in to help hold down the English; the government openly and undisguisedly coquetted with Germany and with any power which it believed hostile to the British Empire.

Then came the Jameson Raid, provoked by misgovernment and by the

The Jameson Raid. growing exasperation throughout the British Empire, but in itself indefensible. It failed signally, and left no heroic memory of resolute fighting to the end against overpowering odds, but only shame and sorrow in its trail. Yet it at least served



A DUST STORM IN JOHANNESBURG.

This is a very cloudy view of Goldopolis. Periodically, especially in winter, vast dust storms prevail which obscure everything with an opaque gritty haze as thick as a London fog, and far more unpleasant.

to rivet the gaze of England upon what was happening in South Africa. Even before the raid the Transvaal Government had begun to arm; it now proceeded to build up a great military power, purchasing cannon literally by the hundred and rifles by the thousand, erecting immense fortifications at Pretoria and Johannesburg, and concluding a secret alliance with the Orange Free State. The money for these armaments was wrung from the Outlanders. By the lavish use of secret service funds the press of Continental Europe was set yelling against England, and treason was fomented in Cape Colony.

The treatment of the Outlanders went from bad to worse, till Englishmen and Englishwomen were murdered, like Edgar and Mrs. Applebee, without redress. No great nation could permit its subjects

to suffer continued humiliation in a country over which that nation had certain rights—however shadowy—and it grew monthly more certain that Great Britain must at last intervene.

The president and the evil genius of the Trans-

vaal through this epoch was Stephanus Paulus Johannes Kruger, born in Cape Colony on October 10, 1825. He was a man of indomitable courage and extraordinary force of character—a fighting man from his youth up. His coolness was shown on one occasion, when, out hunting, he suddenly one day, from the top of a kopje—a hillock such as cover the surface of the upland plains of South

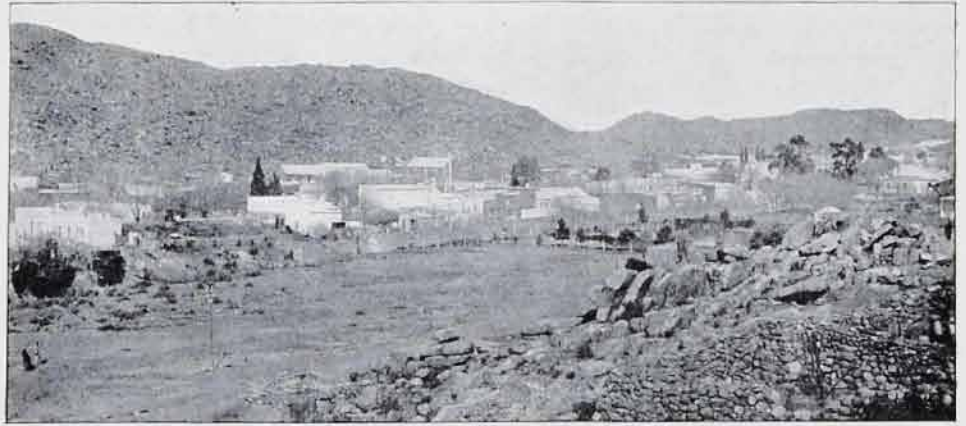


PRESIDENT
KRUGER.

Born at Rustenberg, near Colesberg, Cape Colony, October 10, 1825. Emigrated across the Vaal, 1847. Member of Executive Council under President Burgers, 1872. President of Transvaal since 1881; re-elected 1888, 1891, 1898.

DOPPER CHURCH, PRETORIA.

The Dopper or Quaker Church, Pretoria, where President Kruger very often preached. It stood directly opposite his house, and has quite recently been replaced by a more modern structure.



COLESBERG: PRESIDENT KRUGER'S BIRTH-PLACE.

Seventy-four years ago Paul Kruger was born in the neighbourhood of Colesberg in Cape Colony. He left it with his parents in 1847, at the time of "the Great Trek," and travelled northwards to the wild country, which eventually became the South African Republic.

Africa—saw a large number of Kaffirs evidently advancing to attack him. He sat calmly down without betraying the slightest trepidation, shook the sand from his rough raw-hide shoes, and then waved and signalled with his rifle as if to a considerable force of Boers behind him under shelter of the kopje. The Kaffirs, convinced by his show of boldness that he was not alone, precipitately retreated.

As a diplomatist, Mr. Kruger earned Bismarck's commendation. The great German, who had met him, saw in him the strongest man of our time.

His character.

He was, however, destitute of that noble instinct without which statesmanship builds upon the shifting sands—the instinct of justice and fair play. Personally corrupt, since he was not above charging very heavy travelling expenses for a certain trip in which

he was the guest of Cape Colony; winking at or openly justifying corruption in others; laying up a colossal fortune out of the stealings of himself and his friends from the State, he had all the uncouthness and all the iron determination of an Abraham Lincoln, but lacked the great American's cleanness of hand and love of justice and of right.

Mr. Kruger was by birth a peasant, and remained to the end a peasant in ideas. His will power was coupled with a subtle cunning; his horizon was narrow and



limited and never expanded; his mind was always filled with suspicion and jealousy of all that he could not understand. His patriotism had not prevented him from taking office under the British Government, and asking from that government higher pay. His attitude to the Outlanders, were these of British nationality, was one of insolent contempt. When Johannesburg presented a petition asking for reforms, he remarked, "Ah! that's just like my monkey. You know I keep a monkey in my back yard, and the other day, when we were burning



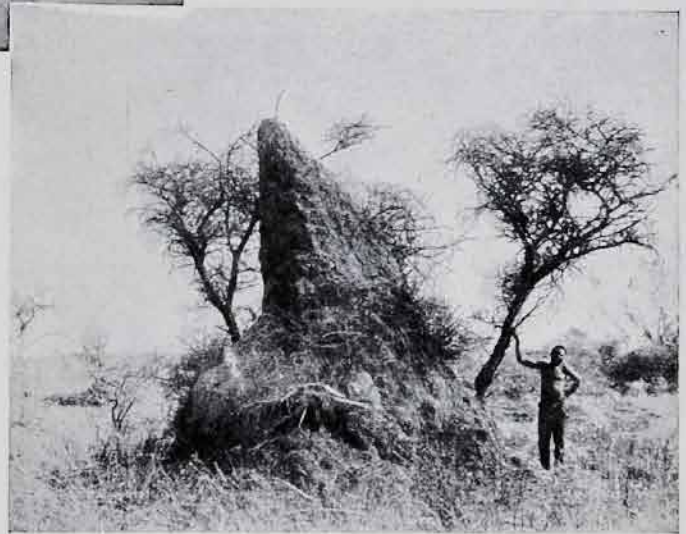
THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, PRETORIA.

This house was given to Paul Kruger by a man named Nellmapius, the original liquor concessionaire, as a small token of gratitude. The only outward signs of its purpose are the flagstaff and a lazy sentry.

some rubbish, the monkey managed to get his tail burnt, whereupon he bit me. That's just like these people in Johannesburg. They burn their tails in the fire of speculation and then they come and bite me."

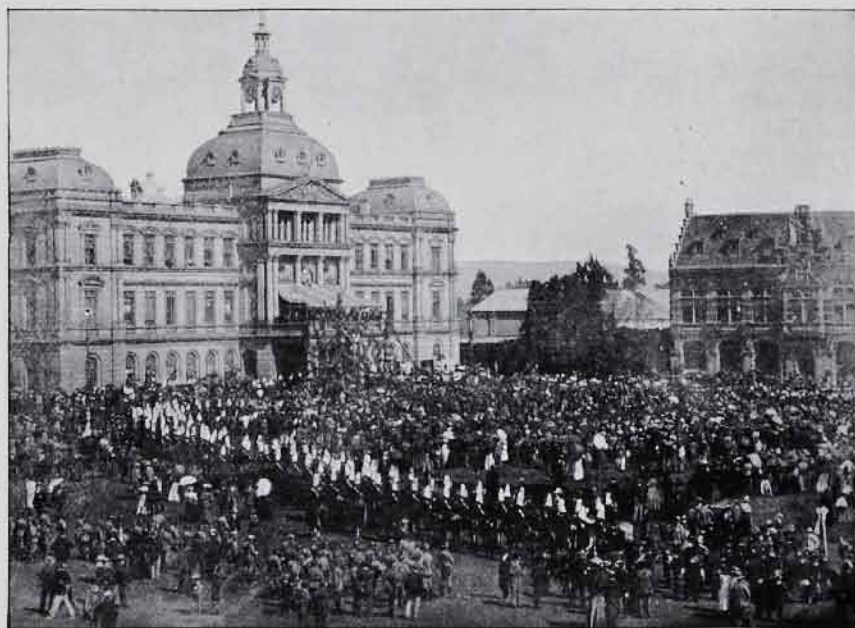
"Protest! protest!" he said on another occasion, "what is the good of protesting? You have not got the guns! I have."

The outward appearance of Mr. Kruger is in keeping with his sinister personality. A shabby frock coat deluged with coffee stains, a seedy silk hat without gloss, an immense



A MONSTER ANT-HILL.

The veldt throughout South Africa, but particularly in parts of the Transvaal, is dotted at frequent intervals by ant-heaps, some of which are as large as the one shown above. The natives use the smaller ones as ovens, first driving out the ants by smoke, and then hollowing out the inside.



THE RAADZAAL, PRETORIA.

After the General Election to the Volksraad or Parliament of the Transvaal in 1893, the new members were formally sworn in, and President Kruger made a speech from the balcony under the awning to the crowd waiting in Church Square. The soldiers are the Pretoria Volunteers in their gala uniform.

scarf of office which sorts grotesquely with this apparel, and ill-fitting trousers barely long enough to meet the boots, are his familiar habiliments. He smokes and drinks coffee incessantly. He has the fervent piety of a Torquemada: believes himself under the peculiar protection of God; and interlards his discourse with religious ejaculations, as if God could smile upon tyranny and corruption. He has exaggerated the outward roughness of Cromwell, forgetting, however, that, to complete the picture, the vast tolerance, which is Cromwell's greatest merit, is required.



OOM PAUL AND TANT' SANNIE.

Paul Kruger and Mrs. Kruger, after whom Mr. Chamberlain enquired on a memorable occasion. The President has been twice married; the present Mrs. Kruger was a Miss Malan. The couple are familiarly known in South Africa as "Uncle Paul and Aunt Sannie."

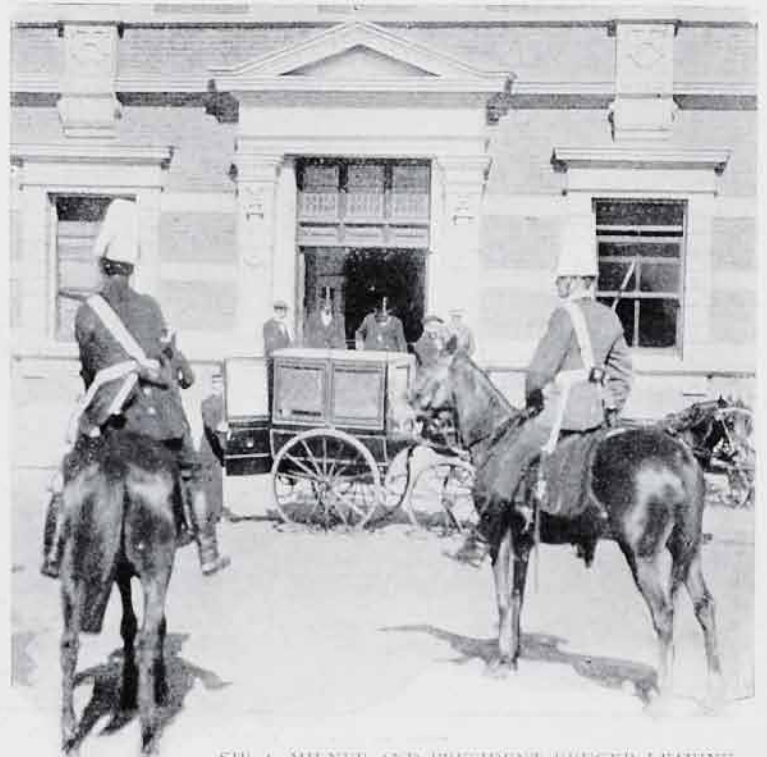
only striving to discover the truth before he took action.

The crisis drew nearer when an immense petition to the Queen was forwarded by the Outlanders, praying for redress of their grievances. A conference was arranged between President Kruger and Sir Alfred Milner at Bloemfontein, and at it Sir Alfred put forward minimum demands—for a reform of the franchise in the Transvaal, by which the Outlanders would be able to obtain votes, and for a re-distribution of seats. The demands were refused, Mr. Kruger offering very much less, and the conference broke up.

Then followed a long diplomatic battle between the British Government and Mr. Kruger. Something on our part was conceded of Sir Alfred's minimum, but not by Sir Alfred: nothing was conceded by the Transvaal, which at every turn asserted its right to be considered a "sovereign independent state." Mr. Kruger, as he had

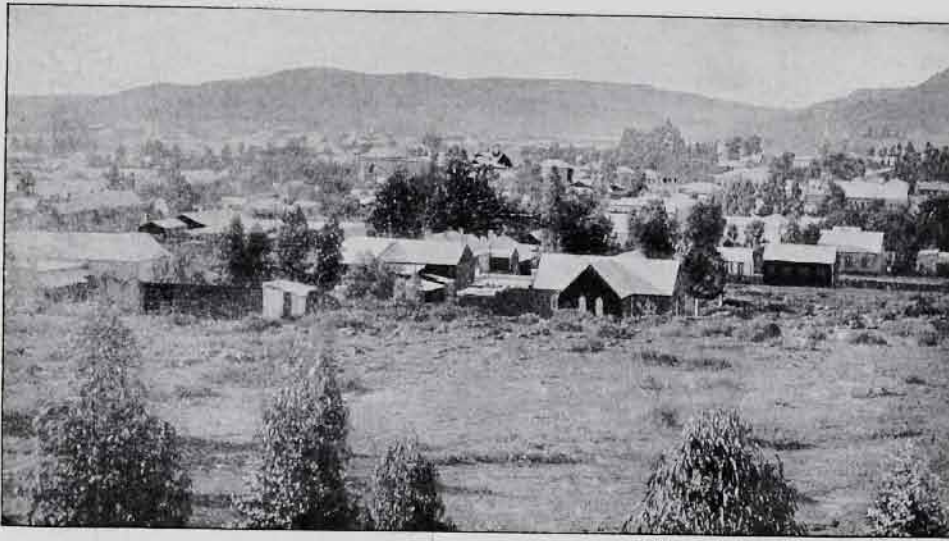
To meet this man in a duel of giants, England sent out her greatest and ablest administrator, Sir Alfred Milner. Alfred Milner went to his arduous task with the solid approval—even with the prayers—of the whole nation. Messrs. Morley and Courtney, and all the faint hearts that masquerade in the party of Little Englanders, blessed the choice. He was known to be wise, moderate, restrained, strong. An Oxford man, he had learnt, in a school which imparts character even more than learning, that the Englishman's duty is not to seek wealth, luxury, or ease, but, in the highest sense, to live well. He did not parade religion, but then it was in his heart. He did not talk of patriotism, but then he had never been in foreign pay, like Mr. Kruger. His manners were not uncouth, his dress was that of the ordinary world. No act of meanness, of corruption, of unscrupulousness can be imputed to him. His career had been one of unsullied brilliance. He was "straight," as he was brave.

At Cape Colony he was welcomed by all. He made no move, but sat still and studied the country, studied the situation, studied Mr. Kruger and Mr. Kruger's policy. He followed impassively the machinations of the Bond, the Dutch party which had organised itself in Cape Colony. Mr. Kruger fancied that here was another man who could be twisted round his thumb, but he was greatly mistaken. Sir Alfred Milner was



SIR A. MILNER AND PRESIDENT KRUGER LEAVING THE CONFERENCE AT BLOEMFONTEIN, June, 1899.

No greater contrast can be imagined than the young, chaper, cultured diplomatist, and the cugged, wily, and uncultured old President.



BLOEMFONTEIN, CAPITAL OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE.

despatched demanding a franchise attainable after five years' residence, a greater representation for the Outlander majority in the Volksraad—the Transvaal parliament—and equality of the Dutch and English languages in that Parliament. An early answer was required. At the same time 5,000 troops were ordered from England and 5,000 from India to South Africa, where our garrison did not much exceed 7,000 men.

On the 16th the Transvaal replied with a flat refusal of the vital demands. At the same time came news of immense military preparations in the Transvaal and of a general exodus of British subjects from Johannesburg. Yet

always prophesied, was aided and encouraged in his resistance by a certain party of Englishmen which denounced Sir Alfred Milner, pretended that England was aiming at "the destruction of the [Transvaal] Republic," and asserted that England must concede, and ought to concede, because the nation would never go to war.

Finally, on September 8, a British note was

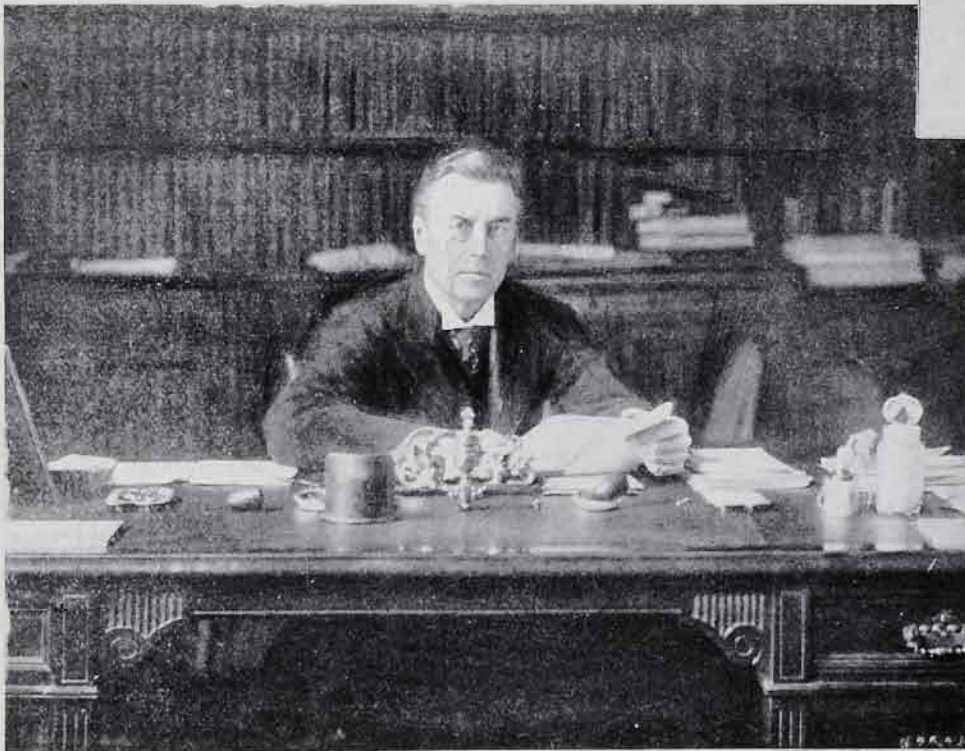


[Photo by Elliott & Fry.]

SIR ALFRED MILNER.

Son of a doctor of medicine; was educated in Germany, and at King's College, London, and Balliol College, Oxford; barrister, 1881; engaged in journalism, 1882-4; Private Secretary to Mr. Goschen, 1885-9; Under Secretary for Finance in Egypt, 1886-92; Chairman of Board of Inland Revenue, 1892-7; K.C.B., 1895; Governor of the Cape, and High Commissioner of South Africa since 1897.

England still waited in hope of a peaceful settlement, and the government even now failed to take the steps which should have been taken at once; it did not engage transports, mobilise an army, and with all possible speed despatch it to South Africa.

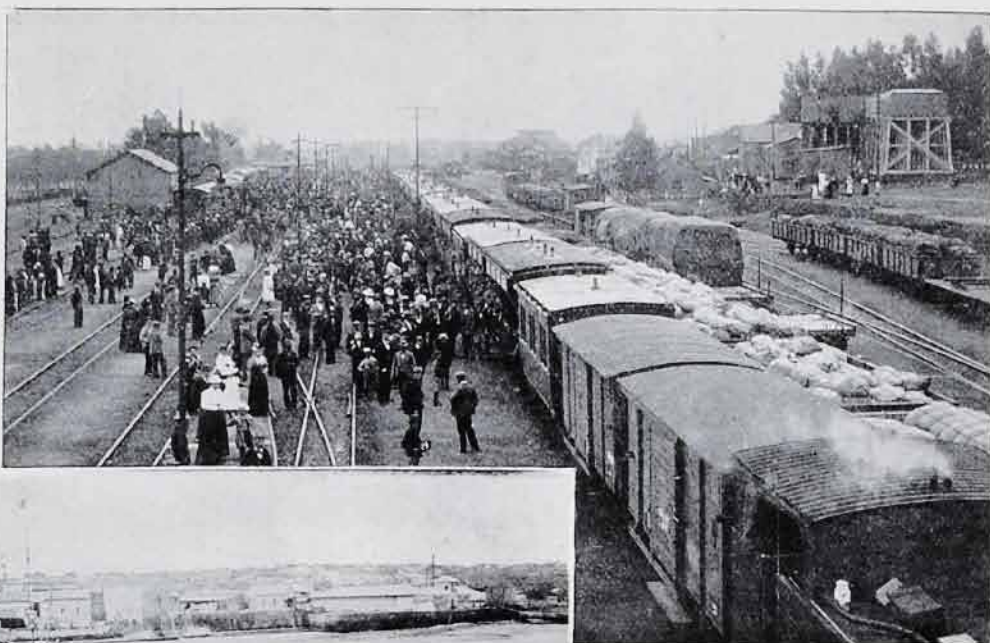


RT. HON. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.

[Photo by Elliott & Fry.]

Born in London, 1836; son of a Birmingham screw manufacturer; Chairman of Birmingham School Board, 1873; Mayor, 1874-6; M.P. for Birmingham since 1879; President of the Board of Trade, 1880; President of the Local Government Board, 1886 both under Mr. Gladstone. He differed from that leader on the question of Home Rule, and resigned, 1886. In 1895 he became Secretary of State for the Colonies in Lord Salisbury's administration.

How terrible was the danger, how near the British Empire in South Africa to its fall in the days which followed the 16th, was not at the time apprehended by the public. Yet the government knew, or should have known. Not till October 7, in face of the hourly



REFUGEES LEAVING JOHANNESBURG.

Owing to the immense crowds of refugees leaving Johannesburg, the rolling stock of the Netherlands South African Railway was unequal to the demands made upon it, and very many hapless Uitlanders had to travel hundreds of miles in cattle trucks, amid terribly trying discomforts.

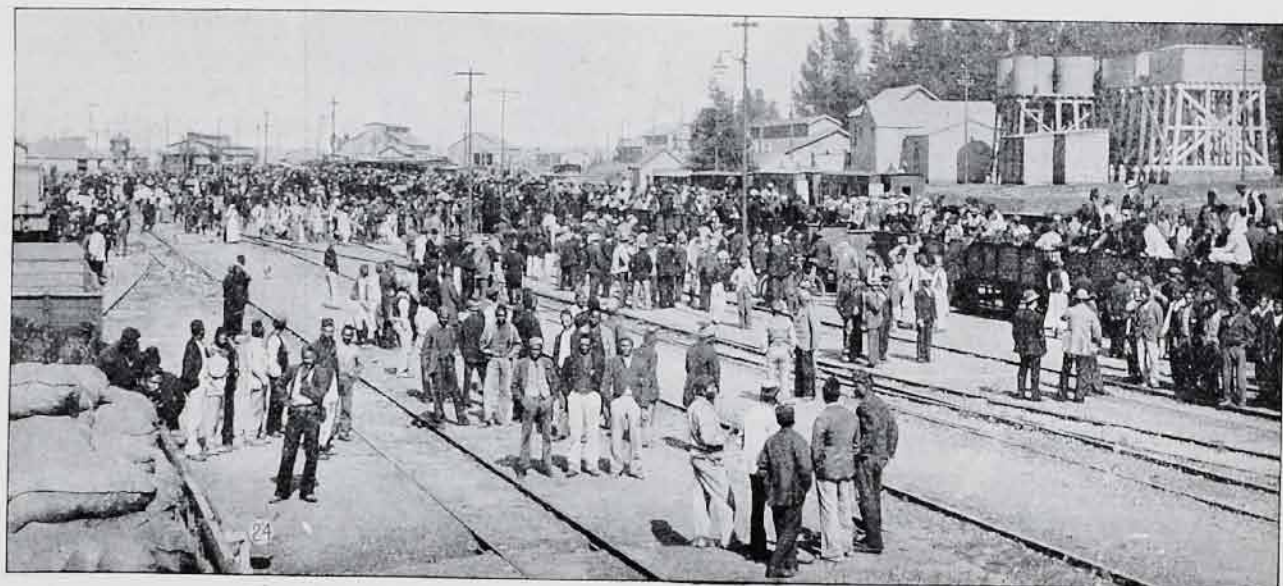
growing peril, was mobilisation ordered in England.

On the 9th, the Boer ultimatum was handed in, demanding the withdrawal of the troops which had reached South Africa since June 1, 1899, and of all troops on their way. There was only one possible answer to this insolent missive—War.

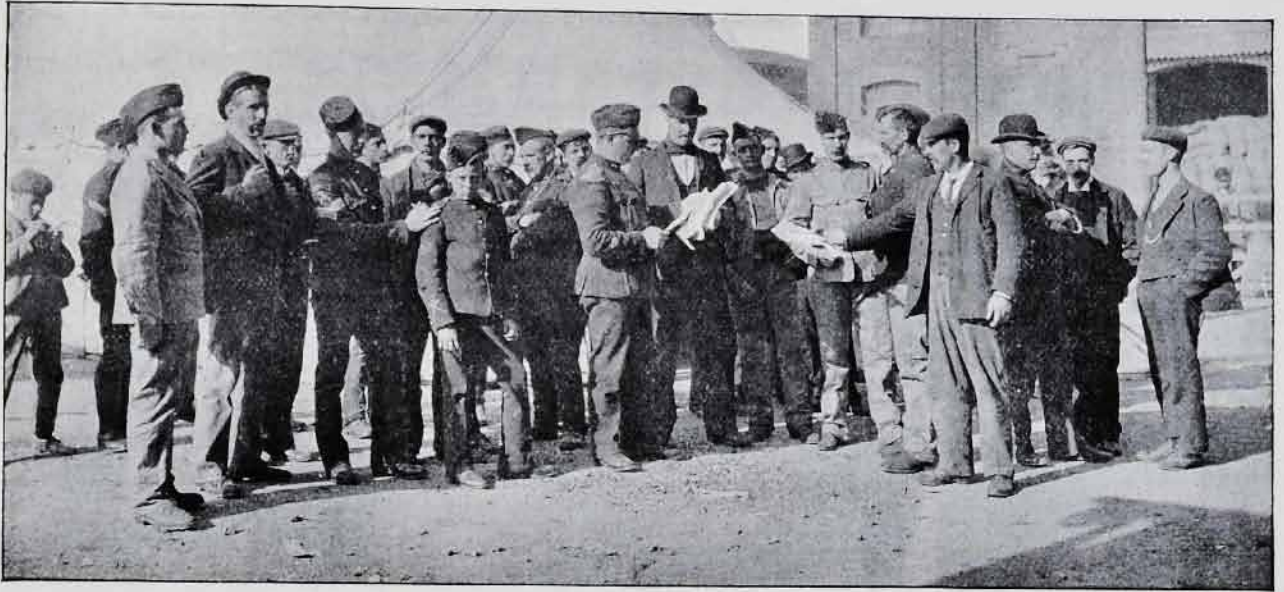


REFUGEES WAITING TO EMBARK AT LOURENÇO MARQUES.

Lourenço Marques is the nearest seaport to Pretoria, and belongs to Portugal. The photograph was taken on the occasion when many refugees from the Transvaal waited all night on the pier for the ship *Avondale Castle*, which had been stopped by H.M.S. *Hatfield* and compelled to discharge at Durban 25,000 in specie consigned to the Transvaal Government.



BRITISH SUBJECTS LEAVING JOHANNESBURG AFTER THE PRESENTATION OF THE ULTIMATUM.



RESERVES MOBILISING AT SOUTHAMPTON
 "His regiment didn't need to send to find him."

CHAPTER II.

THE OVERRUNNING OF NORTHERN NATAL.

Hurried Preparations for War—The Reserves Mobilised—Enthusiasm of the British Public—Strength of the Forces in Natal and Cape Colony—Strength of the Enemy—The Attack Delayed—Disposition of the Boer Forces—Positions of the British at Dundee and Ladysmith—Battle of Dundee—Symons wounded—Storming of Talana Hill—The Treacherous White Flag—Yule's March—Battle of Elandsplaagte—British and Boer Losses—"Remember Majuba!"—Action at Rietfontein—The Boer Tactics—White decides to hold Ladysmith.



HE Transvaal ultimatum for the moment united all Englishmen. No one was found to suggest the idea of surrender to such monstrous and treasonable demands. The

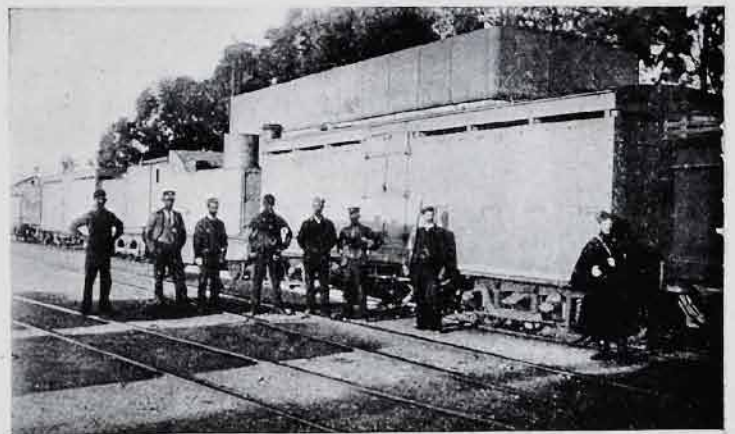
Hurried preparations for war. calling out of the reserves began amidst an excitement which has never been paralleled in our day. Time, unfortunately, was required to get the troop-ships ready, for the Admiralty had not been given a fair chance. Time was also required for the collection of transport, without which no army can move. Horses, mules, tinned meat and food of all kinds, had to

be purchased hurriedly in every direction. The sense of public anxiety was augmented by the knowledge that the army sent out could not be in South Africa, ready for work, within six weeks from the date when mobilisation began. And very much might happen in that time.

Yet there was outward calm. The reservists answered the call like Englishmen;

The Reserves mobilised.

like men, that is to say, who know a painful duty lies before them and will do it. Scarcely one was missing when the time given them to re-join had elapsed. Deserters, who had shipped for America, of their own free will came back to fight the Boers. Men rose from beds of sickness that they might serve with the old colours and not betray the confidence reposed in them. There was no exultation, no desire to fight for fighting's sake, only a calm determination to end the twenty years' purgatory of misrule in the Transvaal by coming to the aid of brother Englishmen.



ARMOURD TRAIN FIRED UPON BY THE BOERS.

This train was attacked by the Boers near Spiofontein, October 15. An attack on a similar train three days earlier, at Kraaipan, near Mafeking, was the first overt act of war.

The nation, too, began to feel that it had a solemn duty to its soldiers. Vast crowds followed the reservists to the points of mobilisation; eyes were dim at the thought of the sacrifice these brave men were making. For they were going to adventure "life and love and youth for the great prize of death in battle," at their country's call. They were exchanging, many of them, comfort and comparative ease for the hunger and rain and cold of the dreary bivouac, for the toilsome march beneath the burning sun of the veldt, for torture by wounds, and death in its most terrifying forms. They were leaving behind them women and children who looked

Enthusiasm of the British public.

to them for daily bread. Yet they came with a single heart; came cheerfully, and gave to their

country all that they had to give as the choicest offering of their love and devotion.

Those who at home and in ease were to reap the fruits of their love and devotion responded to the best of their power. Employers announced that they would pay half wages to the women and



(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)

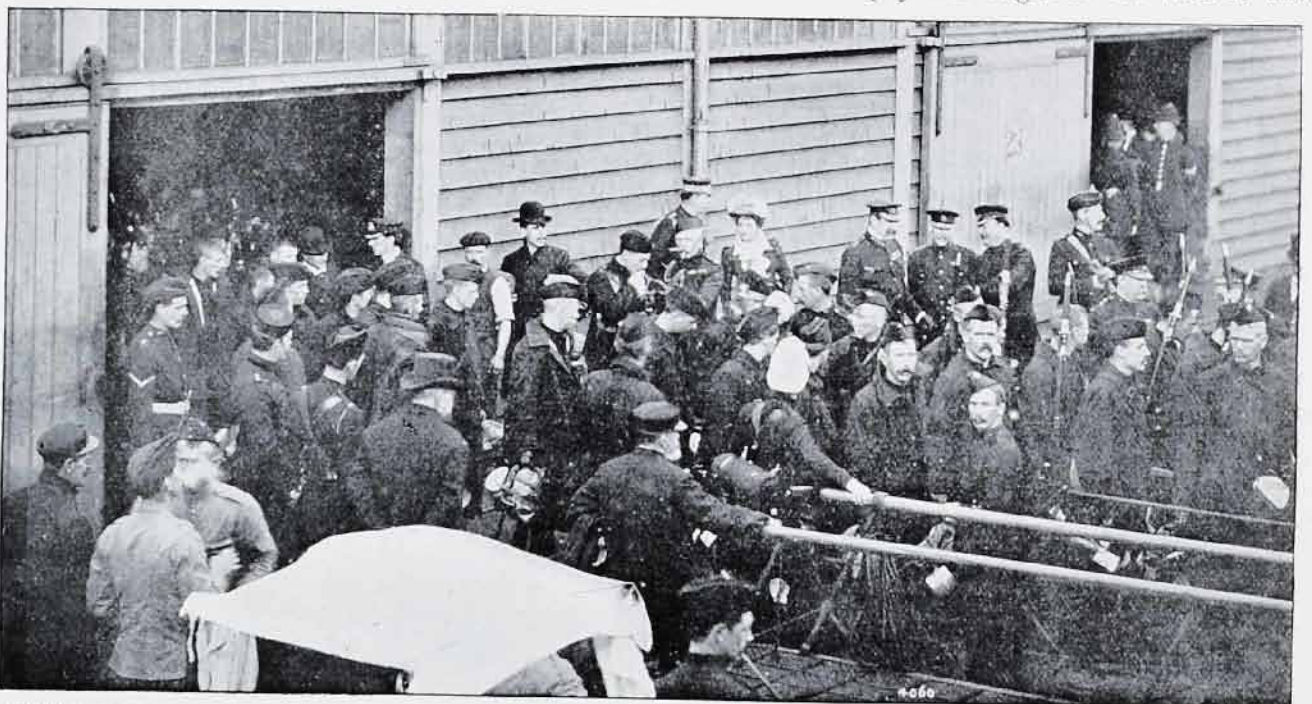
LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL,

with Miss Jennie Jerome. Of American parentage; she is the mother of two sons, one of whom, Mr. Winston Churchill, was recently a prisoner in Pretoria, having displayed conspicuous bravery in a small fight at which he was present as a newspaper correspondent. Lady Randolph was instrumental in organising the hospital ship *Matine* as a token of American brotherhood with Great Britain.



(Photo by Gergens.)

MISS NORMAN AND NURSING SISTERS ON BOARD THE S.S. "TROJAN."



DEPARTURE OF THE 1st BATTALION, RIFLE BRIGADE: H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT LIGHTING THE MEN'S CIGARETTES. (Photo by Gregory.)

children whose bread-winners had been called away; enormous funds were raised to support the widowed and the fatherless of those who should fall, and to keep in comfort the families of the soldiers. Workmen subscribed their shillings; the well-to-do their guineas; the rich their thousands of pounds. The most intensely national of poets, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, appealed in touching verse to the nation's heart. In answer to his appeal women sent their rings, children their pence, and the poor and humble gifts in kind. No names were published; the giving was simple and unostentatious, and therefore all the nobler. Thus our soldiers were made to feel that they went forth to battle with the nation's love and with its fervent prayers.

Nor were these schemes all. The Princess of Wales—Princess of Pity she has rightly been called—at the head of the Red Cross Society, with private effort, equipped hospitals and hospital ships; Lady Randolph Churchill, widow of a man who loved England, who strove for honest reform, and whose name will not soon be forgotten, of American birth herself, raised, with the aid of other American ladies in London, a fund for a hospital ship; Lady White, the wife of the British general in Natal, collected a great sum to furnish the soldiers of the heroic Natal Field Force with Christmas gifts; every steamer carried away to the Cape presents of provisions,



(Photo by W. & D. Downey, Ebury Street.)
THE "PRINCESS OF PITY."

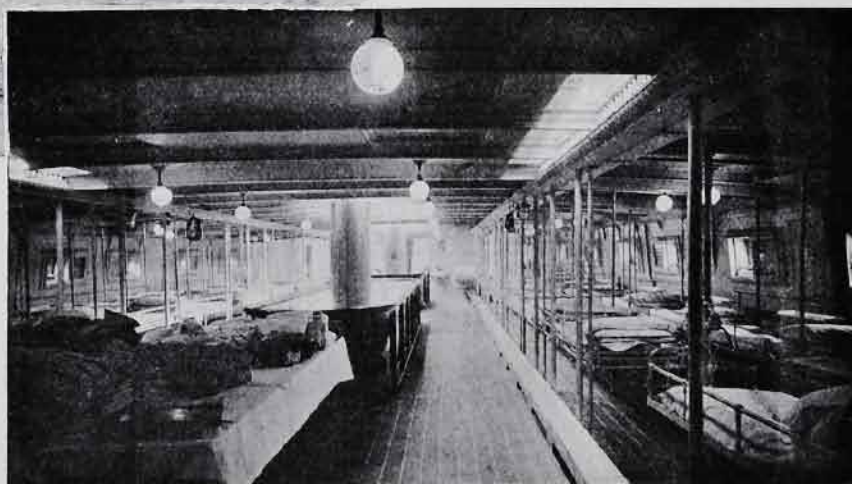
The latest photograph of H.R.H. the Princess of Wales in Drawing-room dress.



THE "PRINCESS OF WALES" HOSPITAL SHIP; FORMERLY THE "MIDNIGHT SUN" EXCURSION STEAMER.

Her Royal Highness, ever to the front in the cause of suffering humanity, has taken the keenest and most earnest interest in the fitting-up of this hospital ship, towards the cost of which she has made a large private grant of funds.

dainties, clothing, tobacco and cigarettes, for the men fighting in the field. From the Queen on her throne to the peasant in his cottage all gave liberally. The flood gates of generosity were opened; a universal impulse of patriotism moved the nation.



(Photo by Gregory.)
THE ALEXANDRA WARD ON BOARD THE "PRINCESS OF WALES" HOSPITAL SHIP.

The flood gates of generosity were opened; a universal impulse of patriotism

moved the nation.

Mr. Kruger's secret service funds, and the desperate exertions of the Free State President, Mr. Steyn, obtained the consent of its Volksraad to the war. Moreover, when that consent had been obtained its armaments were incomplete. Ammunition was wanting; and so, reluctantly, all movement was postponed by the plotters against the British Empire till the first day of October. Even then, it was calculated, it would be easy to sweep the "rooineks" into the sea, as but few of the Indian troops would have arrived. By October 1 the Transvaal completed its mobilisation, and was ready to attack. It was expected that the first Boer victory would be followed by a tremendous uprising of the Cape Dutch, the disloyal of whom had been armed and were in constant correspondence with Pretoria.



[Photo by R. Stanley & Co.]

LADY SYMONS.

Widow of General Symons, and promoter of a fund for the widows and orphans of soldiers.



[Photo by R. Stanley & Co.]

GENERAL SIR W. PENN SYMONS, Who fell in the assault on the Boer position commanding Dundee.

But on October 1 good fortune once more intervened to save our empire. The Transvaal commandoes had assembled, but transport and commissariat were so defective that the Boers were in danger of starvation. The want of rain, too, had left the veldt bare and dry, without grass or sustenance for horses and cattle. It would, therefore, be almost impossible without commissariat for men and beasts to subsist. Delay was thus forced upon the Boers. The transport arrangements were improved, while the commandoes watched eagerly for the first rains, due in early October, which were to be the signal of action for them, and of slaughter for the hapless British soldiery.

The main Boer forces threatened Natal, which colony, from its passionate loyalty to the mother country, was peculiarly odious to Mr. Kruger. The Transvaalers were assembled, 15,000

Disposition of the Boer forces.

to 20,000 strong, at Zandspruit, just across the frontier of the extreme northern angle of Natal; the Free Staters, 10,000 or more strong, were to the west of the many passes which cross the Drakensberg range, threatening the whole north of the colony. The lie of the frontier hereabouts gave the enemy great advantages. Natal sends up a narrow wedge-shaped strip of country between the Free State and the Transvaal. From Ladysmith, at its base, to the most northerly point, this wedge is 50 miles long. How to defend the wedge with a small force was the British problem. If a force were placed at the northernmost point it would be liable to be cut off and surrounded by the Free Staters crossing the passes and seizing positions

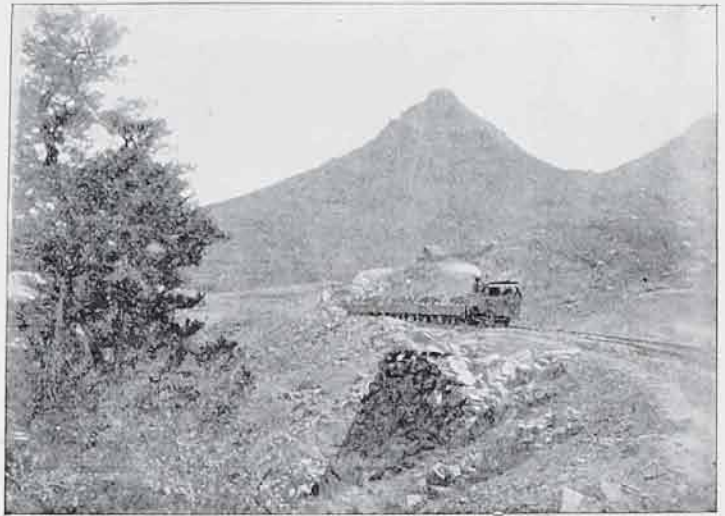


[Photo by Gregory.]

GOOD BYE, DADDY!
A Pipe-Major of the Scots Guards starting for the front.



ELANDSLAAGTE: THE SCENE OF THE BATTLE.



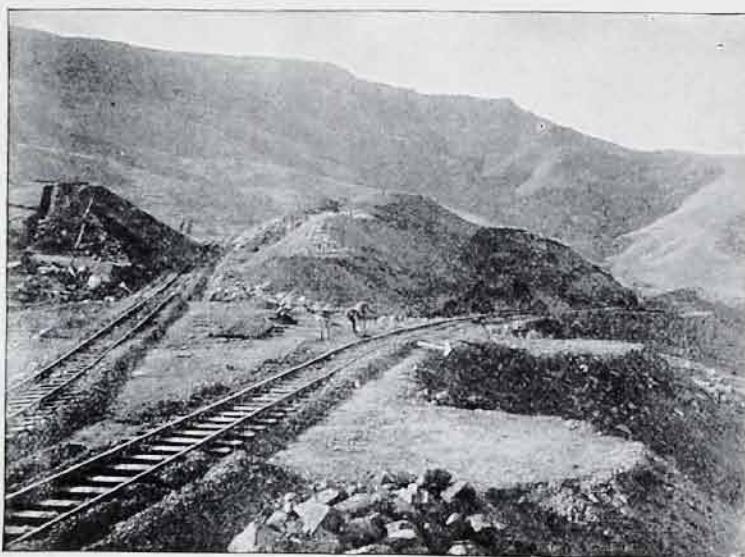
LAING'S NEK.

The "Nek" is the ridge between the two hills; it was the scene of a battle in 1881, and over it the Boers swarmed into Natal in 1899.

in its rear, while the Transvaalers attacked in front. If stationed farther south the same risk remained, though it would be easier to retire. If the whole wedge were abandoned the political effect would be disastrous.

Before the landing of the reinforcements, receiving news of the secret Boer conspiracy to invade the colony, General Sir Penn Symons, in command in Natal, decided to abandon the extreme north of the wedge, where lie the ill-omened battlefields of Laing's Nek, Majuba, and the Ingogo, and to place as large a force as he could spare at the small town of Dundee, 35 miles from Ladysmith and connected with it by railway. When the reinforcements from India arrived in the first week of October, and General White took over the command in Natal, this detachment was strengthened, and the main force established at Ladysmith. The Dundee force, under Symons, was 4,600 strong with 18 guns; the Ladysmith division, under White, numbered about 7,500 men with 24 guns. The latter was reinforced by Natal troops and volunteers in the first ten days of war, till on October 20 it may have reached 9,000. Meantime, this weak little army remained almost unconscious of the storm which was about to burst upon it, for the opinion generally held by British officers was that, owing to his bad transport and defective organisation, the enemy would not be able to move south for some weeks.

The early days of the war in Natal encouraged this belief. On October 12 the Boers seized Laing's Nek and began crossing the Drakensberg in small parties. A few shots were exchanged between the scouts on either side, but there was no real fighting. No one fancied that Dundee was in any danger; on the 16th, a correspondent wrote from Ladysmith that the enemy was expected to remain inactive. Nor were any great precautions taken by General Symons. His officers reconnoitred from time to time; patrols and pickets were out; the main force lay in a valley dominated by lofty hills,



GLENCOE.

The railway on the left runs to Pretoria; that on the right to Dundee.

some point on which he meant to occupy when the approach of the enemy made it necessary. As he could not know from what quarter the enemy would come, this central position was perhaps the best that could be assumed. There was little ammunition at Dundee, and the place was entirely dependent for most things, including supplies, upon its communications with Ladysmith.

The Boers, perfectly informed of the British position, and directed by skilful strategists, had really determined to attack this Dundee force with the greater part of their army. The Johannesburg commando, 2,000 strong, under General Kock, opened operations by moving south from Laing's Nek, and on October 19 seized a position at Elandsplaagte, astride of the railway between Dundee and Ladysmith. A train laden with supplies was captured by the Boers. The 20th was fixed by Generals Joubert and Meyer for the



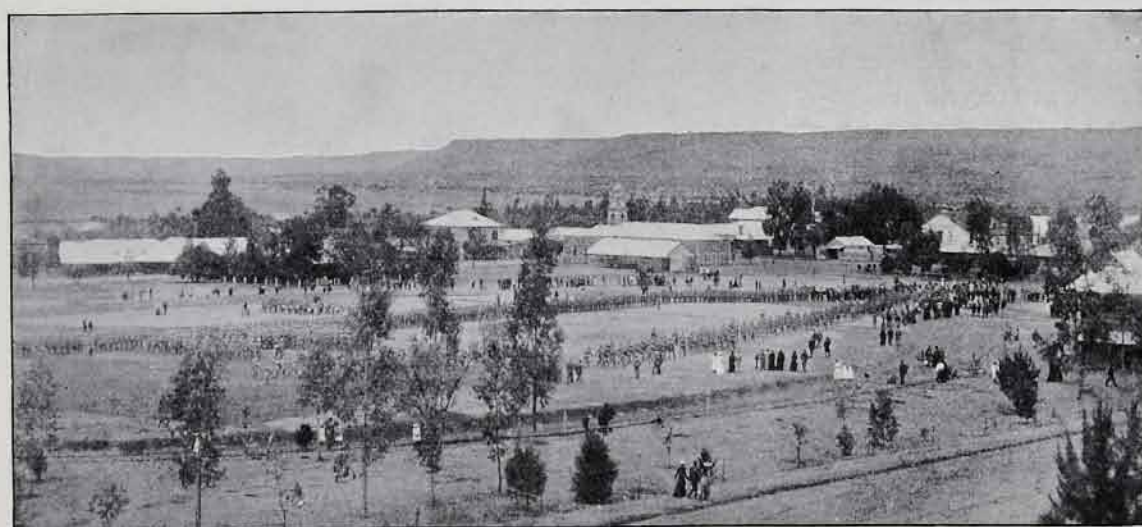
(Photo by H. Nicholls.)

NATAL CARBINEERS LEAVING LADYSMITH FOR THE FRONTIER.

annihilation of General Symons' force. Meyer was to attack from the east with 7,000 men, Joubert from the north-west with 17,000. On the night of the 19th, Meyer's men seized Talana Hill, a precipitous height to the east of and overlooking the British camp at Dundee. They placed several guns in position there. At 2.30 a.m. of the 20th a British picket was driven in. The night was dark and misty; as the dawn spread over the grey hills, out of the mist came the boom of a heavy gun, and a shell dropped plump in the middle of the astonished Britishers.

Thus General Symons was taken completely by surprise. But in this emergency he showed a courage and a decision which were above all praise. As the day broke he put his breakfastless, hungry men into line of battle and sent out his three field batteries to respond to the enemy's artillery fire, which now grew very galling. Along the ridge of Talana Hill, through the thick, wet mist, the Boers could be at times made out. So long as they remained there our position was untenable. They must be dislodged, and dislodged at whatever cost.

Battle of Dundee.



ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS MARCHING OUT OF LADYSMITH FOR DUNDEE.

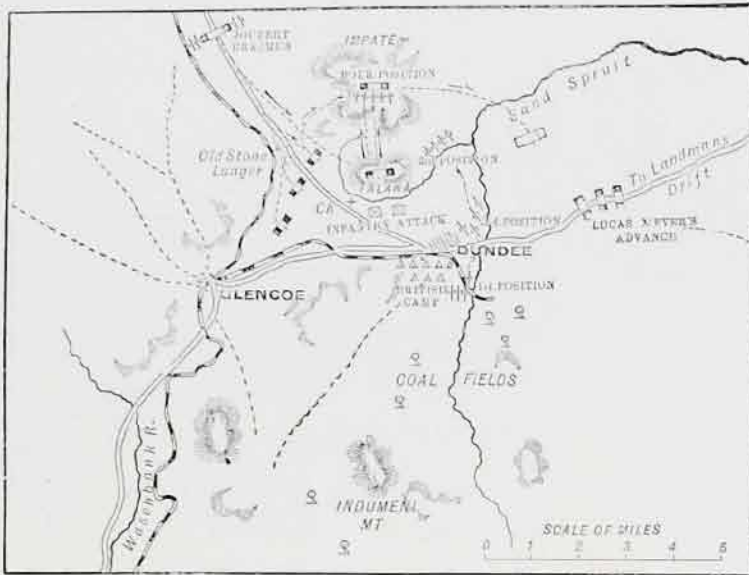
From the British camp the ground for some distance sloped down to a river bed; then followed a short stretch of gently rising ground, and at the foot of Talana Hill a narrow belt of wood. This

passed, the real ascent began. Half-way up the hill and just at the point where the declivity steepened almost to a precipice ran a stone wall, parallel to the ridge. The Boer position was one of extreme strength. It gave their picked shots excellent cover, and enabled their rifles and cannon to sweep with the deadliest effect the slopes below, over which the British must advance.

While the Dublins, King's Rifles, and Irish Fusiliers went forward to the river bed, the British artillery cannonaded the ridge at a range of 2,000 yards. The Boer guns, after a two hours' duel, either

withdrew or were silenced; the moment for the infantry assault had come. And what an assault! to be delivered by three battalions, with present for duty not more than 2,000 men, upon a seemingly impregnable position, held by 5,000 marksmen whose fame had filled the world.

In extended order, with the British guns firing furiously over their heads, the three battalions went forward. They reached the wood under a terrible fire from the heights above; in the wood men began to drop under the rain of bullets. The Dublin Fusiliers and King's Rifles lost their formation amidst the trees and undergrowth, which spread confusion and gave no shelter from the



PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF DUNDEE,
October 20, 1899.

pitiless Mausers of the enemy. Yet the line did not halt. Slowly it gained ground, passed out of the upper edge of the wood, and began to cross the Aceldama between it and the wall.

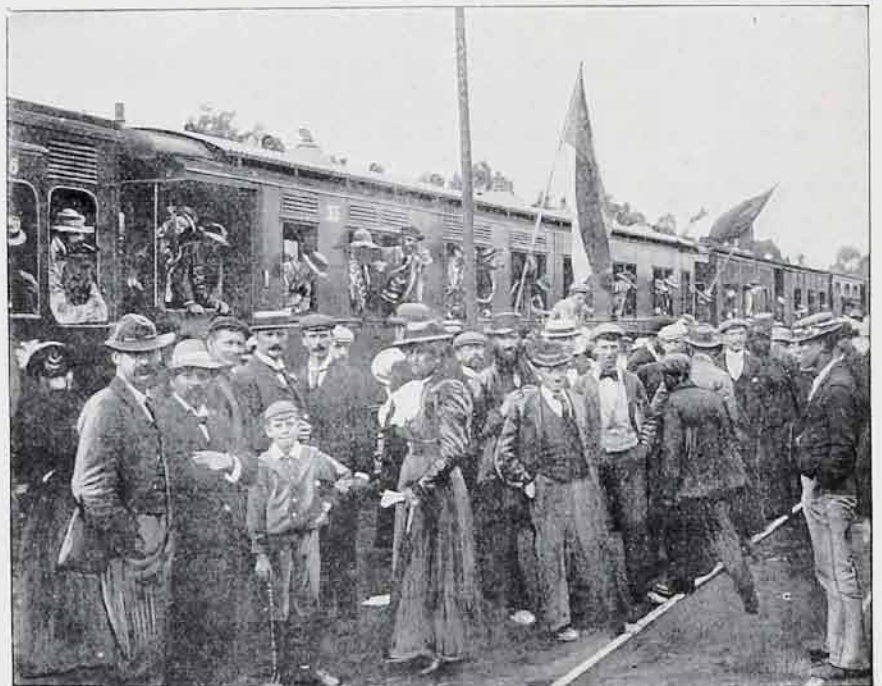
All the morning General Symons had exposed himself with

Symons wounded. perfect indifference to

death. He was everywhere, conspicuous by reason of the lancer with a red flag who followed him to mark his position for his aide-de-camps. He rode to the lower edge of the wood to tell his men that they must take the hill, to encourage them by his presence, and to give them that praise which only the

bravest of the brave can bestow in battle with effect. "You are fine fellows," he shouted to them. Just after he had spoken, as he was galloping back, he was struck by a bullet in the groin and mortally wounded. So long as he could he concealed his wound; then, as his strength failed, he fell or was lifted from his horse and was carried off the field, calm and confident to the last. He sent a message to his men that the wound was but slight, and that he would soon be with them again.

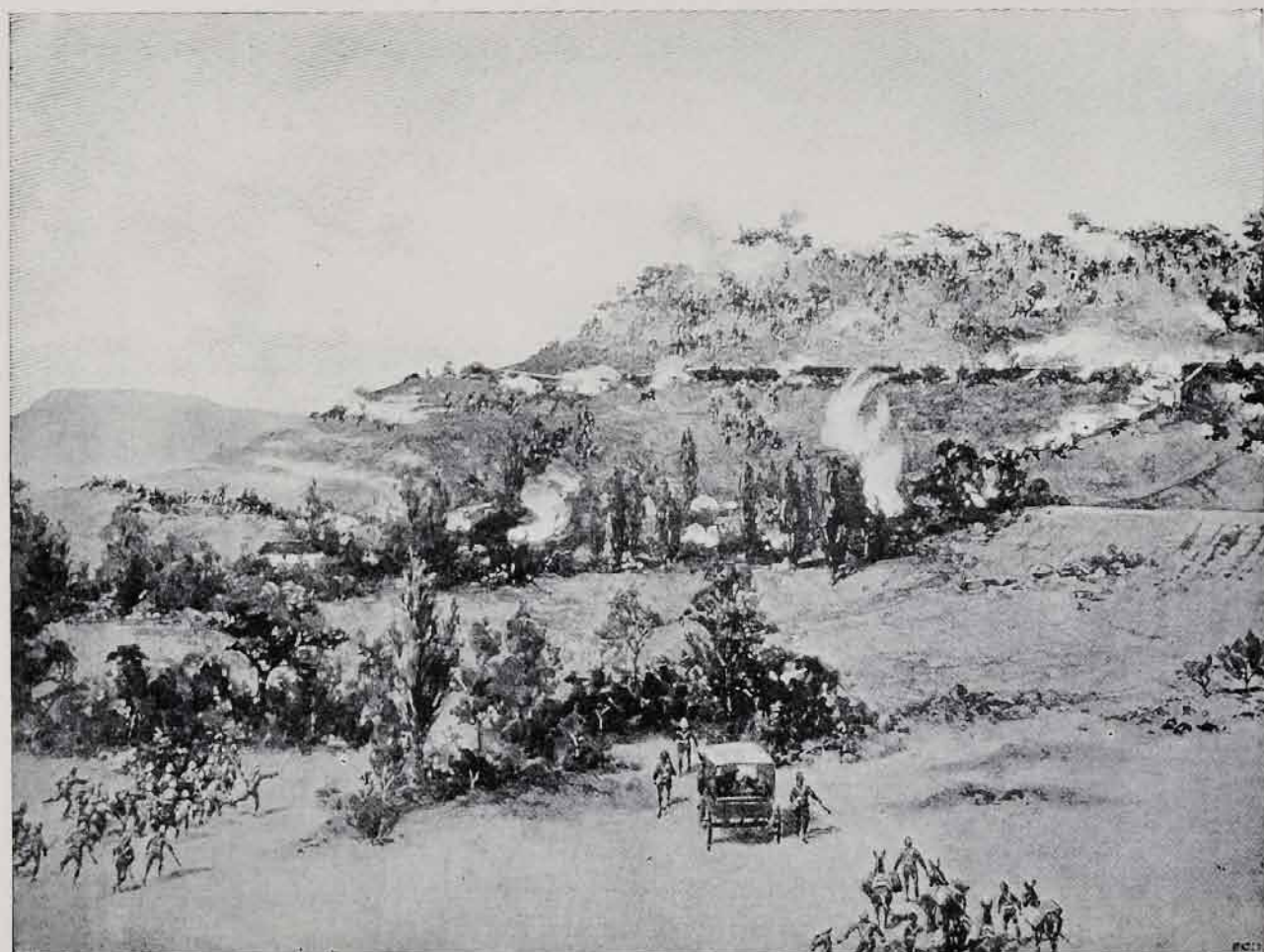
At 10 o'clock the tide of the British advance had surged up to the stone wall. Under shelter of this there was a prolonged halt while the artillery bombardment of the ridge continued. Yet so



BOER BURGHERS LEAVING JOHANNESBURG FOR THE FRONT.

heavy was the Boer rifle fire that it was death to leave the shelter of the wall. About 12, however, there came a lull, and instantly the British line dashed forward with drums beating, bugles sounding, and officers in advance. This was the most perilous stage of the combat, for, as our infantry painfully won its way up the last ascent, the British artillery had perforce to cease its fire. Under a terrific rain of bullets the thin brown line worked slowly forward towards the flaming ridge; for the last time the bugles sounded; bayonets were fixed; and with fierce cheers the top was won. Here fell Colonel Gunning and Captain Pechell, in front of their men, as soldiers and Englishmen should fall. The Boers did not wait to meet the last charge. As the hill was crowned they galloped off, leaving 100 dead and wounded behind them, and two flags.

Storming of Talana Hill.



F. C. Dickinson.

STORMING OF TALANA HILL.

[From a Sketch made on the spot.]

The guns had moved up; the enemy were below us and before us, open to the swift massacre which well-handled artillery can inflict upon demoralised masses of men. But the guns did not open; the enemy had hoisted the white flag, and by this shameful ruse covered the retreat. A great opportunity was lost. Worse still was to follow. The 18th Hussars and mounted infantry had been despatched to work round the enemy's flank; in attempting this a squadron of cavalry and most of the mounted infantry were surrounded by overwhelming forces of Boers and captured. Thus, though the British infantry had fought gloriously, and given freely of its life-blood, the success was an almost fruitless one. The victory did, indeed, save the British force from annihilation, and showed what Britons, well led, could do; beyond that it had no results. It was purchased, too, at a great price. Forty-seven British dead and 221 wounded strewed the slopes of Talana; 208 of the flanking cavalry and mounted infantry were missing or prisoners.

The treacherous white flag.

The battle won, ammunition for another fight was wanting. Ladysmith was cut off; on the 21st Joubert showed in force to the north, and two big 40-pounders, to which the British had nothing that could effectively reply, began to bombard the camp. A new position

Yule's march.

was taken up to the south of Dundee, out of range of the enemy's big guns. Hence, on the 22nd, General Yule, who had succeeded to the command after General Symons' fall, hearing of the victory of Elandslangte, marched with a detachment to intercept the flying Boers. The task was too serious a one for his small force, and he had to return. So dangerous was his position growing hour by hour, that late that evening he determined to retreat. The night was rainy and misty; at 9 p.m. he marched out with all his transport, abandoning his camp and his wounded, even the stricken Sir Penn Symons, and set his face for Beith. He was not molested; on the 23rd, with beating hearts, the little brigade of Britishers, now only 4,000 strong, crossed the difficult



R. Galton Woodville

GORDONS ADVANCING AT ELANDSLAAGTE.

(From photo taken on the Battlefield.)

pass through the Biggersberg, where a single handful of Boers might well have barred all passage, and brought about a terrible disaster; the pass, however, was unguarded. Thereafter the way was plain. On the 24th Sir George White's guns were heard; next day the advance of the column gained touch with the main British force. On this day General Symons died in the enemy's hands, and was buried sadly at night by a small body of Englishmen and English sympathisers in Dundee. A message from our gracious Queen and well-won promotion came too late for his dying ears.

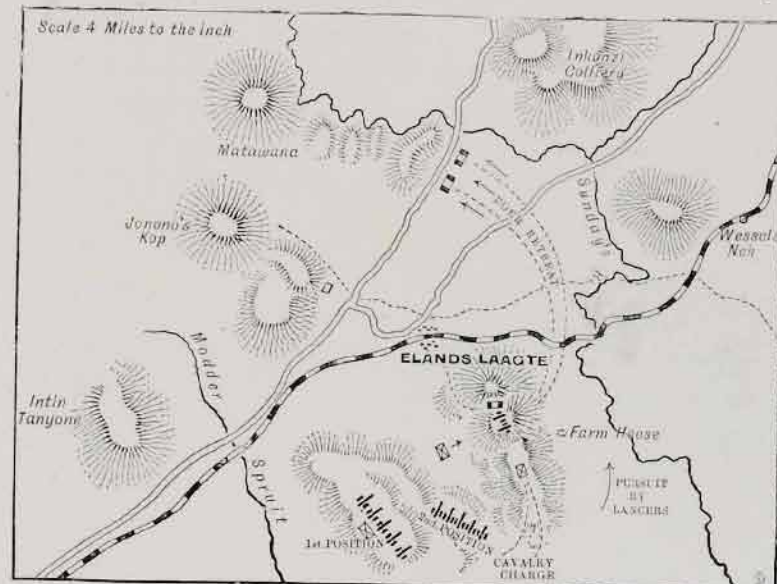
The retreat of the Dundee force was admirably conceived and well executed. Yet it is impossible to deny that the gravest risks were run by hanging on to a very exposed position with a small force. Had the Boers shown their wonted activity, the detachment must have been destroyed or captured. It owed its escape to gallant fighting and good luck.

While these things had been happening at Dundee, General White, at Ladysmith, had not been inactive. Much of his attention had been occupied by the Orange Free State commandoes, which showed in great strength, perpetually threatening Ladysmith and the route to Colenso, but always

retreating when any attempt was made to bring them to battle. This was good strategy, and an essential part of the campaign for the capture of Dundee and its garrison. On the 19th the arrival of a small force of the enemy at Elandslaagte and the capture of a train at the station there became known. A previous train, which was actually standing in the station when the Boers arrived on the scene, escaped through the daring and presence of mind of the engine-driver, who turned on full steam and dashed through the enemy towards Dundee, before they could bring guns to bear.

On the 20th General French went out towards Elandslaagte with a few mounted infantry and some cavalry, supported by two battalions, to reconnoitre. As the troops moved off, far away from the north-east came the dull booming of the cannon, which told of

battle raging at Dundee. The day was so rainy and misty that little could be ascertained. The British troops fell back in the afternoon, and heard the cheering news of a great victory at Dundee.



PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF ELANDSLAAGTE.

On the 21st General French once more left Ladysmith, very early. He had with him the

Battle of Elandslaagte.

Imperial Light Horse, raised from the British Outlanders, six guns of the Natal Artillery, and 400 of the Manchester regiment in a train. An armoured train accompanied the cavalry. Elandslaagte was very cautiously approached, but towards 8.30 a.m. the enemy came into sight. The Boers were riding about on the small plain in which Elandslaagte is situated; their main position was on a long, rocky ridge which dropped at the northern end to a "nek" or pass, where could be discerned their camp. Beyond this again was a small detached hill. Just behind the camp rose a high, conical mountain, on which breastworks of stone could be made out, dominating the whole position. Black figures could be seen all along the skyline of the ridge, indicating that the enemy was in force.

The Natal Artillery opened the battle by directing a fire upon the railway station. At once the Boers replied. Two shells, beautifully aimed, fell right amongst the British guns, putting one ammunition waggon out of action. Our weapons were old and feeble 7-pounders, the Boer guns long-range quick-firing 14-pounders—the weapons lost in the shameful Raid, and now by strange retribution pointed against the brave men who had to pay for the deplorable mistakes of the past. Nothing but withdrawal could have saved the Natal Artillery. The guns fell back and the British force hastened out of range, while General French telegraphed instantly for reinforcements.



W. Denar.]

REMOVING THE WOUNDED AFTER THE BATTLE OF ELANDSLAAGTE. This operation had to be performed in a pouring rain and in almost total darkness.

A couple of hours later these began to come up. First arrived the 5th Lancers and two batteries of field artillery, tearing along with double teams at a gallop. Then came Colonel Ian Hamilton, who had fought and received more than one wound in the struggle with the Boers in 1881. He brought with him the rest of the Manchesters and 1,200 Devonshires and Gordon Highlanders. This gave General French a total of 1,600 infantry, 480 artillery, and about 800 cavalry; he was now able

to return and resume the attack.

The two British field batteries opened a furious fire on the Boer guns, which were located on the top of the long ridge; the British cavalry pushed round to the left and right of the Boer position; the British infantry, in open formation—Gordons and Manchesters on the right, dismounted men of the Imperial Light Horse in the centre, and Devons on the left—prepared to advance to the assault when the cannon had done their work. It was to be Talana Hill over again, but this time with a weaker Boer force.

The enemy's guns were fought with the most obstinate courage; shrapnel constantly burst amidst them: three times their gunners fell back and each time returned to their work. The roar of the artillery duel filled the air, yet in spite of all its sound and fury, the loss of life on either side was as yet small.

The day was advancing, and if the position was to be carried before night fell, the stormers must advance, though the British artillery



Max Cooper.

[After a Photograph.]

LANDING AT CAPETOWN OF COMMANDANT PRETORIUS, WOUNDED AND CAPTURED
AT ELANDSLAAGTE.

preparation was still far from complete. As the hours wore on, General French sent in his infantry to the assault. A thunderstorm raged over the scene of carnage as the line went forward, adding to the grandeur of the spectacle. The British advance across the plain under a fearful fire was splendidly conducted; the Devons were as steady as on parade, firing volleys from time to time and always slowly gaining ground, till they reached the foot of the final steep ascent which led to the summit of the ridge. Men were dropping every moment: the Mauser bullets sang through the air thick as swarms of bees, while in front the crest of the ridge glowed with the perpetual rifle fire of the enemy against the inky blackness of the storm-clouds.

On the right, the Gordons, Manchesters, and Light Horse were also pushing forward. With a roar of cheering they gained the top of the ridge, living and dead and dying in one compact mass. The air rang with tumultuous shouts; the bugles sounded the charge, for the Gordons had yet to storm their way along the ridge under a withering stream of lead which poured from an eminence at its further end; Colonel Ian Hamilton was playing his last card. But the Gordons, after a brief check, swept on along the ridge, tearing down or cutting the barbed wire fences which in half-a-dozen places intersected it. Each fence, each stop, meant death to many gallant men. At last, however, the Boer guns were gained; the Devons too came pouring up the hill, and a torrent of British soldiery swept exultant upon the last Boer remnants.



J. Finnemore.]

CHARGE OF THE LANCERS AFTER THE BATTLE OF ELANDSLAAGTE.

The men at the enemy's guns were bayoneted, and some volleys were poured in upon the host of fugitives tearing down the other side of the hill. A few unwounded and many wounded prisoners were taken.

But as the enemy fled in the falling darkness, the Lancers and Light Horse rode at them. From the nature of things they could give no mercy. The terrific steel spears did their work amongst the yelling, panic-stricken fugitives; the Light Horse, too, had much to avenge—the murder of Edgar and innumerable shameful outrages in the past—and they avenged it. It was a complete and decisive victory, the first that had been gained in the war.

The British losses were heavy, considering that less than 3,000 men had been engaged on our side. Fifty-five were killed and 199 wounded, the Gordons suffering most severely. One-third of the half-battalion engaged was left upon the ground, and fourteen officers, amongst whom was their colonel, were killed or wounded. The Imperial Light Horse also lost their colonel, Scott-Chisholm, shot three times in quick succession as he reached the top of the ridge. Major Sampson, who had fought the Boers before, and suffered for the honour

British and Boer losses.

of an Englishman long years of imprisonment in Pretoria Jail, now poured out his blood once more for his country. What the enemy's loss was it is impossible to say; 65 Boers were buried by the British on the ridge, at least 50 were killed by the Lancers, and as many more may have been removed before the assault. In killed alone the Boers must have lost 150. Two hundred prisoners, mostly wounded, were taken, and probably 200 wounded were removed. The Johannesburg commando, about 2,000 strong, was completely broken up.

As a feat of arms on the British part the victory was a wonderful one. Words can scarcely give an idea of the strength of the Boer position. "Remember Majuba!" shouted the victorious troops, and it was Majuba over again, but with the difference that this time it was the Boers who were beaten. They fought bravely, but it is sad to relate that there were many instances of the most discreditable savagery on their part. A burgher



[Photo by Lambert Weston, Folkestone.]
MAJOR-GENERAL J. D. P. FRENCH.

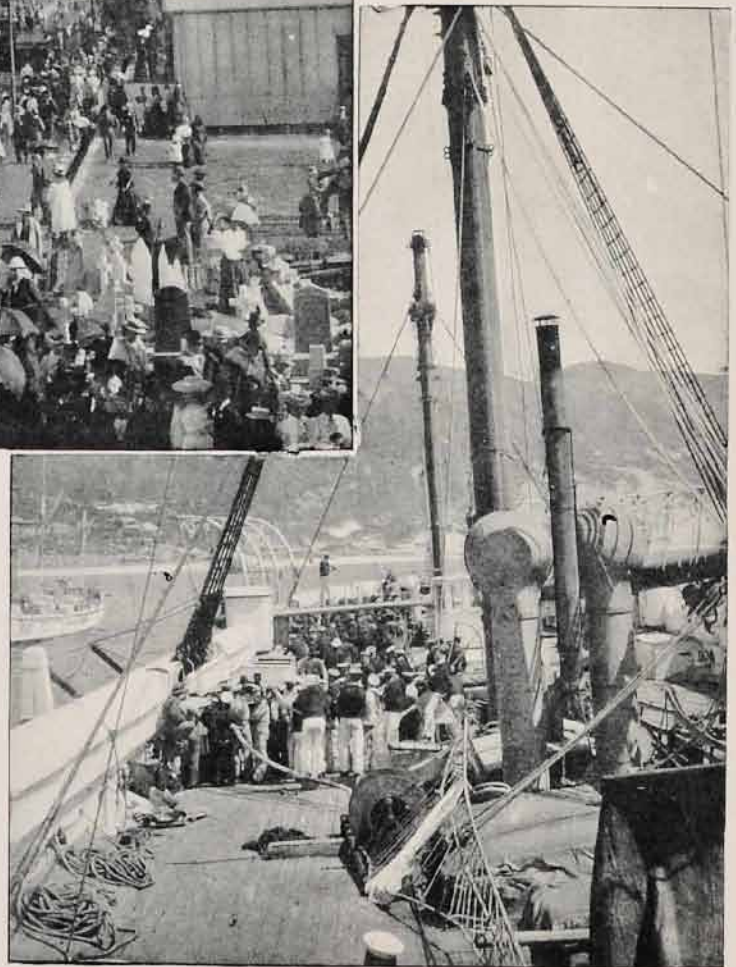
Born in 1852. Served in the Militia, but joined the 8th Hussars as Lieutenant in Feb. 1874, and changed to the 10th Hussars in March. Captain 1880. Major 1883. Served in the Nile Expedition in 1884-5 and accompanied Sir H. Stewart's column in the attempt to rescue Gordon at Khartoum. Lt.-Colonel, 1888; Colonel, 1880. In command of Cavalry Division in South Africa with rank of Lt.-General, 1899; won the victory of Elandslaagte, Major-General 1900 (in recognition of his services in relieving Kimberley).



FUNERAL OF THE BOER GENERAL KOCH AT PRETORIA.

deliberately shot two wounded British soldiers, when several Britishers came on him at his bloody work. He dropped on his knees and cried for mercy, but got what he deserved. A Gordon officer was killed by a Boer to whom he gave quarter. Another Boer showed a white flag and then emptied a revolver into the approaching Britishers, who were off their guard.

Amongst the wounded Boers were many men of note in the Transvaal. General Koch was wounded, and his son, Judge Koch, who had acquitted the murderers of the British subject, Edgar, at Johannesburg some months



BOER PRISONERS ON BOARD H.M.S. PENELOPE AT SIMONSTOWN.

before, was killed. Colonel Schiel, a German officer who had directed the Boer artillery and had in the past been guilty of inhuman atrocities to the natives, was severely wounded.

Night fell before the battle was over. The rain still poured down, the wind was bitterly cold; and the agony endured by the wounded, lying out on that stony mountain without shelter, food and water, was terrible. With all the expedition that was possible in the inky darkness the field of



(Photo by G. Lynch,

GENERAL YULE'S MARCH

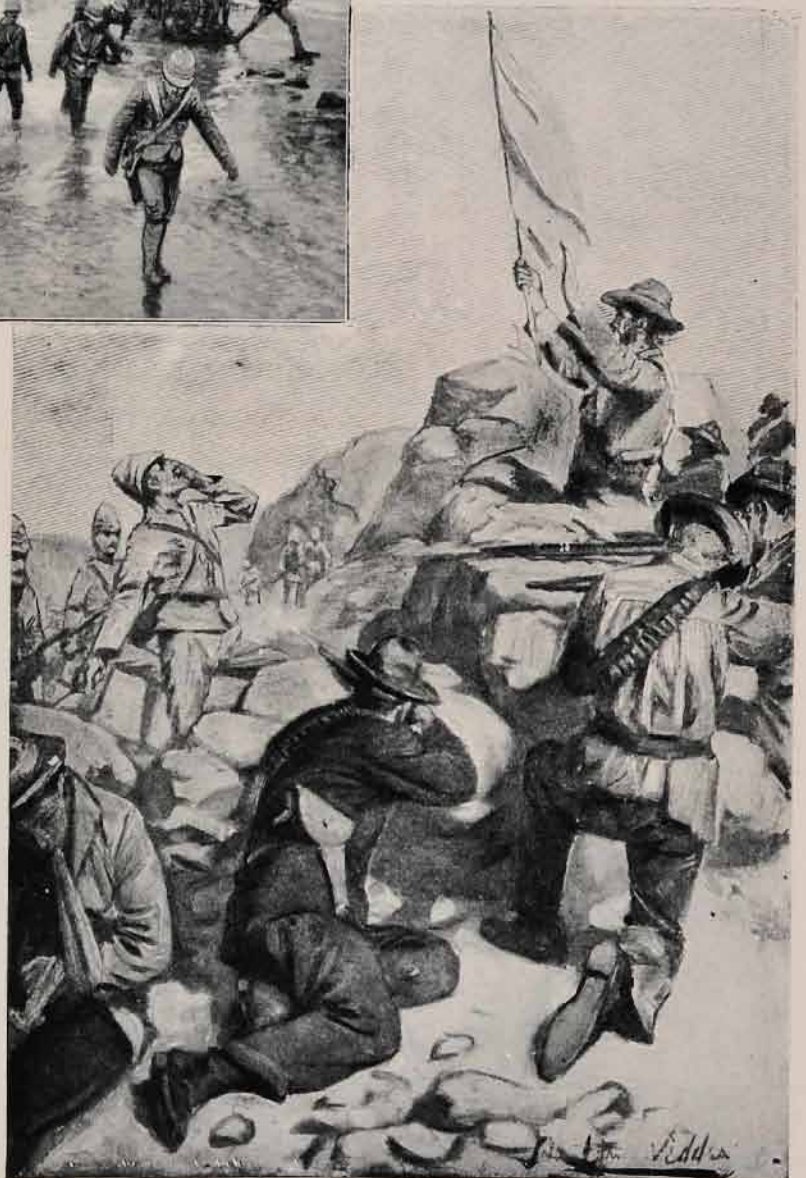
From a photograph taken at a drift on the road.

battle was searched for living men. The badly wounded were carried down the slopes to the enemy's captured camp; the slightly hurt gathered, Boers and Englishmen, round the camp fires. Our men gave the best places—the snugest corners, if there could be any snug corners in the open on such a night as that—to their enemies.

With daylight General French's force marched back to Ladysmith. Among the prizes of the battle were the train, officers and correspondents, captured by the Boers on the 19th.

During the later stages of the action General White had been present. Yet with knight-like generosity he refused to take over the command or to assume for himself any credit. His despatch gave the glory to General French alone.

A day later, on October 23, the Boers were once more at Elandslaagte, this time in very great force. Fearing that they would work across the railway and cut off General Yule's retreat, General White determined to occupy their attention. Early on the 24th 3,000 infantry, four batteries of artillery, and 1,500 cavalry and mounted infantry moved out from Ladysmith. Ten miles had been covered, and the British force was still five miles from Elandslaagte, when the Boers were found several



(S. H. V. painted)

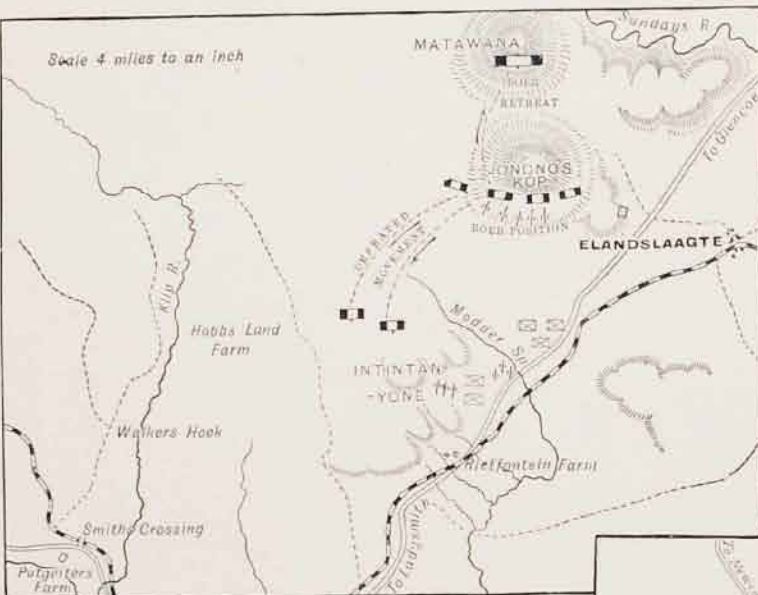
ABUSE OF THE WHITE FLAG BY THE BOERS AT ELANDSLAAGTE.

thousand strong in a formidable position along a ridge near Rietfontein, on the little stream known as Modder Spruit. On two lofty eminences, Matawana's Kop and Jonono's Kop, they had artillery. Their skirmishers were driven in, and our guns at once unlimbered and opened a hot fire, which was as warmly returned. Attempts were made by the British to work round the enemy's flank, but this, with the small number of men



BRITISH WARSHIPS AT SIMONSTOWN THE DAY AFTER THE BATTLE OF ELANDSLAAGTE.
Flags were run up to the mastsheads in honour of the British victory.

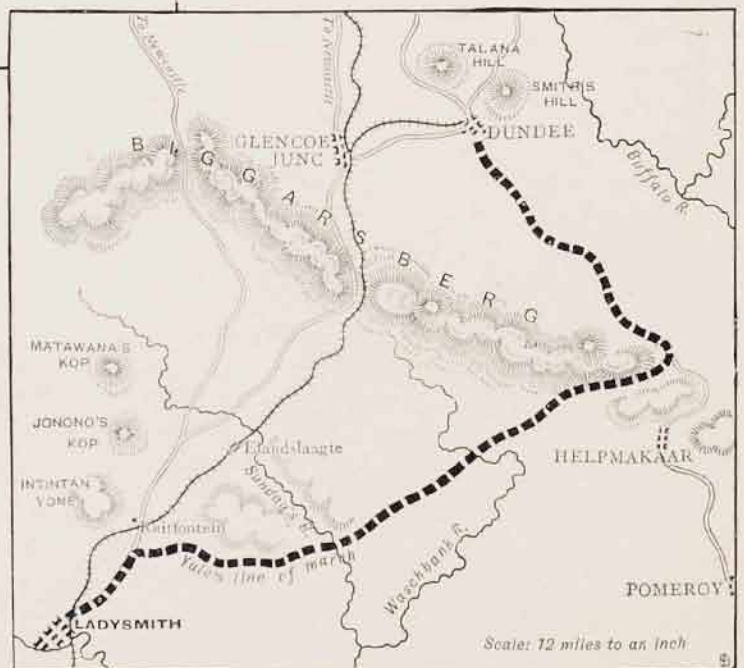
available, was quite impossible.



PLAN OF THE ACTION AT RIETFontein.

lost their colonel and 63 men killed, wounded, or missing. As the morning wore on there was difficulty in preventing what had been intended only for a skirmish growing into a furious pitched battle. At last, about 1 p.m., the welcome news arrived that General Yule's column was near enough to be safe. It had heard the roar of the firing, and was hurrying towards the field to co-operate. Keeping in touch with Yule, General White withdrew his men and marched back to Ladysmith. The British loss was heavy, considering that this was little more than a skirmish, and that no assault on the enemy's position was delivered: 12 were killed, 104 wounded, and 2 missing. The Boers, probably, suffered to about the same extent.

The enemy in turn endeavoured to achieve the same manœuvre against our forces, and the attempt was not repulsed without difficulty or loss. The firing was very heavy, yet the British troops, it was noticed, shot as steadily and as accurately as the Boers, showing how vast an improvement had been effected in the training of our army since the dark days of 1881. As for the Boer artillery, its aim was magnificent, but its projectiles were bad. The British infantry, covering the British gunners, suffered heavily. The Gloucesters, in the fore-front of the battle,



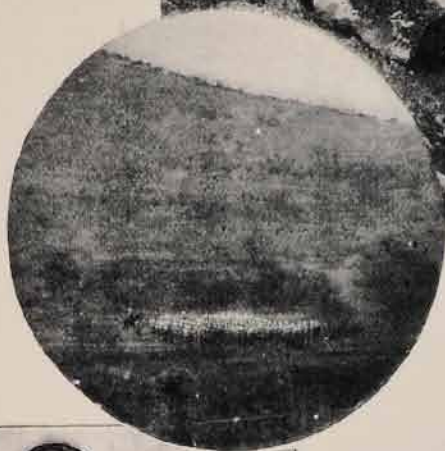
MAP OF GENERAL YULE'S MARCH FROM DUNDEE TO LADYSMITH.

Three days passed before further operations were undertaken. General Yule's men were wearied with hard marching: General White's with continuous marching, counter-marching, and fighting, and rest had to be given to the infantry. The enemy used the time to bring down troops from the north; Joubert's thousands and his powerful artillery took post round the north and east of Ladysmith; other thousands from the Free State continued the line of investment to the west and south. On the 27th they showed with men and guns near Pieter's, on the railway between Ladysmith and Colenso, with the obvious intention of cutting General White's communications with the rear. Only the efforts of General French with the British cavalry kept them back.

The Boer strategy was of archaic simplicity, but great effectiveness; it



SLOPES OF INTINTANYONE.



ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS AT THE FOOT OF INTINTANYONE THE DAY BEFORE THE BATTLE.

aimed at enveloping the British forces, in small detachments, entrenching Boer commandoes round the British camps, bringing up artillery of the heaviest possible calibre, and then inviting attack. The Boers themselves rarely assaulted. They had infinite patience, and, when once the British were shut in, waited for time and hunger to accomplish the required object.

The Boer tactics.

The town of Ladysmith was badly situated for defensive purposes. It was dominated by two high hills which rose the one to the north-east and the other to the east, known as Lombard's Kop and Bulwana Mountain, four or five miles distant. To the rear of the town was the Klip River, which was fordable except during heavy rains. Here centred the roads and railways from the Transvaal, from the Free State, and from eastern and southern Natal. Here also great quantities of stores and ammunition had been accumulated, in readiness for a forward move. The distance by railway from Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal, was 119 miles; from Durban, the real British base, 189 miles.



GENERAL SIR GEORGE WHITE UNDER FIRE AT ELANDS-LAAGTE.

General White had now to arrive at a most critical decision. He had to determine whether he should hold on to Ladysmith or abandon the place and fall slowly back. It was already clear that the Boers were far stronger than anyone in the British army had supposed. They had heavy artillery, with which the British force was utterly unprovided, and even their field-guns had on

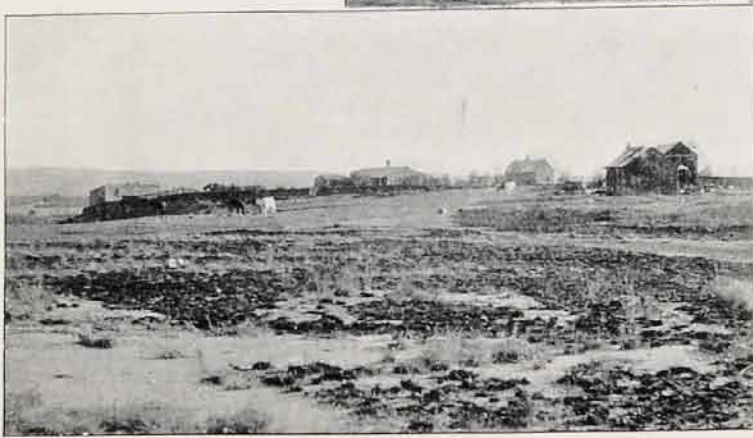
occasion outraged ours. They had fought splendidly; after each battle and each British victory it was said that the "moral effect" would be enormous, yet, nevertheless, the Boers always advanced.

White decides to hold Ladysmith. and appeared to come up smiling. Moreover, certain circumstances had taken the edge off our victories. After Dundee the Boers had captured a great part of our cavalry; and Yule's retreat left them all our wounded of



NEWCASTLE, NATAL.

This little town, near the Transvaal border, was abandoned by the British when concentrating at Dundee and Ladysmith. The late Mr. Escombe, formerly Premier of Natal, was staying here, and was one of the last to leave.



FORT AMIEL, NEWCASTLE.

that battle. After Elandsplaagte had come Rietfontein, in which they had fully held their own. They had overrun the northern wedge of Natal, and were confident of driving the British into the sea.

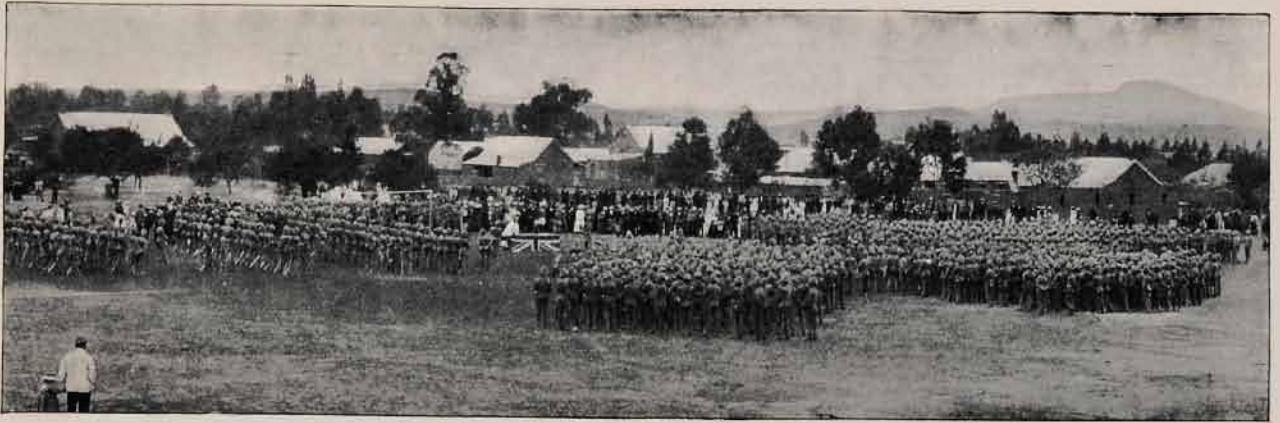
No substantial help could be expected for three weeks; the only reinforcements immediately available were the Border Regiment and the Rifle Brigade, at the most 1,600 men, which were landing at Durban on their way from Europe. But if General White fell back the moral effect would be very bad, and the difficulty of preventing the enemy from overrunning the centre of Natal and plundering the loyalists very great; moreover, the vast accumulation of British stores and ammunition at Ladysmith would have to be either destroyed or abandoned if our army retreated.

General White, therefore, decided to hold the town. He had now under his orders about 12,000 men and 48 guns — 36 15-pounders of the field artillery and 12 7- and 9-pounders of little value. Of the total force about 2,400 were mounted men. Against these the Boers had from 25,000 to 30,000 men and a large number of guns. They were, to a man, mounted, and good horsemen; many of them knew the country; all were accustomed to the peculiar warfare which the terrain in South Africa renders necessary.



HOLLANDERS IN POSSESSION AT FORT AMIEL, NEWCASTLE.

These Hollanders must not be confused with the Boers; they are natives of Holland in the pay of the Transvaal Government. The photograph shows a party of them in occupation of Fort Amiel, after the abandonment of Newcastle by the British.



A SUNDAY SERVICE IN LADYSMITH.

CHAPTER III.

THE INVESTMENT OF LADYSMITH, MAFEKING, AND KIMBERLEY.

The Boers seize the heights dominating Ladysmith—The Battle of Farquhar's Farm—White withdraws to save the town—The guns brought off—Dramatic advent of the Bluejackets—Loss of Carleton's column—Neglect of precautions at Ladysmith—The town beleaguered—Condition of affairs on the Western Frontier—Doubtful attitude of the Schreiner Ministry—First act of war—Attempts to capture Mafeking—The Boers seize Vryburg—Kimberley isolated—Bombardment commenced—Stormberg district abandoned by the British—Attitude of the Cape Dutch.

On October 27 a strong British column marched out of Ladysmith and reconnoitred. The enemy, being not as yet in sufficient strength, or possibly anxious to draw the British on, fell back, and there was nothing more than an interchange of shots.

There was a lull until the 30th. Between the 26th and 29th the Boers, repeating their Dundee tactics, seized the ridge to the north of Ladysmith known as Pepworth

The Boers seize the heights dominating Ladysmith.

Hill, about 7,000 yards from the town, and placed two or more heavy 40-pounder siege guns in position there. They also brought up a large number of smaller guns—Schneider-Canet quick-firers and Maxim automatic 1-pounders—from the ample store with which the gold wrung from the Outlanders had provided them, and



MARITZBURG HOTCHKISS GUN DETACHMENT.
Shut up in Ladysmith; Lieut. Walker in command.



NATAL CARBINEERS WITH MAXIM GUN.

This picture represents the detachment under Lieut. Gallway in camp at Ladysmith. They were taken prisoners in the battle of Dundee.

throwing up entrenchments, further strengthened a naturally strong and commanding position.

On October 29 a war balloon which had just arrived from England was sent up, and the Boer positions were reconnoitred. Late in the evening the greater part of two battalions of infantry—the Gloucesters and Dublin Fusiliers—under Colonel Carleton, with a mountain battery, a total of about 1,200 men, were detailed to move out, under cover of

night, to seize two hills close to the Klip River and six miles to the north of Ladysmith, thus securing the British left for next day's work. The only enemies expected to be encountered in this direction were the Free Staters, who were reported to be in no great force.

To the right of Carleton was Colonel Ian Hamilton with three battalions of infantry, the Imperial Light Horse, and three batteries. He took post facing Pepworth Hill during the night. On his right again was a brigade, five battalions strong, under Colonel Grimwood, with three batteries, facing the Boer position at Farquhar's Farm, to the north-east of Ladysmith.



LADYSMITH CAMP IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WAR.



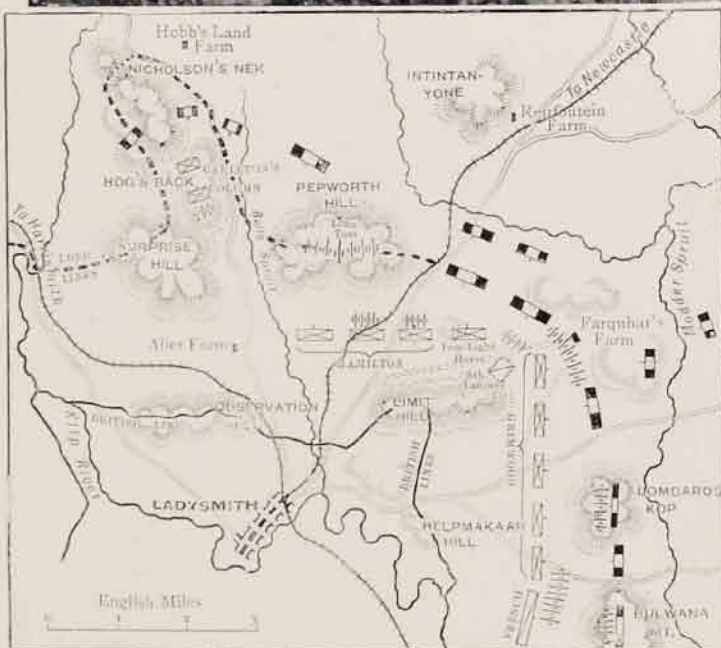
(Photo by H. Nicholls, Johannesburg.)

THE DEVONS IN ACTION.

This photograph was taken on the battlefield, and represents the Devonshire regiment in a position facing Pepworth Hill, firing from behind boulders, which form an effective cover. One of the men, having just fired, has risen to watch the effect of his shot. The photograph demonstrates the absence of smoke from modern rifle-fire.

Last of all, on the extreme British right, was General French with the whole of the cavalry. Only a skeleton force was left behind to defend Ladysmith. The main attack was to be delivered by Hamilton's brigade upon Pepworth Hill.

Dawn came, and with it an unpleasant accompaniment in the shape of shells from the big Boer 40-pounders, which fell in the town. The battle opened when the British troops were noticed by the enemy to be



PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF FARQUHAR'S FARM.

drawn up in the appointed positions. In front of our men were green swelling hills or frowning ridges, the skylines broken only by the enemy's entrenchments and here and there by their field-guns. The whole country, indeed, seemed alive with their hosts, which held in ample force the horseshoe-shaped heights dominating Ladysmith from the east and north-east.

The enemy's field artillery opened from Pepworth Hill and Farquhar's Farm upon the British infantry; the British artillery kept under cover and did not reply till the hostile guns, which fired smokeless powder

The Battle of Farquhar's Farm.

and which were therefore most difficult to find, had been located. Then at last our batteries got to work, and a fierce duel began. The ridge and the plain below were both one sheet of flame. The main Boer artillery position was soon a mass of small clouds of smoke from our bursting shrapnel. About 6.50 the enemy's guns seemed to be silenced, or fired only spasmodically, whereupon our guns shelled the gullies of the heights in which the Boer marksmen lay for shelter, driving them back. Gradually our artillery fire also abated, and the battle paused.



WAR BALLOON IN USE AT LADY-SMITH.



GENERAL JOUBERT, COMMANDING THE FORCES OF THE TRANSVAAL.

General Pietrus Jacobus Joubert, born at Cango, Cape Colony, 1833; State Attorney of Transvaal, 1867; acted as President during Kruger's absence in Europe, 1881-84. Has twice been an unsuccessful candidate for the Presidency.

From the column on the left no news had arrived. About six heavy firing was heard in its direction: an hour later came the crash of a furious fusillade, in which the growl of the Maxim could plainly be heard. To this quarter was shortly afterwards seen moving a very strong commando of the enemy. It was observed pouring down a far-off hill "like a colony of ants on the march." The roar of firing on the left grew louder, and the battle broke out with renewed vigour over all the wide sweep of the quadrant. The Boer guns opened once more; it was clear that the enemy had been strongly reinforced. They showed all round in such strength that the Imperial Light Horse on the left centre had to fall back, and the British artillery in this quarter changed position slightly to meet the oncoming foe. A heavy fire checked the Boer advance, but could not defeat it; to prevent the main British force from being cut off from its left, our troops were thrust forward, battalion by battalion, until every available man was in line.



A BOER COMMANDO.

When occasion arises for a Boer commando to be called out, the Field Cornet or local magistrate rides round to the neighbouring farms and commanders, *i.e.*, orders out the farmers into the field. They go out just as they are, with rifle, bandolier, their horse, and a piece of biltong, or dried meat, in their pocket. A collection of some two or three hundred farmers from one particular district is termed a commando.



A BOER SHARPSHOOTER

[R. Calton Woodville.]

[By permission of H. Graves & Co.

Two British batteries pushed forward into the open and dosed the Boer 40-pounders and other guns on Pepworth Hill with shrapnel so effectively that they almost ceased fire.

On the right, however, fresh Boer weapons were each minute coming into line, and the artillery preponderance hitherto on our side was threatening to pass from us. The enemy's automatic 1-pounder guns were particularly annoying, directing their stream of small but deadly shells upon our guns and our infantry. Yet so splendidly was the British artillery handled that once more it got the better of the foe, checked the counter-attack on the right, and was paving the way for an infantry assault upon the Boer position at Farquhar's Farm when suddenly the most disquieting news arrived from Ladysmith.

This was an urgent message from Colonel Knox, in command of the town, to Sir George White, stating that the enemy appeared to be on the verge of making a determined attack on Ladysmith



John Charlton.]

BRINGING OFF THE GUNS.

and the British camp from the north. Without doubt the Boers advancing in this quarter were the commandoes which should have been held back by Carleton's unlucky column. **White withdraws to save the town.** General White could do nothing but retreat: there was only a mere handful of men in Ladysmith. But to withdraw his forces from a pitched battle, in the presence of a vastly superior enemy, was no easy task.

The battlefield at this moment was a strange spectacle. Though hill and plain spouted continuous flame, a man standing midway between the two armies could have discerned little. It was not the battle of the past with masses of men theatrically manoeuvring amidst clouds of smoke, but the battle of to-day—of the future—a weird, empty-looking smokeless field, where only the fearful din of hidden guns and rifles, of Maxims, Nordenfelts and Hotchkisses, of bursting shell and shrapnel, told of the presence of two combatant peoples. The troops, even the guns, were, as far as could be, behind cover, whence it followed that the effects of the artillery fight, though nerve-shaking enough, were incommensurate on either side with all the tremendous sound and fury. The air was thick

with splinters, shells, shrapnel, and bullets, yet this mighty storm burst for the most part ineffectually on the veldt.

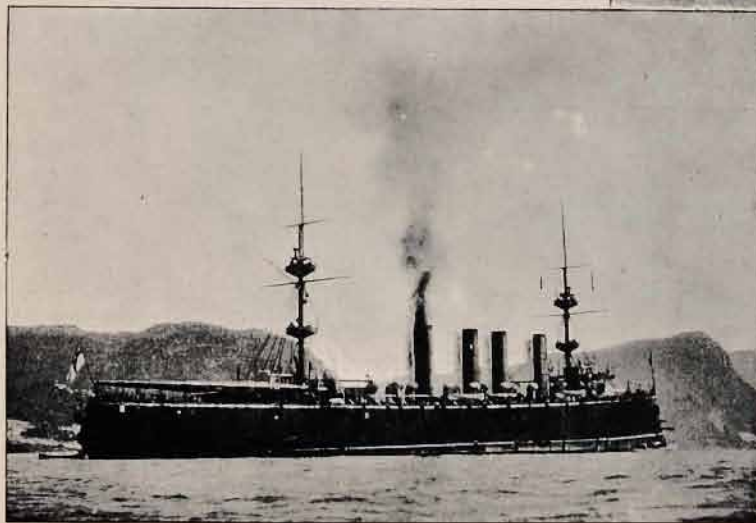
The two battalions of the King's Royal Rifles were the leading infantry, and as they were ordered to retreat came under a heavy fire, and were thrown into disastrous confusion. Indeed, for a moment it looked like complete rout, and had the enemy snatched his oppor-

The guns brought off.



NAVAL 45-POUNDER (47) GUN.

This is one of the guns of H.M.S. *Doris*, mounted on Captain Scott's improvised carriage, and brought from the Cape to Durban by H.M.S. *Powerful*. The photograph was taken while the gun was on its way to the front.



[From a Photograph taken at Simonstown.

H.M.S. "POWERFUL."

Brought half a battalion from Mauritius, on Captain Lambton's own initiative, when proceeding from China to the Cape; and furnished the contingent which arrived so opportunely at Ladysmith during the battle.

For half-an-hour they held their ground; one limber was shattered; five out of six horses of one gun were killed. Then, at last, the five intact guns fell back. Nor was the sixth gun abandoned. Bombardier Saunders, Gunners Bright and Barron, and Drivers Macpherson, Darcy, and Stoddard, under Captain Thwaites, dashed back with a team and limber from the waggons and under a tremendous fire brought off the last weapon.

This half-hour's delay was the salvation of Ladysmith. Already one of the two battalions

tunity that would have been the end of the Ladysmith army. But with superb devotion the 53rd Field Battery galloped forward and prepared to offer the last sacrifice which artillery can make—to save the army at the cost of its own annihilation. The automatic Maxim shells rained upon the guns; a cloud of dust hid the 15-pounders from view; but the gunners stuck manfully, heroically to their task under a terrible cross-fire.



LANDING AT DURBAN OF REINFORCEMENTS FOR LADYSMITH.

The enthusiasm of the loyal colonists found expression in their lavish gifts to the soldiers and sailors on the way to the front. Cigars, pineapples, pillows, and ladies' visiting cards were pressed upon them, the last with promises to send anything which might be needed, "on demand."

from Durban, the 2nd Rifle Brigade, had arrived by train and deployed upon the battlefield, a most welcome help and reinforcement. The 53rd and 13th Batteries covered the retreat in the centre, the one withdrawing while the other shelled the enemy. As the town of Ladysmith was neared it was discovered that the report of an intended Boer attack had been either unfounded

or premature. But the Boer 40-pounders on Papworth Hill were pouring a galling fire into the town. Help was needed to keep these long range guns in order, for none of our field artillery weapons could drive their projectiles the required distance. Help was dramatically forthcoming.

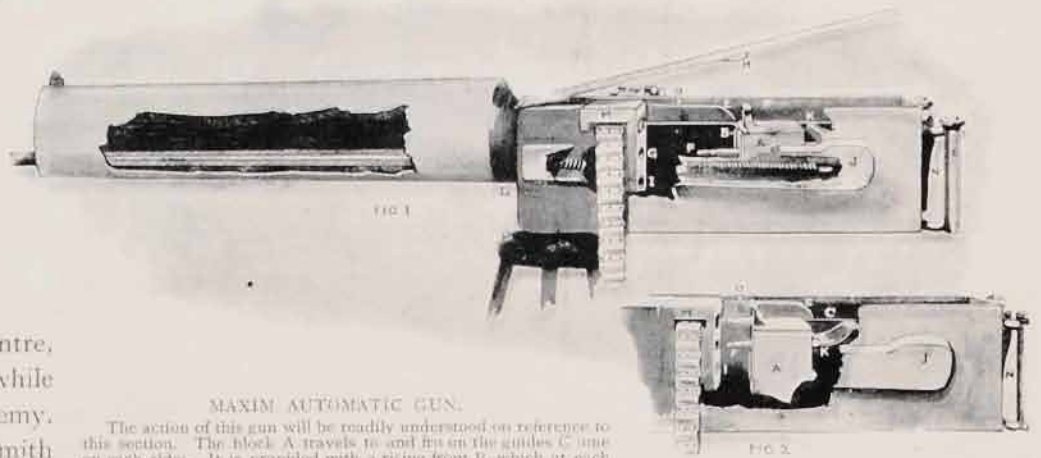


LYDDITE SHELL

As fired by the large naval guns at Ladysmith. a detonating pellet; b weight; c guncotton priming.

MAXIM AUTOMATIC GUN.

The action of this gun will be readily understood on reference to this section. The block A travels to and fro on the guides C one on each side. It is provided with a rising front B, which at each stroke runs up the inclined plane E, along the upper guide D, and picks up a cartridge from the continuous belt shown just below the letter M. At the next stroke this cartridge F is driven into the orifice G to line with the barrel and fired. The empty case is then withdrawn, and at the next stroke is forced into the orifice J, whence succeeding cases push it on till it drops out at L. The gun is cranked by hand, but when once working the "recal" from the explosion of the cartridge drives the block A back, and the springs K and J then force it forward again. This reciprocating motion is kept up so long as the thumbs are pressed against the springs N. The barrel is surrounded by a cylinder full of water to keep it cool.



But the Boer 40-pounders on Papworth Hill were pouring a galling fire into the town. Help was needed to keep these long range guns in order, for none of our field artillery weapons could drive their projectiles the required distance. Help was dramatically forthcoming.

Early that morning a Naval Brigade, 280 strong, from H.M.S. *Powerful*, under the orders of Captain Lambton, had arrived on the scene, bringing two Maxims, four long naval 12-pounders, and two 45-pounders. These weapons had been taken from on board the

Dramatic advent of the Bluejackets.

ships of the Cape Squadron or from the reserve naval stores, and by the ingenuity of Captain P. Scott of the Navy, and Assistant-Engineer Roskrige, had been mounted upon special carriages which would permit their being handled in the field. The sailors had with them a large supply of

lyddite shells—shells charged with the terrible high explosive which had been tried for the first time in war at Omdurman, and which kill, without apparent injury, men fifty yards away from the spot where they burst, by the mere shock of their detonation. The bluejackets had come post-haste, standing on no ceremony, travelling up all night by train from Durban. The big 45-pounders were too heavy and cumbersome to be got into position in the exceeding



SIGHTING A MAXIM GUN.

Photo by Gregory.

In this case the gun is mounted on a galloping carriage. Sometimes it is mounted on a tripod, as shown in the illustration at the foot of page 35.



LADYSMITH AND THE KLIP RIVER.

[Photo by Petros.]

emergency; the 12-pounders, however, at once moved out to the aid of the hard-pressed Natal Field Force.

The sturdy blue-jackets, splendidly led, had whipped one of their guns into position almost before their arrival was known. "Action!" and the breech was opened and closed: "Fire!" and a shell went sailing towards the Boer 40-pounders. Then followed the fearful crash of the common shells. Eight missiles from the Navy gun did the work: the enemy's fire

was stilled; and one more great record was added to the countless achievements of the ever-ready British Navy. Silence fell upon the field, and it was possible to number the slain.

In this battle, known as that of Farquhar's Farm, the British losses on the centre and right were about 60 killed and 240 wounded.

The afternoon wore on and no news came in from Carleton's column on the left. Disaster had evidently befallen it, for stragglers and wounded brought in during the morning stories of an extraordinary stam-

pede of
 mules
 during
 the night, which had thrown the little force into complete confusion.

What had happened was as follows. The column started at 10.30 p.m., with the Royal Irish Fusiliers leading, the six mountain guns and 208 mules in the centre, and the Gloucesters bringing up the rear. The night was very dark, but through the darkness could be heard the ominous sound



[Photo by H. Nicholls, Johannesburg.]

ARTILLERY RETURNING TO LADYSMITH AFTER THE BATTLE OF FARQUHAR'S FARM.
 The wagons on either side of the street were loaded with ammunition and commissariat for a three or four days' fight. Owing to the disaster at Nicholson's Nek they never went into the field. The red-cross flag was flying from the Town Hall, which had been turned into a hospital.

of the snapping of breech-blocks on either flank, and occasionally the clear ring of a dropped rifle, indicating that the enemy was close at hand. Nearing the point which was to be seized the column had to make its way through a defile.

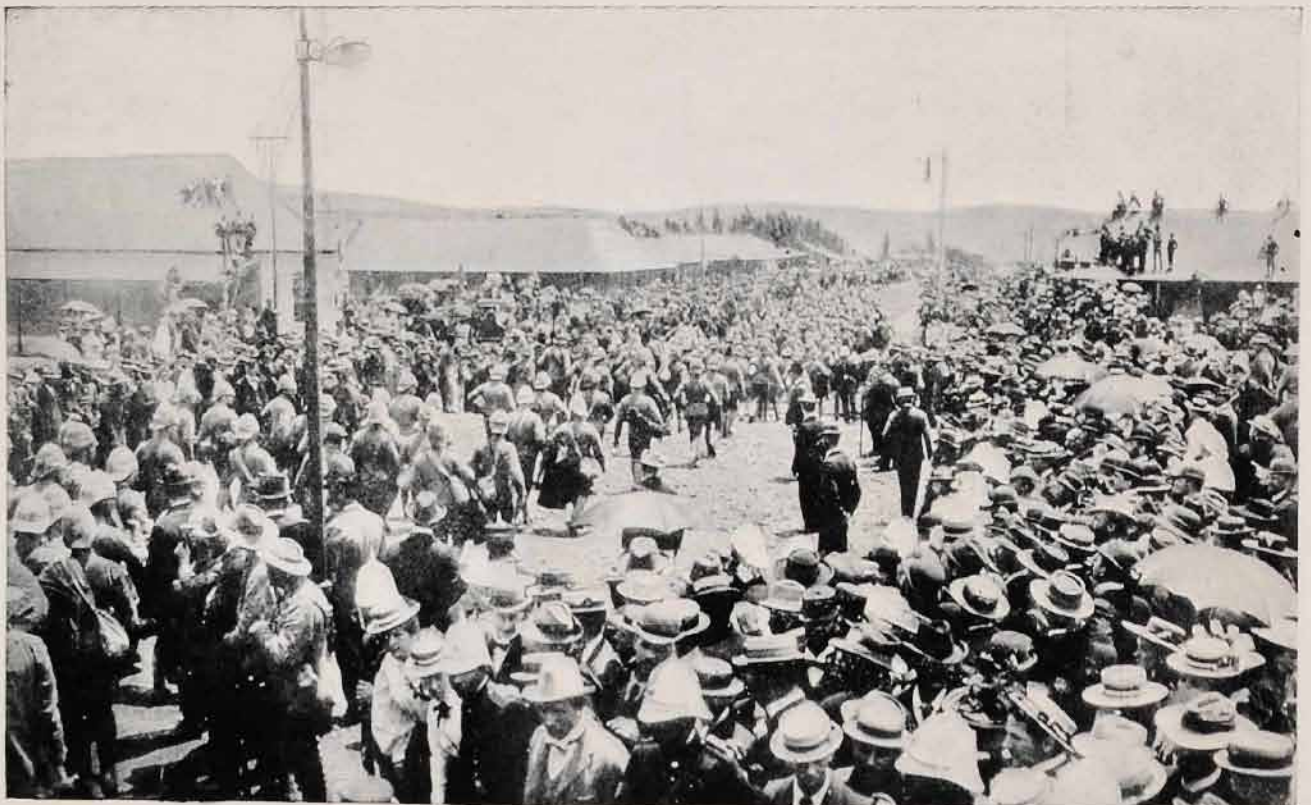
While in the midst of this defile a shot was suddenly fired, and great boulders were rolled down from the precipitous mountain walls. On this the troops by order lay down and waited. As they were waiting a Boer picket galloped furiously through the midst of our men, and



TRANSPORT MULES AT LADYSMITH.

The stampeding of some of these mules led to the disaster at Nicholson's Nek.

the mules took fright, easily wrenched themselves loose from the prostrate mule-drivers, and bolted back upon the Gloucesters. The Gloucesters in their turn mistook the terrified animals for a commando of Boers and fired upon them, increasing the turmoil and confusion. Nothing could stop the battery mules, and they tore through the ranks, taking with them the animals laden with the reserve ammunition for the infantry. The plight of the column was hopeless; it was in too great disorder promptly to retreat, and when daylight came it seized the nearest position available, some miles short of its original destination. This position was a flat-topped, stony hill, commanded by a ridge to the south, by a kopje to the east, and by two hills to the west, which were speedily occupied by the Boers. The British troops did the best they could; rough breastworks were built of stones and a brave resistance was offered to the terrible fire which the enemy speedily poured in from close range on all sides. But any success was out of the question; it only remained for the officers and men to be shot down till



BRITISH PRISONERS, CAPTURED AT NICHOLSON'S NEK, ON THE ROAD FROM THE STATION TO THE RACE-COURSE, PRETORIA.

they could surrender with honour, or till Sir George White could send them help from Ladysmith.



THE TOWN HALL,
LADYSMITH.

LADYSMITH RAIL-
WAY STATION.

This station was shelled by the Boers while the civilians were entraining to leave the town, but little damage was done.

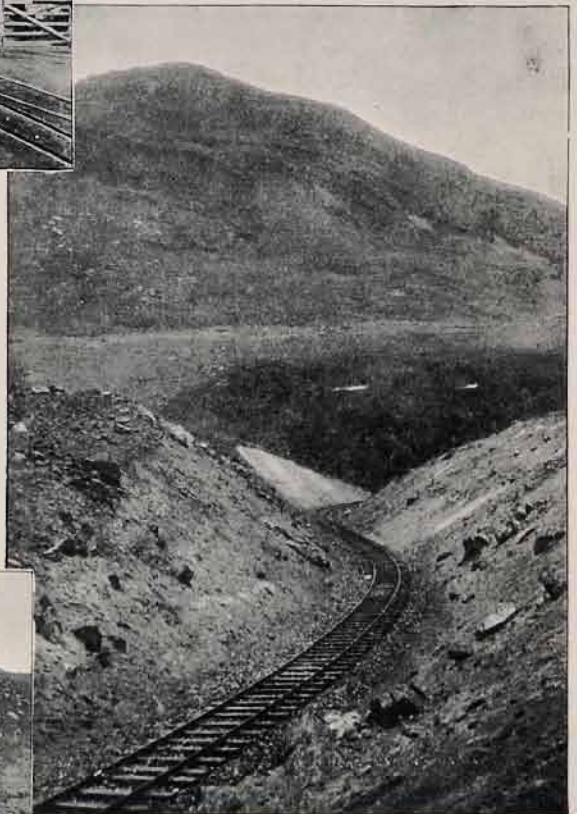


to fix bayonets and die like men, when suddenly

the "Cease fire!" sounded, and it was seen that someone in the British force had raised the white flag. The fury of the subalterns and of the soldiers was indescribable. Their rifles had to be forced from many of the men, and there were not a few who flung themselves down and sobbed at the shame and dishonour. Yet the column was in hopeless plight, and further resistance could only have meant useless slaughter. Twenty-nine officers, 898 men, and four guns of the mountain battery thus passed into the enemy's hands.

About 9 the Boer fire became very galling, and it was almost impossible for the British troops to reply. None of the enemy could be seen: there was only a persistent shower of bullets to indicate his presence. In no direction could shelter be obtained. The bullets came from east, west, north, and south.

Two companies of Gloucesters held the culminating point of the hill to the south. Soon after 9 they were driven back by the enemy's fire, when a party of Boers climbed to the position and swept the plateau at very close range with their rifles. Shelter was sought by the British soldiers upon the reverse slope of the hill, but even here they were found and shot down by the rifles of the enemy. Orders were given to the Irish Fusiliers



A CUTTING ON THE NATAL RAILWAY, NEAR
LADYSMITH.



THE LAST MAIL-TRAIN OUT OF LADYSMITH

Of the four guns, however, two were useless. About 150 men in all, many wounded, escaped into Ladysmith with tidings of the disaster, and 86 more, all wounded, were under flag of truce brought into the British hospitals. The killed on the field of battle numbered 52.

As the result of this defeat, it became certain that Ladysmith must stand a siege. Yet even now the town was not emptied of civilians, as it should have been, though all non-residents, who were for the most part spies, were ordered to take themselves off. The cavalry, who would be useless in a siege, were not sent south. The railway to the north of Ladysmith had not been destroyed, but was allowed to fall into the hands of the Boers intact, so that they were able to bring up from Johannesburg and Pretoria stores, munitions, and guns. This was a very serious mistake, as the Boers' weakest point was

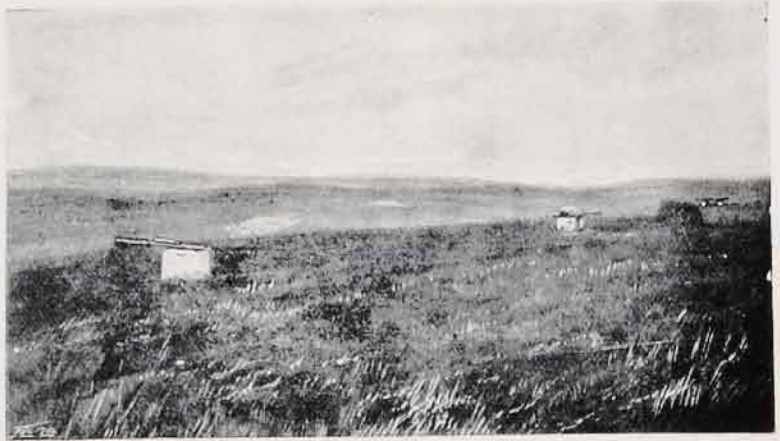


Photo by Capt. Lascelles Davidson.

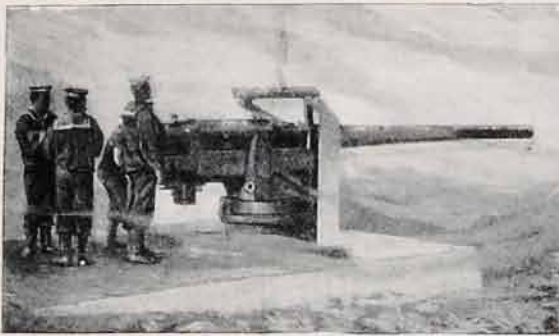
DUMMY GUNS SET UP BY THE BRITISH TO DRAW THE ENEMY'S FIRE.

their transport; with the railway in their hands they were able with ease to maintain the siege.

In other directions there was an unfortunate amount of carelessness. For instance, on November 2 a Boer ambulance containing British wounded was allowed to enter the town, and was not immediately taken charge

Neglect of precautions at Ladysmith.

of by the British medical staff. It was afterwards discovered that the driver was a foreign artillery officer in the Boer service, who used his opportunity to examine the weak points of the town. This ruse was certainly unjustifiable, but steps might



4 1/2-INCH NAVAL GUN, AS MOUNTED FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES.

NAVAL DETACHMENT WITH MAXIM GUN ON TRIPOD STAND.

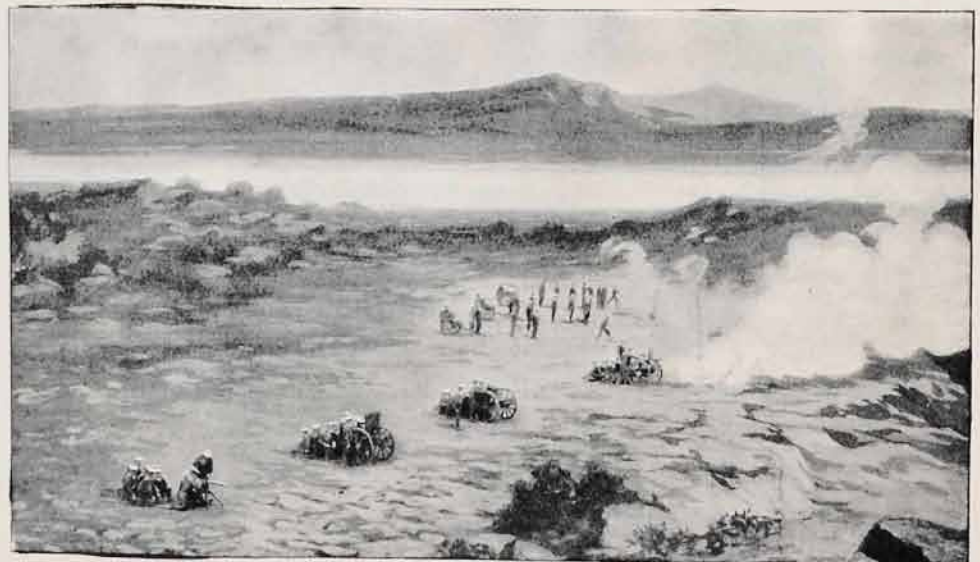


well have been taken to guard against it, for our generals knew by this time the character of the enemy. There were other grave abuses of the Red Cross flag; on October 30 the Boers masked one of their laagers with an ambulance, and on the 31st they built an emplacement for a gun under shelter of the sacred emblem.

On the night of the 31st all preparations for

a siege were made. Earthworks were constructed by the garrison, the naval 4 1/2's placed in the best position, and ammunition and stores distributed at various points wide apart so as to be safe from fire.

The town beleaguered.



NAVAL QUICK-FIRING GUN DETACHMENT.



John Charlton.]

NATAL FIELD ARTILLERY DESCENDING THE BANK OF A "SPRUIT" OR STREAM,

November 1 was spent in getting in the wounded, under a flag of truce. Next day the Boers bombarded the town, mortally wounding Lieutenant Egerton, but had one of their laagers



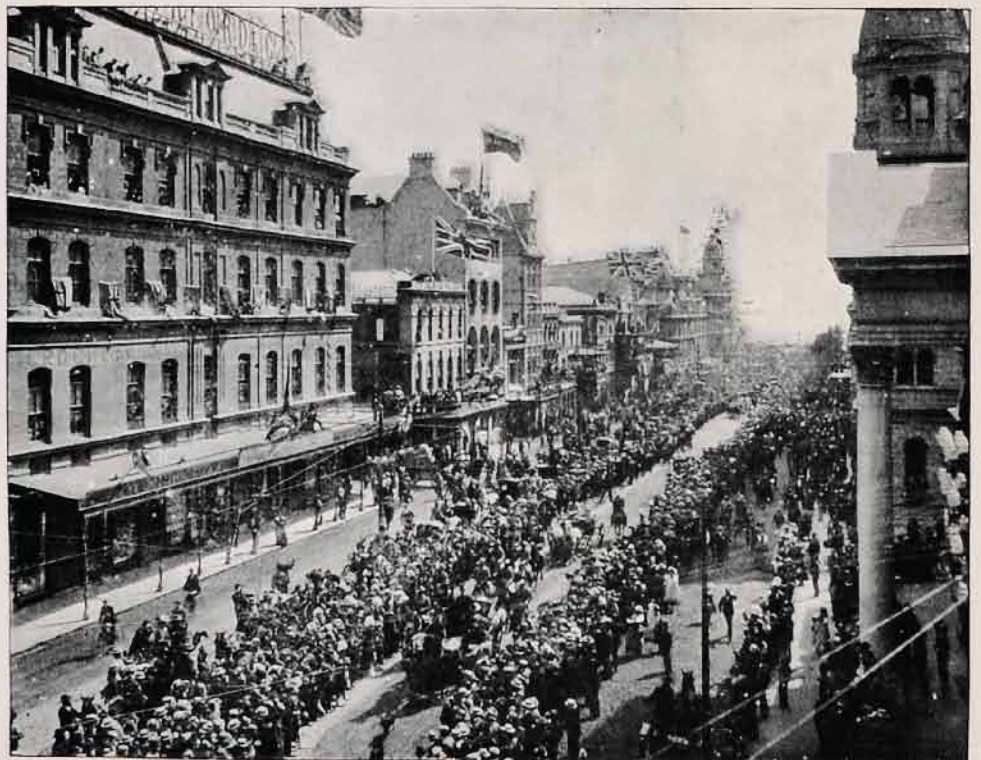
THE ARMoured TRAIN DESTROYED BY THE BOERS AT KRAAIPAN. The destruction of this train was the first overt act of war (see page 49). Kraaipan is a station between Matieling and Vryburg on the Cape to Cairo Railway.

captured by the British cavalry and a battery of artillery. In the afternoon General French left by train for Pietermaritzburg; at Pieters, two stations south of Ladysmith, the Boers were in position with a Maxim 1-pounder and fired on the train. The General only escaped death by lying on the floor of the compartment, as projectiles riddled the side of the carriage. The engine-driver showed great pluck and presence of mind, and this, the last train to leave Ladysmith, got through the enemy's lines in safety. Later in the afternoon railway and telegraph communications were interrupted, and Ladysmith was isolated.

On the 3rd a sortie towards Bulwana Mountain was made by the besieged force, but the Boers were found to be too strong to be attacked. Already the enemy was developing an advance southwards into the heart of Natal; on the 2nd, Colenso, where lay a small British garrison of bluejackets and Dublin Fusiliers, was shelled, and the probability of the detachment being isolated and overwhelmed was so great, that it was, perhaps somewhat precipitately, withdrawn. The great railway bridge across the Tugela fell into the enemy's hands. Here, again, it would have been wise for the British troops to have broken up the bridges instead of leaving them for the enemy's use. It was certain that the Boers, when they should be at last driven back, would not be so obliging.

The situation in Natal was now unfortunate in the extreme. No British reinforcements were within reach. The main army in the Colony was beleaguered in Ladysmith; between the Boers and Durban were only the Colonial troops, at the outside not much over 2,500 strong, a few seamen landed from the British warships, and two regular battalions, the Dublin Fusiliers and the Borderers. A bold, decided advance, and the Boers might yet make good their boast of hoisting the four-coloured flag over Durban.

Meantime on the western frontier of the Boer republics the enemy was hard at work. The British forces in this direction were altogether insignificant. At De Aar, an important railway junction on the line between Capetown and Kimberley, was a handful of British troops guarding a great accumulation of stores for the use of the Army Corps when it arrived. The camp was practically undefended, and was open



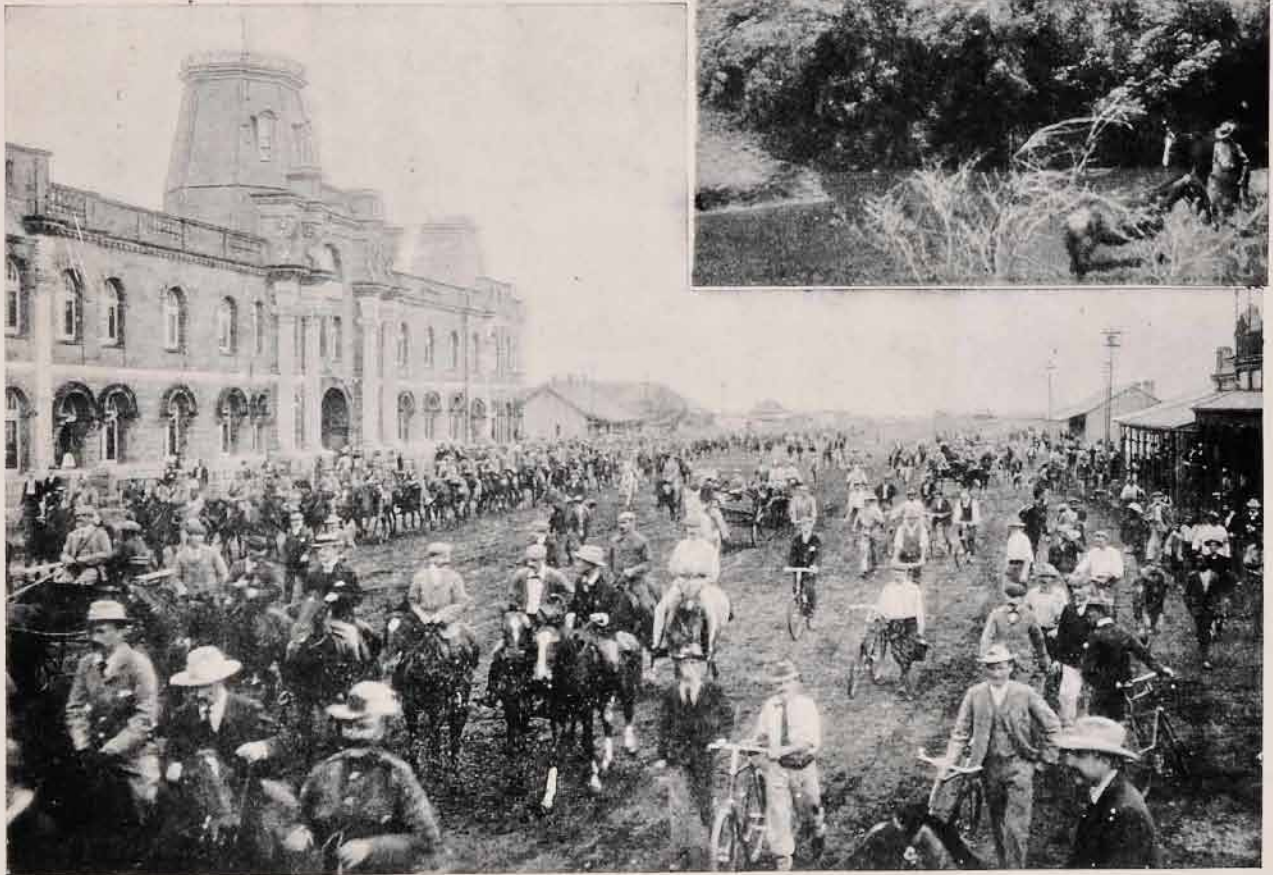
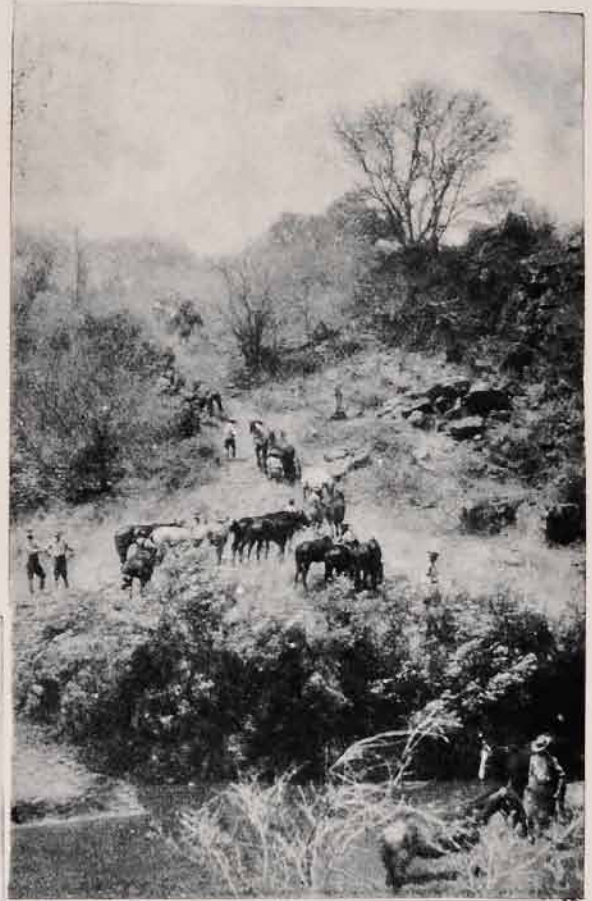
GENERAL BULLER'S ARRIVAL AT CAPETOWN.

General Buller arrived at Capetown on the 31st October, the day after the battle at Farquhar's Farm and the disaster at Nicholson's Nek. He received a most enthusiastic welcome. The photograph represents the scene in Adderley Street.

to a daring attack, for the garrison was too weak to occupy the heights which commanded it. Hope-town, on the Orange River, to the north of De Aar, was occupied by a diminutive force. At Orange River station the great bridge over the Orange River was held by a detachment of bluejackets, and by a handful of infantry entrenched at either end. Beyond that point, which is over 580 miles by rail from Capetown, the line to Kimberley had to be left unguarded. In Kimberley was a detachment of the Loyal North Lancashire battalion, a battery of garrison artillery with some old 7-pounder muzzle-loaders, and a considerable number of volunteers raised and armed by the De Beers Company, which worked the diamond mines. The main difficulty was the provisioning of the place, for there were some 10,000 Kaffir workers in the mines, who were not permitted by the Boers to go to their homes.

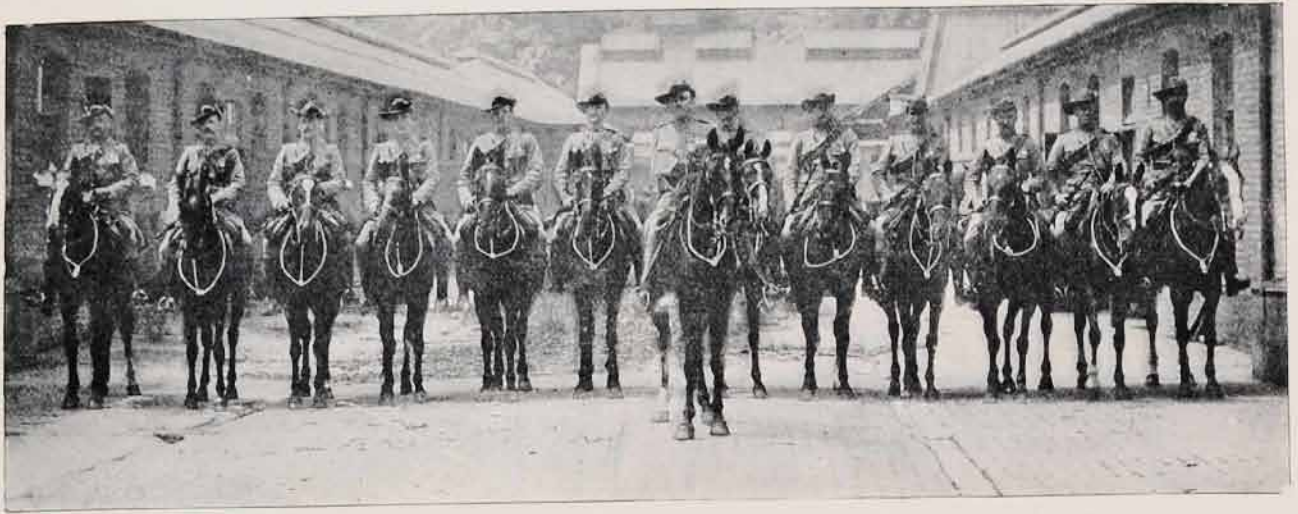
Kimberley lies close to the Free State frontier and 647 miles north of Capetown. In an analogous position close to the Transvaal frontier, 230 miles further to the north, and on the long railway which descends from Rhodesia to the sea, stands Mafeking, with Vryburg half-way between it and Kimberley. At Mafeking had assembled a small British force of

COL. PLUMER'S FORCE WATERING HORSES, ON THE WAY FROM BULUWAYO TO TULL.



COLONEL PLUMER'S FORCE MARCHING OUT OF BULUWAYO.

irregulars, raised by Colonel Baden-Powell, an officer of exceptional dash and capacity, from the splendid material available in Rhodesia, and some detachments of the British South Africa Company's police. Still further to the north and more than a thousand miles from the Cape were other small



RHODESIAN HORSE.

The Rhodesian Horse was originally formed during the Matabele War, in the course of which it did magnificent service. A contingent is here shown under the command of Lieut. Maurice Gilford. A detachment of this regiment proceeded to the relief of Mafeking under Colonel Plumer, and repulsed the Boers on more than one occasion.

detachments under Colonel Plumer, at Palapye, Makloutsi, and Tuli, on the northern frontier of the Transvaal. Between these detachments and Mafeking, between Mafeking and Kimberley, between Kimberley and Orange River, the communications could not be protected, and were certain to be broken. Thus from the first it was evident that Mafeking and Kimberley would have to stand sieges of considerable duration.



[Photo by Elliott & Fry.]

COLONEL R. S. S. BADEN-POWELL.

Colonel R. S. S. Baden-Powell, who is commanding the plucky little garrison of Mafeking, is forty-three years old, and was educated at Charterhouse. He joined the 15th Hussars in 1876, and has seen service in India, Afghanistan, and South Africa. His recently published textbook on the art of scouting has had an enormous circulation. He has also written many books of travel and sport, is a noted amateur artist and actor, and equally at home at scouting, fighting, jousting, polo, big game shooting, hunting, yachting, acting, singing, writing, and painting. Major, 1892; Lt.-Colonel, 1896; Colonel, 1897.

difficult. Mr. Schreiner, the Cape Premier, allowed tons of ammunition and hundreds of railway trucks to enter the Free State just before the war, and seems to have taken no steps of any kind to protect the Colony against invasion. The Cape Mounted Police, a superb body of men, 1,900 strong, the Cape Mounted Rifles, 1,000 strong, and the Cape Volunteers, 4,000 strong, were not drawn upon for defence as they should have been. The volunteers were not properly armed or supplied with ammunition. In

On the southern frontier of the Free State handfuls of troops occupied the important railway junctions of Naauwpoort and Stormberg, and there were British outposts at Aliwal North. It should be explained that three railways run from the littoral of Cape Colony inland to the Free State or the Free State frontier. The first comes up from Capetown to Kimberley by De Aar; the second from Port Elizabeth to Bloemfontein by Rosmead Junction and Naauwpoort; the third from East London by Stormberg to Springfontein on the Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth railway. Lines from De Aar to Naauwpoort and from Rosmead to Stormberg connect the three. Stormberg and Naauwpoort were therefore points of the utmost strategical importance.

The attitude of the Dutch Ministry in power in Cape Colony was

Doubtful attitude of the Schreiner Ministry. so dubious that defensive preparations were rendered most



[Photo by Bassano.]

LT.-COLONEL HERBERT S. O. PLUMER.

Has seen much active service in Africa. He was present at El Teb and Tumul in the Sudan War of 1884, and in South Africa, under Sir F. Carrington in 1896, he raised and commanded a corps of Mounted Riflemen. He commands the gallant little contingent of Rhodesians whose business it is to relieve Mafeking. Col. Plumer has an unusually happy knack of being able to get on well with colonial troops.



VICTORIA HOSPITAL, MAFEKING.

Repeatedly fired on by the Boers during the siege.



FORT AT MAFEKING.

fact, the Cape Ministry appeared to hold to the view that a strict neutrality ought to be preserved by the Colony. There may have been an object not altogether unfriendly in this—to keep quiet the Cape Dutch—or there may have been real disloyalty. But had 5,000 or 6,000 Cape Colonials been available at the outset, Stormberg could have been firmly held, and the Boers prevented from besieging Kimberley.

The Boers opened proceedings on the western frontier by advancing on October 11 under Commandant Cronje from Zeerust to Mafeking, while they broke the

railway both to the north and south. On the 13th the siege began.

First Act of War.

On the night of the 12-13th an armoured train, bringing up two 7-pounder guns and ammunition, which had been sent forward from Capetown, was derailed at Kraaipan, a station forty miles south of Mafeking, and its contents and the party in charge were captured. The engine-driver and one man succeeded in escaping to the south. This was the first example which showed the utter uselessness of armoured trains operating without any support. A rail removed or thrown out of gauge, and they were at the enemy's mercy.



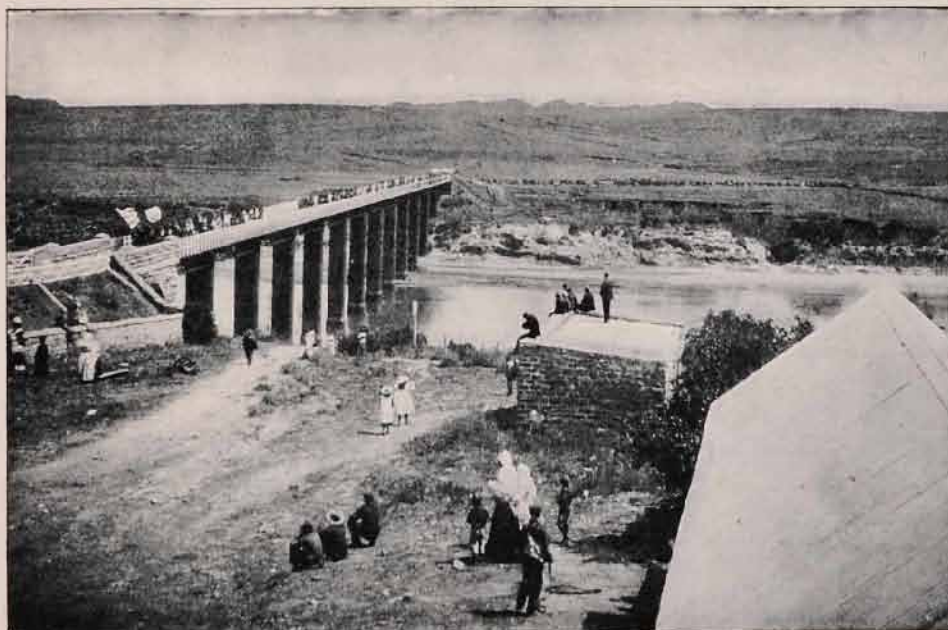
NATIVE VILLAGE, MAFEKING.

The Boers seem to have anticipated an easy and an early success at Mafeking. The resources of the place were small; the garrison all told did not exceed 1,200 men, and was ill provided with artillery. But there was a large accumulation of stores and ammunition, which would at least enable the defenders

to hold out for some months. Cronje had under him 4,000 or 5,000 men with good artillery, and had all the resources of the Pretoria arsenals and magazines behind him. He could draw guns of the heaviest calibre if he wanted them.

On the 14th the enemy were engaged by the garrison, with an armoured train supporting, and were driven back with some loss.

On the 17th the Boers began to shell the town



BOER COMMANDO CROSSING ALIWAAL BRIDGE.

Attempts to capture Mafeking.

with small field guns, but caused no loss. A few houses were slightly damaged, a dog was killed, and that was all. On the night of this day, as the Boers were pushing their trenches dangerously near the British lines, a sortie was brilliantly executed by Captain Fitzclarence with sixty men. He stormed the enemy's position at the point of the bayonet, and did great execution amongst the Boers, who were taken wholly by surprise. Various little sorties took place during the next few days, and Cronje gave courteous notice that he intended to bombard. At the same time he cut off the British water-supply.

On the 24th the Boers placed three heavy siege guns in position, and with them shelled the town, while the smaller weapons kept up a heavy fire. Three bedrooms were wrecked, the gas plant destroyed, and the town set on fire. Next day the bombardment was resumed,

and the enemy massed for an assault, compelling the little British force to leave the bomb-proofs and line the trenches. Day after day these experiences continued till on the 31st an assault was actually delivered upon Cannon Kopje, an outlying hill protected by a small fort. The Boers advanced under cover of the fire of four 15-pounder field guns and of a 5.9-inch siege gun, but were repulsed after a long and desperate struggle, in which the little garrison suffered severely and lost the services of Captains Marsham and Pechell, both of whom were killed.

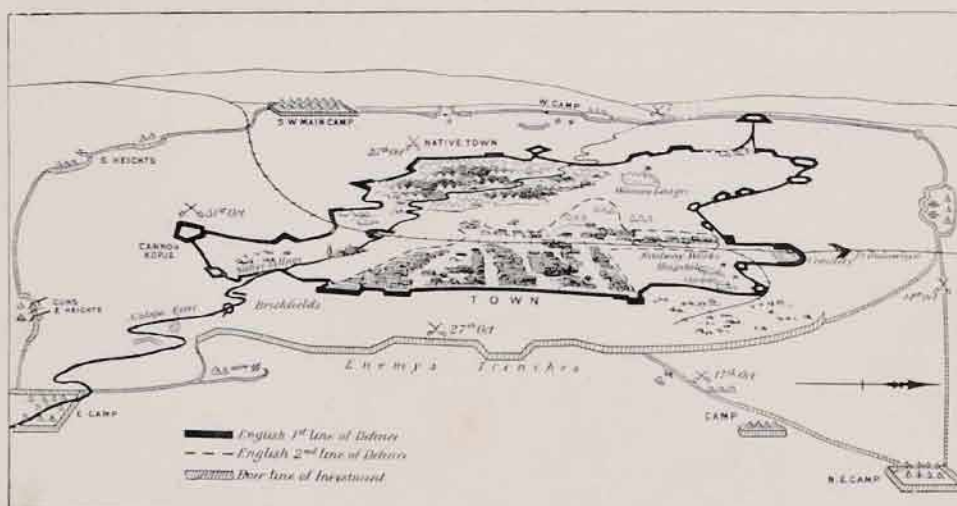


BRITISH PRISONERS SEIZED AT VRYBURG.

The three armed men who are standing up are typical Boers of the district. Their prisoners are—Hollawell, of the *London Daily Mail* and the *Cape Times*, in the centre; Townshend, of the *Rechnantland News*, on the left; Lelyveldt, a compositor, on the right of the group; and a native guide.

To keep his men in good spirits, always a hard task in a long siege, Colonel Baden-Powell held

impromptu concerts, at which fragments of popular operas were given by the ladies and officers in the town. He speedily obtained the complete confidence of his men. No precaution was neglected; everything was foreseen; and in spite of his limited resources he was never beaten. By common agreement between the British and the Boers, Sunday was observed as a day of truce. Once or twice when the Boers were noticed to be



(From a sketch by a British officer, brought through the enemy's lines by a native runner.)

PLAN OF MAFERING,

Showing the British and Boer lines and the spots where fighting took place during the early days of the siege.

digging trenches on that day, "B.-P.," as his men called him, drew Cronje's attention to the fact, and the digging stopped. The Boers, however, persistently shelled the hospital and a convent which the nuns had refused to abandon. These heroic ladies attended the sick and wounded, and took the fullest share in the hard work, setting an example which was above all praise.



ORANGE RIVER BRIDGE.

This bridge, carrying the railway from the Cape to Kimberley and Mafeking, marked the northern position of the British during the early days of the war. Although weakly held it did not fall into the enemy's hands. The photograph shows the camp of the small force which held the northern or exposed end of the bridge.

was withdrawn, as his services were wanted elsewhere, and Commandant Snyman replaced him. The position of the biggest of the Boer guns was altered; the Boer field artillery left for the south.



OORLOG'S SPRUIT BRIDGE, BETWEEN COLESBURG AND NORVAL'S PONT. DESTROYED BY BOERS, November 5.



G. Soper.

(From a photograph by J. E. Nally.)

A LULL IN THE FIGHTING: DINNER-TIME AT MAFEKING DURING THE SIEGE.

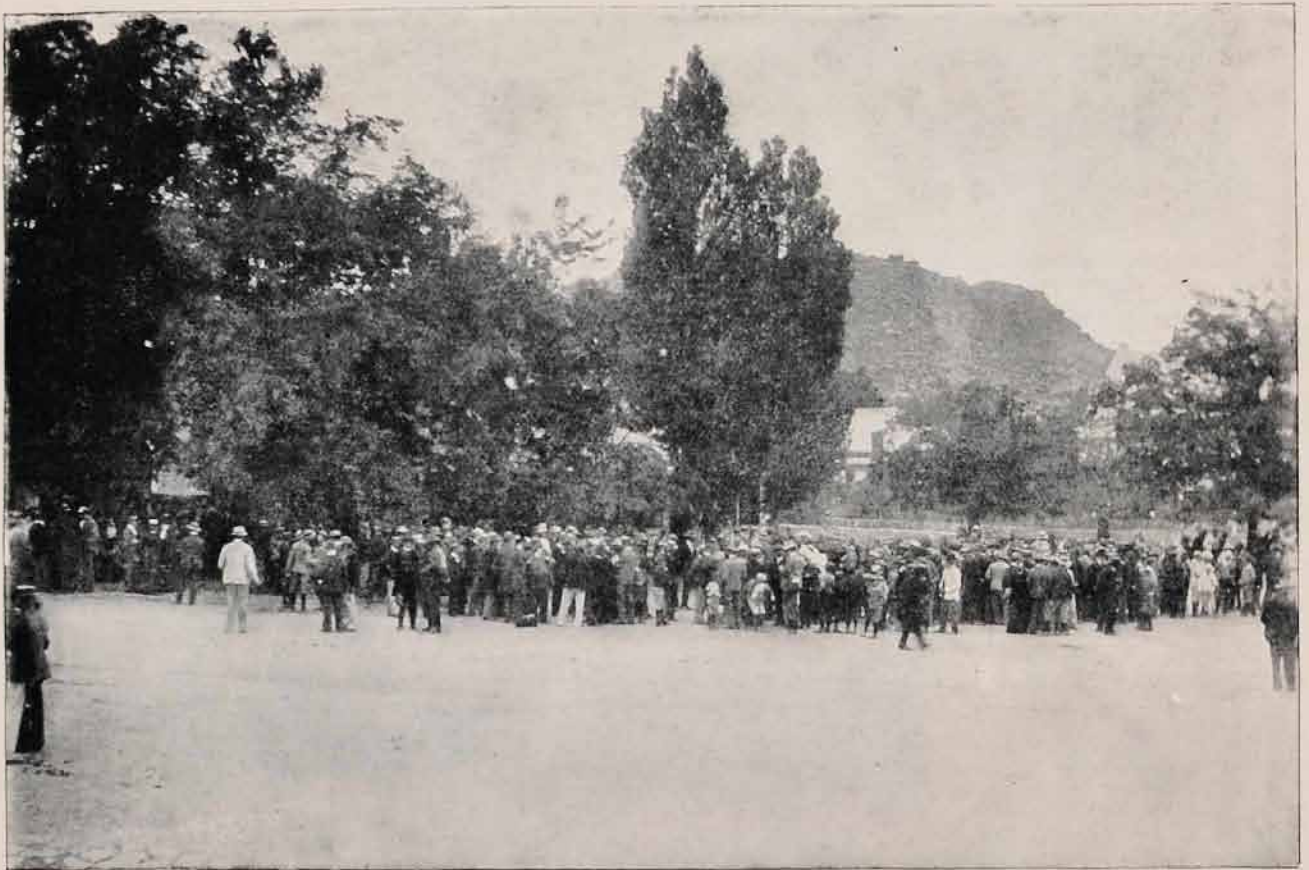
This photograph represents the interior of the "Graveyard Redan," at the cemetery, and is shown on the extreme right of the plan on opposite page.

On November 7 the garrison made a very successful sortie, drawing the Boers under the fire of our ambushed artillery by a feigned retreat. The enemy broke and fled in great disorder, losing heavily. After this an interval of Boer inactivity followed, though the town was constantly shelled. Cronje, with a good number of his men,

The accuracy of the Boer fire was great. Seven successive shots from the 5.9-inch gun struck the front of one of the forts, completely destroying the earthworks, though, strangely enough, there was no loss of life. The convent was hit eight times; a shell struck a hotel and, bursting, moved a billiard table some inches without

injuring those who were playing billiards. Another shell took off the roof of a house in which five men were breakfasting without wounding any of the five.

Turning from gallant little Mafeking to the earlier stages of the siege of Kimberley, Boer forces had assembled at Boshof and Jacobsdal, the one to the north-east, the other to the south of that town, in readiness for a move when President Kruger gave the signal. On October 12 the Jacobsdal commando crossed the frontier, seized Modder River station, telephoned to Kimberley to try to find out the force in the town, and then made all preparations for the destruction of the iron bridge which spans the river at this point. The Boshof commando advanced on Riverton, a station on the railway to the north of the town, drove back a detachment of Cape Police, and looted and wrecked the town.



SCENE AT COLESBERG AT THE READING OF SIR ALFRED MILNER'S PROCLAMATION AGAINST DISLOYALTY.

On the 15th a brush between an armoured train with British troops on board and a small Boer force took place at Spytfontein, ten miles south of Kimberley. Several of the enemy were killed and wounded without any British casualties. On the same day Vryburg, half way between

**The Boers seize
Vryburg.**

Kimberley and Mafeking, was evacuated by the Bechuanaland Police and seized by the enemy. On the 17th the Modder River bridge was destroyed with dynamite, a previous attempt to blow up the bridge-piers having failed. The Boers employed a number of "skilled Continental engineers," whose whereabouts and nationality will have to be inquired into after the war, to accomplish the work. Finally, Belmont station, a few miles north of the Orange River, was occupied by a detachment and fortified, while demonstrations were actually made against Orange River station. Thus Kimberley was thoroughly isolated and cut off from the outer world. The enemy now proceeded to "annex" Bechuanaland to the Transvaal, and Griqualand West to the Orange Free State, and to "commandeer" or expel all residents within these districts. Those who were "commandeered" had to serve against their own country. Most of the British residents took to flight, but a few who remained were seized and impressed for the Boer armies, in violation of all the dictates of international law and of the laws of war.



THE CAPTORS OF VRYBURG.
The Lichtenburg commando, reinforced largely by rebel farmers from Cape Colony.

To protect Kimberley from assault a hedge of thorn bushes was built round the town and earthworks were raised. The enemy, however, at first kept at a very respectful distance, and seemed contented simply to intercept communications. On October 24 a reconnoitring party under Major Turner went out to the north along the railway and came into collision with a small Boer force. Reinforcements were telegraphed for to Kimberley, and a couple of companies of North Lancashires with two armoured trains were sent up the line. The Boers were driven back; they lost Commandant Botha and several men, while the British had 24 killed and wounded. There was great excitement in Kimberley during the fight, crowds pouring out to watch the little British force at its work.

At the end of October the Boer force besieging the town was strengthened by detachments from Mafeking, and probably by recruits from amongst the disloyalists in the Griqualand West district. The investment became closer, and

Kimberley isolated.



[Photo by Bassano.]

RIGHT HON. CECIL JOHN
RHODES, P.C.

Born in 1853; the fourth son of the late Rev. Francis W. Rhodes, Rector of Bishop Stortford. He went to South Africa about 1870 in a poor state of health; eventually settled in Kimberley, and after many years of very hard work effected the amalgamation of the various diamond mining interests into the De Beers Company; has been Premier of Cape Colony; conceived and organised the Chartered Company of British South Africa; a thorough and ardent Imperialist, a wonderful man of business, and the builder of Greater South Africa. His personal exertions during the recent siege of Kimberley endeared him to every one in the beleaguered town.



KIMBERLEY MARKET PLACE.

[Photo by N. P. Edwards.]

the enemy began to show more daring. On November 1, either by accident or by one of the enemy's shells, the dynamite stores of the De Beers Mining Company were exploded, causing a fearful shock and great alarm in the town. On the 7th, after two days' notice had been given, the bombardment of Kimberley began. About 70 shells, most of them of small size and very inferior quality, were fired by the enemy, but with no other result than to shatter a cooking pot. Amidst general mirth the fragments of this vessel were put up to auction, the best specimens fetching as much as a couple of pounds.

Bombardment commences.

On the southern frontier the Boers remained inactive all October. Small detachments of them were observed at Bethulie, at Norvals Pont, and at the Colesberg Bridge. A larger commando 1,500 strong, with three guns, was noticed drilling and practising on the north bank of the Orange River. At this date 2,500 Boers were watching the Basutos, who, it was feared, would take advantage of the war to wipe off old scores. But owing to the tact and skill of Sir G. Lagden, the British Resident in Basutoland, this tribe of Kafir warriors

Stormberg district abandoned by the British.



Frank Craig.

SEIZING A KOPJE.

was kept so thoroughly in hand that it soon became safe for the enemy to withdraw their commandoes and move them to Norvals Pont and Bethulie. The Boers were further emboldened by the victory of Joubert before Ladysmith on October 30. On November 1 they crossed the Orange River in all directions and in considerable force, their main body making Stormberg Junction, some fifty miles south of the Free State border, its objective.

Stormberg Junction was a point the possession of which was almost vital to the British forces. It was easily defensible, and if lost might be very hard to retake. It commanded the lines of communication between the advance from East London and the advance from Port Elizabeth, so that if it fell into the enemy's hands the eastern portion of Cape Colony would be entirely cut off from the west. Through the later weeks of October it had been occupied by a small naval brigade with guns, and by a detachment of the Berkshire regiment. On November 3, by express orders from General Buller, this little garrison retired and fell back upon Queenstown, farther down the East London



FACING THE BOERS.

[From a Photograph.]

During these weeks there were signs of ferment in all directions in the Colony. The Boers had expected a rising of all the Dutch, and asserted that they had received promises to that effect from the leaders of the Bond or Dutch party at the Cape. Rifles and ammunition had certainly been surreptitiously poured into the Colony from the north and distributed to those whom the Boers thought they could trust. Trains with troops and munitions of war on board were fired upon well to the south of De Aar, and obstructions on many occasions were found placed upon the line. But the general attitude of the Dutch Colonials was a hedging one. They had no real grievance against the Imperial Government, which had given them the fullest measure of self-government, and, though sympathising warmly with the Boers, and sharing to some extent their dream of an independent South Africa under Boer rule, they waited for some big success before irrevocably throwing in their lot with the enemies of the British Queen.

Attitude of the Cape Dutch.

railway. At the same time a skeleton force at Naauwpoort was withdrawn to De Aar. The Boers pushed forward slowly; Aliwal North was occupied and rechristened Oliviersfontein, in honour of the Boer commandant; then they appeared in some force at Burghersdorp, some miles to the north of Stormberg, and destroyed a bridge at Steynsburg, on the line between Stormberg and Naauwpoort Junction. The disloyal farmers of this district crowded in numbers to the Free State flag, and the "commandeering" of British subjects and confiscation of British property went on merrily. It was a terrible time for the loyal Britishers, who had foreseen what was coming, but whose warnings had uniformly been disregarded.



EX-PRESIDENT STEYN.

Martius Theunis Steyn, President of the Orange Free State, was born at Wynburg (about 40 miles N.E. of Bloemfontein) Oct. 2, 1857. His father was a waggon-builder and farmer. He lived an outdoor life during his early years, and at twelve went to school at the Grey College in Bloemfontein. At nineteen he was sent to study law in Holland and England, and returned to his native State when twenty-five. He practised at the bar of the Supreme Court, became Attorney-General and (in 1880) a judge. In 1895 on the retirement of Mr. Reitz, he was elected President. It was not until September 1899 that he definitely threw in his lot with Kruger and the Transvaal Boers in opposition to the British Government.

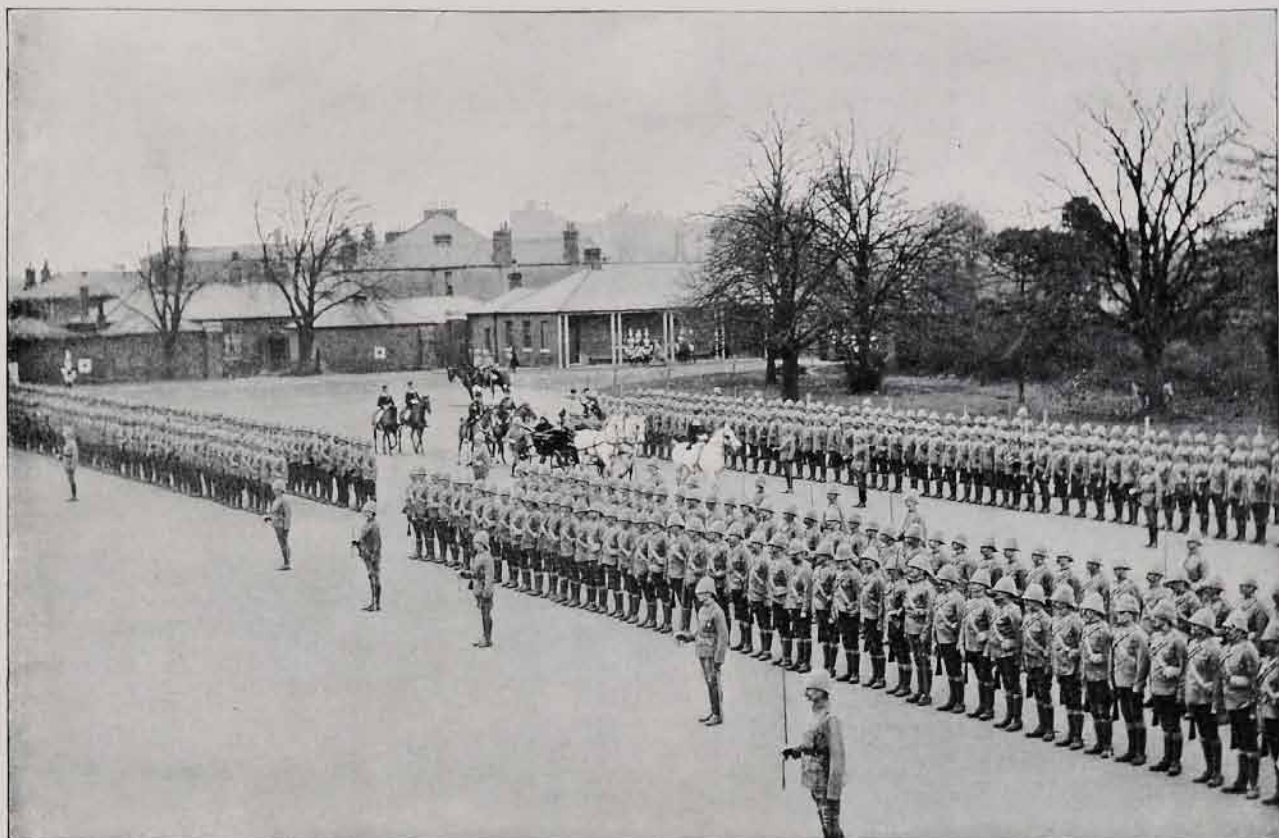


THE PRESIDENCY, BLOEMFONTEIN.
Formerly the official residence of President Steyn.



HER MAJESTY ADDRESSING THE WIVES AND CHILDREN OF THE HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY AND RESERVISTS AT WINDSOR,
November 29, 1899.

After reviewing the 1st Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, Her Majesty, with that unflinching sympathy which since the opening of the war has endeared her more than ever to her subjects, spoke some words of good-choer to the wives and children of the Life Guards, the Blues, and the Reservists, who had that morning left for South Africa.



(Photo by Gregory.)

HER MAJESTY REVIEWING AT WINDSOR THE COMPOSITE REGIMENT OF HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY UNDER ORDERS TO PROCEED TO THE CAPE (November 11, 1899).

The regiment consisted of men selected from the 1st and 2nd Life Guards and the Horse Guards Blue; preference was given to light weights, out of consideration for the horses. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales had bidden the regiment farewell on the preceding day.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DESPATCH OF THE ARMY CORPS.

Dilatoriness of the Government—Full notice to the enemy—Mobilisation begins—Small proportion of cavalry—Loyal action of the Colonies—The greatest Expeditionary Force ever sent over seas—Embarkation of the troops—Food supplies—The voyage out—The plan of campaign—Character of the country—New tactics required—Despatch of the Fifth and Sixth Divisions.



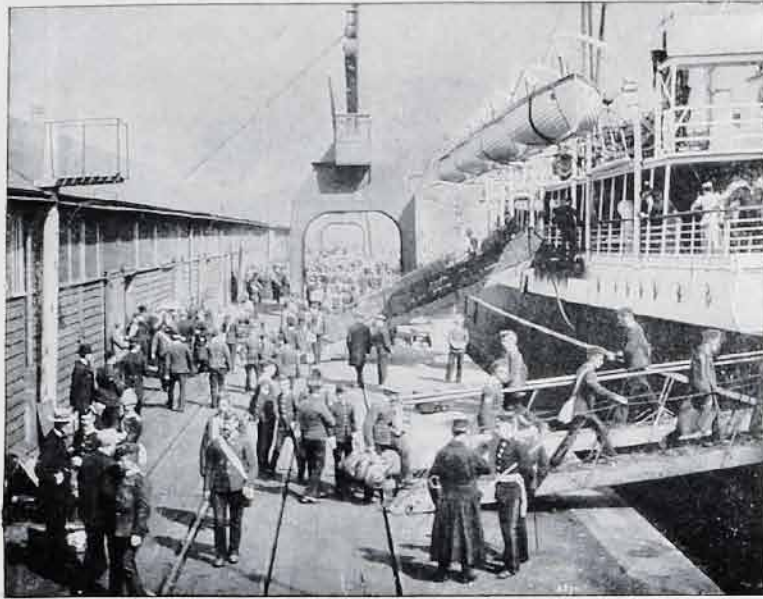
THE first reinforcements for the British army in South Africa to leave England after the tension became acute were three batteries of artillery, which had been ordered out as far back as September 8. Their despatch had been talked of for some months before, but such was the irresolution and timidity of the Cabinet that delay after delay had occurred. Even now, though these guns were most urgently needed, they were not sent out in the fastest procurable transports, but, with a strange neglect

Dilatoriness of the Government.

of military necessities, were placed on board two comparatively slow ships—the *Zibenghla* and *Zayathla*. Both cleared on September 25, but instead of being able at once to proceed, were detained by defects in boilers or by heating of the coal in the bunkers. The *Zibenghla* did not leave the Mersey until October 7; the *Zayathla*, a little more fortunate, got away from Queenstown on September 29. This ill-omened delay is significant in view of later events. Finally the *Zayathla* reached Capetown on October 25 and the *Zibenghla* on the 30th, having occupied, in one way and another, 30 to 35 days on a voyage which could have been accomplished with ease by vessels of moderate speed in 20 or 21 days. It is quite clear that those responsible for providing funds—cheapness was alleged as an excuse for selecting such slow vessels—had completely misapprehended the gravity of the crisis, and forgotten Nelson's great saying, *Five minutes make the difference between victory and defeat*. It is impossible with our British system of administration to discover who exactly was to blame, but clearly someone made a very serious mistake.

The British army had been so organised and prepared by the War Office and successive Cabinets that no considerable body of men was ready to take the field on immediate notice. An elaborate process had to be gone through before any considerable number of squadrons, batteries, and battalions could leave our shores. The immature boys and raw recruits had to be weeded out and replaced by reservists who had left the colours. To call up the reservists the consent of Parliament was necessary, and to convene Par-

Full notice to the enemy.



(Photo by Gregory.)

EMBARKATION OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS AT SOUTHAMPTON.

liament some notice would of course have to be given. The whole system was admirably adapted to ensure our enemies having the very fullest notice and the very fullest warning of our intentions; and, as has been seen already, the Boers were not slow to take advantage of our ineptitude. How we should have fared in like circumstances against a European enemy must be left to conjecture. There would have been no such lethargy as the Boers displayed in the first week of war.

Had the mobilisation been completed, as many urged, in May or June, the Boers could not have gained a month's start, since in May and June the grass upon the veldt is too scanty to permit of extensive movements. They could not well open their campaign until October, when the first heavy rains fall. Yet in the end it may be that the Boers were defeated by our own unsuspectingness. Had our Army Corps been sent out in May or June the Republics would have "climbed down," Britain would have once more gone to sleep, and Mr. Kruger would have waited till we were entangled in hostilities with some great power, and then have struck us with terrible effect.



RESERVISTS AT SOUTHAMPTON DOCKS READING THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE FRONT.

The alacrity with which the Reservists answered to the call to the colours has already been mentioned (p. 17)



(Photo by Gregory.)

OFF!
S.S. German with 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade leaving Southampton.

Rt. Hon. G. J. Goschen. Marquis of Lansdowne.



Marquis of Salisbury. Duke of Devonshire. Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour.

THE COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL DEFENCE.



[Photo by the Stereoscopic Co.]

FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT WOLSELEY, K.P., &c.; COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMY.

Born in 1825, son of Major Garnet Joseph Wolseley; is of Irish birth. Entered the Army 1842; Captain, 1853; Major, 1858; Lt.-Colonel, 1859; Colonel, 1867; Governor of Natal, 1877; Lt.-General and Governor of Cyprus, 1878; Commander of Forces in Ireland, 1890-93; General, 1882; Field-Marshal, 1894. Served in Burmah, the Crimea, at Lucknow, in China and Canada; commanded the Red River Expedition, 1870, the Ashantee Expedition, 1873; the Egyptian Expedition, 1882, and the Gordon Relief Expedition, 1884. As Commander-in-Chief at home he shares with Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary of State for War, the responsibility for the number and equipment of the troops sent out.

The order to mobilise was issued on October 7, but the mobilisation did not officially begin till the 9th. There was—indeed there could be—no hurry over the operation, for transports were not ready, but had to be prepared as rapidly as possible. The total force which it was decided to despatch was as follows:—

	Nom. strength.	Fighting strength.	Guns.
1 Cavalry Division	5,500	4,820	12
3 Infantry Divisions	30,000	26,430	54
Corps Troops	5,000	3,450	48
Line of Communications and Reserves	11,000	11,000	—
	<u>51,500</u>	<u>45,700</u>	<u>114</u>

The "fighting force," it should be explained, includes only cavalry, artillery, and infantry, and excludes engineers, army service corps, and ammunition columns. Thus the total strength of these three arms despatched to South Africa was under 46,000 men. In many of the published estimates the "troops on the line of communications" were placed at 10,000, but they were actually much under 10,000, being only seven battalions strong. To these, 4,000 "reserves at base" had to be added. Thus it would appear that from the first the Army Corps was below its theoretical strength.

Some further facts have to be noted, as they will help to explain certain of the British reverses. Out of this 46,000 men only 5,600 men were mounted—cavalry or mounted infantry. This is a smaller proportion than would be found in any European army of the same size, and was dangerously small in view of the fact that in South Africa we were to

Small proportion of cavalry.

encounter an enemy who was mounted to a man. Nor was the artillery as strong as might have been desired. A German corps of the same size would have had five more batteries, or 30 more guns. In the course of the war our need of artillery was such that batteries had to be improvised from



[Photo by Chas. Knight.]

THE BLACK WATCH LEAVING ALDERSHOT.

Like all the other regiments ordered out, the Royal Highlanders (better known as the "Black Watch") under General Wauchope, who was afterwards killed at Magersfontein, was cheered by enthusiastic crowds as it left for Africa.



[Photo by Gregory.]

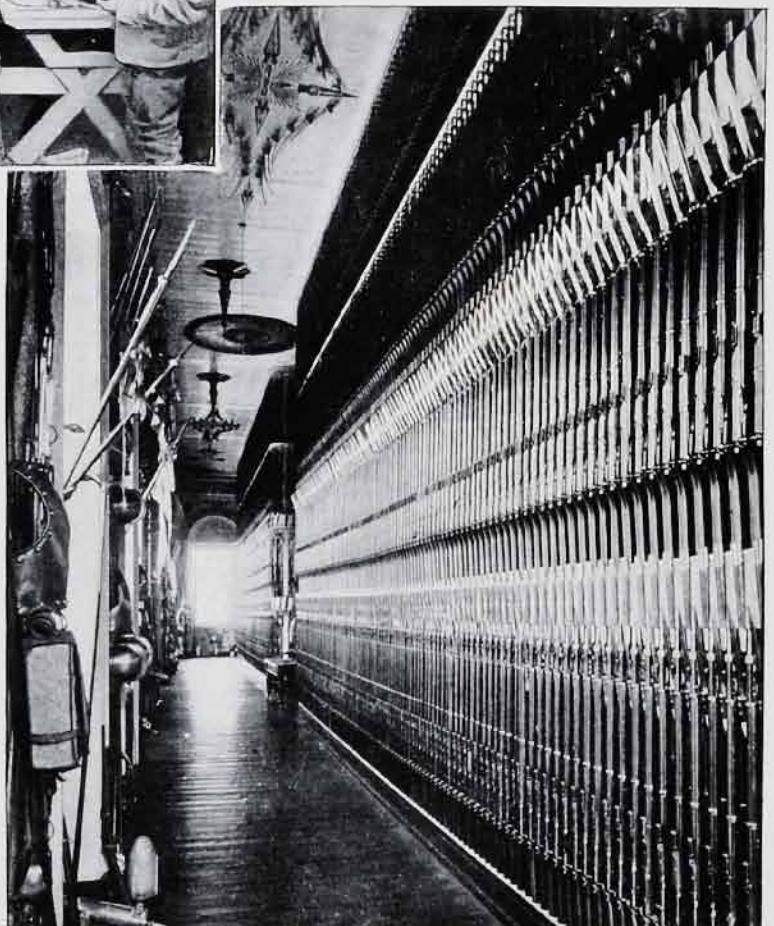
TOMMY AS SEA-COOK. DINNER-TIME ON BOARD A TRANSPORT.

the guns carried on board our war-ships.

To the above totals a certain number of Colonial troops must be added.

Loyal action of the Colonies. Canada, New Zealand, New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria,

Western Australia, South Australia, and Tasmania, all proffered aid, but, unfortunately, the British Home Government did not avail itself to the fullest extent of their tendered assistance. It restricted the contribution of men, in all cases except that of Canada, to small detachments, and did not want even these to be composed of mounted troops. But, though the Colonial forces probably scarcely exceeded 2,000, their appearance upon the scene gave fresh proof of the solidarity of the British Empire, and was a striking earnest of the loyalty of the Colonies.



[Photo by Stephen Cribb.]

STORES TO DRAW UPON. RIFLES IN THE ARMOURY AT PORTSMOUTH.

While Australia and Canada thus responded to the great call of duty, Natal made the most prodigious efforts, to which fuller attention will have to be given hereafter. She placed some 4,000 or 5,000 of her scanty white population in the field, and her sons proved themselves on the field of battle gallant men and skilful soldiers, winning well-deserved tributes from all the British generals. At Durban were many thousands of refugees from the Transvaal, eager to serve against the Boers, but owing to the parsimony of the Home Government indifferent use was made of their enthusiasm. Where we



THE SEND-OFF OF THE CANADIAN CONTINGENT FROM QUEBEC. The photograph represents the Governor-General, Lord Minto, addressing the troops. The French-Canadian Premier, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and the Mayor of Quebec, also addressed them.

might have had 5,000 good volunteers only 1,000 were raised. The Imperial Light Horse, composed almost entirely of Outlanders, speedily made a name for itself, and fought with invariable heroism and devotion.

When the mobilisation in England began the army organisation worked very satisfactorily and smoothly. No such task as the transport

of an

The greatest expeditionary force ever sent over seas.

Force,

50,000 strong, six

thousand miles over

sea had ever before

been undertaken in

the whole record of

military history. In

the Crimean war we

had moved 33,000

men with 3,350 horses

and 54 guns a dis-

tance of about three

thousand miles, and

that was considered

a very great feat.

With each increase

in the distance the

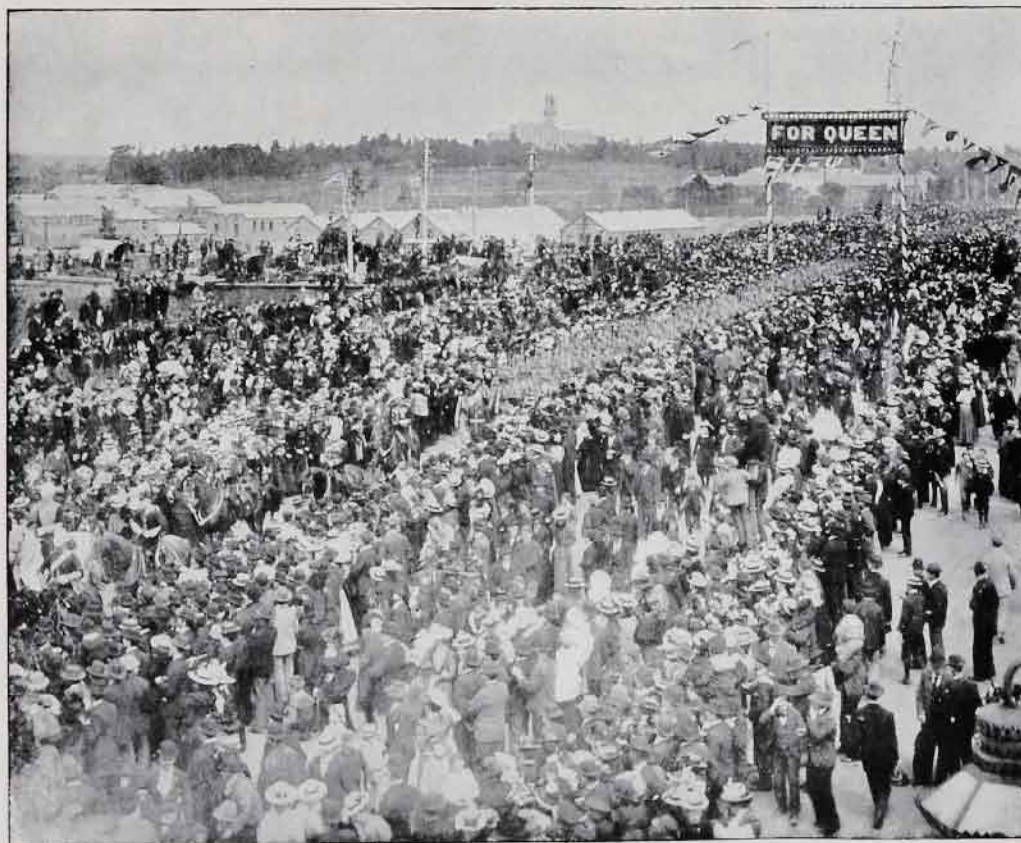
space that must be

allowed man and

horse grows, and an

extra amount of food

and stores must be

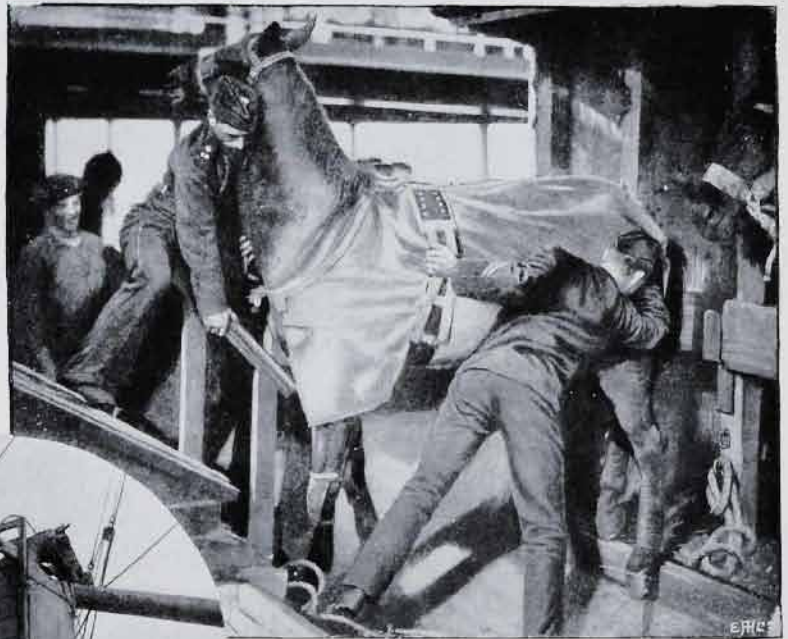


THE VICTORIAN CONTINGENT CROSSING PRINCE'S BRIDGE, MELBOURNE.

As in England, so in all the Colonies, immense crowds gathered to witness the departure of volunteers for the front. This demonstration of the loyalty of the Colonies is certainly one of the most gratifying of the results of the war.

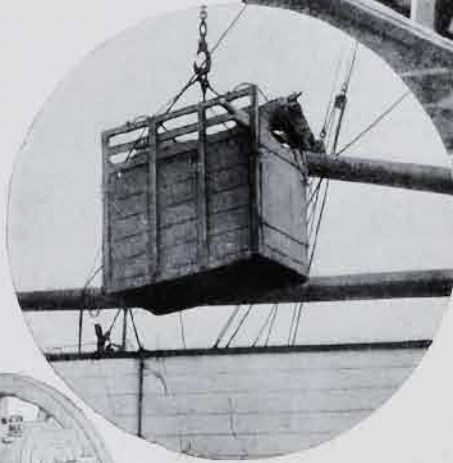
carried. For very short voyages of a few hours or less one man can be shipped for each ton of the vessel's displacement. For such a trip a steamer like the *Britannic* could carry 5,000 or 6,000 men. Actually, she embarked only 1,200 men on the voyage to South Africa, for this reason, that if the troops were to arrive in good health and fit for service, they could not be packed on board like sardines. The British soldier is a valuable and expensive product, and far more carefully treated than the Frenchman or Russian.

The Admiralty was charged with the duty of hiring and fitting transports. It was decided that, as the supply train for the army could not be ready in South Africa for some weeks, vessels of only moderate speed should be chartered. In acting thus the extremity of the emergency seems to have



[Photo by Gregory.]

GETTING CAVALRY HORSES ON BOARD



[Armstrong, Whitworth & Co.]

12-POUNDER NAVAL FIELD-GUN.

The picture represents the 12-pounder gun on field carriage, as used at Ladysmith and elsewhere.

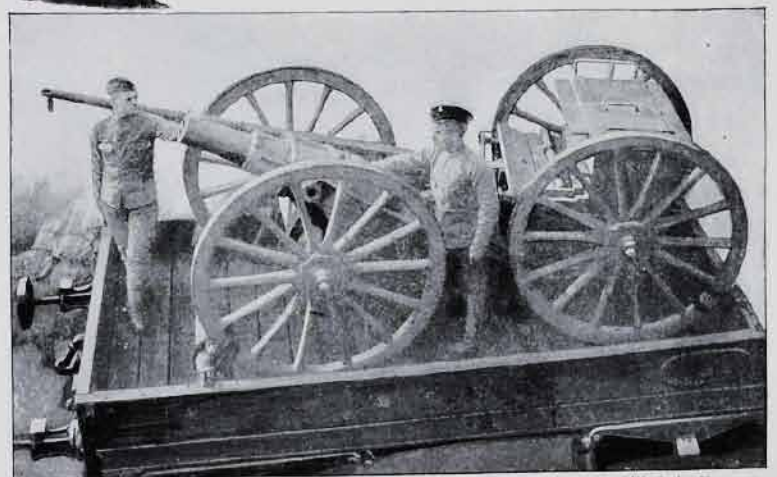
the time required to provide the horse-transports with proper fittings was so considerable that very few were able to leave with the head of the Army Corps.

On Friday, October 20, the first batch of troops, 5,000 strong, embarked at Southampton in

Embarkation of the troops.

four steamers; on the 21st, 5,615 were shipped; on the 22nd, 4,864; and on the 23rd, 6,335, making a total in four days of over 21,000 men. The troops were of splendid physique, a large proportion

been in some degree overlooked. Long before the first batch of troop-ships was half way to the Cape troops were most urgently needed in all directions. In Natal and in central Cape Colony our generals might have been able to dispense with an elaborate transport system by making use of the railways. Of the steamers chartered the great majority steamed 12 or 13 knots. The *Aurania* of 17 knots, *Britannic* of 16, and *Roslin Castle* of 15, were the fastest chosen. Though the cavalry and artillery should, strictly speaking, have sailed first, since horses always require some days' rest on land before they are fit for hard work after a long voyage,



[Photo by Gregory.]

A 6-INCH HOWITZER OFF TO THE FRONT.

This is one of the weapons of the siege train intended for the bombardment of Pretoria, and used against Cronje at Paardeberg.

being reservists; their conduct was sober, steady, and irreproachable. As for the embarkation, it was conducted in every case with machine-like order and precision. "It was almost automatic," says an eye-witness; "no one gave orders; there was not the slightest fuss or flurry. Every one in every rank knew exactly what he had to do." As the ships one by one cast loose there was a roar of cheering from their decks and from the shore. Thus did the soldiers of the Queen set out upon that voyage from which, alas! too many of them were never to return.

The supplies carried on board each ship had to be very considerable in view of the length of the voyages. Taking, as an example, the *Sumatra*, which conveyed 1,200 men to the Cape; she was furnished with 6,000 lb. of preserved meat, 14 tierces of salt beef, 21 barrels of pork, 2,500 lb. of preserved potatoes, 400 lb. of compressed vegetables, 670 lb. of salt, 100 lb. of mustard, 60 lb. of pepper, 150 gallons of vinegar, 100 lb. of pickles, 1,250 lb. of rice, 1,300 lb. of split peas, 6,000 lb. of sugar, 140 barrels of flour, 336 lb. of suet, 900 lb. of raisins, 1,300 lb. of coffee, 113 lb. of chocolate, 1,300 lb. of treacle, 4,520 lb. of oatmeal, and 10,800 lb. of biscuit. These were the government supplies to be issued free as rations to the men.

In addition the canteen laid in stores of corned beef, lunch biscuits, ginger-nuts, bloater-paste, brawn, butter, cheese, tinned haddocks, herrings, lobsters, mackerel, jam and marmalade, sauces, sausages, potted meats, condensed milk, blacking, laces, soap, tobacco, and other necessaries and luxuries. These the soldiers would have to purchase out of their none too generous pay. Though from the above list it might seem that nothing was wanting, there were complaints, not without foundation, of both the quality and the quantity of the food in some of the ships. The *Arawa's* meat was discovered, on inspection just before she left, to be bad and had to be renewed.

There were one or two other mischances, as might indeed be expected in an enterprise of such magnitude. The *Rapidan* from Liverpool with remounts on board encountered very heavy weather in the Irish Channel, and had to put back with heavy loss in horses. The *Manchester Port* had shipped some compressed forage which, being damp, heated on board, and detained her till it could be removed.



E. M. Rice.

THE LAST EMBARK.

The total tonnage engaged in the movement of the Army Corps, its supplies, and its transport was about 600,000, exclusive of vessels chartered for the divisions which followed later. Yet so vast were the shipping resources of England that the withdrawal of this great number of steamers from the mercantile marine only slightly affected the cost of freight.

The voyage was covered by the Channel Squadron and its cruisers. At Gibraltar were the eight battleships of



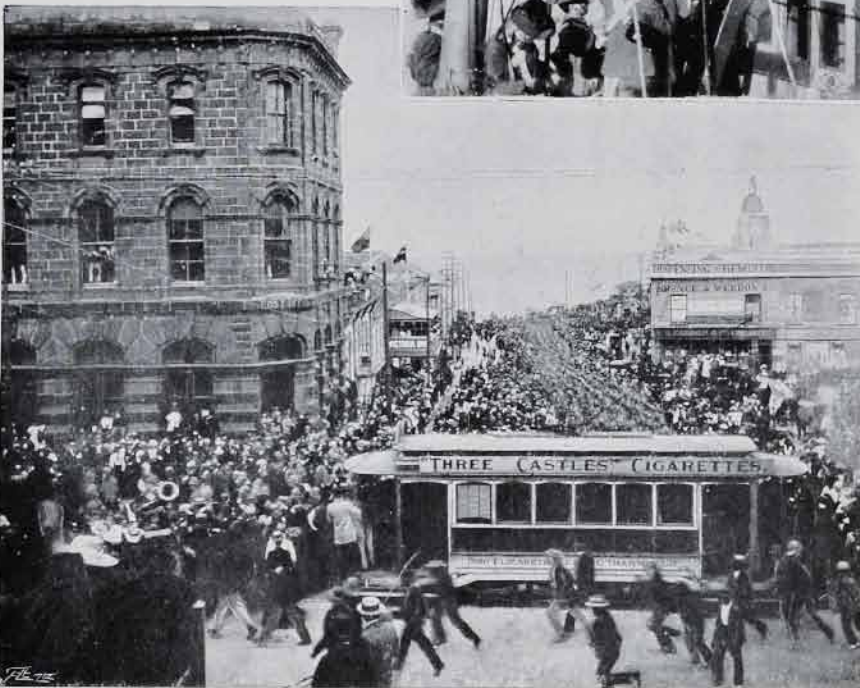
ARRIVAL OF NEW SOUTH WALES LANGERS AT CAPE TOWN FROM ENGLAND.

This detachment, being the only Colonial force in England when war broke out, was accorded an overwhelmingly enthusiastic send-off by the immense crowds who lined the London Streets to see them march to the railway station.

the squadron; between Gibraltar

and the Canaries, pa-

trolling the route, the cruisers *Furious*, *Pactolus*, and *Pelorus*; and at the Canaries the 20-knot vessels *Niobe* and *Diadem*. Nor were these attentions superfluous. Some days before the time when the transports began to arrive at the Canaries a strange cruiser appeared, which had been built



ARRIVAL OF THE WELSH FUSILIERS AT PORT ELIZABETH.

in France for Brazil and sold, no one knew to whom. Before the war there had been talk of Boer privateers, and this vessel was a most suspicious intruder. She was watched night and day by the cruiser *Niobe*, but it was possible that she had confederates. Accordingly, orders were given



Photo by G. W. Wilson & Co.

BUFFALO HARBOUR, EAST LONDON, WHERE PART OF THE ARMY CORPS LANDED.

to the transports on leaving the Canaries to put out all lights and to alter course, steaming 100 miles to the west of the usual trade route. Nothing happened, however, and the Boer cruiser, if Boer cruiser the stranger really was, vanished. It would be interesting, however, to know what subsequently became of her.

The last of the Army Corps transports left England on November 9, and on the same day the first arrival at Capetown was recorded. This was the *Roslin Castle*, which had left Southampton on October 20 with General Hildyard, his staff, and one battalion of his brigade. She was at once sent on to Durban by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Redvers Buller, who had reached Capetown on October 31. The next transports in were the *Moor*, which arrived on the 10th, the *Yorkshire*, *Lismore Castle*, *Aurania*, and *Hawarden Castle* on the 11th, and the *Gascon* on the 12th. Thereafter every day for a week saw the arrival of more ships and men.



St. Ca. on-Woodville.]

A RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE.

The original plan of campaign had been as follows:—The three British divisions under Generals Lord Methuen, Clery, and Gatacre were to land respectively at Capetown, Port Elizabeth, and East London. From each of these seaports a railway line leads inland: from Capetown to Kimberley and Buluwayo on the line which will one day run throughout the length of Africa "from the Cape to Cairo"; from Port Elizabeth to Bloemfontein; and from East London to Springfontein on the Port Elizabeth and Bloemfontein railway. On nearing the Orange River these three lines converge on a front of about 100 miles, the Capetown and Kimberley line at Orange River station, a distance of some 570 miles, that from Port Elizabeth at Norvals Pont, 328 miles by the railway, and that from East London at Bethulie, a distance of 290 miles. The use of three lines of railway, which in any case would have been very much to our advantage, was the more desirable from the fact of the South African lines being single tracks, with but scanty accommodation for the returning trains, and few facilities for the transport of huge quantities of stores and war material. It was probably intended to effect the concentration a little south of the

Orange River, or perhaps ultimately upon Orange River station, where the Capetown and Kimberley line crosses the river. The three divisions would then have advanced on Bloemfontein. Meantime the original idea was that Sir George White would be able to keep the enemy at bay in Natal. This was a lamentable miscalculation, and the fact that after twenty days of war he was enveloped, defeated, and shut up in Ladysmith with 12,000 men profoundly affected the whole conduct of the campaign.

The problem before General Buller when he reached South Africa was a difficult one to resolve. Was he to depart from his plan of campaign and detach a great part of his force to Natal to relieve Ladysmith? If he did so, an advance on Bloemfontein must be almost indefinitely postponed. Or was he to advance resolutely upon Bloemfontein and to trust to such strategy drawing off the Boers from Natal to the defence of the threatened capital of the Free State? But, in this case, how could he be certain that the Boers would not "swap queens"—or determine to take Ladysmith with the 12,000 British troops inside the town, and allow



OUDEMOLEN CAMP
12th Lancers parading one hour after receiving orders to proceed to the front.

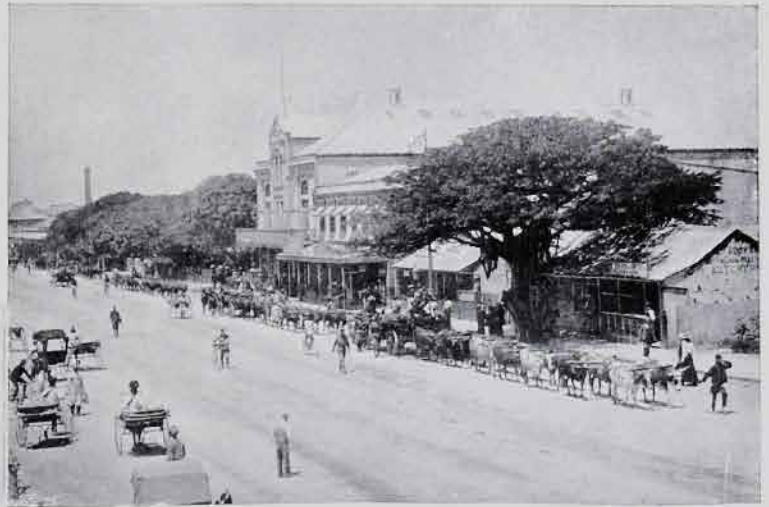


ARRIVAL OF NEW SOUTH WALES LANCERS IN CAPE TOWN.
Passing the General Post Office in Adderley Street.

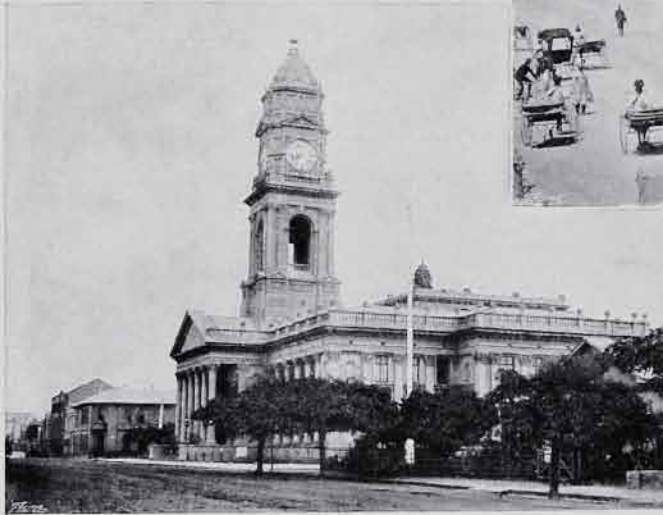
Bloemfontein to fall? It is possible that political pressure decided the problem; but, be this as it may, General Buller eventually decided to move about half his force to Natal. One division, that under Lord Methuen, received orders to undertake an advance upon Kimberley, which town was reported to be in some straits, though the published despatches were cheerful enough in tone. Lord Methuen began to concentrate at De Aar. General Gatacre, with a greatly attenuated force, was sent to East London, to operate in what is perhaps the most difficult region of all South Africa, in the midst of a population thoroughly disloyal.

A word must now be devoted to the terrain in South Africa. Except in Natal the country through which the advance was about to take place is generally arid, waterless, and unproductive. The climate is dry, salubrious, and generally hot. Rain is

Character of the country.



MARINES WITH HEAVY GUNS PASSING THROUGH DURBAN.

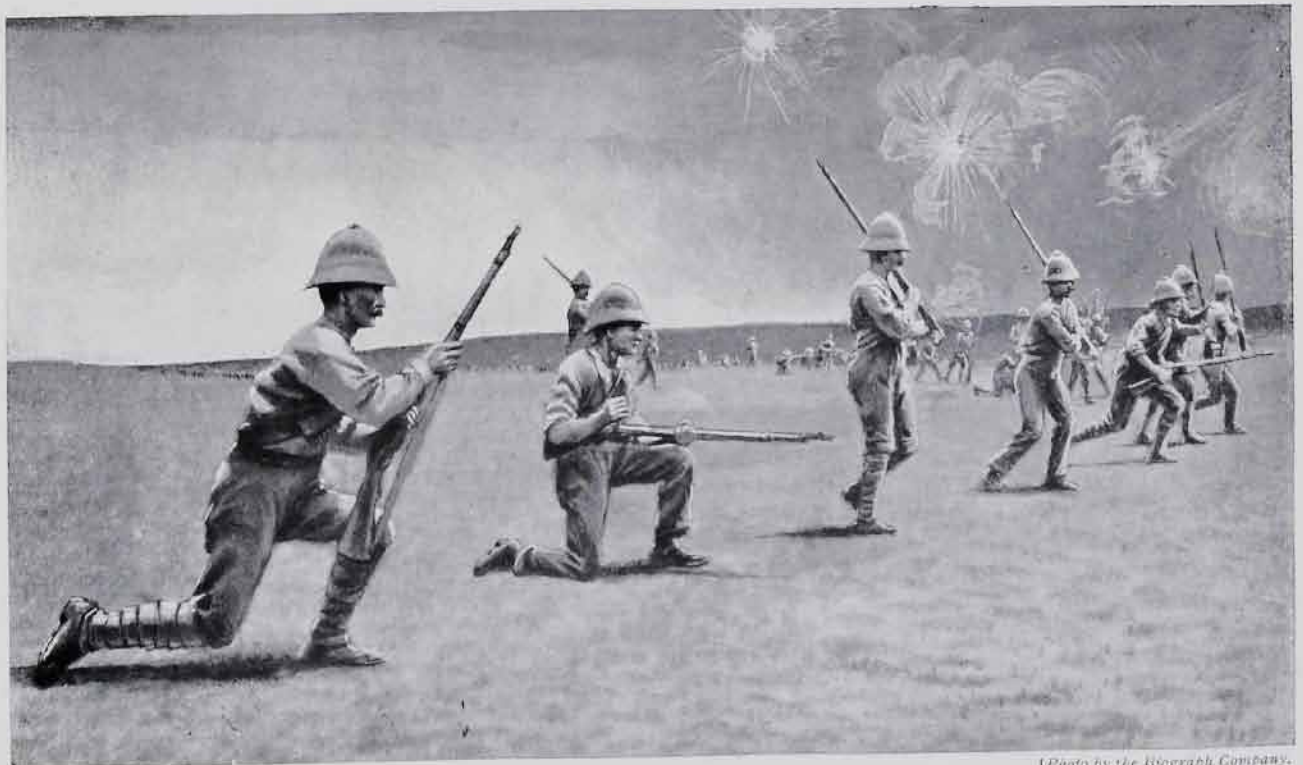


DURBAN TOWN HALL.

This building claims to be the finest in Natal. It has been fitted up and used as a hospital during the war.

almost unknown except in the rainy season, which includes the months from mid-October to mid-March. Over a great part of Western Cape Colony the rainfall is less than 10 inches; in Central Cape Colony and the west of the Free State it ranges between 15 and 25 inches. In consequence of this diminutive rainfall forage for horses and mules is difficult to obtain in any but the wet season, and South

Africa generally cannot maintain its own population, but has to import breadstuffs. The physical



(Photo by the Biograph Company.)

FEELING THE ENEMY.

The "firing line" approaching within rifle range. From an instantaneous photograph of troops actually in action.

structure of the country is a vast table-land, 2,500 to 5,000 feet in height, lying on both sides of the great Drakensberg Range, the topmost summits of which rise to 11,000 feet. As in most mountainous

regions, the climate of this great upland is hot by day and cold by night. The rivers, for the most part, shrink in the dry season to mere chains of stagnant pools; the Orange River alone is able to float small boats along the greater part of its course at all times of the year. When the rains do come the tricklets swell to formidable torrents, and can only be crossed with difficulty. The surface of the interminable table-land or veldt is broken by innumerable low hills or kopjes, which are covered with boulders, affording the finest



A VIEW IN THE KARROO.

The northern portion of Cape Colony and much of the Orange Free State is of the arid character indicated in this photograph. It is dotted with ant-hills and with low scrub.

possible shelter for marksmen. Here and there rise the low conical mounds which mark the nests of white ants, and which give equally good cover. Desolate, monotonous, and forbidding though this land appears at first sight, its charm grows upon the traveller. Its very dryness makes it a healthy home for the white races; its air is clear and stimulating to a degree.



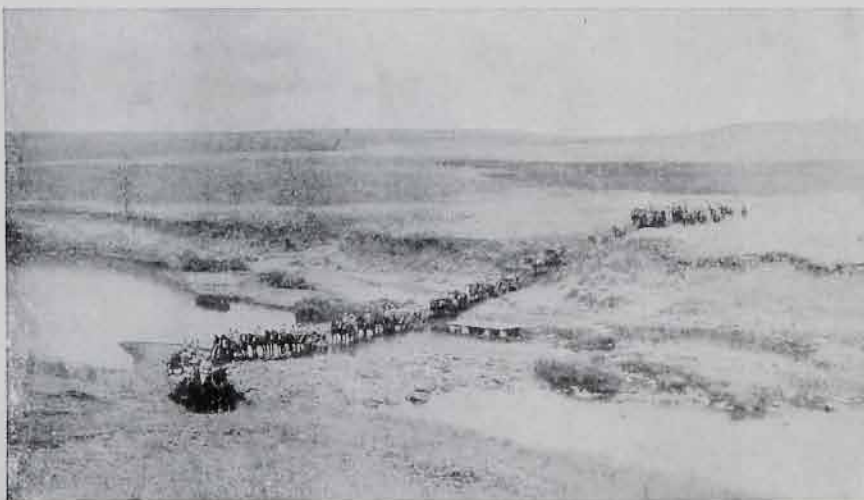
A KAFFIR HUT IN THE KARROO.

In such a country as this the tactics of

New tactics required. Europe cannot be employed. The general's greatest difficulty will be to provision and water his men and beasts of burden. The absence of good roads compels entire reliance upon railways, and gives them an importance which they nowhere else possess. Yet,

liable as they are to interruption by a single daring horseman, they are most untrustworthy lines of communication, as was seen again and again during the course of the war.

When the news of the defeat of Sir George White on October 30 reached England the Government did not, as might have been anticipated, gather from this the extreme need for large reinforcements, or awake to the gravity of the war. Three battalions were ordered out to replace the men lost at Nicholson's Nek, but



A BATTERY OF ARTILLERY CROSSING A DRIFT

The rivers in South Africa are subject to rapid fluctuations in volume. A river which is easily fordable in the morning, may by night be quite impassable, and this fact has had to be reckoned with by our Generals. Buller, in particular—"The Ferryman," as a humourist dubbed him on account of his frequent crossing and recrossing of the Tugela—found his operations greatly obstructed by the swollen river.



[Photo by Argent Archer.]

RESERVISTS AT KILKENNY.

The photograph represents the playing into barracks at Kilkenny of the last batch of reservists of the King's Royal Rifles (3rd Battalion). Of this regiment the Duke of Cambridge is Colonel-in-Chief, and Sir Redvers Buller Colonel-Commandant.

a steady stream of reinforcements was not kept flowing towards the Cape. There was talk of mobilising a Fifth Division, but the mobilisation was not begun until November 13, and thus 10 days were wasted at a time when every moment was precious. Nor was there any haste in the despatch of this Division; the first transport conveying troops belonging to it did not leave till November 24, the last not until December 9, forty days after the disaster. The Sixth Division was not mobilised until December. Had both divisions been mobilised on November 3 or 4, it may safely be predicted that the misfortunes which befell British arms in South Africa during the second week of December would not have had to be recorded. Whatever may have been the cause of

these delays, it is certain that they occasioned deep disappointment, not only to the generals at the front, whose despatches again and again adverted to the necessity for more men, and especially for more cavalry and artillery, but also to the public at home, who throughout had manifested their readiness to meet any expense and to make any sacrifice to secure a prompt and permanent settlement. There were rumours of friction between the War Office and the Treasury, but Sir Michael Hicks-Beach has indignantly repudiated the charge of parsimony. Lord Wolseley has, however, frankly admitted that the forces of the enemy were underestimated; an error into which, unfortunately, we fall again and again.



PLAYING THE BOER GAME.

British soldiers using ant-hills and boulders for cover.



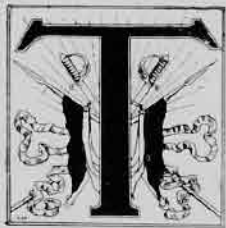
S. Charlton.

BRITISH CAVALRY DRIVING IN A BOER OUTPOST.

CHAPTER V.

THE BEGINNING OF THE ADVANCE IN NATAL AND CAPE COLONY.

Natal threatened—Armoured trains—Ladysmith bombarded—Assault on the town—The Boers at Chieveley—Armoured train wrecked near Chieveley—Endeavours to clear the obstruction—Capture of Mr. Winston Churchill—The Estcourt garrison in danger—Shelling of Mooi River Camp—Boer advance checked at Nottingham Road—The Willow Grange fight—Arrival of Lord Dundonaki and General Buller—Comparison of the opposing armies—The forward movement begins—Boer position at Colenso—Buller determines to attack.



THE Boer success before Ladysmith on October 30 was not promptly followed up, probably because of the want of a properly organised transport, and the diminutive British forces outside the beleaguered town were given three or four very precious days to prepare for the worst. Colenso, we have seen, was evacuated on November 2, and the British garrison withdrawn to Estcourt, 27 miles farther south. The Boers occupied a strong position on a hill known as Grobler's Kloof, a little to the north of the Tugela, commanding thoroughly the roads between Ladysmith and Colenso. Upon this hill they placed heavy guns and erected entrenchments with two objects—the first to prevent the advance of a relief force from the south, the second to shut in Sir George White. They also showed well to the south of Colenso, in the neighbourhood of Frere, having apparently marched by the roads which lead down into the centre of Natal from the Upper Tugela region. They did not immediately occupy Colenso, but they made all preparations to destroy the two bridges, should such a measure become necessary.

The danger for Natal was great. Captain Percy Scott of the *Terrible* landed with a large number of guns and bluejackets to defend Durban; works were erected at Pietermaritzburg, the capital of the Colony, and volunteer forces were raised with all possible expedition.

Natal threatened. The Imperial Infantry Corps, 1,000 strong, was enrolled at Durban and Pietermaritzburg; Murray's Mounted Volunteers, Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, the Umvoti Mounted Volunteers, and the Durban Light Infantry were among the other regiments raised by the Colony.



Frank Craig.]

COLD STEEL: BRITISH SOLDIERS DRIVING THE BOERS FROM A KOPJE.



DURBAN, THE BRITISH BASE IN NATAL.

Hundreds of refugees from Colenso and the abandoned districts poured down into the seaboard of Natal, yet there was no sign of panic. The women especially distinguished themselves by their fortitude and bravery in this hour of sad calamity. Nor did the Colonists reproach the Home Government, which had failed, in spite of many entreaties, adequately to garrison the Colony, though to the irresolution and tardiness displayed by the authorities at home all these sufferings were due.

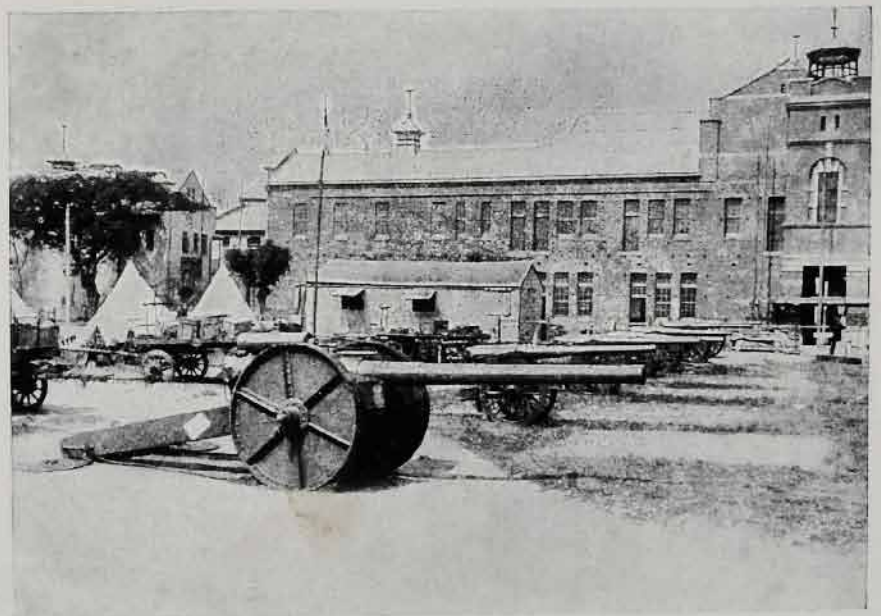
An armoured train daily proceeded from Estcourt to reconnoitre in the direction of Colenso. Why this dangerous and clumsy contrivance should have been used for such a purpose it is difficult to say. The lives of somewhere about 100 men were daily risked upon an errand which could have been accomplished with infinitely greater ease by half-a-dozen mounted infantry. The train was tied of necessity to one line of advance or retreat: it was a conspicuous object, and made enough noise with its puffing and blowing to alarm all the Boers for miles around. Nothing could be easier for them than to bring up and lay their guns on some particular point of the line, removing one or two rails. If this were done after the train had passed, its retreat might be cut off and its capture rendered certain. The risk was a matter of common talk in the British camp, yet these foolhardy expeditions continued day by day.

Armoured trains.



CAPTAIN PERCY SCOTT, C.B., OF H.M.S. "TERRIBLE."

Under Captain Scott's direction a number of 45-pounder naval guns were rapidly supplied with carriages, which gave them mobility and rendered them available as a sort of heavy field-gun. So mounted, they were of the greatest service both in the defence of Ladysmith and in our numerous assaults upon Boer positions. Captain Scott also designed a railway truck to carry the gun, and from which it could be fired.



GUNS LANDED BY THE "TERRIBLE" AT DURBAN, ON CAPT. SCOTT'S CARRIAGES.

On November 5 the armoured train carried two companies of the Dublin Fusiliers close to Colenso, when the enemy was sighted. The infantry detrained, but, as it was clearly seen that the Boers were endeavouring to cut the British line of retreat, entrained again and fell back towards Estcourt.



ESTCOURT.

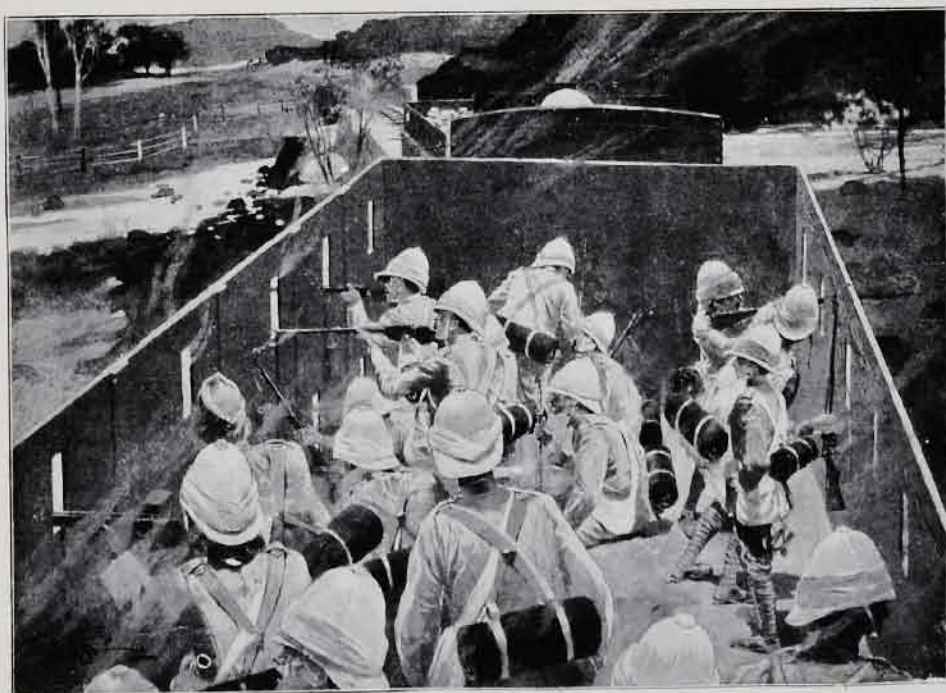
shell and shrapnel into the town, doing, however, very little damage, and inflicting insignificant loss of life. On November 4 General White opened negotiations with Joubert, in command of the Boer forces, for the removal of the sick and the women and children, who should have been sent away before the siege began, but who, with the lamentable want of foresight which characterised all our operations, had been allowed to remain in the town till the investment was complete. It is natural for a general officer in command of an investing force to refuse to allow a besieged force to rid itself of its encumbrances, but Joubert suggested that the non-combatants should be removed to a certain point outside the zone of fire. This point was afterwards known in the British camp as "Funkumdorf"; few of the wounded and very few indeed of the women consented to remove to it. In fact, the bearing of the British women was here, as in all other quarters, heroic, and above all praise.

On the 9th the Boers delivered a half-hearted assault upon Ladysmith, and were repulsed with some loss. The main attack came from the north, and was

assault upon Ladysmith.

Assault on the town.

and were repulsed with some loss. The main attack came from the north, and was



INSIDE AN ARMOURD TRAIN.

Then the enemy in his turn retired, and the train advanced cautiously as far as Colenso station, while the British troops entered the town and removed at their leisure four waggon loads of shell, provisions, and stores. On the 9th the train advancing on Colenso found the line torn up about a mile from that town.

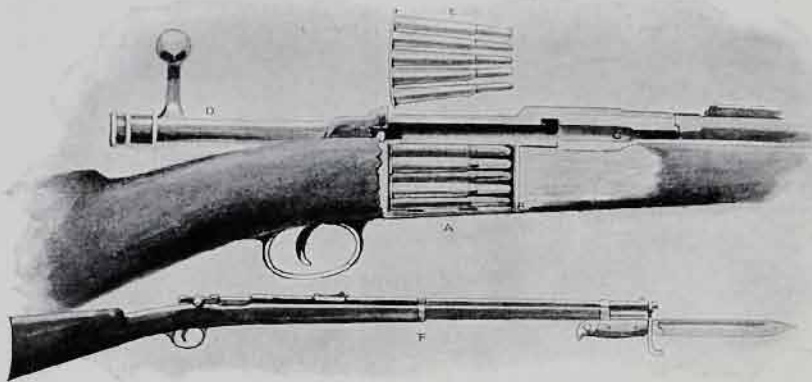
Meantime the Boers had steadily bombarded Ladysmith. Day by day their heavy guns poured

met by the King's Royal Rifles and the Rifle Brigade. It was never pressed home, as the Boers did not approach within a thousand yards of the British works. They could be seen in all directions just out of range massed for an advance, but the advance was never made. There was a furious interchange of rifle and cannon fire, but little more. The British losses were absurdly small—only three killed and seventeen wounded. To what extent the enemy suffered it was difficult to say, but there is reason to think that the Boer losses were far heavier.



THE LEE-ENFIELD RIFLE, USED BY THE BRITISH TROOPS.

The cartridges *b* are placed singly in the magazine *A*, from which a spring at the bottom forces them upwards till one of them enters the breech, when it is pushed forward by the bolt *d* into the chamber *c*, and fired. The withdrawal of the bolt ejects the spent cartridge. There is a slide which, when required, cuts off the magazine and allows single cartridges to be used. *F* is a cleaner and oil-can carried within the butt.



THE MAUSER RIFLE, USED BY THE BOERS.

The cartridges *e* are carried in a holder, from which, by one pressure of the thumb, they are released and dispose themselves in proper order in the magazine *A*. They are pressed upwards by a spring *b*, and forced, one at a time, into the chamber *c* by the bolt *d*. The rifle is sometimes provided with a bayonet, but this the Boers do not carry.

released, he would execute six British officers. The threat was received with the contempt which it deserved. It appeared that Marks was a member of the Transvaal detective service who had been in



LADYSMITH CAMP AND UMBULWANA.



THE EYES OF THE ARMY. NATAL POLICE ON PATROL

Natal gathering information before the war. As such his detention was perfectly justifiable; indeed, in any European struggle he would have been summarily shot.

On November 12 the first ray of light pierced the deep gloom in Natal, when the first troops of General Hildyard's brigade landed from the *Roslin Castle* at Durban. They were at once sent up country to Estcourt. On this same day a general movement of Boers coming

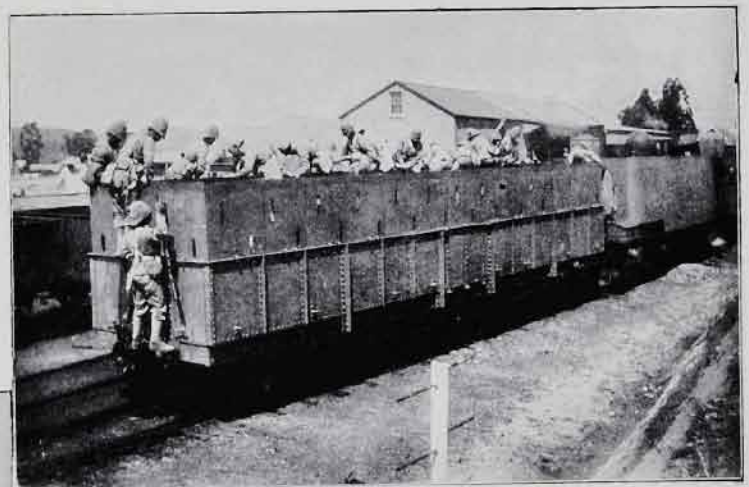
The Boers at Chieveley.

from the Free State began upon Central Natal. On the 13th the railway line was destroyed at Chieveley, one station to the south of Colenso. A force of about 500 Boers was seen at Chieveley on this day. The armoured train arrived while they were actually at work destroying the line and temporarily drove them back. About the same time parties of Boers were seen at Estcourt, and some alarm began to be felt for the troops at that place. On the 14th the *Lismore Castle* and *Yorkshire* arrived at Durban, on the 15th the *Gascon*, and on the 16th the *Hawarden Castle*, and landed fresh reinforcements, which were hurried up to General Hildyard at Estcourt.

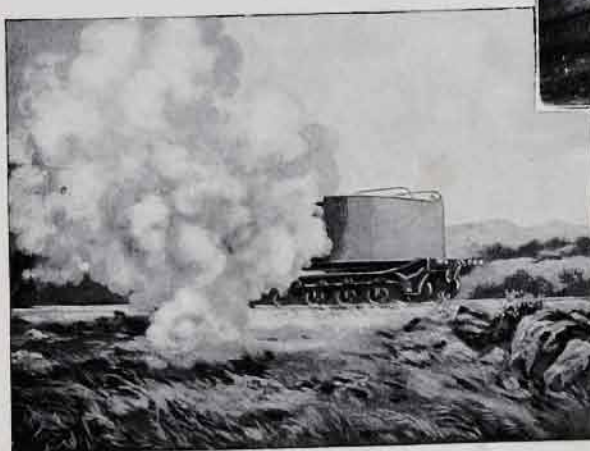
On the 15th a second and easily preventable reverse befell our troops in Natal, causing general discouragement. This was the derailment of an armoured train near Chieveley—a catastrophe which

had been foreseen for some days by every private and subaltern in the British camp. Early on the 15th the train, with a company of Dublin Fusiliers, half a company of Durban Light Infantry, and one wretched little muzzle-loading 7-pounder gun from H.M.S. *Tartar*, mounted on a truck and manned by bluejackets, left Estcourt. The train passed Frere, the station south

Armoured train wrecked near Chieveley.



THE DUBLIN FUSILIERS CLIMBING INTO THE ARMOURD TRAIN ON THE DAY OF THE DISASTER



PIRING A GUN FROM AN ARMOURD TRAIN.

of Chieveley, in safety without seeing any Boers. Just beyond Chieveley, however, the enemy were made out in some strength upon a hill. A message reporting this fact was sent back to Estcourt, whereupon the train was promptly ordered to return to Frere. The order was obeyed, but when less than two miles from Frere, a hill in front commanding the line at a distance of only 600 yards, was seen to be held by the enemy. The Boers gave no sign

of life till the train was close under them, and then opened a tremendous fire from their rifles and from two field guns and a Maxim automatic one-pounder. Simultaneously the driver of the locomotive put on all steam and the train headed furiously down a steep gradient toward Frere. But the enemy

had made full preparations. A large stone had been placed on the line, and this derailed the leading truck (containing plate-layers' tools, a break-down gang, and the guard), an armoured car behind it, and another truck. The occupants were flung through the air, and several of them severely injured. The engine, one armoured car, and the truck with the 7-pounder, kept the rails.

Unfortunately the derailed armoured car and truck blocked the line and had to be removed. The Boer guns had changed their position, and opened a pitiless fire at a range of 1,300 yards.

None the less, the men of the Durban Light Infantry and the Dublin Fusiliers, led by Captain Haldane and Mr. Winston Churchill—sometime a lieutenant in the Army and now acting as a newspaper correspondent—bravely set to work. Shells and bullets rained upon them, yet, in spite of this, one truck was dragged backwards and then

**Endeavours to clear
the obstruction.**



THE DISASTER TO THE ARMOURD TRAIN NEAR CHIEVELEY.

In which Mr. Winston Spencer Churchill, the special correspondent of *The Morning Post*, son of the late Lord Randolph Churchill, distinguished himself by his gallant conduct.

topped over so as almost to clear the line; it still overlapped slightly, and the engine was set to work to butt it aside. There was great danger of derauling or injuring the locomotive in this operation. Attempt after attempt was made carefully, with unsuccess. Each time the engine moved it a little, but only a little, and the successive pushes failed to clear the line. At last, however, a well-aimed shell struck the locomotive, setting the wood with which it was protected on fire, and the driver in despair turned on full steam. With a grating, tearing sound the engine tore its way past, but, unhappily, the armoured car and truck behind it parted their couplings, and could not be got past the obstruction. They had to be abandoned.

As many of the wounded as possible were placed on the engine, and keeping on the further side of it the survivors retreated. The Boers, however, poured in such a hot fire that order soon vanished from the British force. The engine had to put on steam to escape; the infantry were left behind, and dropped here and there crying for help. A few were doubling to some houses for shelter, when a wounded private raised the white flag.

At once the Boers galloped in upon the shattered remnants and demanded their surrender. Churchill was captured with the party; he had been on the engine, but upon reaching Frere had gallantly jumped down and gone back into the battle. Five of the British force were killed; twenty

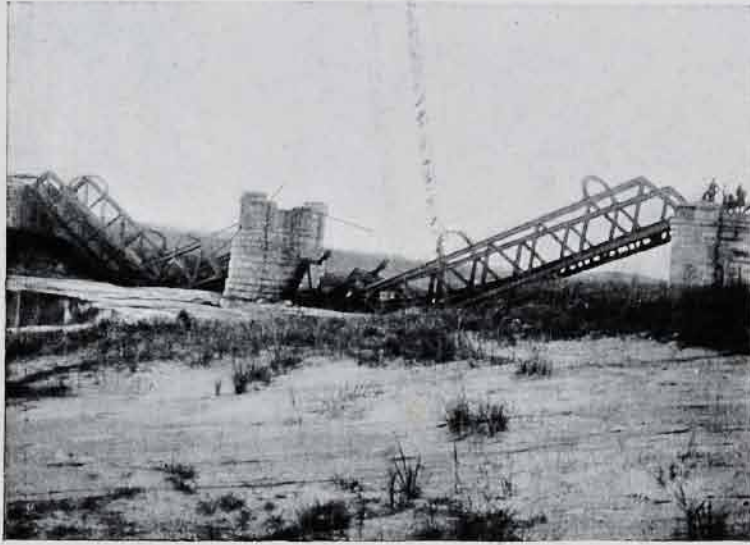


[Photo by Gregory.]

GENERAL SIR REDVERS BULLER, K.C.M.G., K.C.B., V.C.

Born, 1839; entered 60th Rifles, 1858; served in China, 1860; Red River Expedition, 1873; Ashanti War, 1874; Kaffir War, 1878; Zulu War, 1878-9; Deputy Adjutant-General, 1885; Under Secretary for Ireland, 1887; Adjutant-General, 1890; Lieut-General, 1891; In command at Aldershot, 1898; appointed to command of Army Corps, South Africa, 1899. Sir Redvers Buller arrived in Capetown October 31; having matured his plans he went on to Natal, arriving on November 25.

wounded and sixty unwounded prisoners were taken; fifteen wounded escaped on the engine, and about twenty men who were not on the engine



FREERE BRIDGE, DESTROYED BY THE BOERS, November 24.

got away through the bush. Thus needlessly and wastefully were a

hundred men, whom the country could ill spare, thrown away. The defeat had, however, one excellent result. It thoroughly discredited the armoured train, and this death trap was used no more. Henceforward scouting was done by mounted men.

The Boer detachment which had effected this capture was 300 strong, part of a commando of about 3,000 men who were moving south under General Joubert to raid Natal. The unhappy British prisoners were assembled and marched to Colenso, whence they were despatched to Pretoria. They were treated with extreme kindness.

The Boer commander complimented them upon their defence, and permitted them to see the guns which had wrought their discomfiture. These were of the latest type, quick-firers, using fixed ammunition (*i.e.*, with shell and cartridge made up together as in rifle ammunition), and of much greater range than British field guns.

In face of the Boer advance, the position of the garrison at Estcourt, which did not reach 3,000 men, became very serious. The place was commanded by heights from which the Boer long-range guns could bombard with effect, and from the numerical weakness of the British force and the want of water these heights could not be occupied by our men.

The Estcourt garrison in danger.

There were no cavalry or mounted infantry beyond a couple of hundred men to meet and keep touch with the enemy. The only artillery available was composed of one or two naval

2-pounders and the Natal Government obsolete 9-pounder muzzle-loaders. The Home Authorities in their wisdom had decided that this was to be an infantry war; and the result was that the Boers by their extreme mobility, and the ubiquity which resulted from that mobility, were able to do what they liked. They could collect great quantities of cattle and loot, could isolate the British garrisons in Natal, and almost invest them. Had they determined to destroy the railway, the cul-



AT CHIEVELEY: SIGNALLING FOR REINFORCEMENTS. [Photo by the Biograph Co.]

verts, and the railway bridges south of Colenso the damage and delay caused would have been very great, but for some inscrutable reason they did little beyond wrecking the iron bridge at Frere and tearing up the rails in one or two places.



KAFFIRS DIGGING A TRENCH FOR THE BRITISH AT CHIEVELEY.

of infantry, Bethune's mounted infantry—raised in Natal—and two batteries of artillery were the first to arrive. On the 18th there was skirmishing between the Boers and the British troops a couple of miles to the north of Estcourt. The enemy raised the Transvaal Flag at Weenen and scoured the whole country on both sides of the railway between Colenso and Estcourt. On the 19th Boers were seen at Highlands, two stations to the south of Estcourt and close to Mooi River, where a small British force was encamped.

As the transports reached Durban a considerable force of British troops assembled at Estcourt between November 16 and 19. Two battalions



[Photo by Elliott & Fry.]

MR. WINSTON LEONARD SPENCER CHURCHILL.

is the eldest son of the late Lord Randolph Churchill, and inherits many of his father's brilliant qualities. He was born on November 30, 1874, and is therefore only a little over twenty-six years old. He was educated at Harrow and Sandhurst, and entered the Army in 1895. He served with the Spanish forces in Cuba in that year, and saw much Indian service with the Malakand Field Force in 1897; was orderly officer to the late Sir William Lockhart, and was attached to the 21st Lancers with the Nile Expeditionary Force in 1898, and present at the battle of Khartoum. On November 15, 1899, when an armoured train was captured by the Boers at Chieveley, Lieut. Churchill distinguished himself by his bravery; he was taken prisoner and deported to Pretoria, where he remained in prison at the State Model School for many weeks. On January 14 he escaped, and, after enduring very many hardships, he reached Delagoa Bay, and again went to the front.

It was decided to attack the enemy under cover of darkness, and on the 20th 900 British infantry, 450 mounted men and two naval guns moved out



PRETORIA.

Showing in the foreground (above the point marked) the Model Schools where the British officers were imprisoned.

from Estcourt under Colonel Hindé. But at the last minute news was received that the Boers were far stronger than had been supposed. Colonel Hindé hesitated to attack, and the opportunity was lost. On the 21st the British column tardily approached the enemy's position, and was about two

miles off it when intelligence arrived that another Boer commando was approaching the railway from the west. Fearful of being cut off, after indulging in a little skirmishing with the Boers the British fell back to the railway, entrained, and retired precipitately to Estcourt. In the evening the railway and telegraph south of Estcourt were broken and the British force there isolated. On the same day Mooi River

Shelling of Mooi River Camp.

Camp, where were 4,000 or 5,000 British troops, was shelled at extreme range. The boldness of the Boers is proved by the fact now known that they ventured upon this daring act in the face of a far superior force of disciplined troops with a second superior force to their rear.

By this Boer advance a small party of Natal Police, under Captain Cayzer, who had gone to Weenen to maintain signalling communication with Ladysmith, were all but cut off. They had an exciting time of it. Having climbed a mountain 5,000 feet high and set up their instruments, just as night fell a native brought them news that they were in the very midst of 1,200 Boers. Fortunately the night was pitch dark, pouring with rain, and in the plash of the deluge they were able to steal their way unperceived down a precipitous disused Kaffir track. At the bottom, however, it was found that Captain Cayzer's horse had broken its fetlock. One of the police took the Captain up behind, and in this plight the party rode before the enemy first into Greytown and then on to Pietermaritzburg.

The most southerly point reached by small raiding parties of the Boers was Nottingham Road,



LANCERS AT NOTTINGHAM ROAD.
The most southerly point reached by the Boers in Natal.



THE CLOCK OF CHIEVELEY CAMP.

The cartridge-case of one of the large naval guns was used as a bell, a sword serving as clapper to strike the hours.

twelve
miles to
the south
of Mooi

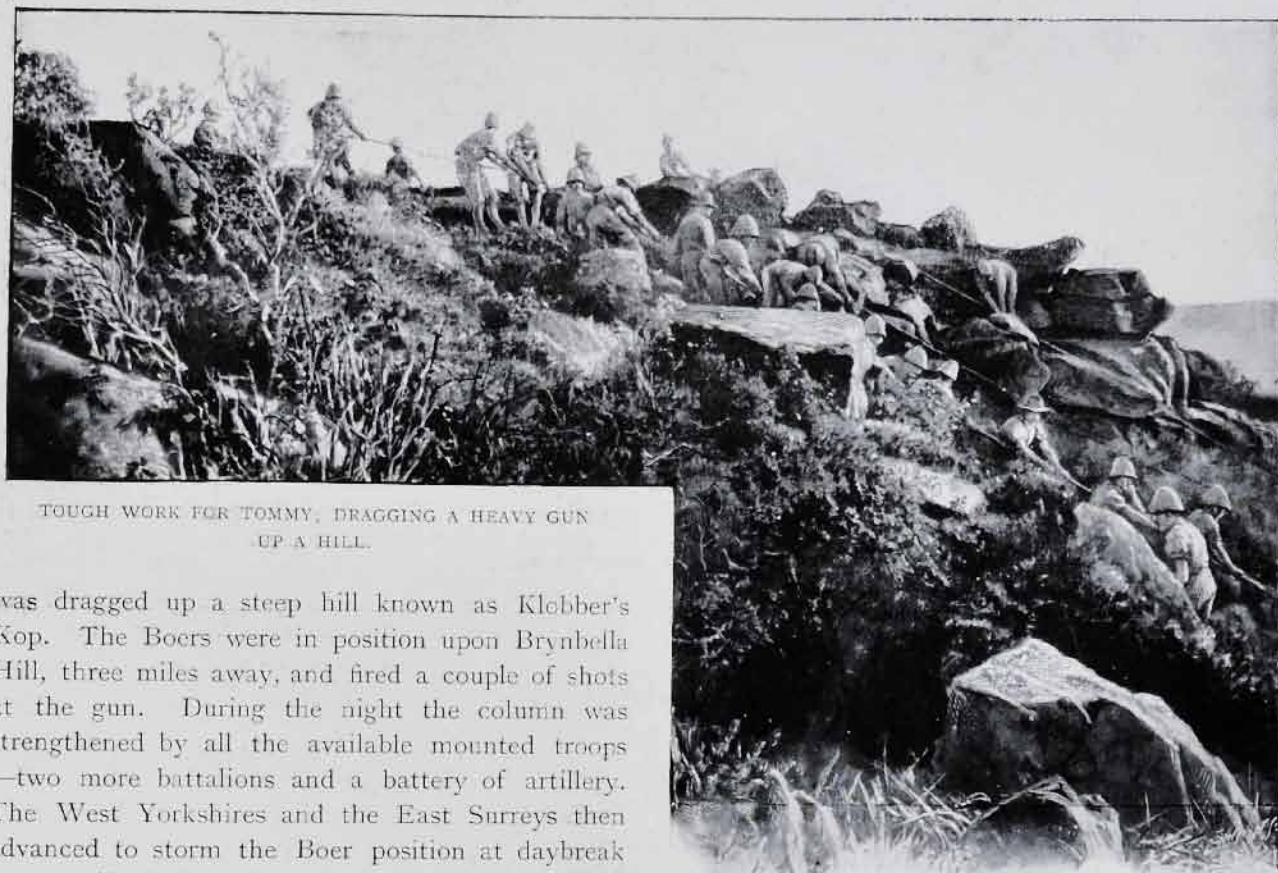
River Camp. Here they looted farms, destroyed the farmers' furniture, and did an immense amount of wanton damage.

To check this advance an effort was at

last made
on the
22nd by

the troops at Estcourt. In the afternoon of that day the West Yorkshires, East Surreys, and Durban Light Infantry, with a naval 12-pounder, moved to Willow Grange. The gun

**The Willow
Grange fight.**



TOUGH WORK FOR TOMMY, DRAGGING A HEAVY GUN
UP A HILL.

was dragged up a steep hill known as Klobber's Kop. The Boers were in position upon Brynbella Hill, three miles away, and fired a couple of shots at the gun. During the night the column was strengthened by all the available mounted troops—two more battalions and a battery of artillery. The West Yorkshires and the East Surreys then advanced to storm the Boer position at daybreak in a terrific hailstorm, during which hailstones fell as big as eggs and wounded two or three men.

They climbed the slopes of Brynbella and were close to the Boer camp when a picket challenged and opened fire. In a moment the British troops with fixed bayonets were upon the picket, but the Boers in camp had taken the alarm and fled along a ridge which extended for about a thousand yards, to the main force, now seen to be posted at the further extremity of the ridge. A heavy fire was opened upon the West Yorkshires, and the battalion promptly took shelter behind a low stone wall. Here the Boer guns shelled them with effect, while as the naval gun was unfortunately unable to reach the enemy, the British had no artillery of their own to reply. The position was quite untenable;

[From an Instantaneous Photograph.]



BRINGING IN THE WOUNDED FROM THE WILLOW GRANGE FIGHT.

there was nothing left except for the infantry to retire. The retreat was covered by the mounted men, and by a squadron of the Imperial Light Horse; it was not effected without difficulty, as the Boers poured in a tremendous fire, moving their guns forward to shell the infantry. The British losses were eleven killed and sixty-seven wounded, while Major Hobbs and eight men were taken prisoners. Major Hobbs had stayed behind to give aid to a wounded man. The



COLENZO RAILWAY BRIDGE.



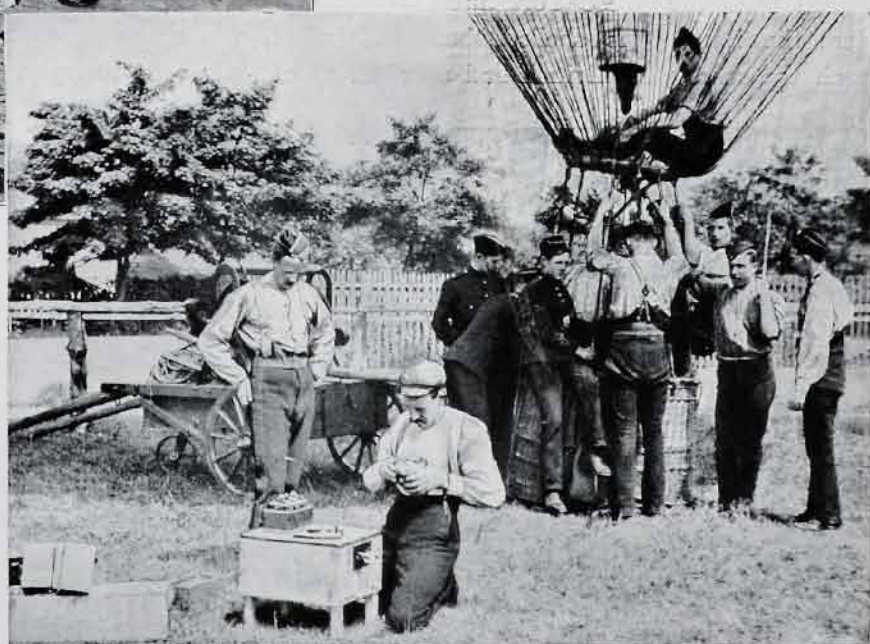
BRINGING A BOER MESSENGER INTO THE BRITISH CAMP.

Bearers of messages between the opposing commanders, and in many cases ordinary prisoners of war, are blindfolded before being led into camp, in order that they may not be able to report particulars of the defences.

under the impression that the enemy, in overpowering force, was all around. At that very moment the Boer commandos, 3,000 strong, were scuttling back to Colenso with their plunder, only too pleased to be unmolested. The high-water mark of the Boer advance had been reached. On the

affair was far from satisfactory, as the British force, with a great numerical preponderance, failed to dislodge or capture the enemy's commando. It had, however, in the end the desired result, since the Boers became anxious about their retreat and at once began to fall back.

This foray was not without its comic side. On November 24 the 6,000 British troops at Mooi River manned the trenches and prepared to do or die.



GETTING A WAR-BALLOON READY: ADJUSTING THE TELEGRAPHIC APPARATUS.

[Photo by Knight.]

24th the Estcourt force pushed forward to Frere unopposed, but found that further progress was stopped by the destruction of the railway bridge over the Blaauwkrantz. The engineers at once went to work to build a trestle bridge. In the next two days the railway was repaired between Estcourt and Mooi River. On the 30th Lord Dundonald, who had arrived and taken over the command of the mounted troops, pushed forward with 1,400 mounted infantry and a battery of artillery to Colenso, and drew a very heavy fire from the Boer positions. After reconnoitring these he fell back without the loss of a man. On the same day the railway bridge at Colenso was blown up by the Boers.



BRINGING UP A BATTERY OF FIELD ARTILLERY.

In the meantime, during the closing weeks of November and the early days of December, no less than sixteen battalions of infantry, two regiments of cavalry, and five batteries of field artillery had arrived at Durban, and with them had come General Buller to take over the command. Added to the 4,000 men already under arms in the colony outside Ladysmith, they gave an available British force in the field of a little over 21,000. In this force the infantry numbered 18,000, the cavalry and mounted infantry 2,600, and the artillery 750 with 30 guns. A mountain battery armed with six miserable little screw seven-pounder muzzle-loaders should be added to this total.

Certain points must now be noted as bearing upon the adequacy of this force for the work which was before it—the work of clearing a way to Ladysmith. In the first place the strength of the enemy was believed to be at least 25,000, and might easily be nearer 35,000. General Buller was thus, even adding in as available the 10,000 effectives at Ladysmith, by no means certain of outnumbering the enemy. In the second place he would have to act on the offensive, and would have to assail or “turn” strong Boer positions. To “turn” a position, it need scarcely be said, is to work round it. But positions held, as were these, by good and mobile troops cannot be successfully assailed, and certainly cannot be turned unless there is a considerable advantage of numbers on the assailant's side. In point of mobility General Buller's infantry could not compare with the Boers, who were, of course, to a man mounted, who slept in the open and needed no such elaborate transport system as is required in the British Army. While the British soldier was moving five miles the Boer could cover fifteen. Again, in artillery,

Comparison of the opposing armies.



(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)

MAJOR-GENERAL THE HON. NEVILLE GERALD LYTTELTON, C.B.

Took command of the 2nd Infantry Brigade at Aldershot last year. He was born in 1845, and was educated at Eton. He joined the Rifle Brigade in 1865, and served with it in Canada and India, seeing a good deal of active service. A.D.C. to Lord Spencer, Viceroy of India, from 1868 to 1873, and Military Secretary to Sir John Aclay, Governor of Gibraltar, and to Lord Roay, Governor of Bombay. He went through the Egyptian campaign of 1882, and commanded a brigade in the Nile Expedition of 1898, being present at the battle of Khartoum. He was Assistant Military Secretary at the War Office during 1897 and 1898, and now commands the 4th Brigade in South Africa.



(Photo by Evelyn, Aldershot.)

MAJOR-GENERAL HENRY JOHN THORNTON HILDYARD, C.B.

Had the command, until the beginning of the war, of the 3rd Infantry Brigade at Aldershot. Originally destined for the Navy, in which he served from 1859 to 1864; three years later he entered the Army, and in 1876 became Captain in the Highland Light Infantry. From that time forward his advance was rapid, and he attained his present rank in 1899. He served with the Egyptian Expedition in 1882, and was present at Kassassin and Tel-el-Kebir. From 1893 to 1898 he was Commandant of the Staff College. Commands the 2nd Brigade in South Africa.



(Photo by Dribbham & Smith.)

MAJOR-GENERAL GEOFFREY BARTON, C.B. Took part in the Ashanti War of 1873-4, and in the Zulu War of 1879 in command of the 4th Battalion of the Natal Native Contingent. He again saw active service in the Egyptian War of 1882 as D.A.O.G., and went through the battles of Kassassin and Tel-el-Kebir. During the Soudan campaign of 1885 he was Assistant Military Secretary to Sir Gerald Graham. He commands the 6th Brigade of the South African Field Force.

which must be used freely to pave the way for an infantry attack. General Buller's army was very weak. The usual proportion in European armies is five guns to every thousand men; he had only thirty field guns, instead of 105, to 21,000 men. Finally, his mounted force was inadequate, and his transport system hastily improvised.

All these considerations militated strongly against any substantial success. It is not known whether he asked of the Home Government a larger force, but if he did it was not granted him. Yet 50,000 men with 200 field guns would have been not one whit too great a strength for the proper performance of his task.

Here as elsewhere in South Africa the disasters which befell British arms may be traced to these three causes—under-estimating the enemy's force, attempting to effect most difficult operations in a difficult country with inadequate strength, and failure to observe the precautions which the lessons of the past have shown to be necessary.

In the last week of November, General Buller's army was reinforced by two naval 47-inch guns and fourteen 12-pounders, which



(Photo by Van Hoepen.)

SOME OF THE MEN WHO KEPT US OUT OF LADYSMITH.
Boer farmers with their servants encamped on a hill overlooking the town.

had been sent ashore from the *Terrible* for the defence of Durban. These weapons, from their great range and extreme power, were a valuable addition to the British artillery, though, mounted on improvised carriages and drawn painfully by oxen, they could not compare in mobility with our field guns. They were manned by blue-jackets, who proved themselves formidable marksmen.

On December 11th everything was ready for a forward movement.

The forward movement begins.

The troops were disposed as follows:—

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>HILDYARD'S BRIGADE.
2nd Royal West Surrey,
2nd West Yorkshire,
2nd East Surrey,
2nd Devonshire.
14th and 66th Field Batteries.</p> | <p>LUTTELTON'S BRIGADE.
2nd Scottish Rifles,
1st Durham Light Infantry,
1st Rifle Brigade,
3rd King's Royal Rifles,
14th and 66th Field Batteries.</p> | <p>BARTON'S BRIGADE.
1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers,
2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers,
2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers,
2nd Royal Fusiliers,
63rd and 64th Field Batteries.</p> | <p>HART'S BRIGADE.
1st Connaught Rangers,
1st & 2nd Rl. Dublin Fusiliers,
1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers,
1st Borderers,
63rd and 64th Field Batteries.</p> |
| <p>1st Royal Dragoons,
13th Hussars.</p> | <p>DUNDONALD'S MOUNTED BRIGADE.
Composite Regiment of Mounted Infantry,
Bethune's Mounted Infantry,
7th Field Battery.</p> | <p>Thornycroft's Mounted Infantry,
South African Light Horse.</p> | |

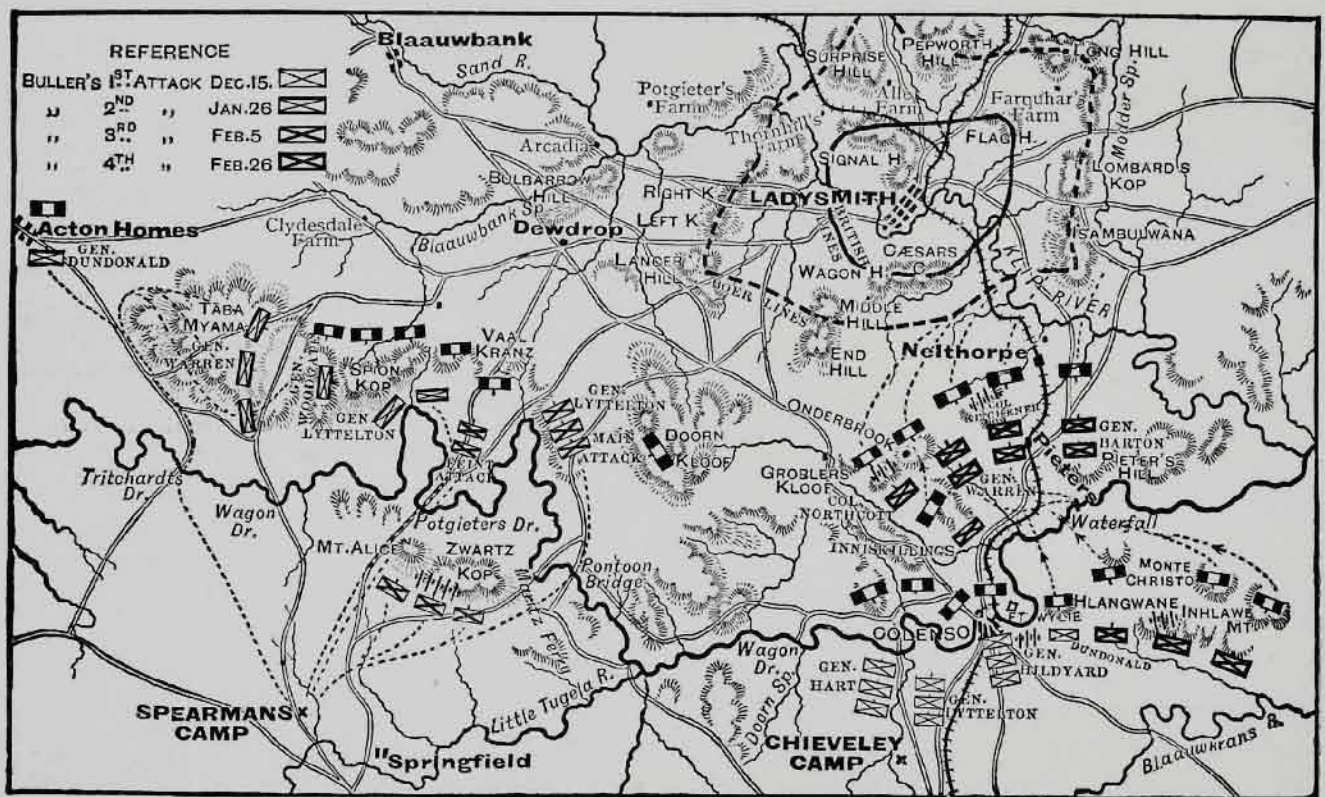


BOER COMMANDO WITH MAXIM GUN DRAWN BY HORSES.

Barton's brigade was the first to move out from Frere Camp. At dawn on December 12 it advanced to a kopje three miles south of Colenso. From this kopje the ground sloped smoothly and gently down to the River Tugela, hidden in its deep bed by scrub and brushwood.

To the north in a hollow lay the tin roofs of the little village of Colenso and the road bridge, which the Boers had left intact. Across the river the outline of the enemy's works could be vaguely made out by powerful glasses along the slopes of two strongly fortified kopjes and beyond these on the high hills which rise to the north-west and which are known as Red Hill and Grobler's Kloof. At Fort Wylie, on a low hill just across the river, was another strong Boer position close to the railway and commanding the two bridges. Away on the extreme British right rose the steep purple slopes of Mount Inhlawe on the southern bank of the river. This mountain towered to a height of over 4,000 feet, dominating the whole neighbourhood. From its slopes and summit an enfilading fire could be directed upon any force

Boer position at Colenso.



MAP SHOWING BULLER'S THREE UNSUCCESSFUL AND FINAL SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO DRIVE THE BOERS FROM THEIR POSITION ON THE TUGELA.

attempting to cross the river near Colenso. It was held in strength by the Boers, who had built a military bridge over the Tugela to the north of it, though the fact was as yet unknown to the British. Nearer Colenso were the heights of Monte Cristo and Hlangwane, both, like Inhlawe, held by the Boers.

The naval guns followed close on the heels of Barton, and took up a position facing Colenso on the evening of the 12th. On December 13 they opened fire on the Boer entrenchments at 7,200 yards, giving particular attention to the two kopjes. No reply could be drawn from the enemy. From time to time small groups of Boers were seen scattering as shells fell, but except for this there was silence in their positions.

On the 14th Hildyard's, Lyttelton's, Hart's, and Dundonald's brigades followed in the steps of Barton's, and encamped to the north of Chieveley, in sight of Colenso. The naval guns advanced somewhat and again bombarded the kopjes and Fort Wylie, at times also shelling a laager which could be seen 10,000 yards away, on a ridge beyond the river. Once more the Boers maintained absolute silence, and very few of them were seen. The general impression was that they were falling back, and that they did not intend to hold the line of the Tugela.

That evening General Buller determined to force the passage of the river with all his troops on

the 15th. The mounted troops under Dundonald were to occupy

Hlangwane Hill, covered by the

7th Battery; the English [Hildyard's] and Irish [Hart's] Brigades,

supported by artillery, to advance towards the river and endeavour to cross by the fords,

Buller determines to attack.



THORNEYCROFT'S MOUNTED INFANTRY PACKING KIT AT MOOI RIVER CAMP, BEFORE GOING INTO ACTION.

Hart's Brigade by the Bridle Drift, above Colenso, Hildyard's by the main ford close to the iron railway bridge. The 7th Battery was, if possible, to take up a position on Hlangwane Hill so as to enfilade the enemy's position.

Barton's Brigade was to take ground between Hildyard's and Dundonald's, Lyttelton's between Hildyard's in the British centre and Hart's on the British left, ready to support either. The naval 4.7's and four of the 12-pounders, under Captain Jones of H.M.S. *Forte*, took up a position on the top of an eminence two miles from Colenso, prepared to set to work when the advance began.



STEAM ROAD LOCOMOTIVES USED BY THE BRITISH GENERALS IN SOUTH AFRICA TO BRING UP SUPPLIES.



LETTERS FROM HOME. DISTRIBUTING THE BRITISH MAIL IN CAMP.

Position of
Boer "Long Tom."

Boer camp behind
this shoulder.

Trenches held by
Hildyard's Brigade.

Boer advanced position
shelled by naval gun.

Colenso
Village.

Boer
advanced
position.

Ambulwana,
overlooking
Ladysmith.

Where the ten guns
were lost.



PANORAMA OF THE

This picture includes about 24 miles of the river, which divided the contending armies. It is taken from behind the British positions, looking almost due north towards left is an armoured train, and in the right

BATTLE OF COLENZO.

Ladysmith, which lies behind the hills a little to the left of the centre. In the foreground are the 47-inch naval guns being brought into position by ox-wagons. To the right is a portion of a Kaffir kraal.

[From a sketch by Capt. W. S. Carey.]



DEATH OF LIEUTENANT ROBERTS, ONLY SON OF FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS OF KANDAHAR, IN AN ATTEMPT TO RECOVER THE ABANDONED GUNS AT COLENZO.

Lieut. Roberts is seen on the extreme right of the picture. He fell mortally wounded; Capt. Congreve returned to his assistance and brought him in.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST BATTLE OF COLENZO.

The battle begins—Bombardment of Fort Wylie—Artillery pushed forward—The Boers open fire—The guns abandoned—General Hart's position—The Dublin Fusiliers attempt to ford the Tugela—Their retirement ordered—Failure to carry Hlangwane—Advance of Hildyard's Brigade—General withdrawal ordered—Death of Lieutenant Roberts—Guns and men captured by the Boers—Retirement effected in good order—Our losses—Scarcity of water—Bravery of the Army Medical Corps—Impressions of an eye-witness—Armistice—A day of blunders.



LONG before day broke the infantry began to move off in huge masses. The men were in the best and highest

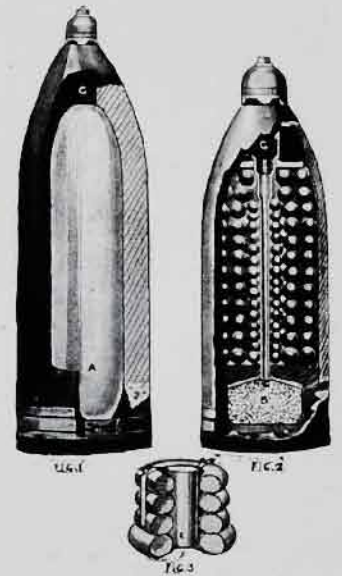
The battle begins.

of spirits, expecting easy victory. To this cheerfulness the general opinion of the Staff that the enemy were on the point of retreating contributed greatly. Gradually the dense columns opened out into skirmishing order, and the

eagerly-looked-for day began to break, radiant, clear, intensely hot, over the distant ridges of the Drakensberg.

The crash of the naval 12-pounders, opening fire on Fort Wylie at 4,000 yards, began the battle at 4.45. They fired slowly till the day grew higher and all preparations were completed, when they poured in a terrific storm of shells and shrapnel. On their right the 14th and 66th Field Batteries and six naval 12-pounders under Colonel Long took up the bombardment. There

Bombardment of Fort Wylie.



COMMON AND SHRAPNEL SHELLS.

Fig. 1 shows a "common shell;" on exploding, its fragments are hurled in all directions, and if charged with a high explosive, such as lyddite, the mere concussion caused by the release of the gases will cause death at a considerable distance. Shrapnel shell (Fig. 2) is filled with metal balls, which, on the explosion of the charge of powder, *a*, are flung forward in the face of the enemy. Fig. 3 represents the cartridge, of cordite, used in howitzers. Both shells are here shown with fuses attached, which may be arranged to fire the charge either after the lapse of a given number of seconds, or on impact. The fuse communicates with the charge through the channel, *c*.

was still no sign of life from the long, indistinct lines of Boer entrenchments, flickering through the heat-mist which rose under the burning sun from the parched ground. Far away and well out of range a few small groups of Boers could be made out through field-glasses, apparently watching the British artillery fire. So complete was the silence of the enemy that the conjecture that the position had been abandoned became almost a conviction.

At this point, Colonel Long, with the artillery in the centre, determined to push closer in, where his 15-pounder field guns could fire with better effect, though he had received orders to keep his two batteries under cover of Barton's brigade, and only to use the naval 12-pounders at long range. He was, it would seem, fully under the impression that the enemy had retired, and refused to listen to the entreaties of one or two junior officers, who dreaded some trick on the part of the Boers. He was confirmed in this impression by two scouts whom he sent forward. One rode close up to the river bank: the other actually set foot on the road bridge without seeing a single enemy. This was a carefully calculated ruse of the Boers, and it succeeded. Confidently, Colonel Long directed the 14th and 66th Field Batteries and six naval guns under Lieutenant James to advance to a point barely 800 yards

Artillery pushed forward.



[Photo by the Biograph Company.]

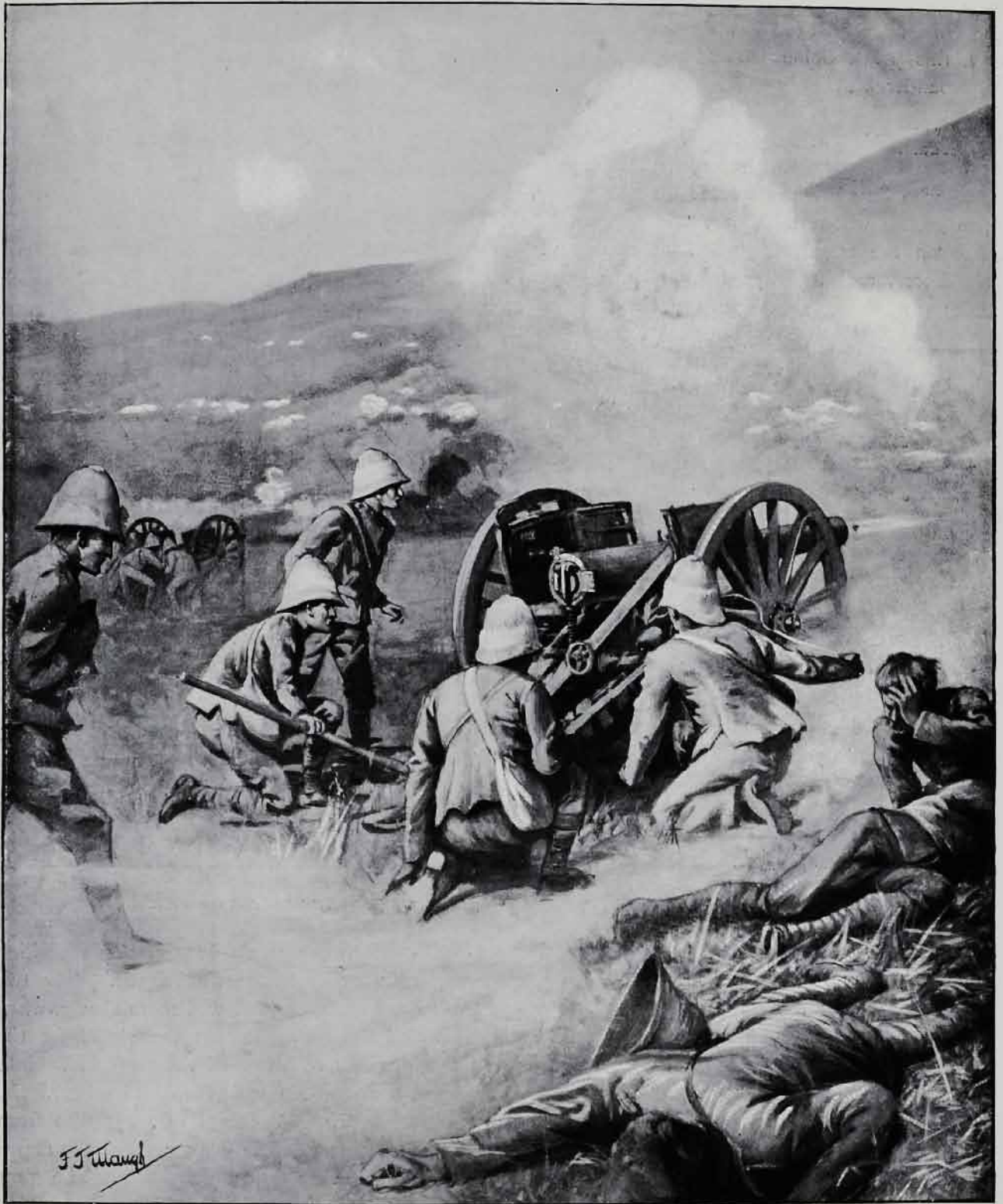
GENERAL BULLER WITNESSING THE FIRING OF THE NAVAL GUNS IN THE BATTLE OF COLENZO.

from the Tugela and 1,200 yards from Fort Wylie, crossing on the way two dongas. This position was more than a mile in front of the slowly advancing infantry of Hildyard's brigade. The two batteries galloped forward, outstripping their infantry escort; the naval guns followed more slowly, when suddenly a single shot rang out from one of the hills behind Colenso. It was the signal for the

The Boers open fire.

Boers to open fire. Instantly the whole northern bank of the river broke into flame with a fearful crackling and spluttering, above which could be heard the loud and heavy hammering of the Boer 1-pounder automatic guns. A deluge of projectiles from rifle, cannon, and machine gun descended upon Colonel Long's artillery. The gunners faced the storm with stubborn heroism, neither flinching from their work nor showing any undue haste. The guns were calmly unlimbered, picked up the range, and then opened fire on Fort Wylie. Two of the naval 12-pounders had crossed the rearmost donga, but all the oxen dragging these were in a moment killed or stampeded by the Boer fire, and the sailors had, perhaps luckily for them, to drag the weapons back to the other four 12-pounders, which now unlimbered and opened from a position considerably to the rear of Colonel Long's batteries. The great 47's, far behind, gave all the aid they could in beating down the fire of Fort Wylie. The Boer works, at this point, were wreathed

in one continuous cloud of smoke from the bursting shells. With the dense green fumes which the lyddite projectiles scattered as they exploded, it seemed as though the hill had broken bodily into flame and was being consumed by subterranean fires. Yet in the midst of this cyclone of death the



NO. 5 GUN OF THE 14TH BATTERY IN ACTION AT COLENZO.

Two men continued to serve this gun after all their comrades had been shot down. Finally they also were killed, and the gun was left standing alone.

Boer gunners, behind their earthworks, worked their guns as steadfastly as the British gunners. The latter, unhappily, stood in the open space before Colenso with half-a-mile of smooth open ground behind them—a splendid target at close range.

And now on all sides the fight grew furious. Far away on Grobler's Kloof, and on Red Hill, invisible cannon were booming, while from Red Hill to Hlangwane invisible marksmen were raining death upon their assailants. The greatest difficulty with which the British had to contend was that there was no enemy to be seen, no clear target to fire at. The dancing blaze of the Boer Mausers was unaccompanied by smoke, and gave no object for the sights of rifle or field gun. The Boers themselves lay *perdu* in deep entrenchments, firing in almost complete security through loop-holes. Their most advanced position in the scrub near Colenso, not 300 yards from Colonel Long's guns, was hidden by the undergrowth.

The two British batteries before Colenso were in an utterly hopeless situation. In a few minutes, most of their horses, two-thirds of their men, Captains Goldie and Schriever, and Colonel Long himself, had fallen dead or wounded. Help was sent for to keep down the enemy's rifle fire, but help did not come. Colonel Long, shot through the arm and liver, was urged to abandon the guns, but firmly refused, replying, "Abandon, be damned! we never abandon guns!" Yet the fury of the enemy's fire at last drove the survivors back to the nearest donga. There they remained, from time to time rushing forward, when there came a lull in the hail of bullets, to re-open

fire. The pitiless storm, however, would always again descend. The diminished detachments caught by its fury would fall to the ground, swept from their feet by the blast of death. Yet so long as there was ammunition in the limbers, one of the twelve pieces continued to fire at intervals, till at last only two men were left. One bowed his head and suddenly fell forward prone upon his gun, the other, the last survivor, turned, and disdainingly walking slowly back as if on parade to the donga in the rear, when a bullet struck him, and he, too, was numbered among the lost. Thus did the gunners of the Royal Artillery answer the call of duty. In the donga behind the guns crouched or lay a few unwounded and a large number of wounded, among them Colonel Long, now delirious, and ever repeating in words of agony and admiration, "Ah! my gunners! My gunners are splendid! Look at them!" Over the donga swept the hail of lead and shrapnel, and it was death to show the head above it. Behind it stretched the smooth level slope, devoid



FACING DEATH: THE LAST TWO GUNNERS OF THE 14th BATTERY.

of cover, swept by the enemy's fire, and across this it was almost impossible to send the much-needed aid.

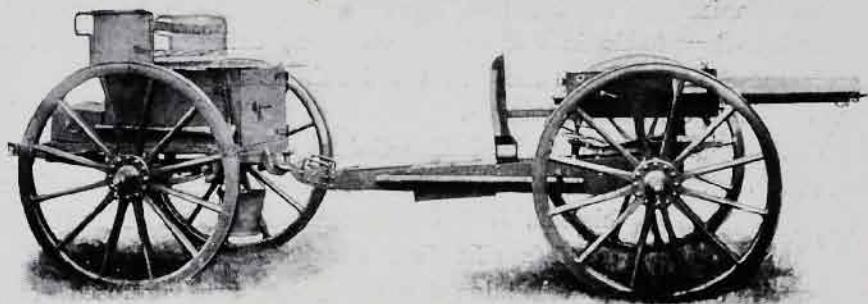
The naval 12-pounders had, as we have seen, taken up a position 400 yards to the rear of the doomed field batteries. Here, almost without support, they kept up a steady fire, and, wonderful to relate, lost only four men wounded. There were many narrow escapes. The little 1-pounder shells from "Pom-Pom," the automatic Maxim, fairly rained about the guns. Three passed between the legs of Lieutenant Ogilvy, R.N., while he was watching the effect of his fire through his glasses, yet did not harm him.

While these things were happening in the centre, on the left and right the attack had been equally unsuccessful. On the left General Hart advanced in column, with two field batteries, toward the drift. Soon after six the enemy suddenly opened upon the brigade, which was still marching in close order, with shell and shrapnel. The brunt of this artillery fire was borne by the Dublin Fusiliers and Connaught Rangers, who sustained heavy losses.

A 45-pounder on Grobler's Kloof, another of the same calibre on Red Hill, and several smaller guns fired steadily at them, and the two field batteries seemed unable to effect much against these weapons. The range was too great, and there was, moreover, difficulty in locating them. The strident crash of the Maxims in the enemy's lines was not the least unnerving of the dangers which had to be faced.

But at length the British troops deployed and advanced in open order, company by company, in desperate rushes towards the ford. The nearer they drew the hotter became the enemy's fire, till it was wonderful to observers that any human being could live in it. And still the enemy was invisible, and the British troops had nothing to fire at. Men sobbed with rage at the fact that they were so helpless. The two field batteries, far too few for the work, could produce no impression whatever upon the dimly-seen Boer trenches, within which the enemy lay in almost perfect security, and the Boer guns left them alone, as if in derision, devoting all their energy to the advancing line of soldiery.

At last the Dublin Fusiliers reached the ford and attempted to cross. But the Boers had dammed the river, and in place of three feet of water there were seven. Yet, burning with enthusiasm and with determination to get at



THE VICKERS-MAXIM 1-POUNDER.

Used by the Boers, and variously called by our men "Pom-pom" and "Ten-a-penny."



J. H. Bacon.]

[Sketched from life.

THE CASUALTY LIST AT THE WAR OFFICE

From the earliest days of the war, drawn white faces anxiously examined the lists of killed and wounded posted up at the War Office in Pall Mall. Perhaps the most moving scenes witnessed here followed the announcement that the Grenadier Guards—many of them London men—had been in action and lost heavily at Belmont, November 23.



A. Morrow.] "LET'S MAKE A NAME FOR OURSELVES AND DIE!"; DASH OF THE DUBLINS ACROSS THE TUGELA.

their enemies, a number of men plunged boldly in. Several were carried down by their heavy rifles and cartridges; others were caught by the barbed wire which the Boers had placed in the stream.

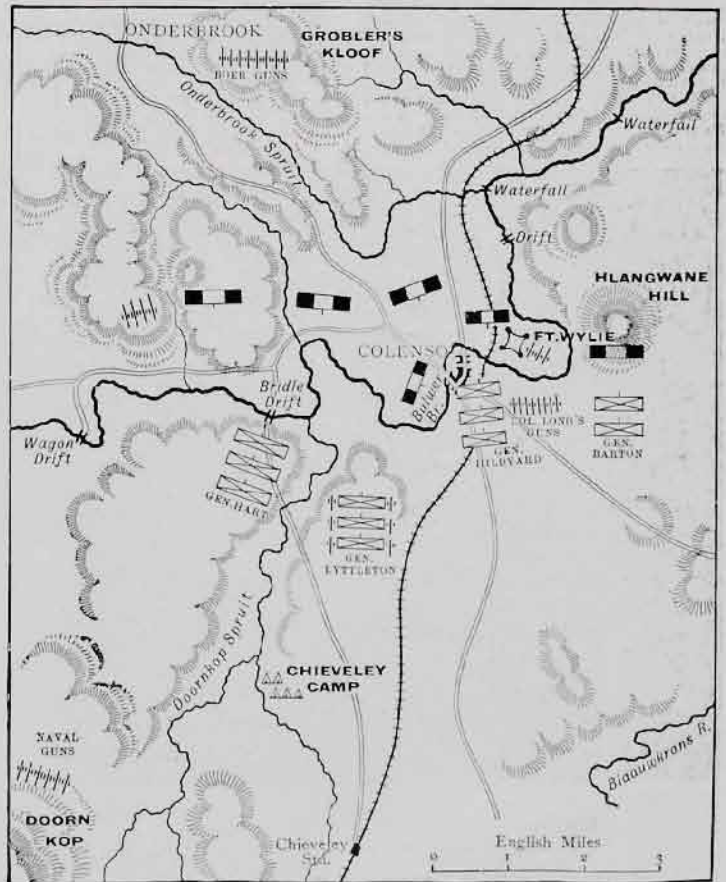
The Dublin Fusiliers attempt to ford the Tugela.

Only a handful reached the other side, climbed the steep bank, and, led by a colour-sergeant who had been first up the hill at Elandslaagte, with the words, "Let's make a name for ourselves and die!" doubled forwards towards a kraal, a little way beyond the river. Among them was the heroic Bugler Dunne, a mere boy, who on this day displayed the most devoted valour. In the advance upon the kraal one by one the men dropped wounded; no one reached it but the sergeant. Alone he could do nothing; so he turned and fled unharmed, crossed the river, and regained his battalion.

At this point came the order to retire. It was with the utmost difficulty that the officers could persuade their men to fall back.

Their retirement ordered.

The enemy redoubled his fire; the big 45-pounders fired shrapnel and shell with all possible rapidity; and it was not until the naval 47's were able to answer them with lyddite that they were held in check. To disentangle the Irish Brigade and cover its withdrawal, half Lyttelton's Brigade came to its help. Then both brigades, as they fell back, moved to the centre to



MAP OF THE BATTLE OF COLENSO.



[Photo by S. Cribb.]

BUGLER JOHN F. DUNNE

Bugler Dunne, of the Dublin Fusiliers, a lad of only fourteen, insisted on accompanying the column in the advance on Colenso; and whilst in the firing line was severely wounded in two places during the attempt to force the passage of the Tugela. He was invalided home, and recovered his health on the voyage. When he arrived in England he was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and became the unwilling object of a public ovation. He was presented to the Queen at Osborne, and as he had lost his bugle in the Tugela, Her Majesty gave him a new one, with a suitable inscription thereon. He is a native of the Isle of Man, and his father and brother are both in the Army.

Failure to carry Hlangwane.

support the final and desperate effort of Hildyard to carry the Colenso ford. On the right also the attack had failed. Dundonald's Brigade was at the base of Hlangwane about 5 a.m., and formed up for the attack. The stiffest work was assigned to the Colonials, the South African Light Horse climbing the hill straight towards the top, while the Composite Regiment and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry worked round the spurs of the mountain on their right. At first no sign of the enemy could be seen. As the roar of battle rose from Colenso behind, the Light Horse breasted the steep slope. It seemed as though the hill was as good as won, when a sharp fire was opened from the summit, and simultaneously Thorneycroft's mounted men were attacked by a large body of the enemy on their exposed right flank. Now was the time to send in support from Dundonald's command or Barton's Brigade, both near at hand; but no support came. Probably the officers named had not received clear instructions; possibly the whole attention of the Staff was rivetted upon the guns in the centre. Be this as it may, Thorneycroft was compelled to retire. Heavily outnumbered, unable to see the enemy, exposed to every shot on the bare slopes of the mountain, the men fell sullenly back with 136 killed and wounded. The failure to carry Hlangwane made it practically impossible for the Army to cross the Tugela.



[Rudall, Carte & Co.]

BUGLE PRESENTED TO BUGLER DUNNE BY HER MAJESTY TO REPLACE ONE LOST AT COLENZO.

In the centre the battle still raged with unabated violence. Indeed, as our men fell back on the left and right the enemy's fire in this



F. Dadd, R.I.]

THE CHAIRING OF BUGLER DUNNE AT PORTSMOUTH. *[After Photos. by S. Cribb]*

quarter grew in fury and intensity. **Advance of Hildyard's Brigade.**

The Boers' attention was no longer diverted, and they were able to concentrate all their strength and energy to meet Hildyard's assault. To have had any chance of success it should have been made simultaneously with Hart's onset on the left. Hart having failed, had it not been for the desperate position of Colonel Long's guns close to the river and in the very centre of the enemy's fire, a retreat would without

doubt have been the wisest course. It should have been no part of the British plan to commit our men to a profitless combat in which they could only be shot down without effective reply. But though the plight of the twelve guns does not seem as yet to have been known to the commander-in-chief, he sent Hildyard forward.

Hildyard's Brigade, led by the Royal West Surreys and the Devons, in superb array descended the gentle slopes which led down from the British camp to the village of Colenso. There was no cover of any kind, and the whole terrain over which they moved was swept at first by the Boer cannon and automatic guns, and then, as our men drew nearer, by the far deadlier rifles of the enemy.

"With magnificent hardihood both battalions walked erect," says Mr. Bennet Burleigh, the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent. "With death filling the air and tearing the ground, onward they went, the most superb spectacle of invincible manhood. Common soldiers in stained, creased khaki uniforms, homeliest of drab — they were heroes bound to command the admiration of the world." From the extreme weakness of the British artillery it was im-



Photos. by G. W. Wilson & Co., Aberdeen.

THE FALLS OF THE TUGELA.

These two falls are about a couple of miles apart, and lie a little below Fort Wylie, and quite close to the scene of the great battle.

possible to beat down the fire from the enemy's trenches near Colenso. No guns were available, for the 14th and 66th Field Batteries were out of action, and from the lie of the ground the naval weapons, which alone remained in this portion of the field, were unable to direct their projectiles upon the enemy. Yet in spite of the



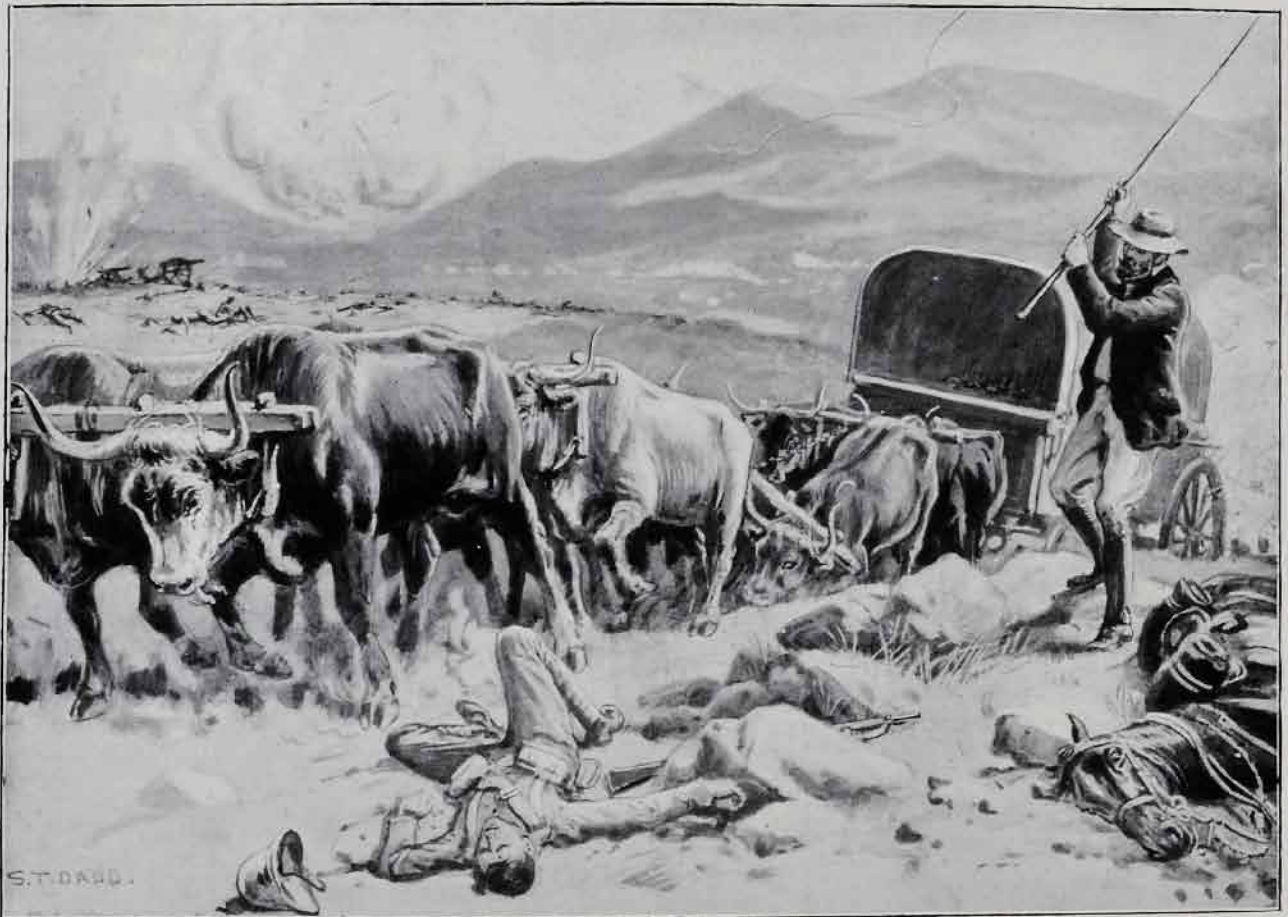
fact that their onset was virtually unsupported the West Surreys forced their way into the brushwood around Colenso, and even reached the outskirts of the village. A tremendous roar of firing came up from the hollow; then the Boers were seen from the naval 47 battery to stream out of Colenso and swarm up the slopes of Fort Wylie. The naval guns, however, lost their opportunity, since at that distance the swarm of fugitives was taken for British soldiers assaulting.

At this point, when the troops were in a good position for crossing the river and assaulting Fort Wylie, General Buller at last heard of the catastrophe to the two field batteries. It was

represented to him as even worse than it really was, since the six naval 12-pounders were said to have been silenced with Colonel Long's guns. The terrible news that the artillery, which he so urgently needed and upon which he had relied to cover the final rush of the stormers, had been thrown away may well have staggered the general. Without the support of guns he considered that Fort Wylie could not be taken. There seemed to be nothing left but a withdrawal, and a withdrawal was ordered, though the Colonel of the Surreys begged to be allowed to attempt the rescue of the lost guns and to be permitted to hold Colenso till nightfall.

While the Surreys were drawing off attention in the direction of Colenso two companies of Devons had crossed the railway and had gone to the help of the field guns. They were supported by two companies of Scots Fusiliers from Barton's brigade. But this half battalion could effect little or nothing. It was forced to take shelter in the donga behind the guns, whence it fired steadily at the Boer trenches some hundreds of yards away.

To see what could be done, and in response to urgent messages for help from Colonel Long,



S. T. Dadd.]

BRINGING OUT AN AMMUNITION WAGGON UNDER HEAVY FIRE AT COLENZO.

about 9.30 General Buller with General Clery and their Staff rode down to the guns under a terrific fire. "Out of this, please," he said to the naval 12-pounders which had fought so bravely and with so much constancy behind the dongas, and these guns were moved back by the bluejackets, but only with the greatest difficulty. No less than 32 of the oxen which dragged them had been shot, and the black drivers had all bolted. An ammunition waggon had perforce to be left behind for the moment, but even it was not finally abandoned. A heroic Natal farmer named Pringle went out alone with a team of slow-moving oxen, deliberately inspanned them under fire, and withdrew the waggon. It now remained, if possible, to save the twelve field guns, 400 yards or more to the front in the very vortex of a storm of shot and shell which broke over them all the more fiercely as the Boers realised what was purposed.

Into this hell rode Lieutenant Roberts, only son of the Field-Marshal, an officer of infinite promise, Captain Schofield, and Captain Congreve. With fresh teams of horses they strove to limber up the guns, but under the tempest of death men and horses were swiftly swept away. Roberts fell stricken with five bullets, mortally wounded. Congreve's tunic was torn to shreds by bullets, and he himself was wounded. Schofield alone seemed to bear a charmed life, and though six bullets passed through his clothes he came off without a scratch, and succeeded in getting away two guns of the 66th Battery. All this while General Buller had sat cool and determined upon the terrible fire. He himself was coursed round his ribs without in-

Death of Lieutenant Roberts. Hughes, his staff doctor, was blown amongst the group; Lord Gerard, horse shot through the neck; and as escort, had their horses grazed bullets through their clothes.

his horse, eating sandwiches under struck by a spent bullet, which flicting a serious wound. Captain to pieces by a shell which burst one of his aide-de-camps, had his several of the Natal Police, acting or wounded, and themselves had Three teams of horses were brought

THE FOUR



[Photo by Knight, Aldershot.]

CAPT. CONGREGVE, V.C.



[Photo by Chancellor, Dublin.]

THE LATE LIEUT. ROBERTS, V.C.



[Photo by Hawke, Plymouth.]

CORPORAL NURSE, V.C.

COLENZO V.C.'s.



[Photo by Chancellor, Dublin.]

CAPT. REED, V.C.

Corporal Nurse obtained his Cross for assisting his superior officers in the attempt to save the guns. Capt. Schofield was not awarded the decoration solely because he acted under orders.

der Captain Reed, and plunged into nessed to an ammunition waggon, almost all shot, and Reed himself for it but to abandon the other retreat.

The Victoria Crosses so gallantly won were presented to Capt. Reed and Corporal Nurse by General Buller, at Ladysmith, on March 18, at a special parade of the troops held for the purpose.

up from the 7th Field Battery un- the inferno. One team was har- but before they could move were was wounded. There was nothing ten guns and order a general

Even now it would have been possible, in the opinion of some, to withdraw the British infantry out of range of the Boer rifles and entrench a force in a position 1,000 yards or so away from the guns, when any attempt on the part of the enemy to cross the river could have been defeated. If the naval guns on the crest of the ridge above Colenso had kept their place and supported this force it would have been practically impossible for the Boers to get near the guns, and the weapons could have been withdrawn under cover of night. As it was the Staff forgot to give orders to the Devons and Scots Fusiliers in the donga to retire, and the men remained there till evening, when the Boers boldly crossed the stream, captured the ten

Guns and men cap- tured by the Boers.



Edward Read.

THE BOERS CROSSING THE TUGELA TO CAPTURE THE BRITISH GUNS

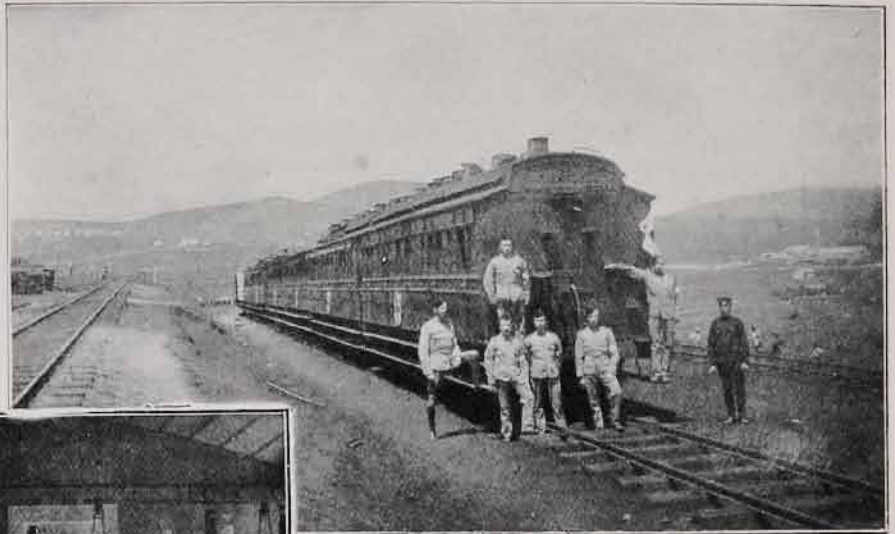


[From the Painting by Therese Schwartz.

OUR GALLANT FOEMAN: THE LATE GENERAL JOUBERT.

Piet Joubert, Commandant-General of the Boer forces, died at Pretoria on March 27, 1900. He was of Huguenot descent. Sir George White has spoken of him as "a soldier and a gentleman, a brave and honourable opponent," and Lord Roberts telegraphed his respectful sympathy to the family of the distinguished General, "whose personal gallantry was only surpassed by his humane conduct and chivalrous bearing under all circumstances." The captive British officers in Pretoria sent wreaths for his coffin.

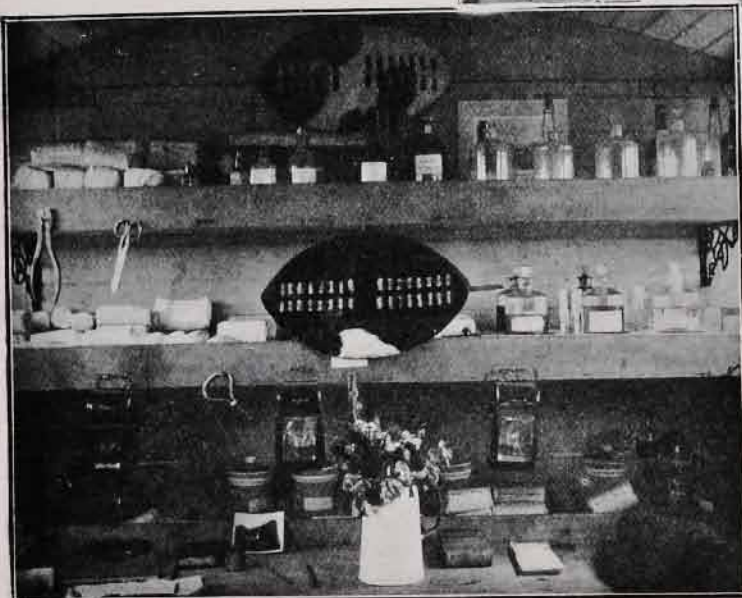
guns, and surrounded the men in the donga, making treacherous use, it is said, of the white flag. The ten guns had not been in any way disabled, as the gunners had expected to be able to return and serve them. The breech-blocks had not been carried off, and it would appear that in spite of the complaints of shortness of ammunition a large quantity



No. 1 FIELD HOSPITAL TRAIN AND STAFF.

of British shrapnel and cartridges was taken by the enemy—probably in the ammunition waggons to the rear of the guns.

Only two officers are known to have escaped unhurt from "the donga of death." These were Captains Herbert and Fitzpatrick. Before they made their desperate attempt they shook hands with each other and with those who were left unwounded. Then Captain Herbert dashed out and got away unwounded, but with his horse shot in the neck. Captain Fitzpatrick followed at full speed, and he too reached safety. A third



THE DISPENSARY AND SURGERY OF THE HOSPITAL TRAIN.

officer had only covered a few yards when a shell burst under him and killed him and his horse instantly.

And now in all directions the British troops were falling back from the field of battle and disaster. It was a scene, says one who was present, "that can never be forgotten by those who were privileged to see it. Slowly, steadily, with correct intervals, as if on parade, only better, our magnificent infantry

Retreat effected in
good order.

fell back; no doubling,
no bunching together,
they stood within 500

yards of the Boer position. Here was no romance of war, no charging of battalions amid a storm of cheers, nothing to brace up the spirits to one glorious effort in which danger is forgotten; nothing but the stream of bullets and shells. From our position I could plainly see the thin dust-coloured lines retiring. Presently, clank, clank from the Maxim-Nordenfelt and a group of men would fall; again an officer might be seen walking slowly in rear of his company; you looked again, and a speck of khaki was all that could be seen. The use of smokeless powder has added greatly to the horrors of

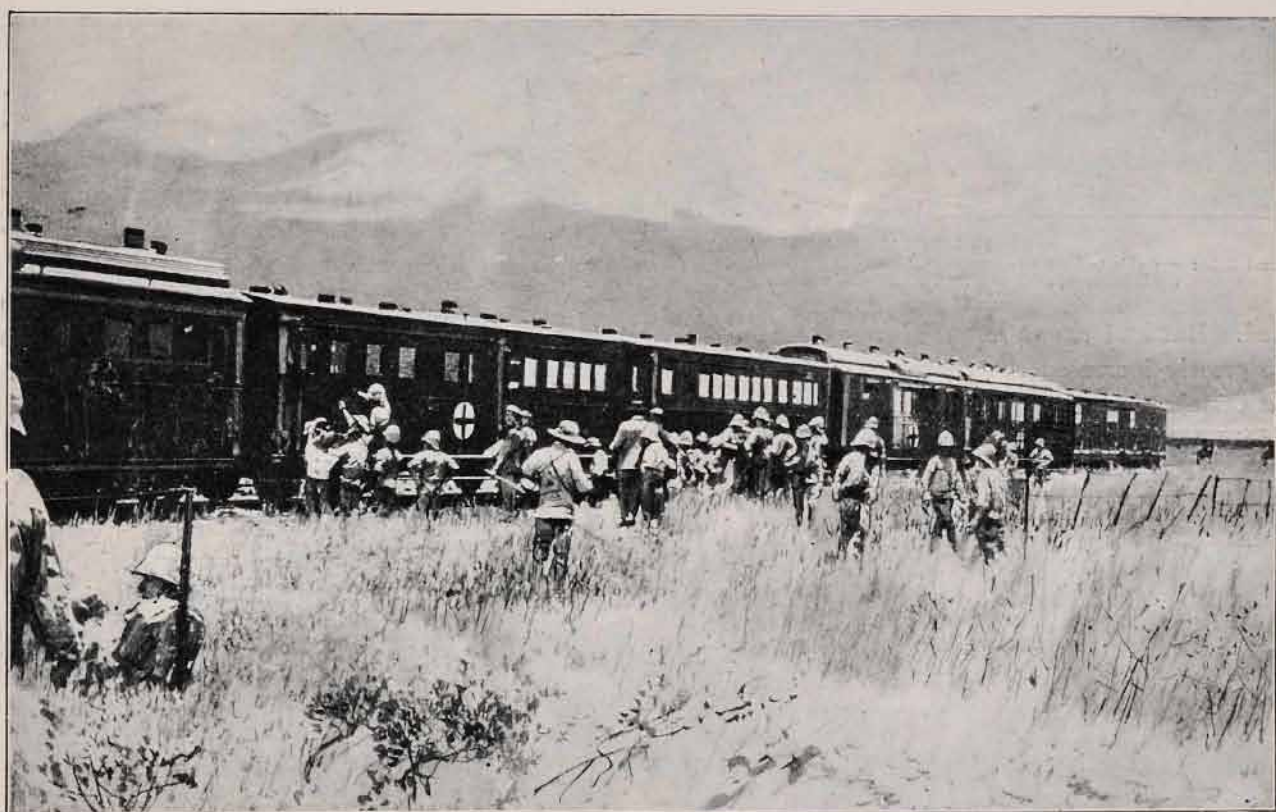


INTERIOR OF HOSPITAL TRAIN.

war; this was the strange thing about the battle of Colenso, the utter absence of smoke, and the clearness with which each incident could be seen. At last, covered by the Cavalry Brigade and the 7th Battery, the wearied infantry returned. Twelve hours' fighting in the burning sun, losses over 1,200—not so bad for our boy soldiers. Absolutely undefeated, unshaken by what they had passed through, our magnificent infantry at last could rest."

Not so much with the Commander-in-Chief as with his impetuous subordinates rested the blame for this disastrous day. The entanglement of the guns it was which had the greatest part in piling up the British losses and converting what was almost a success into a humiliating defeat. Had the British artillery been stronger, even this rash move might not have proved so calamitous as it ultimately was. Forty guns might have beaten down the Boer fire, which twelve guns were utterly unable to check.

The total British losses were 132 killed, 765 wounded, and 228 missing or prisoners; a total of 1,125. The heaviest sufferers were the two field batteries—the 14th losing 50 and the 66th Battery 42 men, out of a probable total present in each case of 140 men. The Dublin Fusiliers lost 218 men



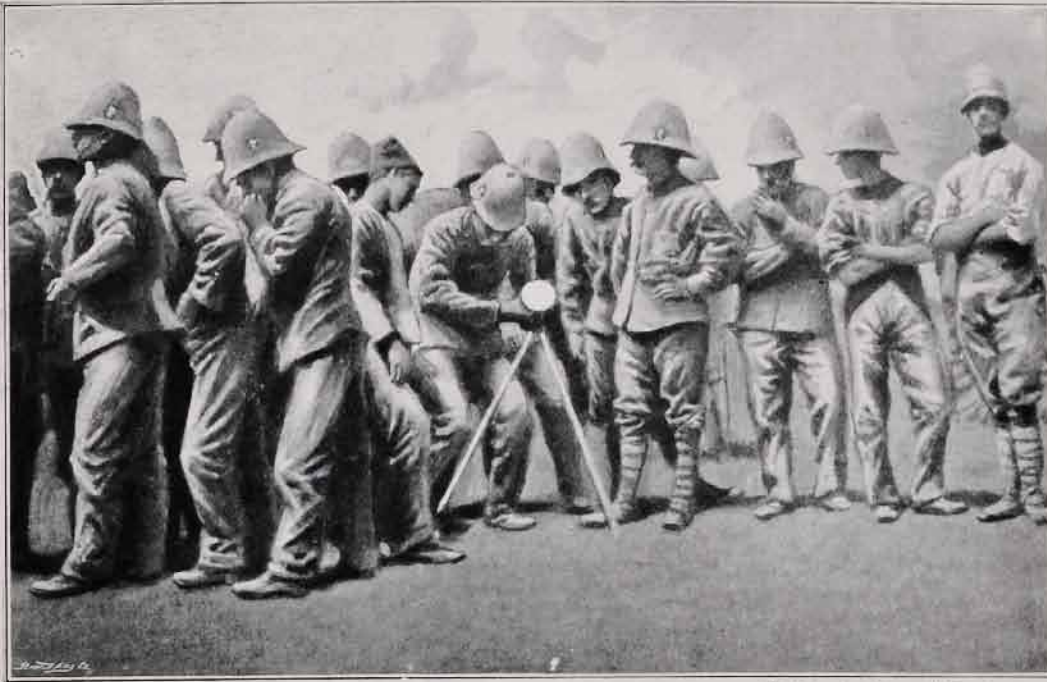
(Photo by Major Brazier-Creagh, R.A.M.C.)

THE FIELD HOSPITAL TRAIN AT THE BATTLE OF COLENSO.

out of about 1,000. As the force actually engaged did not number more than 15,000, when all deductions had been made, the casualties were a high percentage. The loss in killed was unusually small, and a very great number of the wounded were only very slightly injured—for the most part shot in the foot. As to the enemy's losses it was impossible to speak with any accuracy. Very few Boers were seen during the fighting, and it would appear that at the outside 200 or 250 were killed and wounded, mainly by the British artillery fire. Thus our troops suffered heavily without inflicting serious casualties upon the enemy.

It is noteworthy that in the fighting no estimate whatever could be arrived at as to the Boers' strength. Whether they numbered 10,000, 15,000, or 20,000, no one knew, and no one could even guess. It was evident that the trenches and the position generally were very strongly held. The ranges are believed to have been carefully measured, and wire entanglements had been constructed close to the enemy's works, so that storming them would have been a matter of exceptional difficulty, even without the swift and deep river as a further obstacle in their front. It does not appear that

the Boers weakened their force surrounding Ladysmith during the action. The garrison there probably did not expect a battle, and so made no move.



HELIOGRAPHING INTO LADYSMITH.

(Photo by the Biograph Company.)

General Buller was able to keep up communication with Ladysmith, as Lord Methuen was with Kimberley, by means of the heliograph, an apparatus for reflecting sunlight in flashes indicating letters and words.

As serious as the loss of over a thousand men in the none-too-strong relief column was the loss of ten guns. This reduced Sir Redvers Buller's available artillery to the contemptible total of twenty field pieces. It is wonderful that the Boers made no attempt whatever to follow up their victory; instead, they seemed perfectly satisfied with the results that had been obtained.

But had they pressed vigorously upon the British flanks during the retirement, they might have greatly increased the casualties in our ranks, and, perhaps, have converted defeat into catastrophe. It is certain that they were strong enough to do this had they been well directed, and their own mobility was such that they could have had no fear of any untoward consequences resulting to themselves from such a course of action.



[Photo by the Biograph Company.]

A NOVEL FEATURE OF THE BATTLE-FIELD: THE BIOGRAPH CAMERA IN OPERATION DURING THE BATTLE OF COLENSO.

The day was fiercely hot and water was scarce, which greatly increased the sufferings of the British troops. The wounded, especially, had to endure terrible agony under the scorching sun, yet the demeanour of the men was above all praise. None complained; few uttered a groan; they faced pain with a heroic stoicism. A man who was shot through the abdomen had a cup of water brought to him by an orderly as he lay writhing with parched mouth. "Take it to my pal first," he said, "he is worse hit than me." It was the spirit of Sir Philip Sidney. A drummer boy of fourteen sat, with his left arm shattered, on the ambulance, eating a biscuit. Admiring his bravery and endurance, an officer went up to him and gave him half-a-crown. "Thank you," said the lad, "but would you mind putting it in my pocket, as I musn't let go of my biscuit." Thus were the sublime and the ridiculous blended around those sorrowful



FIRST AID TO THE WOUNDED. THE ARMY MEDICAL CORPS AT WORK UNDER A HEAVY FIRE AT COLENZO.

tents to which the stricken painfully pilgrimaged from all parts of the field. Some limped in as best they could; others were borne on stretchers; all, as they arrived, were given food.

Within the tents the surgeons plied their work of merciful cruelty. "Each of the three operating tents," says Sir William McCormac, "contained two operating tables, and as fast as a patient was taken off the table another took his place. Awaiting their turn, the wounded were lying outside in rows, which were being continually augmented by the civilian bearers coming in from the field. As each wounded man reached the hospital he was served with a hot cup of Bovril, large cans of which were boiling outside the tents. The way in which the wounded had been dressed on the field, and each man ticketed with the nature of his wound, his name, and regiment, was excellent; and was very useful for identification. This also saved much time at the field hospitals, because the seriously wounded could be at once discriminated

**Bravery of the
Army Medical Corps**

from the more trivial cases. . . The praise of the regimental officers and men in respect to the way in which the Royal Army Medical Corps had done their duty under heavy fire was unanimous and unstinted. An officer of the Devons, wounded in the foot, told me that he managed to get to a hut near the bank of the river, which was being used as a dressing station. This hut was continually under heavy fire, and he described the behaviour of the medical officers as magnificent. . . . The work performed in the operating tents was, in my opinion, of great efficiency, the operations being deliberately carried out with skill and despatch under the very trying circumstances of intense heat,

hurry, and excitement all round.

The Royal Army Medical Corps officers of these hospitals had started their surgical work about 3 a.m., and when I visited them in the evening they were still hard at it, having had no food meanwhile and no time for rest, and the work went on for hours afterwards. Altogether some 800 patients passed through the field hospitals during the day. The men showed the utmost pluck and endurance."

And yet in the midst of the scene of suffering and sorrow one thing consoles the heart. Why was it that these men faced these frightful conditions and endured the rain of bullets and shrapnel and shell splinters? Was it not because of their faith in those unseen things for which the Christian martyr of old laid down his life? The martyr died for God; these men were ready to endure all things for duty and for their country. Of such motives the Englishman rarely speaks. Yet in the heart of the nation "there is an instinctive recognition that a man's part is not to shirk the hardships or escape from the sorrows of life." It was this recognition that had brought thou-



THE FATAL TELEGRAM: "KILLED IN ACTION."

sands of men—"duke's son, cook's son, son of a belted earl"—of their own free will thousands of miles across the sea to lay down their lives in the flower of their age.

The impression produced upon spectators by the fight is thus described by one who was present, not as a correspondent or combatant. "X and I," he writes, "were present through that massacre of our poor brave troops and volunteers at Colenso on Friday; on the battle-field, within the lines actually. Shells burst within a thousand yards of us. We saw the dead and wounded carried away till cart after cart was full to heart-breaking overflowing. The wonderful artillery practice and the roar and rattle of rifles, Hotchkiss, Maxims, and cannon, up to the great earth-rending lyddite death-dealers, kept us in a state of excited enthusiasm. X had nightmare, as you may imagine, that night, and details of the scenes we witnessed

Impressions of an
eye-witness.

must have been sickening enough reading for you. If this was only a 'reconnaissance in force,' what must a battle be? . . . I often feel as if I were out of my mind, or in some dream or other state, for it is all bewildering and stupefying, and this intense heat in any case grievously affects me. No rain, no cessation of its suffocating fury night or day. How can the troops endure it?"



HOSPITAL COOKS PREPARING BEEF-TEA.



IN A FIELD HOSPITAL ON THE TUGELA RIVER.

That night the defeated general telegraphed to the Home Government a brief and manly account of the unlucky day. He neither minimised nor exaggerated the disaster. He has been censured for opening his melancholy dispatch with the words, "I regret to report serious reverse;" but if this was not a "serious reverse" speech has no meaning. It was a matter of absolute necessity to give the authorities at home true and exact information as to the situation, that they

might be able to gauge correctly the measures necessary to meet the danger. Not General Buller for making this report, but the home authorities, for publishing it, must be blamed, if there is to be any blame.

Thus checked, the General next day obtained an armistice for the purpose of burying the dead and recovering any of the wounded who might have escaped notice. The dead were found to have been stripped of their clothes by the Boers, who were short of clothing themselves, though the wounded near the enemy's lines on the previous day had

Armistice.

been very kindly treated and given water. They were deprived of their arms and accoutrements, but were allowed by the enemy to be carried off by our stretcher-bearers and ambulances, only the slightly wounded officers being detained as prisoners.

The enemy throughout fought with great courage and determination, but it must be remembered that they



THIRSTY SOLDIERS TAKING THEIR TURN AT THE WATER-BARREL.
The scarcity of water is one of the great obstacles to the rapid movement of troops in South Africa.

had the advantage of strong entrenchments. They displayed particular restraint and coolness in sitting quiet under a tremendous bombardment, and in allowing General Buller's men to advance to relatively close quarters before fire was opened. What is wonderful is that the British Intelligence Department in the field seems to have known very little of the enemy's disposition and entrenchments. The day was a day of tragic blunders issuing in great and unnecessary sacrifice of men. That the loss was not far heavier is surprising in view of the intensity and volume of the enemy's fire. The casualty list at least proved that the Boers were not the marksmen they had been supposed to be.

As has been pointed out already, General Buller's army was from the first insufficient—insufficient in numbers, and especially weak in artillery. In the opinion of most correspondents

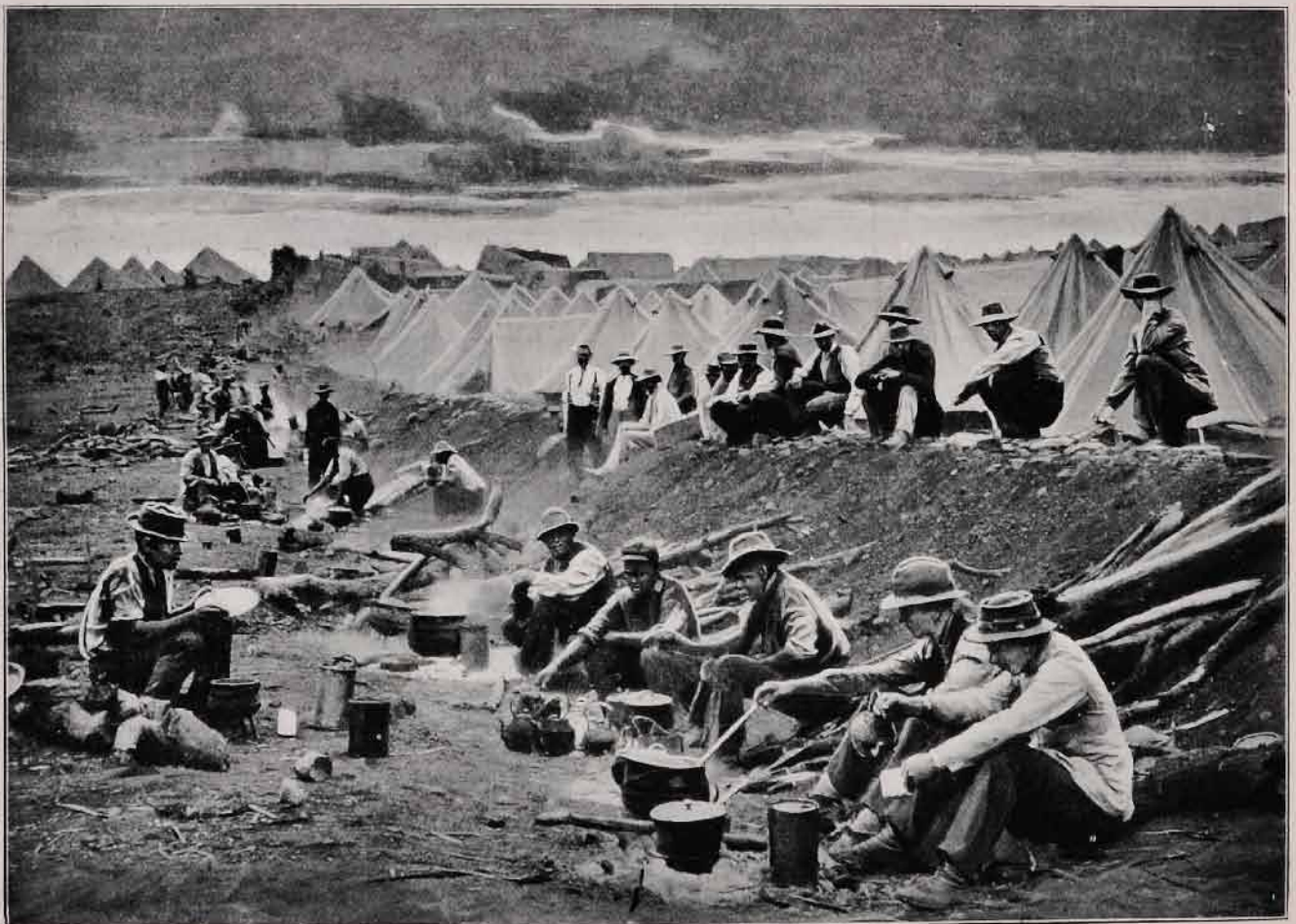
Why the attack failed.

on the field—an opinion justified by the final success in February—there could be no chance of success unless Mount Hlangwane, upon the British right, were captured. In Boer hands this position gave an excellent sallying-point whence to direct counter attacks upon the British flank and line of communications. Judging by the measure of success which a small force of Colonials obtained in their assault upon this hill, it would have been possible with greater strength, which was available, to have carried it. General Barton's brigade, 3,500 strong, was hardly engaged in the battle, yet, when appealed to for assistance, the general refused to send it. Mr. Bennet Burleigh, who does not write hastily, considers



COLONEL C. J. LONG, R.A.

Obtained his Lieutenancy in 1870; served in the Afghan War of 1878-80, and in the Sudan under Lord Kitchener in 1897-8 as commandant of the Egyptian artillery. He was present at the battle of Khartoum, and for his services on that occasion was mentioned in despatches. Colonel, September, 1899; in command of the Royal Artillery at Colenso, where his anxiety to get within effective range of the enemy led to the loss of ten guns. In that action he was mortally wounded.



IN A BOER LAAGER: COOKS PREPARING A MEAL.

that half a battalion put into the fight at this point might have turned the scale. With Hlangwane in British hands the Colenso lines would have become untenable for the Boers, and the enemy must have fallen back upon Pieters. But at Pieters, if they had fought in December, they would have had to face the great risk of the Ladysmith garrison breaking in upon their rear. For at that date Sir George White's army was capable of moving, and had its cavalry and artillery in fair condition. So that the capture of Hlangwane on December 15 might well have brought with it the immediate relief of Ladysmith.

Again, it is curious that seemingly no one in the British Army was aware that the Boers had entrenched positions to the south of the Tugela. Yet their dispositions in the Modder River fight, which had occurred more than a fortnight previously, so that the Staff had had full time to acquaint itself with the details, should have led to the conclusion that it was at least probable there were such entrenchments to the south of the river.

A third cause of the defeat was the utter untrustworthiness of the maps of the district, although Natal had for two generations been a British colony, and though a considerable British garrison had for years been stationed in Ladysmith.

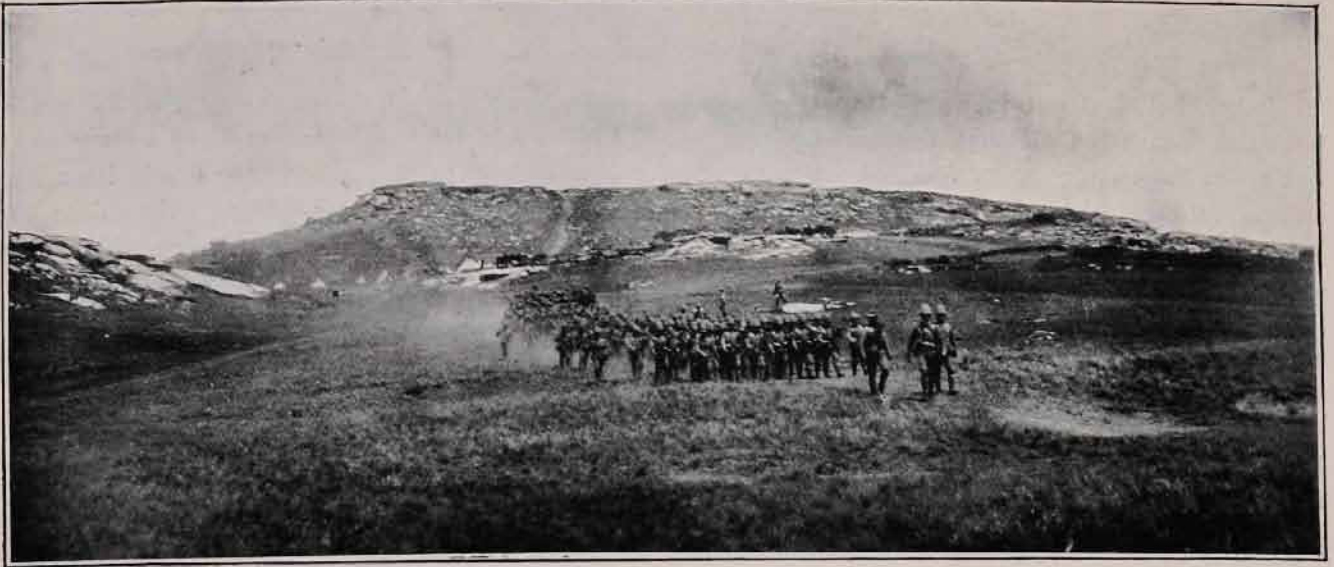
Next there were the actual mistakes of generals in the field. And here it should be remembered in extenuation that while the non-combatant of average intelligence, sitting in an arm-chair, can often point out after the event what ought to have been done, and what was done wrongly, such critics have not to face the storm and excitement of battle, in which men are only too apt to forget or neglect the teaching of history. It is a classical saying that the best general is he who makes the fewest mistakes, and the proverb is itself an admission that mistakes in war are inevitable.

In their management of the battle the Boers had the assistance and counsel of Colonel de Villebois-Mareuil, a French officer of distinction, who, at a huge salary, had been enlisted to advise their generals. But they paid little or no attention to his counsel. At the time it was supposed that the Boer victory was largely to be attributed to him. We now know that it was due to the errors of the British War Office and the mistakes of the British generals.



THE LATE GENERAL DE VILLEBOIS-MAREUIL.

Sought out by Dr. Leyds on the outbreak of hostilities, Count de Villebois-Mareuil, who retired from active service in the French Army in 1866, hastened to Africa, and set to work to elaborate a plan of campaign in Natal. He is said to have been responsible for the disposition of the Boers at Colenso and elsewhere on the Tugela, and to have been present and active in directing the repulse of Buller's attack. He was killed in an action near Boshof, in the Orange Free State, where he and some seventy men were surrounded and killed or captured by Lord Methuen, April 5, 1900.



STARTING ON THE FATAL MARCH: ROYAL IRISH RIFLES MARCHING FROM BUSHMAN'S HOEK IN PREPARATION FOR THE BATTLE OF STORMBERG.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BATTLE OF STORMBERG.

Mistakes of the Boer Generals—British withdraw from Naauwpoort and Stormberg—General Gatacre takes command—Advance of the Boers—Omnibus Horses for the Artillery—Conditions of successful attack—Gatacre moves upon Stormberg—The forces detain at Molteno—The wrong road taken—The column surprised—The fight—Fatigue of the British troops—A gun abandoned—Order to retreat given—The dead and wounded left—Narrow escape of the armoured train—The return to Molteno—British losses—Disastrous results—The Boers seize Colesberg—British re-occupy Naauwpoort—Arrival of General French.



DURING early November the operations of the Boers in the central field of war, along the Cape Colony frontier from Aliwal North to Orange River Station, were languid in the extreme. Numerous small bodies of the enemy had appeared in this region, which, as we have seen, was denuded of all defence and open to any attack; but there was no energy or combination. Had the scattered commandos been united into one body and directed by one able brain, they might with little or no difficulty have pushed south into the very heart of Cape Colony. At Cradock and Graaff Reinet they had hundreds or thousands of sympathisers, who only waited for their coming to rise. Ensnared in this mountainous and difficult

Mistakes of the Boer Generals.



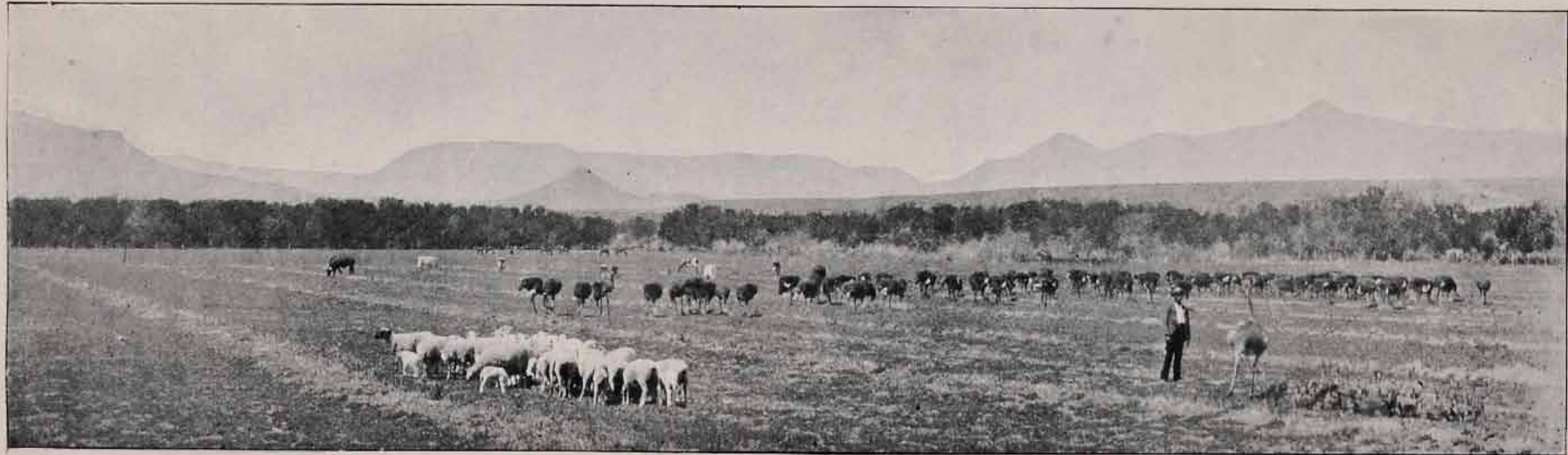
KAFFRARIAN RIFLES' CAMP AND MAXIM GUNS, BUSHMAN'S HOEK.



GENERAL GATACRE'S CAMP, WITH QUEENSTOWN IN BACKGROUND.

(Photo by H. Nicholls, Johannesburg.)

country, astride of the railway which runs northward from Port Elizabeth, and threatening on the one side the line from Capetown to De Aar, and on the other the railway from East London to Stormberg, they could have rendered any advance in Cape Colony impossible till they had been dislodged. The army assailing them would have been compelled to fight in a miniature Switzerland, where roads, towns and mountains were only very incorrectly depicted on existing maps. We can guess from General Buller's troubles in Natal during the advance on Ladysmith what would have been the issue of such a campaign. For the British Government, unlike the French or Italian, had never taken the trouble to prepare its Army for the special contingencies of mountain war. It seemed to expect that by a special dispensation of Heaven it would always find level ground upon which to fight.



AN OSTRICH FARM AT GRAAF REINET, IN THE CENTRE OF THE DISAFFECTED DISTRICT.

We see, then, that if the gravest mistakes had been made by British generals, the enemy committed yet more colossal blunders. There was nothing whatever to prevent the Boers from detaching 10,000



MOUNTAINS OF STORES AT NAAUWPOORT.

men from Natal in early November and sending another 5,000 south from before Kimberley, which would have been more hopelessly isolated if the rails had been broken in the vicinity of Victoria West, far to the south of De Aar, than it was when the line was cut only at Spytfontein. It is certain that their foreign advisers, and in particular Dr. Leyds, urged such a course upon the Boers. They were, one would suppose, shrewd enough to understand the immense advantages which carrying the

war so far south would give them, but it may be that their armies had the weakness of all peasant forces, hastily levied and ill-compacted, and that the individual Boers shrank from going so far afield from their homes.

The tiny British garrisons had at General Buller's order evacuated Naaupoort and Stormberg, the first on the 2nd and the second on the 3rd of November. From Naaupoort the British fell back to De Aar, and from Stormberg to Sterkstroom and Queenstown, the latter place only ninety miles from East London. There they remained a fortnight in hourly danger of attack, waiting for the tardy transports that conveyed the Army Corps.

Meantime the Boers occupied Barkly East, Aliwal North, Jamestown, Burghersdorp and Colesberg. At

Aliwal North they seized a loyal Dutch magistrate, Mr. Hugo, and made him stand upon the bridge while they were crossing, as they were fully under the impression that it had been mined. This gentleman displayed such devotion to his Queen, and such unswerving fidelity to Britain, that he had afterwards to fly for his life, leaving behind him his wife and children.

On the 15th an armoured train with a small detachment of the Berkshires reconnoitred to a point well beyond Stormberg, and returned, without incident and without seeing



[Photo by L. W. Ford, Queenstown.]

QUEENSTOWN: THE TOWN HALL.

The photograph represents the principal street in Queenstown as decorated on the occasion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

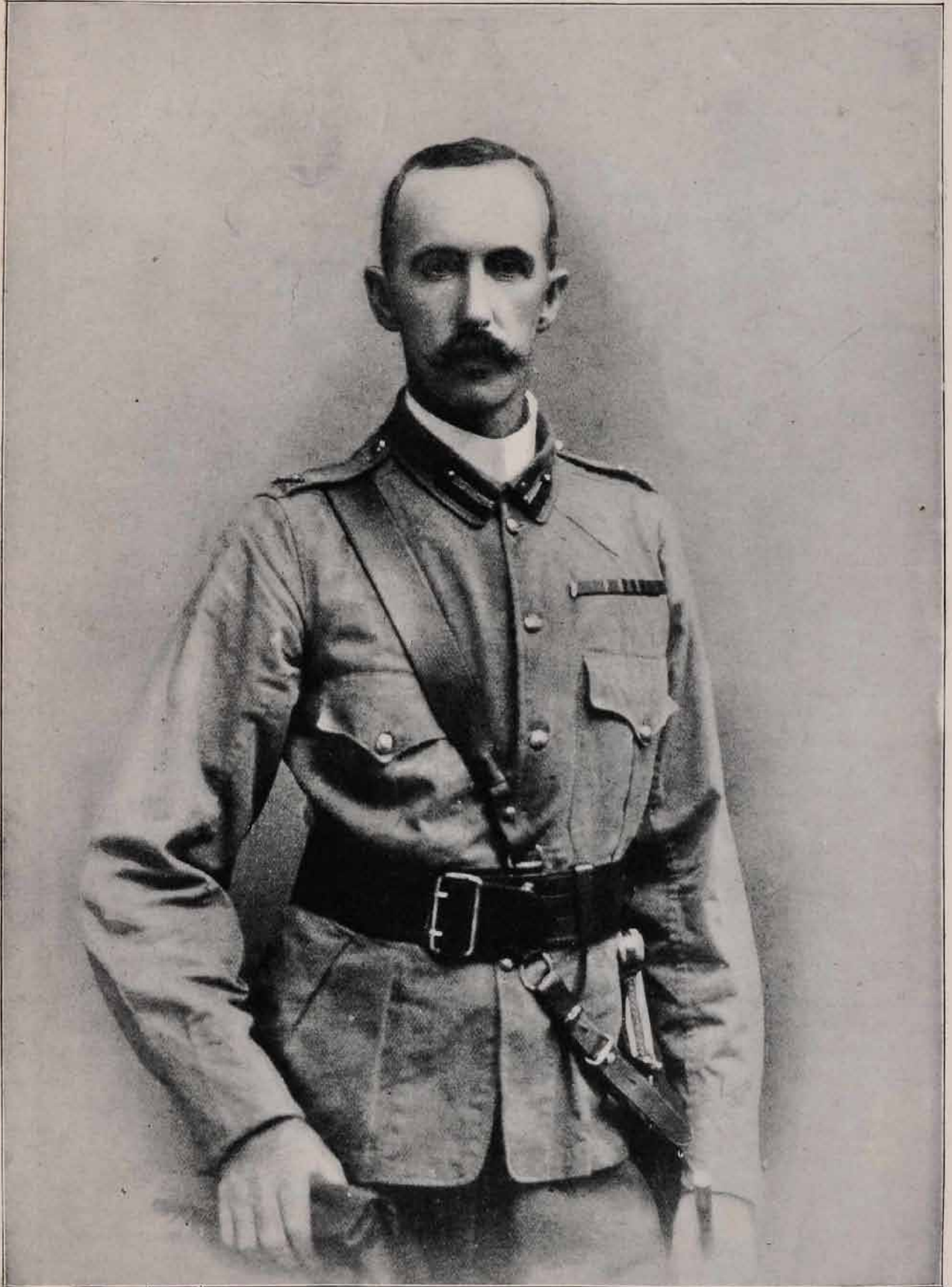


Photo by Cumming, Aldershot.

LIEUT-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM FORBES GATACRE, K.C.B., D.S.O.

Born 1841. Entered the Army in 1862; was Instructor of Military Surveying at the Royal Military College, 1872-9; Deputy-Adjutant and Q.M.G. with the Hazara Expedition, 1888; served in Burma, 1889, Chitral, 1895, Sudan, 1898, and commanded the British Division at the battle of Khartoum; in command of South-Eastern District, 1897; appointed to command the 3rd Division in South Africa, with rank of Lieut-General, October, 1899.



PRESIDENT STEYN AND HIS GUARD OF HONOUR OF FREE STATE BURGHERS

anything of the enemy, to Queenstown. On November 18 General Gatacre himself arrived with his staff from Capetown, accompanied by a portion of the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles.

Sir William Gatacre had the reputation of being an excellent though somewhat too daring general. He had great experience in savage warfare; in Chitral he had commanded a brigade and won golden opinions; in Egypt he had served under Lord Kitchener, that exact disciplinarian and stern judge of men,

and had commanded the British brigade at the Atbara, where he led in person the impetuous assault upon the Dervish zeriba. At Omdurman he had charge of the British division. He was a man of the most intense energy — "Back-acher" was his nickname among his soldiers — sparing others not more than himself. On Sunday, the 19th, he addressed his men at Church Parade and told them the news of the repulse of the Boer attack by the Ladysmith



RAILWAY CUTTING AT STORMBERG BRINGING UP TROOPS IN AN ARMOUR'D TRAIN.

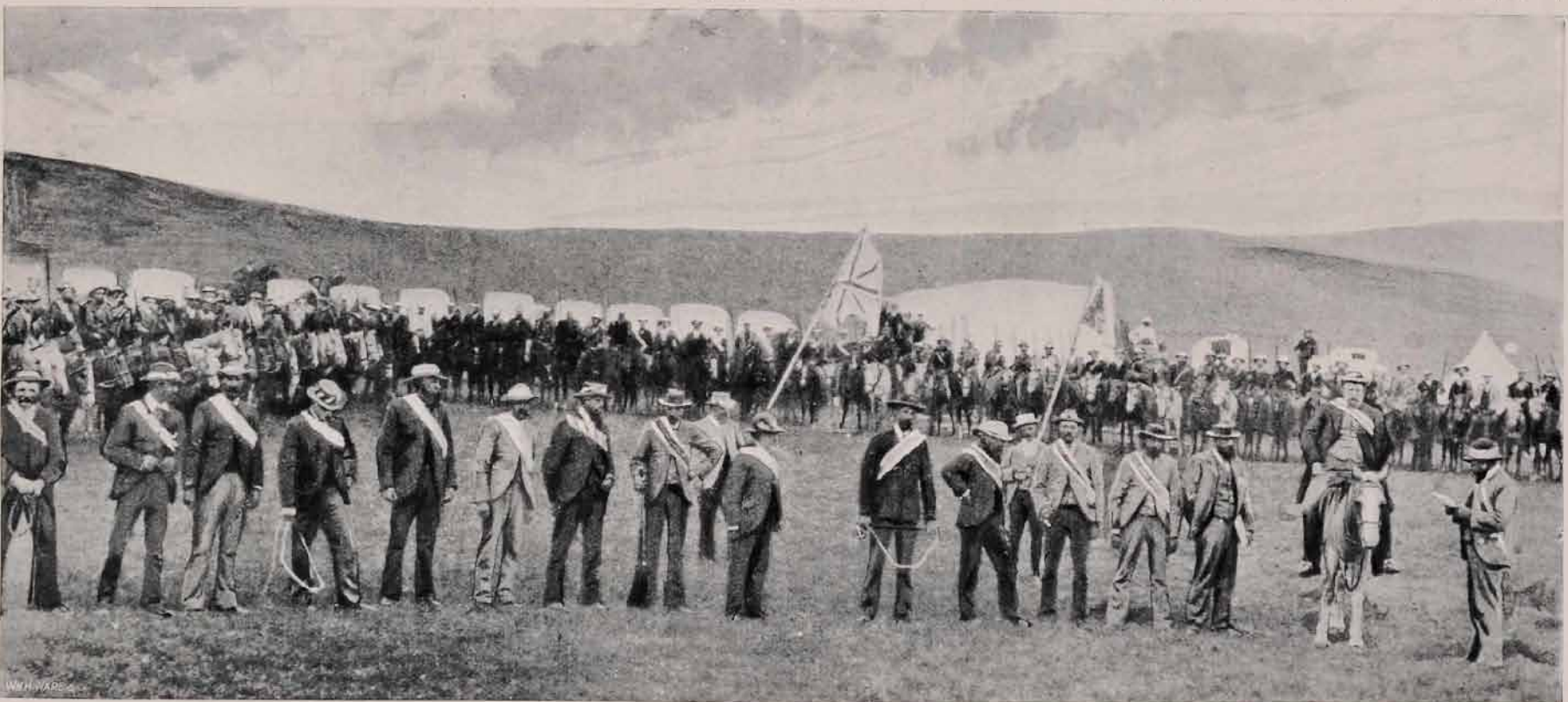
garrison. On the 21st he reconnoitred Bushman's Hoek, an important point on the railway between Queenstown and Stormberg, where the road and line climb to a great height over a shoulder of the Stormberg range, and where he placed a small detachment of Colonial troops. Halting at Sterkstroom, he reviewed and congratulated upon their appearance the Kaffrarian Rifles—a local force. Next day he moved his little force, composed of the Irish Rifles, Berkshire Mounted Infantry, and a few Cape Mounted Rifles, forward to Putter's Kral. He had with him six screw mountain guns and six Maxims of the Cape Mounted Police. Here he halted some days and waited for reinforcements. The want of men in Natal for the relief of Ladysmith and the protection of the Colony being pressing, his troops were for the most part diverted and he was sacrificed.

Now, at last, the enemy moved. On November 26 a

Advance of the Boers. commando of about

1,500 Boers advanced from Burghersdorp and seized Stormberg Junction, thus cutting off all communication between General Gatacre on the one side and the British forces at De Aar on the other. At the same time there were reports that 3,000 Transvaalers were moving to Burghersdorp, but as a matter of fact the majority of them appear to have gone to Colesberg. Some, however, with a heavy 40-pounder and at least one field gun did join the Stormberg commando.

By December 1 only two of the eight battalions forming



WAPENSCHOUWING AT BARKLY EAST.

Much of the Boer accuracy of marksmanship may be attributed to their periodical Wapenschouwings. These are Irish contests in miniature. From far and near the Boers (in times of peace) assemble at the farm of the Landdrost, or principal man of the district, and for three or four days engage in rifle shooting contests for prizes in money and kind. The occasion is made use of for various Boer festivities, in which dancing always forms a prominent part. No regular targets are used, but for ten or twenty parallel lines are suspended at various distances, and accuracy of aim is encouraged by continual calling of the objects to be fired at, so that the sighting has to be guessed by the marksman.

General Gatacre's division had arrived. He had still no cavalry and no artillery.

On the 2nd, Dordrecht, a small place some miles to the north-east of

**Omnibus horses for
the Artillery.**

Sterkstroom, was occupied by a commando of the enemy

numbering about 500 men. About this date there were probably 3,000 Boers in all in the Stormberg district, but they were much scattered and showed little sign of mischief. Meantime the small British column was reinforced by two field batteries, the 74th and 77th. Their horses, however, after the long voyage were in very poor condition. Fully half of them were omnibus or tram horses, without the slightest artillery training, though the batteries might well have had a week's careful exercise in England, since they only left on November 2. Most of the horses had only been received a

few hours before the embarkation took place, and were, in consequence, quite new to their work. An ammunition column followed the two batteries, but the supply of ammunition was barely sufficient for one great battle. All these deficiencies hampered the general terribly, and account in some degree for his ill-fortune.

A quaint story of the omnibus horse is told by *The Times* correspondent with the column:—

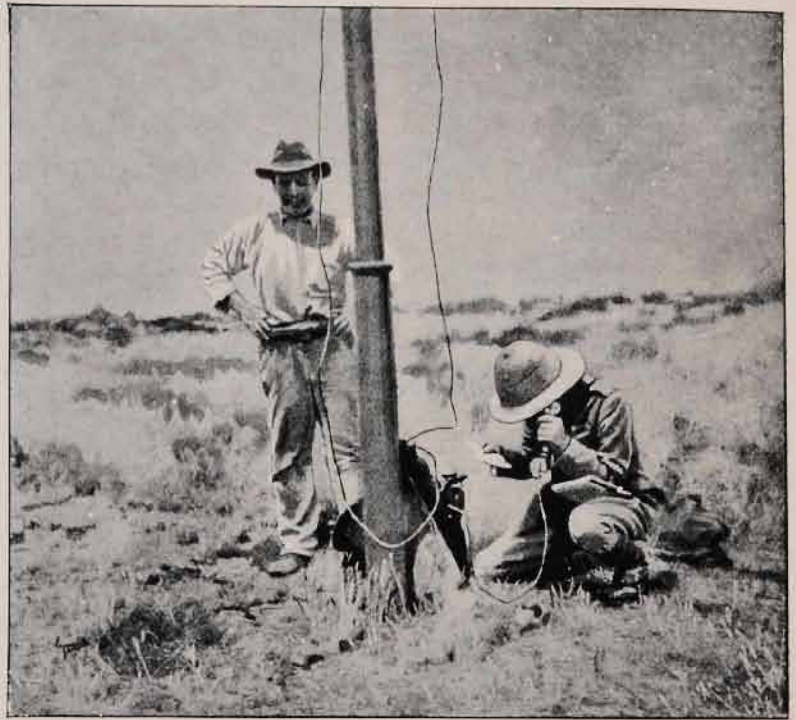
"One of the drivers," he writes, "who had been entrusted with the charge of a sick horse in addition to an ex-tramcar animal, proceeded to mount the latter, regardless of the fact that it, probably, had not had a saddle on its back since it was a colt. The result was much kicking and rearing, combined with an obstinate determination to remain otherwise stationary. The man got angry, and, uttering a variety of anathemas, began to ply his spurs with vigour and intention. Just as the contest culminated another driver standing by called out, 'Stow them spurs, Jack; ring yer bloomin' bell!'"



NOT SO DENSE AS THEY SEEM.

[Photo from life.]

The Englishman is endeavouring to obtain information from the old Boer farmer and his vrouw (wife). The figures are very characteristic; Boers of both sexes in middle life develop a tendency towards obesity.



TAPPING THE TELEGRAPH WIRE: A FREQUENT INCIDENT IN WAR.

On December 6 the column had a field day, but Colonials and military observers noted with alarm that no attempt was made to teach the troops to make use of the advantages of the ground. There was the same blind rushing at the enemy's supposed position, after quite insufficient artillery preparation, as in most of the early and sanguinary encounters of this war.

A few words must here be said as to the method of fighting battles in modern war. The first step is to ascertain by scouting and

Conditions of successful attack.

reconnaissance the exact position of the enemy, and, as far as may be, his strength. Against the Boers, as indeed against any enemy, this is a matter of exceptional

difficulty. Even the greatest generals in the past, when smokeless powder and long-range rifles did not exist, and when it was far easier to approach to close quarters, have found themselves mistaken in such matters. The force and position of the enemy ascertained, the next thing is to conceal from him your own intentions and, as far as possible, to strike him unexpectedly. This was not easy for the British campaigning in a country openly or secretly disloyal.



A REFRACTORY MOUNT.

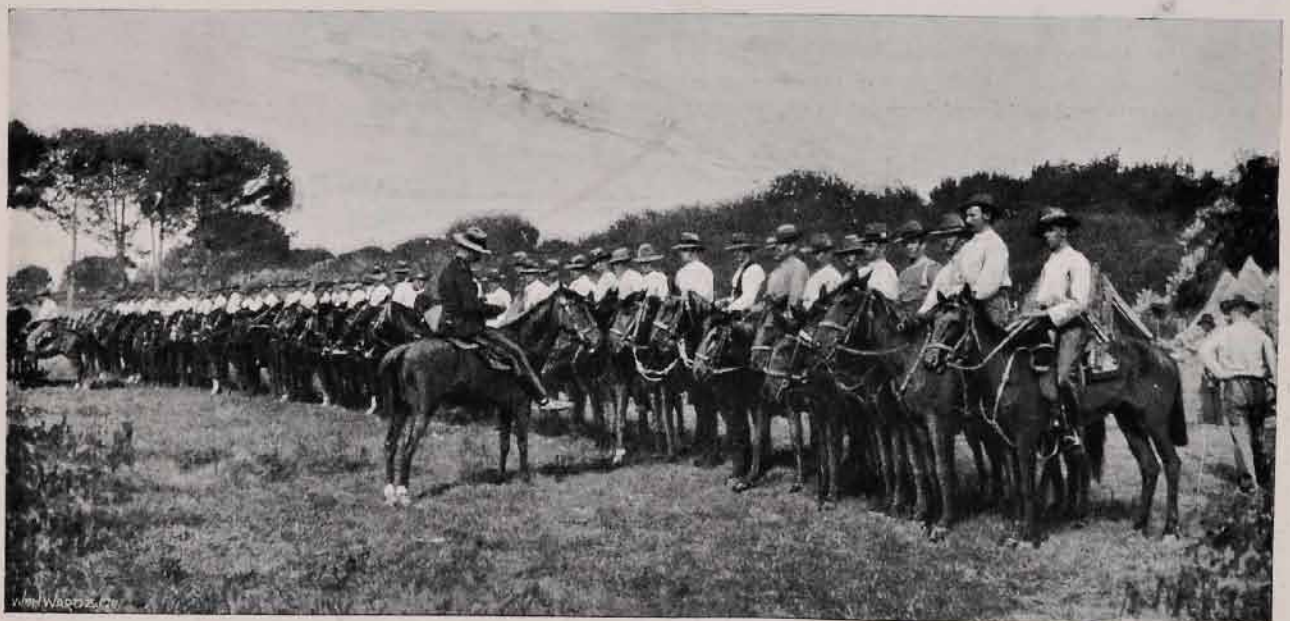
Under the conditions of their subsidies, the Government "commandeered" a number of horses from the principal omnibus and tramway companies; horses more accustomed to running in front of a car than to riding inside one.

ceeding, infantry and cavalry work round the enemy's two flanks and endeavour to get behind him, so as to cut off his retreat and ensure the capture of his men and guns.

Thus to attack the Boers with success three things were wanted: a good and numerous artillery; an infantry force sufficient to storm the Boer positions after the artillery preparation; and cavalry or mounted infantry in abundance to follow up success and convert it into victory. Yet, as we have seen, the proportion of artillery sent to South Africa with our army was absurdly low, and the cavalry and mounted infantry were enormously below the generals' requirements. Again and again in the course of the despatches we find our officers complaining that their hard-won little victories were barren of results owing to the insufficiency of these two arms. These facts are of the utmost importance, because they prove that our failure in South Africa, far from being due to "inevitable"

When the general has determined upon battle he brings up his artillery on the enemy's flank and front, and steadily bombards. This is known as the artillery preparation. Its object is as much to cow as to kill the foe—to render his shooting uncertain, and to pave the way for the final attack, which is delivered by the infantry in very open formation, crawling forward and taking advantage of all cover, till at last the men are close enough to rush in and use the bayonet.

While the artillery preparation is proceeding, infantry and cavalry work round the enemy's two flanks and endeavour to get behind him,



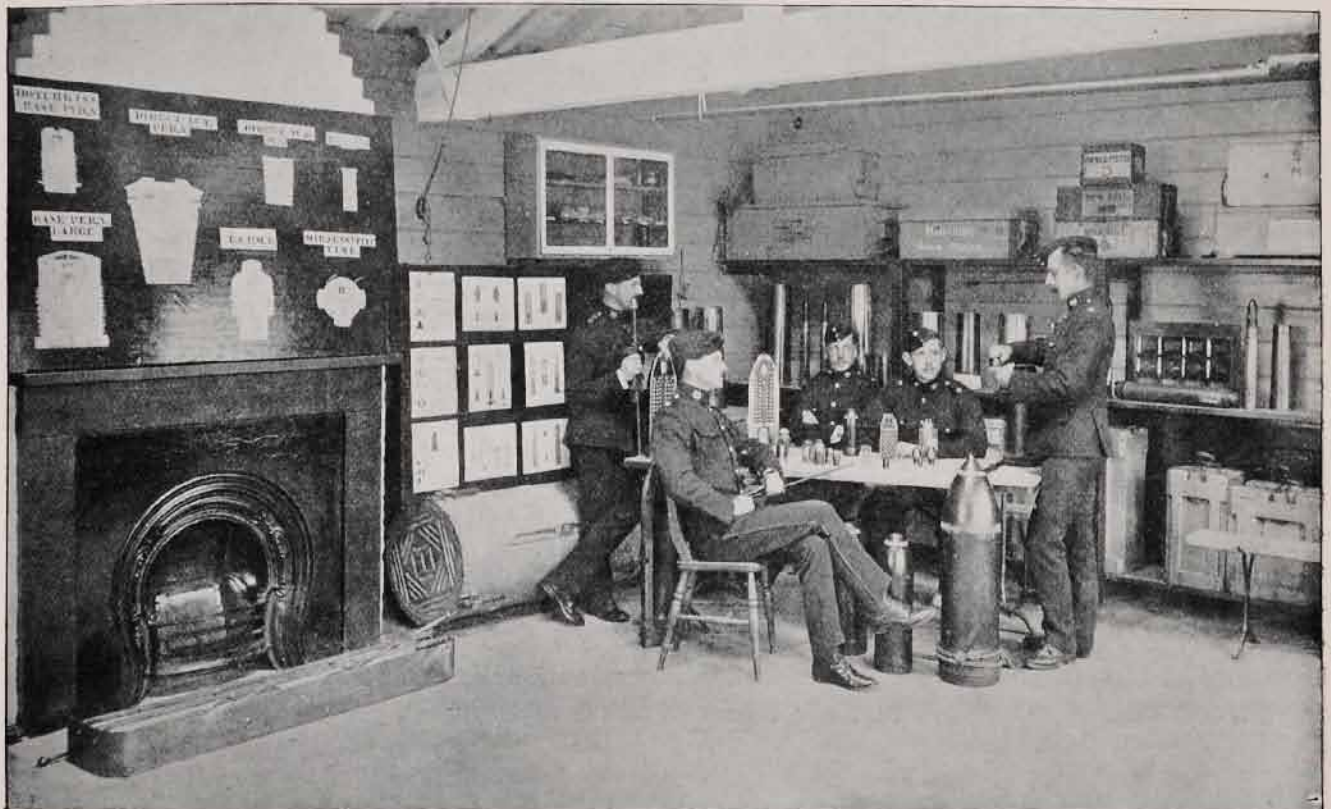
EVERY MAN HIS OWN HORSE-BREAKER.

Parade of the New South Wales Lancers on untrained horses at the Remount Depot, Stellenbosch.

[Photo by Murison.]

causes, was the result of the complete disregard of the rules of military science, and, indeed, of common sense. In the words of Napier's history of the Peninsular War, "it is fitting first to expose the previous preparations and plans of the Cabinet, lest the reader, not being fully awakened to the difficulties cast in the way of the English generals by the incapacity of the Government, should, with hasty censure or niggard praise, do the former injustice."

All through these days of early December, General Gatacre was urged and pressed by the British loyalists in Eastern Cape Colony to push forward, stop the enemy plundering their farms, and prevent disloyal Colonists from joining the hostile standard. The pressure upon him grew constantly till he was unable to resist it. Against his own will—against his better judgment—he determined to attempt a perilous enterprise in a region which is difficult and mountainous, of which there were no correct maps, and where every inch of the ground was, through the help of the rebels, known to the enemy.



TEACHING THE USE OF SHELLS AND FUSES.

[Photo by Crabb, Southica.]

On the table are several specimens of shrapnel shells, cut in section to show their construction. Over the fire-place is a series of diagrams illustrating the various kinds of fuses.

On December 7 he decided to convey 2,500 men and six guns northward by train to Molteno on the next day, and marching thence by night to attack the enemy's laager at Stormberg at dawn on the morning of the 9th. Unfortunately, on the 8th he was unable to start, and had to postpone his effort to the next day. Thus there is reason to think that the Boers, through this delay, had full warning of his intentions.

Gatacre moves upon Stormberg.

The attack having been determined upon, it would have been expected that he would make use of the wing of the Berkshire regiment which had garrisoned Stormberg before its abandonment, and which knew the ground well. But that regiment was left behind to guard communications. It would have been expected that the rules laid down by military authorities for night attacks would be observed. They are as follows: That the line of advance should be most carefully reconnoitred by the general in person, full information obtained as to the enemy, and the attacking column covered by a swarm of scouts and patrols to obviate all chance of a surprise. None of these precautions had been taken, and entire reliance was placed upon guides, four in number, whom events proved hopelessly untrustworthy. This was in spite of the drill-book caution that men who know the country well by day are not to be depended upon at night unless they have often covered the road in the dark.

On the 9th the move began. The troops entrained at Putter's Kraal at 4 a.m. They numbered 966 of the 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers, some 400 of the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, 300 of the 1st Royal Scots, and two bat-



FARRIERY IN THE FIELD.
Army blacksmiths at work shoeing horses.

The forces detrain at Molteno. field artillery with twelve 15-pounders. The mounted infantry, 257 strong, moved by road with 42 Cape Police. The journey to Molteno in open trucks took two hours longer than had been expected, owing to delays on the railway. Upon the way 440 more men of the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles were picked up at Bushman's Hoek, and 100 Royal Scots dropped to guard the camp. In consequence of the vexatious delays, instead of three hours' rest being given the men at Molteno, before undertaking the march, only one hour could

be spared. At 9.15 p.m. the infantry marched off into the darkness to cover by a wide detour the last nine miles intervening between Molteno and the enemy's position. To watch Molteno itself the remnant of the Royal Scots was left.

"No operation of war," says Mr. Winston Churchill, "is more critical than a night march. Over and over again in every country frightful disaster has overtaken the rash or daring force that has attempted it. In the gloom the shape and aspect of the ground is altered. Places, well known by daylight, appear strange and un-

recognisable. The smallest obstacle obstructs the column, which can only crawl sluggishly forward with continual checks and halts. The effect of the gloom upon the soldiers' nerves is not less than on the features of the country. Each man tries to walk quietly, and hence all are listening for the slightest sound. In such hours doubts and fears come unbidden



SCENE ON THE RAILWAY.
Showing precipitous rocks such as checked the charge of the Northumberland Fusiliers and Irish Rifles.

to the brain, and the marching men wonder anxiously whether all will be well with the army, and whether they themselves will survive the event. And if suddenly out of the black silence there burst the jagged glare of rifles and the crash of a volley, followed by the yell of an attacking foe, the steadiest troops may be thrown into confusion."

As the column stole off into the darkness with gun-wheels muffled in hide to prevent the tell-tale creaking that might warn the enemy, an ominous signal was seen. Far away on the right there flashed several times towards Stormberg a bright light. No one then knew its meaning, yet unquestionably it was to tell the enemy that the night march had begun. Already the run of ill-luck which marked the operations of this column had set in; 160 of Brabant's Horse, 235 of the Cape Police, four 7-pounders, and a Maxim at Penhoek ought to have marched to effect a junction at Molteno with General Gatacre's force. A telegram which he had handed in to a telegraph clerk at Molteno with the order was not transmitted, and so they failed to arrive. The General did not observe the precaution of requesting a message acknowledging the receipt of his instructions, nor did he duplicate the despatch.



WARM WORK UNDER A BLAZING SUN: BRINGING UP A GUN BY HAND-LABOUR.

A little beyond Molteno the road forks. To the left runs the Steynsburg road, which at the last moment was taken by the column. From it a mountain track led by a detour to the enemy's position. To the right ran the direct Stormberg road, which General Gatacre had originally decided to follow. He did not inform the Intelligence Officer at Molteno of his change of plan, nor did he post an officer at the junction of the roads to direct those who were following as to his course. In consequence, the Field Hospital, ammunition waggons, a Maxim, a detachment of Royal Irish Rifles, and a bearer company took the wrong road at the start; then, finding that they did not come up with the column, returned to Molteno, only to be told that the road they had taken was the right one. Once more they wearily retraced their steps and bivouacked in sight of Stormberg at 2.30 a.m. Nothing could as yet be made out of the British column.

Hour after hour that column had marched in the darkness; the full distance to the enemy's position had been covered, yet the guides found they were nowhere near Stormberg. The night slipped away; day began to break, and it became plain that surprise was not to be hoped for. The order was given to "fix bayonets," and about 4.15 a.m. of the 10th the troops, after seven hours continuous marching, weary and utterly exhausted, reached the foot of Rooi Kop, the mountain

overlooking Stormberg Junction, on which the enemy were intrenched. The guides had mistaken the way and had led the force eighteen miles instead of nine miles, coming in upon the enemy's right rear instead of his right front. Though two of the Berkshire Regiment with the force had drawn attention to the mistake when the proper turning was passed, they were not listened to, such was the blind trust reposed in the guides. The latter were questioned, and persisted that they were in the right; they were, they said, taking a somewhat longer line to avoid a rough patch of road.



A BOER VEDETTE.

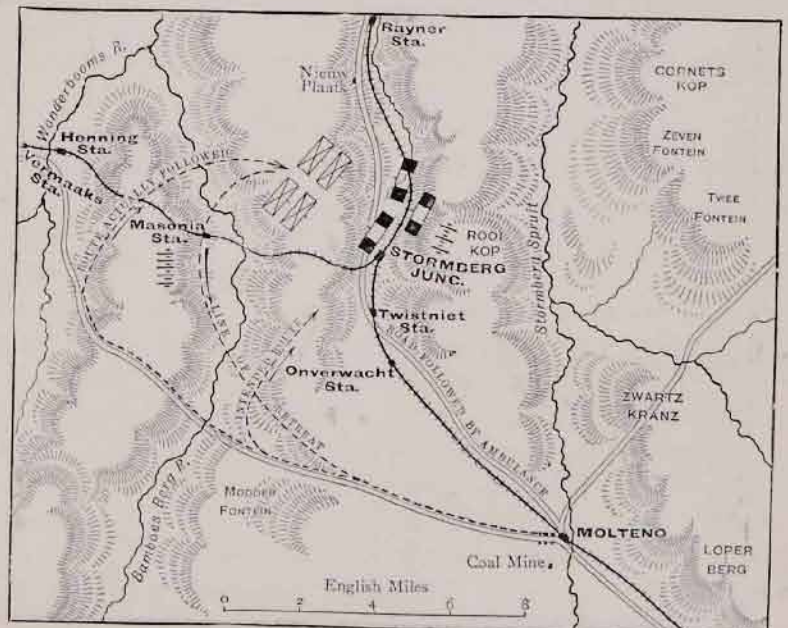
If at this moment the uselessness of persisting in the enterprise with worn-out men had been realised, and a prompt retreat ordered, no mischief would have resulted. But, far from retreating, the force pushed on in the dim light carelessly, in close order, as though there had been no enemy within miles. "No cheering, men, but get in silently with the bayonet." was General Gatacre's only order. In the breaking daylight, an admirable target, the column defiled past a line of kopjes. Suddenly from these burst forth the flash of rifles, and a staggering fire was poured in upon the mass of men beneath.

The fire was so fierce that it stopped the column's progress. The British, and not the enemy, had been surprised. And the British soldier after twenty-four hours of weary journeying by train, waiting under arms, and marching, was in no condition to grapple with a fresh enemy, ensconced in positions of great natural strength. Yet, recovering from their first astonishment and consternation at the murderous fire, the British regimental officers and privates of the Northumberland Fusiliers and Irish Rifles dashed at the kopjes.

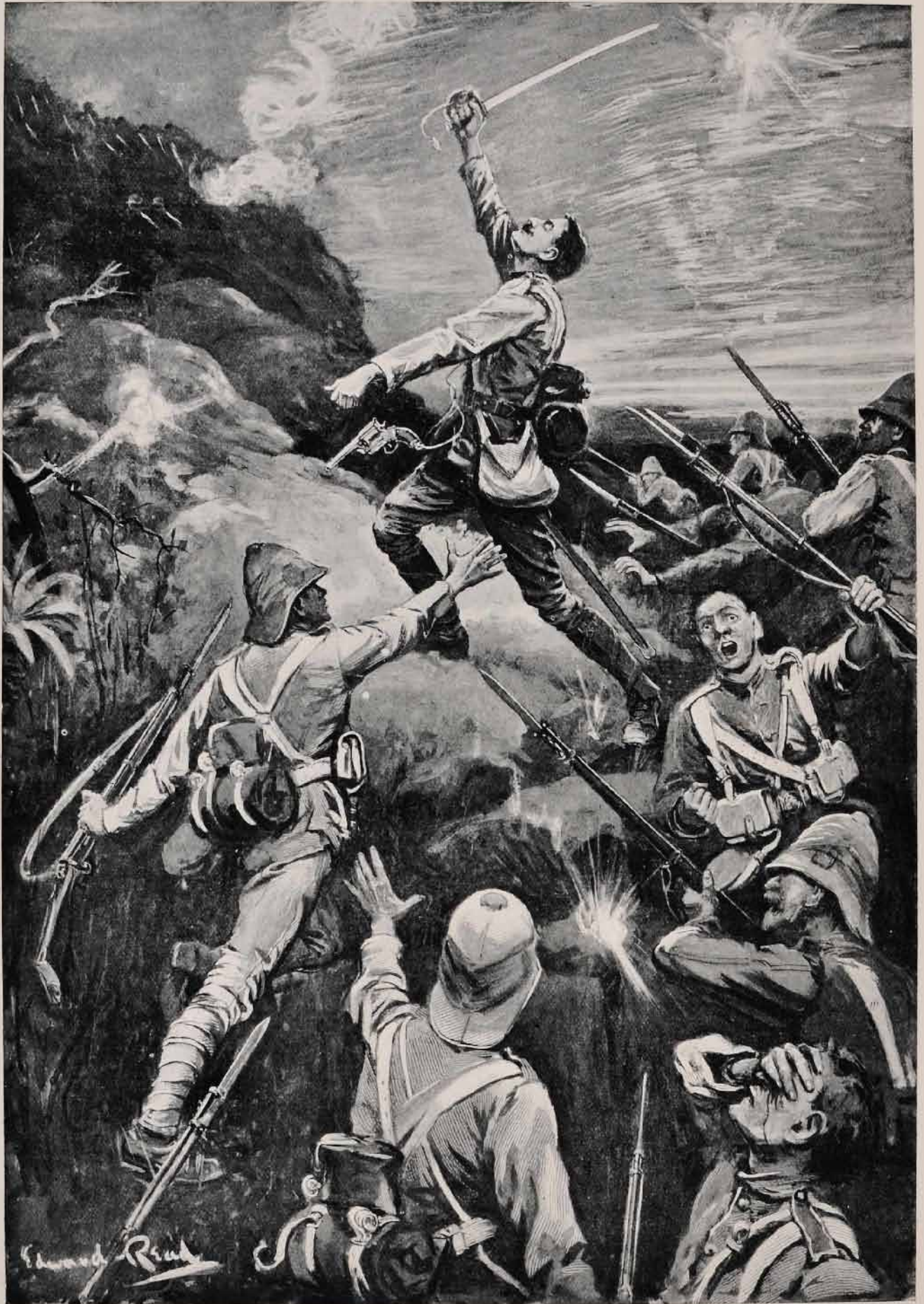
Both battalions were simultaneously entangled in the fight. No organised body of reserves was left to support the skirmishers or feed the advancing line with fresh men. The stormers, under a tremendous fire from an invisible enemy only eighty yards away, forced their way up the steep and stony slopes, encountering wire fences in which many were caught and delayed. "The Boers," wrote a bandsman of the Northumberland Fusiliers, "had put up fences with spikes in, and when we got halfway through we stuck fast. The Boers were laughing at us. My haversack stuck fast in the fence,

The fight.

MAP OF THE BATTLE OF STORMBERG.



MAP OF THE BATTLE OF STORMBERG.



THE BATTLE OF STORMBERG: CHARGE OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS.

and there I was struggling, with the bullets flying all round me. I managed to get the haversack off and left it in the fence. Our regiment was 1,100 strong, now we don't muster much over 500." They neared the top, advancing from boulder to boulder, when just below a stone wall held by the enemy they found before them a vertical precipice. It was only a few feet high—a few feet of sheer unclimbable rock—but such an obstacle will repel the efforts of the best mountaineer, much more those of weary and heavy-laden infantry under the very muzzles of the enemy's rifles. At the same time the Boer artillery opened fire with a heavy 40-pounder of long range and two quick-firing field pieces. Desperate attempts were made to scale the precipice, but ladders alone could have enabled the men to surmount it, and ladders were wanting. At this moment several shells from the rear burst amongst them. There was nothing for it but for the infantry to retire and hold the best position they could reach near at hand.



THE RETREAT AFTER THE BATTLE OF STORMBERG.

So exhausted were the men by their long march and by the climb, that when the retreat began many threw themselves down and instantly fell asleep under the enemy's fire. No efforts of their officers or comrades could keep them awake. Men fell in a heavy slumber as they staggered down the mountain side. Others had not the endurance left to march back through the bullet-swept zone behind them, and sank down on the kopjes waiting to be made prisoners, because they felt escape was beyond their strength. The remnant painfully picked their way down the slopes under the pitiless hail from the Mausers, and doubled back across the 500 yards of open veldt to the nearest cover. It was a terrible scene, and had the Boers shown the smallest energy or attempted a charge, General Gatacre's whole force must have been captured or destroyed.

The two batteries of artillery had been caught by the enemy's fire on the march. The ground was so unfavourable that they could not promptly come into action. They had to wheel and gallop back some hundreds of yards. At this moment a gun stuck fast in boggy ground; the team of

Fatigue of the British troops.

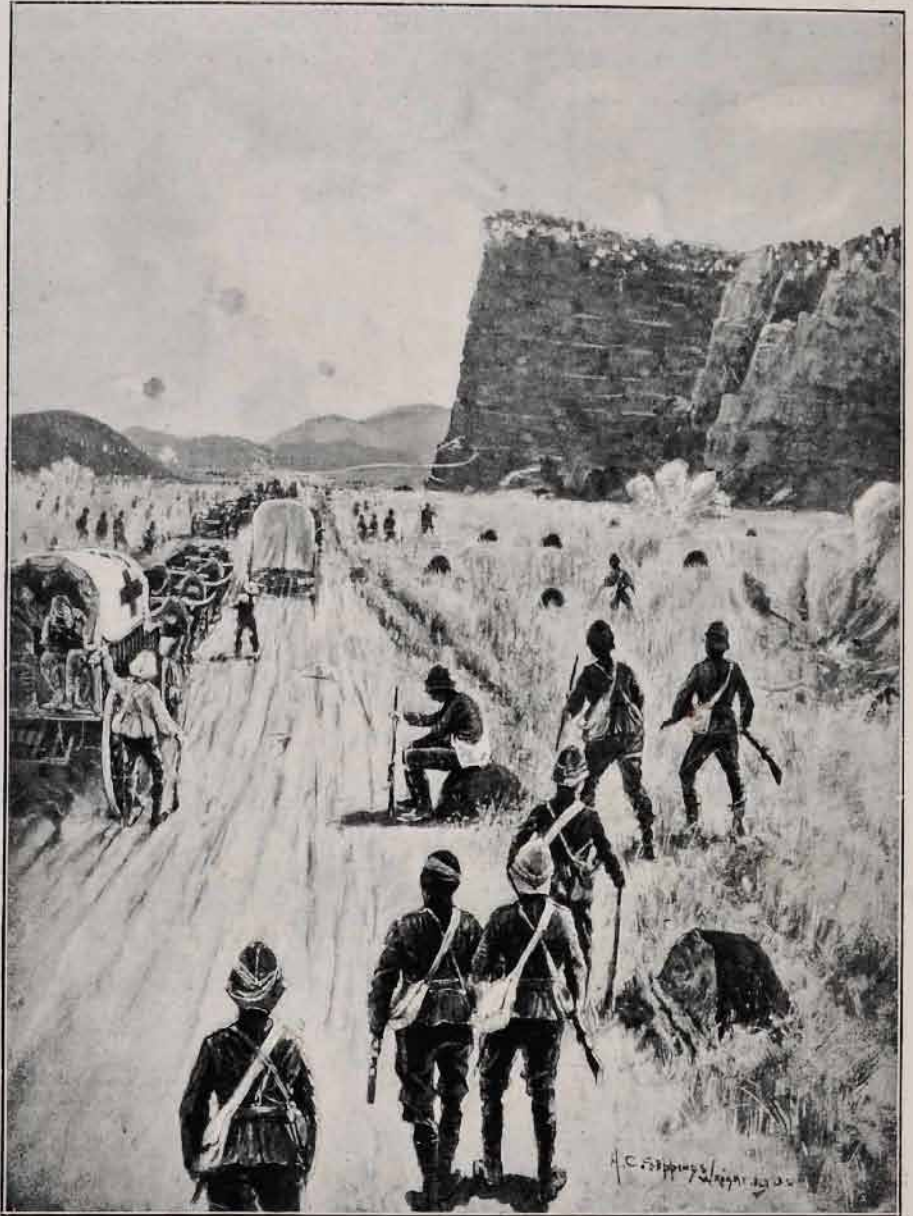
horses dragging it was instantly shot down by the enemy, and it had to be abandoned. The other eleven weapons selected a position and promptly opened on the crest of the kopjes held by the Boers. On them they directed a most effective shell fire, but, unhappily, some of their projectiles fell short and dropped among the British infantry, as they were painfully trying to scale the precipice just below the Boer position, adding to the confusion. Such accidents are almost inevitable in war. The Boer shells in reply came fast and thick. The enemy's 40-pounder was infinitely more powerful and of far longer range than the British field pieces. The manner in which our gunners stuck to their dangerous work under its projectiles was one of the consoling features of this sorrowful day.

The attack had failed so hopelessly that, under the cover of this artillery fire,

Order to retreat given.

General Gatacre rallied his men and gave the order to retreat. But it was difficult to draw the infantry, once heavily engaged, out of the fight. Some were too weary to move; others lay fast asleep under the Boer works; others, again, with the stubborn fighting instinct of the British soldier, preferred to hold their ground, in the vain hope of snatching eventual victory. Those, however, who responded to the order proved that their spirit had not been broken by calamity. They showed a bold front, formed up on a low line of hills covered by the artillery, and in perfect order began the retrograde movement. The two batteries of artillery fired alternately, the one falling back while the other was in action, and held off the Boers. But the retreat was long and difficult, as the British troops had to describe a complete semicircle, everywhere commanded by the Boer guns, around a central point held by the enemy.

It has been said that British soldiers are better at an advance than a retreat. In retreat the very best troops, especially if galled by artillery to which they can make no reply, are apt to break and run. But the soldiers of the Northumberland Fusiliers and Royal Irish Rifles in this hour displayed a steadiness above all praise—a stubbornness and endurance which proved their splendid quality, and showed them equal to any work when well led. They ground their teeth, indeed, as they saw the dead and wounded left behind unaided and untended. They flung themselves down when the great 40-pounder shells came



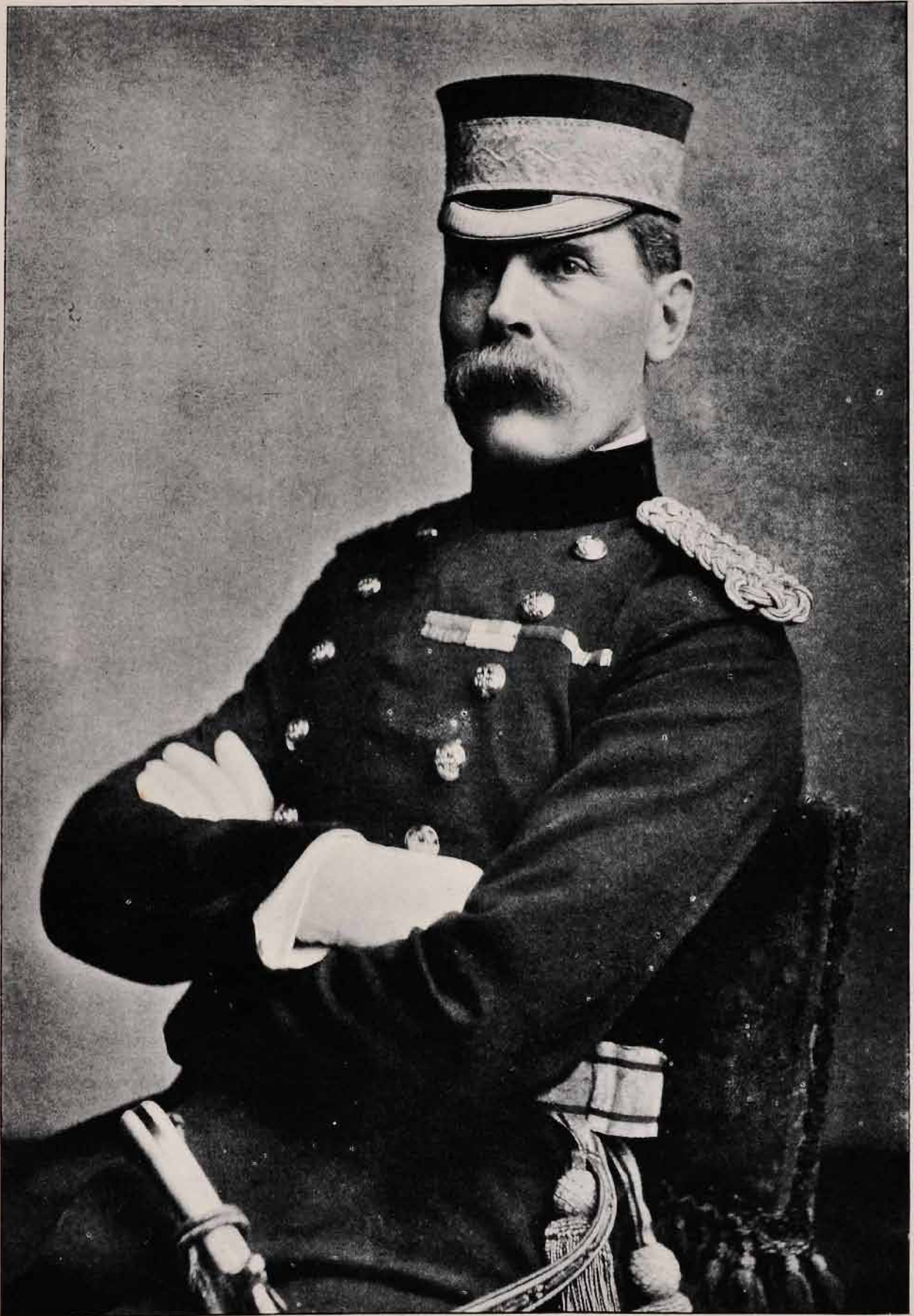
H. C. Seppings Wright

[From a Sketch by Lieut. T. N. F. Davenport.]

THE RETREAT FROM STORMBERG.

The drawing represents the withdrawal of guns and ambulance waggons towards Molteno. The steep crags on the right were occupied by the Boers. Our men being well scattered, the enemy's shells did little damage.

The dead and wounded left.



[Photo by Win. law & Griva.]

LIEUT.-GENERAL LORD METHUEN, K.C.V.O., C.B., C.M.G., J.P.

Paul Sanford, Lord Methuen, was born in 1845, and entered the Scots Guards in 1861. He was sent on special service to the Gold Coast in 1873, and in the following year became Brigade-Major at Ashanti and for the Home District. Two years later he was appointed Assistant Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. From 1877 to 1881 he was Military Attaché to the British Embassy at Berlin. He commanded Methuen's Horse and the Field Force during the Bechuanaland Expedition of 1884-5, and was Deputy-Adjutant-General in South Africa in 1888. From 1892 to 1897 he commanded the Home District, and at the beginning of the war with the Transvaal he was given the command of the First Division of the Army Corps. He arrived in Capetown to take over this command on November 10, 1899.

hissing amongst them, and then, when the explosion had come and gone, leapt up to shake their fists at the Boers. But they did not quicken their pace. The officers set a splendid example. General Gatacre was in the most exposed position: wherever the enemy's fire was hottest there he was certain to be found. The company officers appealed to the men and helped them in their weary progress. The men in turn aided those of the wounded who could walk. Lieutenant Stevens of the Irish Rifles, shot through both lungs, was carried by four gallant privates, who forgot their own fears and their own weariness in their soldier-like devotion. He himself made light of his terrible wound, and laughed at the odd pertinacity of a black policeman, who had used the opportunity of the



THE RETURN FROM STORMBERG: LIEUTENANT STEVENS CARRIED BY FOUR PRIVATES.

action to lay hands upon certain stampeded Boer horses, thus turning even battle and defeat to personal profit.

Hour after hour this terrible retreat continued, both officers and privates staggering, weary, footsore, exhausted, along, expecting each moment to find that the enemy had intercepted them. But the enemy showed the usual Boer want of enterprise, and was content merely to fire shell from the 40-pounder, which for the most part did not burst. At last, more than thirty hours after their start, the dejected troops straggled back into Molteno. In some degree they were covered for the last mile or two of their retreat by an armoured train, which had advanced towards Stormberg during the fighting, and which had barely escaped derailment and capture. The fish-plates of the rails were seen to have been removed some

few yards beyond the place where the train halted, and a Boer gun was observed trained in readiness to play upon the wreck.

**Narrow escape of
the armoured train.**

A private who was in the battle gives this account of the retreat:—"The hills were unscalable, and after fighting for nearly six hours we had the order to retire as well as we were able, leaving most of our wounded and killed behind, as the Boers were working round to cut us off as we were retiring. We got into Molteno with about forty-six wounded men about five o'clock at night, after being on the march for about twenty-two hours. The poor fellows were dropping by dozens along the road with sunstroke and exhaustion all the way along, but it made up for all when we got to Molteno. The people were waiting for us with tea, bread and butter, and everything we could wish for, and we were glad of it, too, as no man or beast had had anything to eat or drink, except what we had in our water-bottles, from the time we started till we returned. Directly the Boers saw a stretcher party go to pick a man up they fired volleys into them. No one blames General Gatacre for getting into the trap; everyone is willing to stick to him and go up and have another go at the brutes. I saw one Maxim gun and about forty men of theirs go up with one shell of ours. They must have lost ten times more than us."

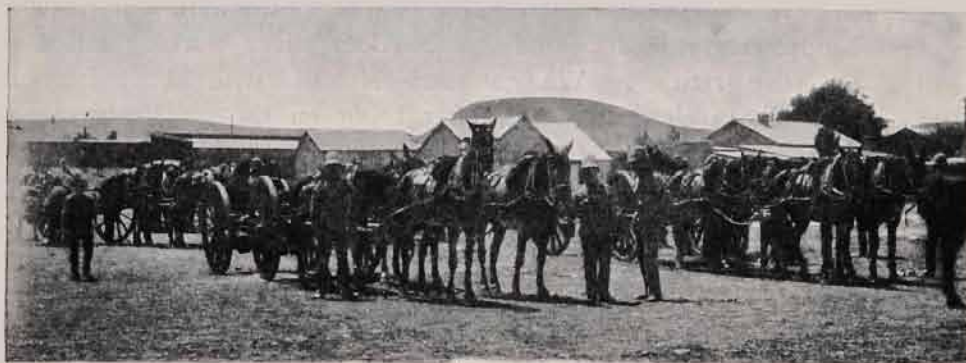
Great disaster as was the battle of Stormberg, it was in no way dishonourable to the private soldier or subaltern officer. These had fought gallantly and stubbornly; they failed not from any want of courage or devotion, but because the task set them was beyond the strength of man. Brave in the advance, they were cool and deliberate in the retreat. In the military qualities of the common Englishman there had been no decline since the great days of the past, and this battle proved it.

The losses were heavy. Besides one gun which stuck in a bog, another weapon overturned and fell into a water-course, where it was captured by the enemy. The killed were thirty-one and the wounded fifty-eight, almost all taken prisoners, while 633 unwounded men were also captured by



BACK IN MOLTENO: THE TOWNSPEOPLE GIVING REFRESHMENTS TO THE TROOPS.

the enemy. A few wounded officers and men were brought into Molteno from the battlefield by the troops. The British loss



DETRAINING ARTILLERY AT
NAAUWPOORT.

The enormous total of prisoners taken was due simply and solely to the exhaustion of the men.

The Boer force which inflicted this grievous punishment was said, by the enemy, to have been only 800 strong. It certainly did not exceed 1,500. It was composed of very indifferent material, a fact which heightened the deplorable nature of the reverse. It displayed neither vigour nor enterprise, and this though its losses were absurdly small—five killed and sixteen wounded.

At this low cost it had completely paralysed General Gatacre's column and cut up two of the finest battalions in the British Army.

It was not the enemy's generalship or marksmanship that won this Boer success, but the strange run of ill-luck in General Gatacre's column, and the neglect of all ordinary precautions. As a matter of fact, the Boer shooting was exceedingly bad, and all who witnessed the action were astounded to

discover that so few had been killed and wounded on the British side. Surprised as the column was, in close formation, it should have been all but annihilated.

The natural result of the defeat was that the Dutch in the district, who had been sitting on the fence to see which side would win, joined the victors. Some hundreds of farmers at once repaired to the Federal standard.

General Gatacre found his position so doubtful that he thought fit to retire from Molteno and fall back to Bushman's Hoek, where he established his headquarters.

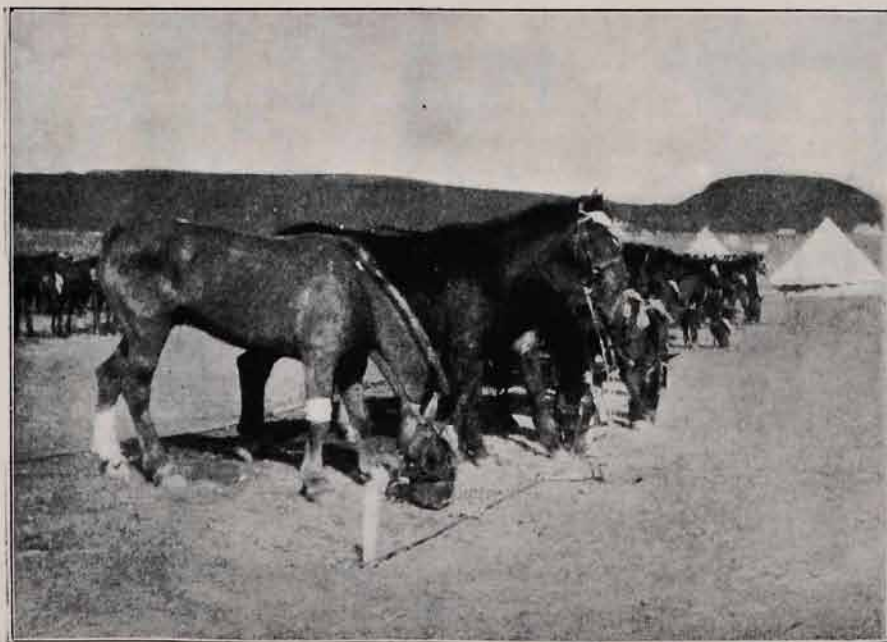
There were stories that, as soon as he discovered that his

in officers was lighter than usual; but Lieutenant-Colonel Eager, of the Royal Irish Rifles, was mortally wounded, and both the majors of this battalion were wounded.



AN AWKWARD ACCIDENT.

The capsizing of a wagon on any of the South African coach-roads is by no means an unusual sight. It is usually caused by careless driving, as, for example, by attempting to drive straight across a watercourse or "slit" on the road instead of taking the wagon diagonally over it, so as to lessen the strain. On more than one occasion, as on the road to Stormberg, a like accident has occurred to our guns.



DUMB VICTIMS: WOUNDED HORSES AT NAAUWPOORT.



OFF-LOADING HAY AT ARUNDEL: THE ARMY SERVICE CORPS AT WORK.

[Photo by Fyne, Capetown.]

guides had misled him, he drew his revolver and shot them. A court of inquiry investigated the behaviour of the guides after the battle, and decided that they had erred through inadvertence, not treachery.

Towards Colesberg the enemy began operations on November 1, crossing the bridge and advancing to the southward. Naauwpoort had been evacuated, and they had the whole of the country between that place and the Orange River at their mercy. They blew up the road bridge across the river north of Colesberg and a railway bridge on the Colesberg and Norvals Pont line, which looked rather as though they were afraid of a British advance than as if they meant a serious invasion. At last, on the 15th, they seized Colesberg.

**The Boers seize
Colesberg.**

The growing aggressiveness of the Boers compelled the despatch of a British force to watch them and protect the immense depôts of stores at De Aar. On November 19 Naauwpoort was re-occupied, and three days later General French with

**British re-occupy
Naauwpoort.
Arrival of General
French.**

3,000 men (amongst whom were the 1st Worcesters, 6th Dragoons, New Zealanders, and New South Wales Lancers) followed in support to Hanover Road, between De Aar and Naauwpoort. Next day he proceeded through Naauwpoort with an armoured train and a couple of hundred men, and found the Boers near Arundel. This was the high-water mark of their advance in the central field of war.

The British and the Boers interchanged shots, but the casualties were insignificant. General French pushed north towards Arundel



BRITONS FROM THE ANTIPODES: NEW ZEALANDERS WITH GENERAL FRENCH'S DIVISION.

on the 25th, and repaired the railway line, which had been broken in one or two places. On December 6 he advanced and seized Tweedale, a station south of Arundel; on the 7th occupied Arundel, and next day pushed forward with the greater part of his force towards Rensburg. The enemy opened a heavy fire upon the British mounted infantry and cavalry, including the New Zealanders and New South Wales Lancers, but no casualties occurred. With Arundel in the hands of General French, and a cavalry brigade watching the enemy, all danger to De Aar vanished. But the force was too weak to do more than keep the enemy in check until reinforcements should arrive.



ORANGE RIVER BRIDGE.

CHAPTER VIII.

LORD METHUEN'S ADVANCE.

Lord Methuen takes charge of the Western Campaign—Reconnaissance towards Belmont—Heavy loss of officers—Lord Methuen reinforced—Advance to Fincham's Farm—British victory at Belmont—Chaplain Hill's bravery—Conventions of usages of war—Boers retreat—Frontal attack criticised—Lord Methuen congratulates the troops.



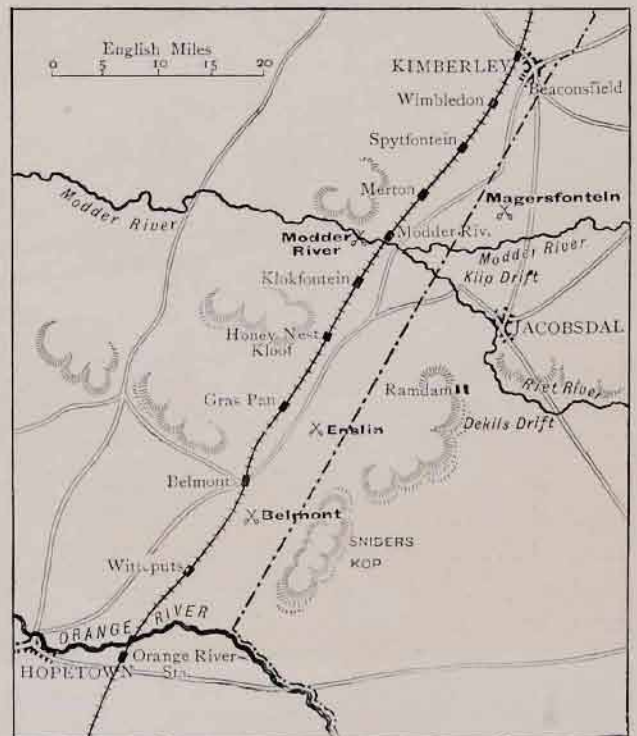
EARLY in November the situation at Kimberley began to cause some uneasiness in South Africa. The town was one of considerable size; the food supplies in it were not large in proportion to its population; its fighting resources and garrison were limited; and it lay in an extremely exposed position. The fall of Kimberley would have a most unfavourable effect upon the disloyal Dutch of Cape Colony, and would place vast financial resources, in the shape of the diamond mines, in the hands of the Boers.

But if a British relief force succeeded in fighting its way to Kimberley, and if it could protect the seventy-seven miles of railway communication to Orange River Station in its rear, it would be excellently placed for an invasion of either the Free State or the Transvaal.

On November 10, Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen, the Commander of the First Division, landed at Capetown and received instructions to organise a flying column for the relief of the diamond city. Lord Methuen

was an officer of distinguished service, though this was the first time that he had held an independent command with a large body of troops. He had fought in the Ashantee and Egyptian Wars, and in 1884-5 had raised a body of horse when the Bechuanaland dispute seemed likely to cause trouble. He was a man of energy and intense self-confidence, fond of sententious maxims, reputed a good tactician. In appearance he was tall and big-framed, with a slight stoop. In action he displayed all the bravery and coolness of the typical British officer.

Lord Methuen takes charge of the Western Campaign.

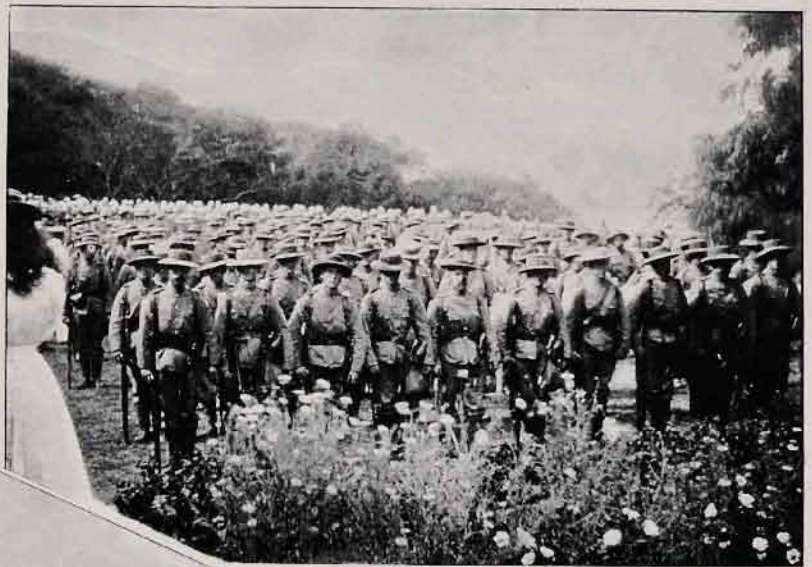


MAP SHOWING LORD METHUEN'S ADVANCE FOR THE RELIEF OF KIMBERLEY.

The spots marked X are the scenes of battles; the dotted line is the boundary of the Orange Free State.

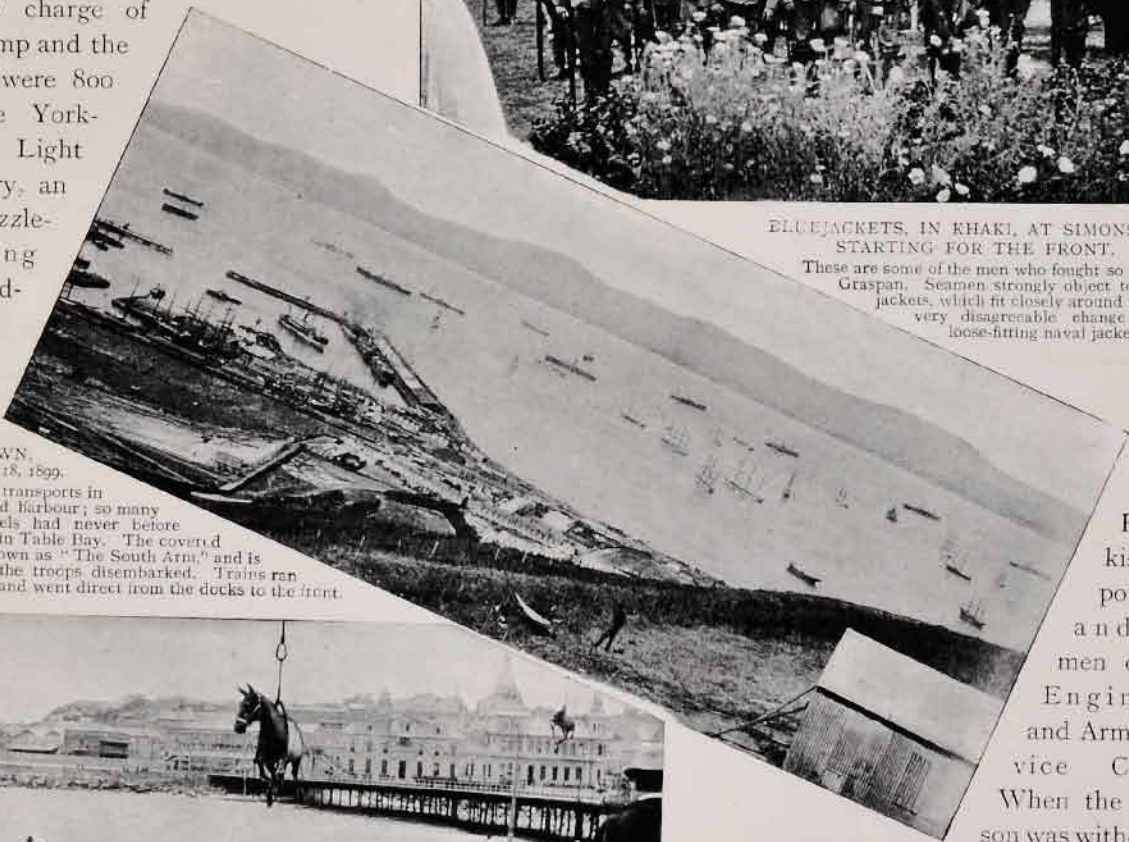
The base for his column had been, before his arrival, established at De Aar, where thousands upon thousands of tons of biscuit, meal, forage and ammunition had been accumulated in readiness for his advance. Mules by the thousand and ox waggons by the score followed the stores. There was a time when General Buller himself was expected to take charge of the western field of war, and at De Aar a superb tent, an iron bathroom, and a sumptuous kitchen with a fine battery of culinary accessories were prepared for him. But the needs of Natal distracted him and he never came.

In charge of the camp and the stores were 800 of the Yorkshire Light Infantry, an old muzzle-loading 9-pounder, a



BLUEJACKETS, IN KHAKI, AT SIMONSTOWN, STARTING FOR THE FRONT.

These are some of the men who fought so valiantly at Graspan. Seamen strongly object to the khaki jackets, which fit closely around the neck; a very disagreeable change from the loose-fitting naval jackets.



THE DOCKS, CAPE TOWN, November 18, 1899.

Showing transports in the bay and harbour; so many large vessels had never before been seen in Table Bay. The covered jetty is known as "The South Arm," and is where all the troops disembarked. Trains ran alongside, and went direct from the docks to the front.

Hotchkiss 6-pounder, and 150 men of the Engineers and Army Service Corps. When the garrison was withdrawn

from Naauwpoort, these were reinforced by nine 15-pounder field-guns of the Field Artillery and 400 of the Berkshire Regiment. The force at the Orange River bridge, sixty miles to the north, which was now in touch with the enemy, was also strengthened till it mustered about 2,500 men, composed of the 9th Lancers, Rimington's Guides—a regiment of horse raised in Cape Colony—the Northumberland Fusiliers, the Royal Munster Fusiliers, nine guns of the Field Artillery, and an armoured train.



LANDING MULES AT PORT ELIZABETH

Great numbers of mules, purchased in South America and elsewhere, were conveyed in special vessels to South Africa for transport purposes.

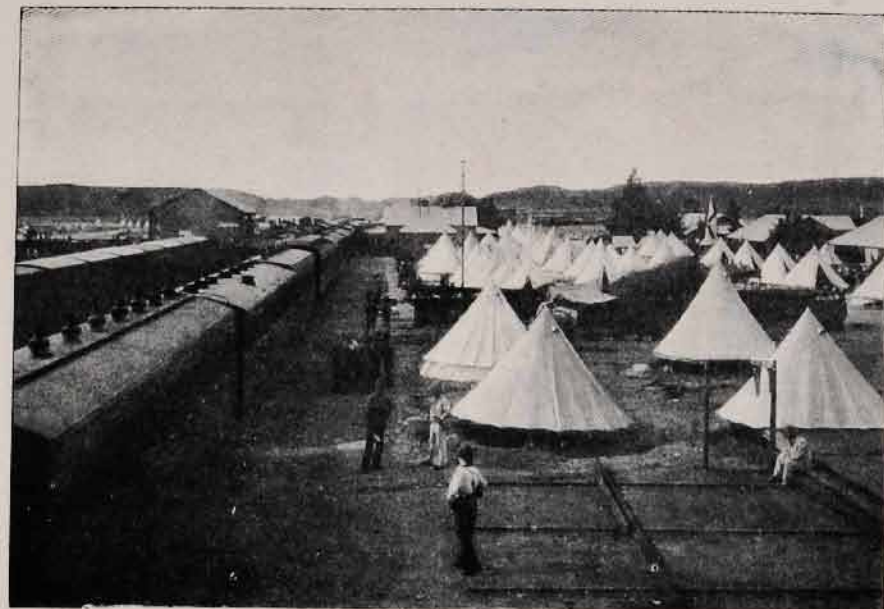
The main British camp lay to the south of the river and of the red iron bridge which spans its muddy waters. To the north the bridge head was entrenched and held by a small detachment. Away to the

north and east and west stretched the monotonous veldt covered with sage-green brushwood, its surface broken here and there by abruptly-rising, stony hills.

The first encounter with the enemy in this quarter took place on November 10. On this day a reconnoissance was carried out to the north-west by a small column under Colonel Gough, 700 strong, composed mostly of mounted men

— cavalry
and infantry
—and having

with it one field battery. The column left Orange River on the 9th, and, pushing forward, located a Boer position on a long semi-circular ridge, nine miles to the east of Belmont. Attempts were successfully made to compel the enemy to disclose the extent of his position and the strength of his force. For that purpose two squadrons of Lancers threatened the enemy's left, and 200 mounted infantry his right, while the artillery opened fire. The enemy replied but feebly. Then the mounted infantry pushed rapidly



THE NUCLEUS OF A GREAT MILITARY DEPOT. ORANGE RIVER CAMP IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WAR.

forward, hoping to get behind the Boers and cut off their retreat. More troops were signalled for to Orange River, and at once all the men remaining in camp were entrained and sent forward.

Unfortunately, the mounted infantry in their movement failed to make out a small party of Boers, ensconced behind good cover, and came under an unexpected and terrible fire, which in a few moments killed Colonel Keith-Falconer, mortally wounded Lieutenant Wood, and hit two other officers and two privates. The attempt to outflank the Boers had to be immediately abandoned—and it was well that it was abandoned. Colonel Gough supposed he had before him only 700 men and one gun under Commandant Vandermerwe. Much uncertainty prevailed all through the war as to the Boer numbers, but it is probable that the force opposed to him was at least twice and possibly three times as strong as he supposed.

The heavy loss in officers on this occasion struck the last blow at the system of distinguishing officers from men by their equipment and uniform.

Heavy loss of officers.



BOER POLICE AT THE FRONT.
Armed with Mausers and cook-pot.

Though officers and men alike wore khaki, the officers' buttons were polished till they shone like jewels, whereas the men were forbidden to polish any part of their equipment; the officers carried swords with gleaming silver hilts, whilst the men had their rifles carefully dulled. It followed that the officer was discernible at a great distance, and the Boers, with very correct military instinct, made use of this fact to pick them off. A certain number of the best shots with good field-glasses were detailed for this purpose. In acting thus the Boers were in no way transgressing the customs of war. In the great Continental armies instructions are given to the best shots to aim at the officers, as by the loss of its leaders the best force in the world is speedily paralysed. Henceforward in all the British columns the officer was to carry a rifle and to dress exactly



CHILDREN OF THE EMPIRE.

The native question has always been a bone of contention between the British and the Boers; the latter regard the Kafirs as mere chattels, whilst our own rule secures for the natives of Africa, as of all other parts of our world-empire, the elementary rights of liberty and justice.

like the men. This measure had immediate effect, considerably reducing the high proportion of loss in the commissioned ranks, though from the nature of things the officer, being in front of his men, must always be more exposed than they.

At length, on November 20, the organisation of Lord Methuen's

column was complete and all was ready

for a start. It was composed almost wholly of infantry, and that the very finest in the British Army. Its brigades were two in number—the Ninth and the Guards. The Ninth Brigade, under Major-General Fetherstonhaugh, comprised the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers—the famous “Fighting Fifth,” who for eighteen months had had but a fortnight in bed, continually facing privations in Crete, in the Sudan, and wherever campaigning was to be done—the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry, the 2nd Northampton Regiment—with terrible memories of Majuba—and half the 1st Loyal North Lancashire. The Guards Brigade, under Major-General



THREE GENERATIONS AT THE WAR.

(Photo by Van Hoepen.)

Boys of fifteen and sixteen, as well as many grey-bearded men, are found in the ranks of the Boers. Their method of fighting makes drill to a large extent superfluous; anybody who can shoot can fight under their tactics.

in bed, continually facing privations in Crete, in the Sudan, and wherever campaigning was to be done—the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry, the 2nd Northampton Regiment—with terrible memories of Majuba—and half the 1st Loyal North Lancashire. The Guards Brigade, under Major-General

Colville, was made up of four Guards battalions, magnificent in appearance and physique, as gallant in action as well conducted in the barracks of the Empire's capital—the 1st and 2nd Cold-



[Photo by Hughes & Mullins.]

GENERAL FETHERSTONHAUGH,

Who was severely wounded through the shoulder at Belmont, was in command of the 9th Brigade at that battle, having been transferred from Lieut.-Colonel (half pay) of the King's Royal Rifles. He went through the Zulu War of 1879, and was in the Nile Expedition of 1884-5. He joined the service in 1867, and was appointed to the 31st Regiment. In 1863 he joined the 60th Rifles, and eventually commanded that regiment. After his wound at Belmont, his command was transferred to General Pole-Carew.

streams, the 3rd Grenadiers, and the 1st Scots Guards. All the battalions of this brigade were at full strength, or if anything over strength, so that Lord Methuen's total force of infantry mustered about 7,500 men.

To support this superb infantry there should have been artillery galore; to cover its movements cavalry and mounted infantry without stint. But whereas forty guns were about the right proportion, in the light of all experience, for the division, its guns were only twelve in number, of the 18th and 75th Field Batteries. To these were added four long 12-pounders, in charge of a small naval brigade, composed of seamen and marines from the ships on the Cape Station, and commanded by Flag-Captain Prothero, of H.M.S. *Doris*. The consequences of this inadequate supply of artillery will be seen at every turn. The heroic

infantry had to be flung upon the entrenched positions of unshaken enemies, and had to sustain heavy losses. A great price was paid in British blood for the deficient equipment of our army.

Of mounted men there were a hundred or so of Rimington's Scouts, two squadrons of the 9th Lancers, and some companies of mounted infantry. In all they may have totalled 500 men. Yet in the European proportion more like 1,500 cavalry were required, with a couple of batteries of horse artillery. Of horse artillery there was none at all, nor was there a single howitzer with the column. These facts, evident to all, raised in the minds of a few sinister doubts as to the future success of the column, which doubts were only too painfully justified by events. It was clear from the start that no victory could be followed up, and no decisive blow inflicted. Yet here as elsewhere the generals and the men anticipated swift and certain success. The Boers before them were believed to be weak in numbers, ill-organised, and of low fighting capacity. The rapid advance to Kimberley would, it was thought, be scarcely contested.

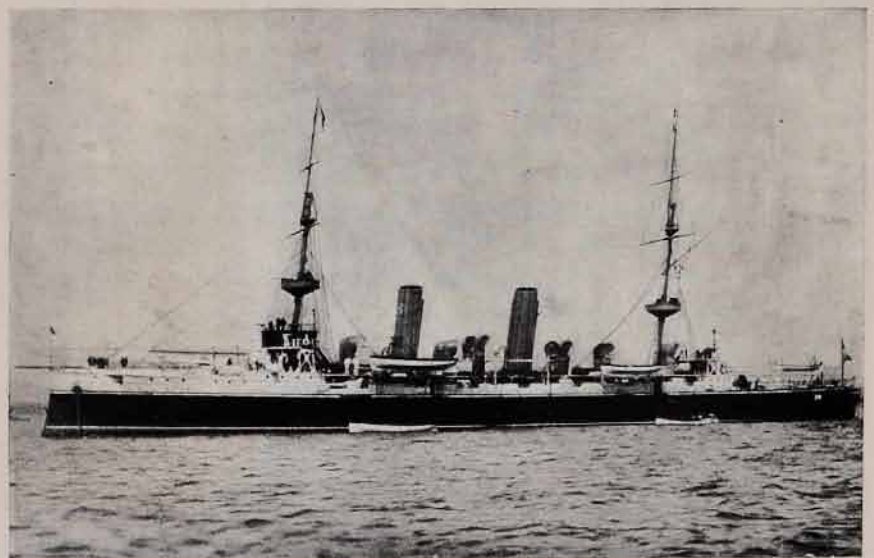
The column was, in consequence, to march in the lightest possible order. Baggage and stores were cut down; officers were to have no tents; Lord Methuen himself was to set the example of sleeping in his cloak in the open; the men were



[Photo by H. W. Barnett, Park Side.]

GENERAL POLE-CAREW, C.B.,

Was specially referred to by Lord Methuen for his services at the passage of the Modder River. His command of the 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards only terminated last year; he had entered that regiment as Ensign in 1869. During the Second Afghan War he acted as A.D.C. to Lord Roberts; and to H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught in the Expedition against Arabi Pasha. He went through the Burmese War of 1886, and for his gallant conduct was awarded the C.B.

**H.M.S. "DORIS."**

The "Doris," the flagship of Rear-Admiral Harris at the Cape, supplied the commander and some of the men who fought under Lord Methuen, and in her Admiral's cabin Cronje was confined after his surrender.

[Photo by Cribb.]

loaded as lightly as possible. The regiments marched without bugle or drum, as it was feared that the sound of these instruments would give information of movements to the enemy.

At midnight of the 20th-21st, the column stood to arms, 9,000 strong, waiting the order to advance. Lord Methuen had always been a great believer in night marches and night attacks upon the enemy, and on this campaign seized the first opportunity of putting his ideas into execution. Then for hours the column waited under the star-lit sky. At two the moon rose, but still no order came. The serpent-like array of men, horses and guns waited, silent, immobile—waited impatiently. At last, soon after 2.30, the long-looked-for order arrived. The Guards' Brigade, with the cavalry and artillery, strode off through the scented night: as day was breaking over the kopjes to the east, the Ninth Brigade followed.

The first day's march was a short one of nine miles to Fincham's Farm or Witteputts, half way

between
Advance to Orange
Fincham's River
Farm. and Belmont.

Yet, though short, it tried the men severely. As the sun rose the heat grew tropical, and water there was none till Fincham's Farm was reached. The line of route lay across the undulating,

thirsty veldt, sand-floored, overgrown with brown scrub, along the foot of perpetual kopjes. Nothing was seen of the enemy, yet the Boer scouts dogged the column and noted its every movement.

At Fincham's Farm the column halted for the night, and next day marched to Belmont. Here it was known that the enemy would be found and a battle fought. While the infantry marched into camp, Lord Methuen pushed forward with the two batteries of artillery and the naval guns, and carefully examined the Boer position.

Some miles to the east of the railway rose a line of kopjes running north-west and south-east—to the north known as Table Hill, in the centre as Gun Hill, and to the south afterwards called Fryer's Kopje. These were held by the Boers. Behind rose a second and loftier line of heights, broken in the centre by a deep "nek" or pass, in which was known to be the Boer laager. This line of heights was defended by stone breast-



A NOTED SCOUT.

Sergeant Cunningham, of Rimington's "Tigers." They are so called from the fact of their wearing a piece of tiger skin around the hat.



[Photo by Gregg].

HIS MOTHER'S FAREWELL.

A soldier of the Scots Guards ordered on active service.

works, and was also held by the enemy. The key to it was Mont Blanc, to the south-east of the nek.

Lord Methuen took every precaution to prevent the enemy from guessing the proximity of his 9,000 men. Only the artillery moved forward, and in a futile way shelled the foremost line of kopjes. Our guns were, as in every battle of the war, outranged by the enemy's artillery. A big weapon in the hands of the Boers made superb shooting, and had the projectiles and fuses been good, would have inflicted heavy loss. As things were, there were only two men wounded in the British force, whereas the enemy had six killed or wounded. The latter figure, however, must be entirely conjectural.

The infantry in camp, meanwhile, received orders to march out at 1.30 a.m. of the next day, the 23rd, to deliver an attack upon the enemy at dawn. This was the first occasion upon which most of the men had ever been engaged. So far they had faced only discomfort; now they were to confront mutilation, pain, and sudden death. They were to learn what war was: "It was not play. It was not pleasure. It was not sport under the greenwood tree, but a savage encounter with desperate adversaries, who dealt death and grievous wounds with impartial hands." Yet these thoughts depressed and saddened few in the camp; rather, perhaps, the excitement tended to raise their spirits. From general to private all looked forward to the breaking of the day and the coming of the moment when the flower of the British Army should measure its strength against the detested Boer.

The army had out-marched its transport, and that night the men had little or nothing to eat. They filled their water bottles, left behind their great-coats, and, some time later than the appointed hour, marched



PLAY.

Tummy can fish for sticklebacks with as much zest—and as little art—in South African waters as in the fountain in Bushey Park or the Thames at Hammersmith.

silently forth into the darkness in one long line, the Northumberland Fusiliers on the left, the Northamptons and Yorkshires in the centre, and the Guards on the right. No words were spoken; no sounds made; yet now and again the creaking of the waggons startled the soft night air and gave more audible warning than a multitude of talking men. Again, when the railway was crossed, the wire fence had to be cut away with an axe, as it seems that our troops were not equipped with wire-cutters. This made a tremendous noise and might have been heard miles away; so that the enemy could not but have been very well aware of the advance of the British.

And now over the kopjes before the British Army broke the untimely day. The land lay silent, and, as the line pushed forward, the little "dikkopfs" rose from the veldt with their melancholy cry. All chance of surprise had gone. Dawn had come and found the British troops not close upon the enemy's position, but some distance away. That distance would have to be crossed in daylight under a murderous fire. The men advanced in open order to assault the first line of kopjes, where as yet no sign whatever of the enemy could be discovered. "A death-like silence," says Mr. Kinnear, the Central News correspondent with the column, "hung over all. Nothing was to be heard but the swish, swish, in measured cadence of the soldiery as they brushed through the low bush. An order was issued by the commanders of battalions to 'Withhold fire and attack with the



W. H. WARD & CO.
F. J. Waugh.

[After a Stereo-Photo from *Life* by Underwood & Underwood, Copyrighted 1900

DEADLY EARNEST.

The lonely sentinel on the wide veldt experiences many a nerve-shaking terror in the still night hours, knowing as he does that he is surrounded by subtle foes, accustomed to find sufficient shelter in any scrap of scrub or stone.

bayonet. . . . And still the Boers were silent in their trenches and our artillery refrained from speaking out."

Puzzling as was the silence of the Boers, the silence of the British artillery was still more curious. The soldier in his attacks likes to hear the roar of his own guns; it gives him moral courage and a sense of support. He dislikes an enemy who awaits his onset in absolute silence and withholds fire till the last moment. Upon the kopjes no enemy could be discerned; the hills seemed so many huge lifeless stone-heaps, tenanted only by scorpions and lizards.



F. Dadd, R.I.]

[From a Sketch by a British Officer.

THE BATTLE OF BELMONT.

The line of infantry reached the foot of the kopjes and began the ascent, each man four paces from his neighbour, without supports or reserves. At this instant the slopes burst into flame, and a strange, unearthly crackling and sputtering ran along the front of the advancing soldiers. "You could see nothing but men dropping all round you," writes a private in the Scots Guards. This fire at close ranges should have been annihilating, and yet, as a matter of hard fact, not very many men went down. The Boers seemed to be nervous and alarmed at the steady and determined approach of our infantry; after the first few rounds they shot most indifferently and failed to use their splendid opportunity. They had almost complete shelter behind great boulders and stone walls, whereas our troops had to scale on hands and knees the steep and stony slopes. In the assault the Grenadiers, who were in too close formation, suffered most.

The British troops with a roar of cheering reached the summit of the kopjes and used their bayonets upon the Boers, whom they caught amidst the boulders. Here fell Private St. John, a famous boxer, in hand-grips with the enemy. Writes a brother private of his battalion:—"At the battle of Belmont we fought hand to hand. I was just behind David St. John when he was shot. He stuck his bayonet right through a Boer and could not get it out again. He tried to throw the man over his shoulder to get him off, and then another Boer came up and shot him through the head. Then another of our men put his bayonet through that Boer's heart." But the main body of the enemy had already discreetly retired. The Boers with their agile little ponies could wait till the stormers were close upon them, and then leap upon their steeds and gallop off to their fresh position in the rear, thus baulking our

British victory at Belmont.

soldiers of their prey at the very moment when against any other enemy the battle would have been gained. There was not cavalry or horse artillery to drive home the blow and keep the foe "on the run." And thus the fight had to be fought over and over again.

Halting on the summit, to give time for the artillery, which had now been ordered to open fire on the high ground beyond the line of kopjes, to do its work, the infantry re-formed, while a heavy shrapnel fire was poured in upon the enemy's second position. The Boer guns responded vigorously, but without doing much harm. An artillery duel of an hour-and-a-half's duration followed, yet it cannot be said that any full or complete preparation for the assault was achieved by the British guns. They were too few in number, and they fired for too short a time. About 5.45 a.m. the advance was resumed.

This time the fighting was harder and the men suffered more. The Ninth Brigade lost its general, Fetherstonhaugh, wounded while leading. He had cantered up and down his fighting line attended by his staff, and so doing drew a severe fire from the enemy upon his men, who could not reply from fear of hitting him. At last a soldier in the ranks shouted in humorous indignation, says Mr. Kinnear, "— thee! Get thee to —, and let's fire!" Mont Blanc was stormed by the 1st Coldstreams with splendid dash, while the Northampton and Northumberland

attacked a high ridge to the south of Chaplain Hill's it. Here bravery.

Chaplain Hill, of the Ninth Brigade, covered himself with honour. He followed the fighting line and administered the last consolation of the Sacrament to the dying, standing erect where no man dared to show himself amidst the hail of bullets. It was a noble and inspiring picture: the fallen soldier prone in the grip of death; the priest upright and serene; around on every side the tumult of battle and the rush of the storming line. "Get down," shouted an officer to the chaplain; "you have no right to risk your life." "This is my place and I am doing my special business," was the answer. And the bullets left him unscathed.

As the ridge of the second position was gained, the Boers once more took to flight, carrying with them, for the most part, their killed and wounded. A few small parties were, however, cut off and made prisoners. At this juncture there was the usual and apparently inevitable abuse of the white flag. One was raised when the British storming line was only fifty yards away. Our men at once ceased fire, whereupon a shot was fired at our men by one of the party which had raised the white flag. Nor was this an isolated incident. Colonel Crabbe, of the 3rd Grenadiers, and Lieutenant Willoughby were slightly wounded by men who fired upon them under cover of the white flag; Mr. Knight, the gallant correspondent of the *Morning Post*, was shot in the arm with an explosive bullet in the same manner. But even more



A. Morrow

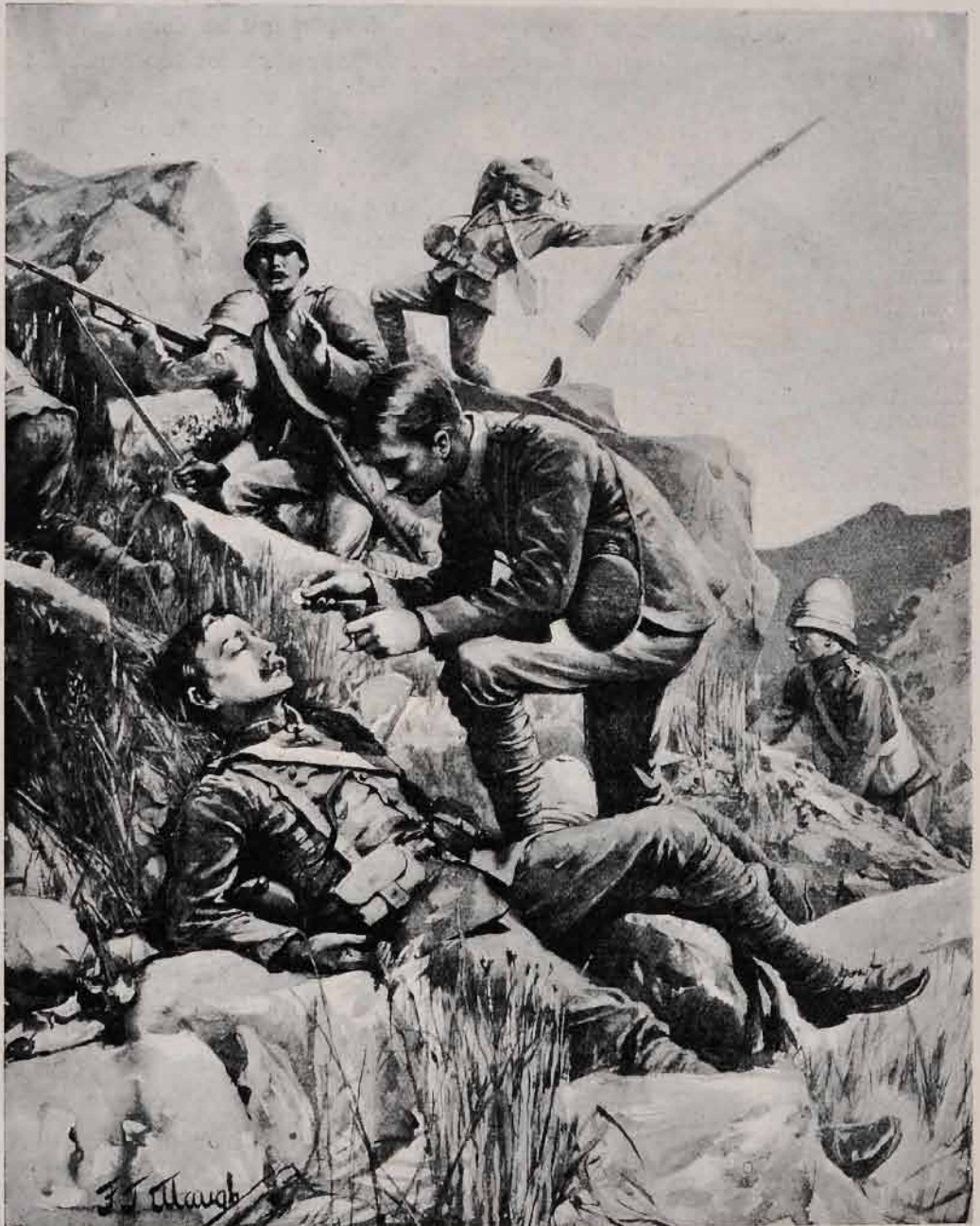
DAVID ST. JOHN KILLED WHILE BAYONETTING A BOER.

Contraventions of usages of war.

horrible treachery was displayed by a wounded Boer to Lieutenant Blundell. That officer stooped to give his disabled enemy a drink of water, when the Boer shot him, inflicting a mortal wound.

While the storming of the second ridge was proceeding, the Naval Brigade rendered valuable aid by shelling the enemy's position at 1,800 yards. The field artillery, too, poured in a heavy fire. Nothing was more admirable than the manner in which the British infantry went forward under a perfect tempest of bullets and carried one after another of the Boer lines of defence with never a check. The men cheered at each rush; as they mounted the slopes, through the crackle of the musketry came, from the rear, the stirring tunes of a regimental band. It was the Scots Guards' band, stationed well behind the firing line, the only one that played its regiment into action.

"By George! A British infantryman is a plucky chap!" wrote an artillery officer of this stage of the battle. "The bullets were coming quite thick enough for us where we were, so you can tell what it was like for them climbing those hills. I believe our fire helped the Cold-streams a lot in driving out the Boers; anyhow, they have written to thank us for having lessened much their losses. After the place was taken the Boers were off down the other side like lightning and away. We went round



F. J. Waugh.

CHAPLAIN HILL'S ACT OF DEVOTION.

Administering the Sacrament to a dying soldier under heavy fire.

to the right flank of the hills and saw them a long way off on another range of hills. Eventually we started back to camp about 10.30 a.m. and watered horses, arriving back about 1.30. The left flank was carried in much the same way. Altogether, it was rather a good battle. The place we attacked is, I believe, called Kaffirs' Kop. We were in action, I suppose, about an hour. I was surprised at not feeling more alarmed; as a matter of fact, one has too much to think about."

After the second position of the enemy had been stormed, yet a third was captured by the Guards, covered by the heavy fire of the artillery. This terminated the fighting.



H.P.E.
F. Dadd, R.I.]

BOERS SURPRISED ON A KOPJE AT BELMONT BY THE GRENADIER GUARDS.

[From a sketch by a British Officer.

About 6 a.m. the enemy was in full retreat and the battle was won. It remained to follow up the victory, but unhappily the Lancers were too few and too exhausted with their hard work to inflict much damage. It has since been asserted by Boer prisoners taken at Paardeberg that all their guns might have been captured. They expressed contempt for our cavalry, but perhaps they did not understand the difficulties which it had to face. Be this as it may, the Boers were able to get away, leaving behind them, however, sixty-four waggons and a large quantity of ammunition. The waggons were destroyed and the ammunition exploded by Lord Methuen. Eighty-three Boers were said to have been killed and twenty wounded, and about thirty unwounded prisoners were taken. Among these were a German commandant of artillery and six field cornets.

Boers retreat.



J. Finemore, R.S.A.

THE NEW SOUTH WALES LANCERS' BAPTISM OF FIRE.

[After a sketch on the spot.]

The New South Wales Lancers first saw active service at Belmont, where they covered the retirement of the 9th Lancers, who, in attempting to cut off a number of Boers, were in turn pursued by them.

The British losses were heavy considering the immense numerical advantage which Lord Methuen possessed, and of which little use was made. Fifty-three officers and men were killed and 245 wounded, of whom twenty-two died of their wounds. The scene after the battle was a very sad and terrible one. It is thus described by Mr. Kinnear:—"The Boer rifles appeared to have got in chiefly in the abdomen and lower limbs. The khaki was dyed so deeply with crimson that some of the dead and wounded must have received more than half-a-dozen shots. Indeed, it was frequently discovered through the campaign, notably in the case of officers, that they had been hit five or six times. This proves, I think, that in spite of the order removing badges and other marks of rank, the keen-eyed enemy is able to spot and pot his man."

The dead lay tranquil as if overcome by Death's twin brother Sleep. Silence came upon the victorious soldiery as they turned their gaze upon these sad victims of the conflict, who had offered



REMOVING THE DEAD.

up the last and greatest sacrifice that man can make. The wounded, too, were silent. Few complained; they bore their pain with stoicism, or even made light of their wounds. Lieutenant Russell, with his face streaming blood, maintained that he had nothing more than a scratch. The ambulance corps and bearers moved to and fro amongst them, bandaging the wounds, administering relief, and preparing them for passage down to Wynberg, whither all the less serious cases were despatched by the hospital train.

From the first the wisdom of "taking the bull by the horns," or attacking full in front the Boer positions, was questioned in England. It was

asked why did not Lord Methuen, with quite three men to the enemy's one, surround them, or only make a demonstration in front while delivering his real attack from the flank. **Frontal attack criticised.** Again, if he determined to attack in front, it was questioned why he did not make a greater use of his artillery, instead of flinging his superb infantry upon an intact and entrenched enemy. By a fuller artillery preparation, it was said, many lives might have been saved, and not impossibly the Boers might have been dislodged with infinitesimal British losses. Some of these doubts have not yet been answered, but from Lord Methuen's own despatches it is clear that the frontal attack was not of his planning. He meant to fall upon the enemy's flank, but here, as at Stormberg, a succession of accidents prevented the general's original intentions from being carried out, and rendered the task of the infantry very much harder. In attacking, at all costs, when it was evident that the Boers were on the alert, and when the intended flank movement had failed, Lord Methuen wished to show the enemy that the British soldier was morally his superior; that no position of whatever strength could stop the British Army, and that an invisible foe, raining death upon our men in the open, was no terror.

The moral effect upon the Boers was, in fact, considerable, though not, perhaps, so great as the British staff at the time supposed. A prisoner told the British soldiers that the Boers believed in their ability to hold their position against all the armies of the world. They had expected the arrival



MAUSER CARTRIDGE.
The charge is of "smokeless powder" (hornified nitro cellulose).



LEE-ENFIELD CARTRIDGE.
Charged with cordite (nitro-glycerine and gun-cotton).



DIAGRAM SHOWING THE "RIFLING" OF A LEE-ENFIELD RIFLE.

The spiral grooves cause the bullet to rotate rapidly on leaving the barrel. The twist of the rifling in a Mauser runs the opposite way; this latter weapon weighs nearly 7 lb. less than the British (Lee-Enfield) pattern, and the bullet leaves the muzzle at a velocity of 2,034 feet per second as against 2,000 feet, the speed in the case of the Lee-Enfield.

of General Cronje with four or five thousand Transvaalers from Mafeking, and were greatly incensed at his failure to put in an appearance. Official Boer accounts stated that twelve Boers only were killed and forty wounded.

After its baptism in blood the British division marched back to camp, leaving behind it the battlefield over which the great vultures were already wheeling slowly, having gathered swiftly and strangely from all quarters. In camp Lord Methuen delivered to it a brief, soldierly, and sympathetic address:—

“Comrades,” he said, “I congratulate you on the complete success achieved by you this morning. The ground over which we have had to fight presents exceptional difficulties, and we had as an enemy a past master in the tactics of mounted infantry. With troops such as you are, a commander can have no fear as to the result.

Lord Methuen congratulates the troops.



GRAVES OF THE SOLDIERS KILLED AT BELMONT.
Erected by the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles.



SLEEPING OUT ON THE VELDT
How our soldiers make themselves comfortable—when they can.

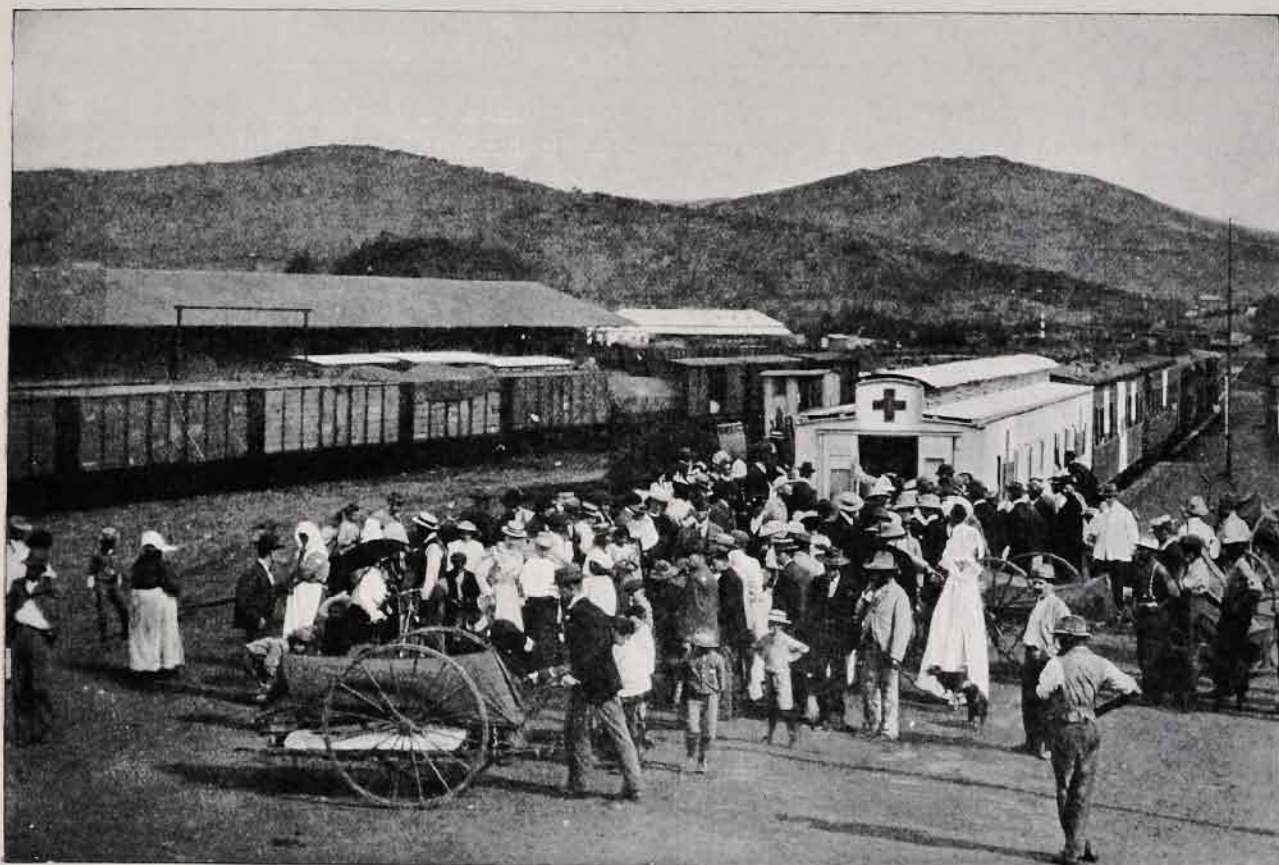
“There is a sad side, and you and I are thinking as much of those who have died for the honour of their country, and of those who are suffering, as we are thinking of our victory.”

And not they alone were thinking of the dead and the wounded.

When it became

known in London that the Guards' brigade was likely to go into action, large and anxious crowds began to assemble about the War Office in Pall Mall, and to besiege the lobby where the casualty lists are usually posted. Not for many years had scenes so sad and pathetic been witnessed in that temple of official routine. Many of the men had friends and relatives in London, and thus the capital was moved by a stronger personal interest than in the case of regiments whose headquarters are in the provinces.

The misuse of the white flag and the fact that not a few of his men had been wounded with “dum-dum” or expansive bullets drew from Lord Methuen a dignified letter of protest which he addressed to the Boer commander, but which unfortunately did not have the effect of stopping the practices complained of.



ARRIVAL OF A TRAINLOAD OF WOUNDED BOERS AT PRETORIA.

CHAPTER IX.

LORD METHUEN'S ADVANCE—*continued.*

March to Swinks Pan—Advance of Ninth Brigade—Battle of Enslin—Bombardment of the Boer position—Reinforcements sent for—The Bluejackets and Marines take the kopje—British losses—The Queen congratulates the Naval Brigade—Boer losses—Lack of water at Enslin—Lord Methuen's address to the troops—March to Klofontein—Lord Methuen's available forces—The Boers in force at the Modder River—Disposition of troops—Scene of the battle—Boer preparations—Battle of the Modder—The torture of thirst—Sleep during battle—Arrival of an additional Field Battery—Attempts to cross the river—Retreat of the Boers—Comparison of British and Boer losses—British artillery fire—Characteristics of the fighting—The Boers fire on the Red Cross—Conduct of the Free Staters impugned—Kruger's remonstrances.



THE night of the 23rd and morning of the 24th were spent in camp near Thomas' Farm while the Engineers, supported by the armoured train, repaired the railway line. In the afternoon of the 24th the camp was struck and the force marched seven miles north to Swinks Pan, over the waterless veldt, leaving the 1st Scots Guards and two companies of Munster Fusiliers—who had come up from Orange River—to hold Belmont station, in the neighbourhood of which there was still a small Boer force 500 strong.

This day the armoured train had a brush with the Boers, in which three officers and men were killed or wounded. At Swinks Pan there was a good water supply, and there the column halted. Away to the east rose kopjes, which, the scouts had ascertained, were held by Boers. The enemy's strength, however, could only be guessed at; it was placed at 400 men. Events showed very plainly that this was a ludicrous underestimate. The Boers had closely dogged the column, though rarely or never seen. At Swinks Pan traces of their presence and smouldering camp fires were discovered, showing that their scouts had been close at hand.

That night the column received orders to be under arms at dawn, when a move was to be made for Graspan, where was the enemy's position. The Boer force being believed insignificant, only the Ninth Brigade, with the artillery, cavalry and mounted infantry would, it was thought, be required.

The Guards were accordingly left with the baggage—they had done the hardest work at Belmont and had fully earned the right to a rest—and were directed to march north to Enslin, which was to be the next halting point.

Soon after 6 a.m. of the 25th, the Ninth Brigade found itself in front of the Boer position. This lay along a line of low but steep hills; upon the extreme left, connected with these hills by a long, grassy ridge, was a small, stony kopje, which is thus described by Colonel Verner: "Five hundred

**Advance of the Ninth
Brigade.**

yards from the kopje's summit the plain rose gradually, and scattered boulders were to be seen. Two hundred yards nearer, the slope steepened and the boulders were more numerous. Another hundred and fifty yards and the slope became almost a precipice—a mass of rock and scree—and could only be climbed on hands and knees in many places. Here and there were vertical patches of cliff; everywhere rocks and boulders gave fine cover." Here, it was afterwards discovered, was posted the old guard of the Boer force—a party of 300 Transvaalers, but recently arrived from Kimberley. The enemy's strength was actually between 2,000 and 3,000, with one heavy gun, five field guns, a Maxim 1-pounder automatic—the dreaded "Pom-Pom" which



DETRAINING THE WOUNDED AT WYNBERG.



THE VILLAGE OF WYNBERG.

Lord Methuen's men were now to face for the first time—and a rifle-calibre Maxim. The Boers were under the command of General Delarey; they appear to have been a different force from that which had fought at Belmont.

In consequence of the heavy loss which he had sustained in storming

Battle of Enslin.

**Bombardment of the
Boer position.**

the kopjes at Belmont without full artillery preparation, Lord Methuen

brought up his field batteries and two naval guns, and opened the battle by a

prolonged bombardment of the Boer position. Already, about 6 a.m., the enemy had fired the first shot at a party of Rimington's Scouts who ventured within range. The field-guns began their work at a range of 2,500 yards, and then closed in to 1,500. The naval guns opened at 5,000 yards and closed to 2,800. The Boers vigorously replied with their guns, but as these were scattered and not massed together, as they furthermore fired smokeless powder, and were in some cases posted just behind the crest of the ridge, they were almost impossible to locate. Indeed, in this battle, as in the Belmont action, the enemy's invisibility was nerve-shaking. There were no masses of men to be seen and made into targets; no gleaming array of guns invited a deluge of projectiles. But for the crackling roar and the quick, heavy banging of the "Pom-Pom" and the field-guns, but for the

flashes of fire from the rifles, the line of kopjes might have been the haunt of only the little "dikkopf" and the great South African vulture.



NO. 1 BASE HOSPITAL, WYNBERG.
Where our wounded officers are nursed.

The feature of the artillery fight was a duel between the "Pom-Pom" and the 18th Field Battery. "The Boer gun," says Mr. Julian Ralph, the brilliant correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, "was never seen, and the man who served it never once saw us. His piece was hidden beyond the ridge on the further slope, and a comrade gave him his range and direction. For a long time this gunner devoted his attention to one of the field batteries. Next he attacked the black mass made by their horses and limbers. Later he paid his

respects to the naval gun and its crew. He never achieved perfect excellence, for he did no damage to any British gun; he killed but two horses in the field, and he wounded but five of our men altogether. And yet he got his range so quickly and well, and he was so persistent and so wholly invisible, that our men set their teeth in grim determination to destroy him. They had for a target nothing but the thin smoke which rose over his gun, but into that little floating cloud they planted shot and shell, until at the end of the day they had given out 210 rounds, if I remember the extraordinary figure correctly. All the other Boer guns were silenced before this one was, and at twenty minutes to ten this was silenced and every gun of the enemy was speechless."

Says an officer in command of one section (two guns) of the 18th Field Battery:—"I had a warm time of it, from a quick-firing gun, firing one-inch common shell, but luckily all the rounds (about 100) fell just about 100 yards beyond my guns. We didn't get a scratch. In the meantime I plugged away at the right hand line of kopjes, but couldn't for the life of me see where their cursed little gun was."

Noting the intensity of the artillery and rifle fire,



STAFF OF THE OFFICERS' HOSPITAL AT WYNBERG.

(Photo by Fyne, Capetown.)

and receiving reports that a fresh commando of the enemy was advancing from the north-east and threatening his rear, Lord Methuen came to the conclusion that the Boer force before him was far stronger than 400. Accordingly he heliographed orders back to Belmont to the battalion of Coldstreams and to the Guards' Brigade, now on their march to Enslin, for them to hasten immediately to his help.

Reinforcements sent
for.

The British artillery fire soon appeared to get the Boer fire under. From the first the enemy had wasted ammunition at absurd ranges upon our guns with but little effect, seeming more intent



Drawn by J. H. Thornely.

A LANCER AT THE "CHARGE."

on fancy shooting than upon doing any real damage. To all who watched the bombardment of the kopjes it appeared impossible that any living thing could be left upon them. A perfect hailstorm of shrapnel descended upon the stony slopes, yet, as was afterwards discovered, with but inconsiderable effect. The Boers had for the most part fallen back from the slopes which faced our guns to the other side of the ridge, where they lay behind the boulders in almost complete security.

About 7 a.m. the infantry began to work forward under cover of the artillery fire, to assault the isolated kopje upon the left of the Boer position. The Boer right was merely watched by five companies of the Northumberland; the Yorkshire Light Infantry, marines and seamen of the Naval



W. H. WARD & CO.

[Photo by Knight, Alershof.]

GENERAL FRENCH.

A brief sketch of General French's career is given on p. 30 of this work. He was in command of the forces which routed the Boers at Elandslaagte; left Ladysmith by the last train which succeeded in getting out of that town before it was invested; took up the command of the forces operating in the Colesberg district, November 16, 1899; led the cavalry division which effected the relief of Kimberley, under Lord Roberts's orders, February 13, 1900, and helped to enclose Cronje and compel his surrender, February 27. He has since taken an active part in the operations around Bloemfontein and Wepener. He has the advantage of leading that arm—cavalry—which is able to meet the enemy on something like equal terms; but his operations have been crowned with an amount of success which marks him out as a specially able commander.



(Photo by Symonds.)
 FLAG-CAPTAIN PROTHERO,
 Of H.M.S. *Doris*. Wounded in action at the
 battle of Enslin.

Brigade, and North Lancashires were concentrated against the kopje. The Naval Brigade led the storming force, extended in a single line, each man six paces apart from his neighbour on either hand. "As the line passed me," writes Colonel Verner, "I noted how each hard, clean-cut face was from time to time anxiously turned towards the directing flank, so as to satisfy each individual that the interval and dressing were properly kept. . . . No better kept line ever went forward to death or glory." As they began the ascent, advancing by brief rushes in very open order, the hill suddenly appeared to



(Photo by Symonds.)
 COMMANDER ETHELSTON,
 Of H.M.S. *Powerful*. Killed in action at the
 battle of Enslin.

swarm with enemies; from the crest, from behind every boulder, poured a murderous fire. The naval officers of the brigade still carried swords and could be readily distinguished: they were the target of every Boer rifle. "In the breathing time between the rushes of the assailants," says Colonel Verner, "one conspicuous figure was to be seen standing erect, and marking the station taken up by the Naval Brigade. This was their commanding officer, Captain Prothero, R.N., a man of great stature and immense physique, who elected thus to stand leaning on his walking-stick while his men, lying prone, gathered breath for another rush. . . . Eventually the inevitable occurred and he was seen to drop, happily only wounded and out of action for a time." It was at this point that Commander Ethelston of the *Powerful* was hit half-a-dozen times and killed, and that Major Plumbe of the Marines, who was gallantly leading in front of his men, closely followed into the storm of battle by his little terrier, staggered, shouting to his superb soldiers not to mind him, but to advance. He never rose again. There too fell Captain Senior, side by side with his field officer. So terrible was the fire, so annihilating its effects upon the Brigade, which had drawn into closer and closer order as the hill steepened and the space narrowed, that the order was given to retire upon the last cover.



MARINES OF THE NAVAL BRIGADE
 WHICH FOUGHT AT ENSLIN.

The detachment is here represented marching out of Simonstown on its way to the front. The officer in khaki walking alone is Capt. Senior, who was killed in the battle of Enslin (perhaps better known as the battle of Graspan).

For a moment it seemed as though the attack had failed. But the artillery poured its fire upon the crest of the ridge with more vehemence than ever; and up the slopes in very open order, firing and cheering, came the Yorkshire Light Infantry to the support of the hard-pressed Naval Brigade, while the Loyal North Lancashires and Northumberlands, too, were sweeping forward upon the line of heights held by the Boers. Once more the seamen and marines pressed upward at an order from the wounded Captain Prothero: "Men of the Naval Brigade, advance at the double; take that kopje and be hanged to it." Full in the front of them was Midshipman Huddart of the *Doris*, who even in that band of heroes won a name for conspicuous and amazing bravery. At the bottom of the hill he had fallen hit in the arm; halfway up he was shot through the leg; yet staggering forward he reached the summit of the blood-stained slope, where, shot once more, in the stomach, he breathed forth his young life. Thus died the



F. J. Waugh.]

DEATH OF MAJOR PLUMEE AT THE BATTLE OF ENSLIN.

His little terrier followed him up the hill and kept watch by him for hours after he had been mortally wounded, until he was picked up by the ambulance.

officers of the Royal Navy. For the last few yards of the advance the Boers could no longer fire with safety upon their assailants. Their very position became disadvantageous as the slopes were so steep that they had to stand up to see their assailants, and in the deluge of shrapnel and rifle bullets which beat upon the summit, this was almost certain death. Lieutenant Taylor of the Navy and Lieutenant Jones of the Marines, the last in spite of a bullet in his thigh, were the first into the Boer entrenchments at the top. They were closely followed, and the kopje was won.

Throughout the advance of the Naval Brigade the naval officers behaved with the most reckless and devoted courage. "Your fellows are too brave," said a soldier-officer of famous gallantry to a sailor-officer. "It is utterly useless for you to go on as you do, for you will only all get killed in this sort of warfare. I saw your officers walking about in front of their men, even when the latter were taking cover, just as if they were carrying on on board ship." "Did you watch the Naval

Brigade?" said Colonel Barter to a staff officer. "By Heaven, I never saw anything so magnificent in my life."

The scene on the summit is thus described by *The Times* correspondent:—"The hill-top was almost dripping with blood; not a boulder escaped its splash of crimson, and the innumerable splinters and chips of the ironstone blocks indicated the terrific nature of our fire. Most of the dead or wounded Boers were carried off—thirty of the more severely wounded were found in their hospital a quarter of a mile away—but here and there a dead man proved that here the Transvaal had sent its men down for the first time to meet the oncoming column."

"I shall never forget the faces of some of those who had fallen in the final rush," says Colonel Verner, of the dead of the Naval Brigade. "They lay about in every attitude, many with their rifles, with bayonets fixed, tightly clutched in their hands, and in some cases still held at the charge. There were the same hard-featured, clean-cut faces, which but a short time before I had watched laboriously skirmishing across the veldt, now pale in death, but with the same set expression of being in terrible earnest to see the business through."

The enemy fled towards his right along the ridge; others mounted their



SAILORS CARRYING THEIR WOUNDED COMRADES TO THE HOSPITAL AT SIMONSTOWN.



WOUNDED SAILORS IN THE ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL AT SIMONSTOWN.

horses and made off to the north. The Lancers and Rimington's Scouts essayed pursuit, but hurrying after the enemy had to pass between two seemingly untenanted kopjes. As the mounted men drew near to these, the slopes burst into flame and a sheet of lead checked the pursuit. The force which thus suddenly intervened was afterwards believed to have been a detachment of Transvaalers under General Cronje, whose coming Delarey was awaiting. The

cavalry were too exhausted to follow up. "For the second time," wrote Lord Methuen, "I longed for a Cavalry Brigade and Horse Artillery Battery to let me reap the fruits of a hard-fought action." Had he been able to launch a strong force of mounted men upon the enemy, the Boer guns must have been captured, the Boer army destroyed, and the relief of Kimberley without further fighting might well have been assured. There would then have been no Modder River, no Magersfontein. As it was, all that could be done was for the artillery to shell the fugitives at long range.

The deadliness of the Boer fire is seen in the heavy losses of the Naval Brigade and in the fact that most of those who reached the summit of the kopje unwounded had bullets through their clothes or equipment. A marine officer had his water bottle and revolver shot away, his leather belt cut, and the magazine of his rifle carried off by a bullet, but escaped injury himself.

The British losses were sixteen officers and men killed, 169 wounded, of whom four died of their wounds, and nine missing. The Naval Brigade was by far the heaviest sufferer, as it lost no less than 101 officers and men, out of a total of 365 on the field. The Marines left nearly half their strength upon the ground, the "Blue Marines" or Marine Artillery being the hardest hit of all, with twenty-six killed and wounded out of a strength of fifty-seven. Yet men questioned whether it was wise to use up the magnificent *personnel* of the fleet in such attacks, when this *personnel* is none too strong, and when it takes years to train seamen. After the battle the Brigade was deservedly thanked by the Queen. "The Queen desires," ran her telegram, "that you will

The Queen congratulates the Naval Brigade. convey to the Naval Brigade who were present at the action of Graspan, Her Majesty's congratulations on their gallant conduct, and at the same time express the Queen's regret at the losses sustained by the Brigade."

The Boer losses in the action can only be guessed at. Twenty-one dead were found on the field and buried; thirty wounded Boers were captured in the enemy's hospital, and a few unwounded men were also taken. Among the prisoners was Mr. Jeppe, a Transvaal millionaire, and Commandant Rissik. In all, the enemy's casualties probably exceeded our own, and may be placed at from 200 to 240. The Jacobsdal commando, 180 strong, alone lost forty-six men killed and wounded.

Here, as before at Belmont, there was the same violation of the white flag, with, superadded, gross misuse of the red cross flag.

From the battle, which was known officially by the name of Enslin, though it had occurred near the tiny village of Graspan, the army marched to Enslin and there bivouacked. There was little or no water, and this added greatly to the suffering of the troops after the morning's terrible fight under a sweltering sun. The men crowded round the locomotives and offered immense sums—a whole year's pay—for a cup of water from the tenders, but in vain. The engine-drivers had received the strictest orders on no account to part with their water. One soldier was seen lying flat under a steam pipe, striving to catch in his mouth the scanty drops. Nor was there any too much food. Nothing beyond the service rations had been able



HOME FROM THE WAR.

[Photo by Crisp, Southsea.]

Lack of water at Enslin.

to keep pace with the column. The men had to do without the little canteen luxuries which add so

much to the pleasure of a soldier's life. The officers had to fare upon bully beef and compressed vegetables, despite the champagne and delicacies which



REPAIRING THE RAILWAY NEAR ENSLIN.

the thoughtful mess caterers had brought out from England only to be stacked in mountainous piles at De Aar.

At Enslin Lord Methuen addressed his troops upon the morning after the battle.

Lord Methuen's address to the troops.

He congratulated them upon the work they had done, and expressed his

appreciation of their gallant endurance of hardship. The work was the severest encountered by the British Army for many a long day. They had, in front of them, an

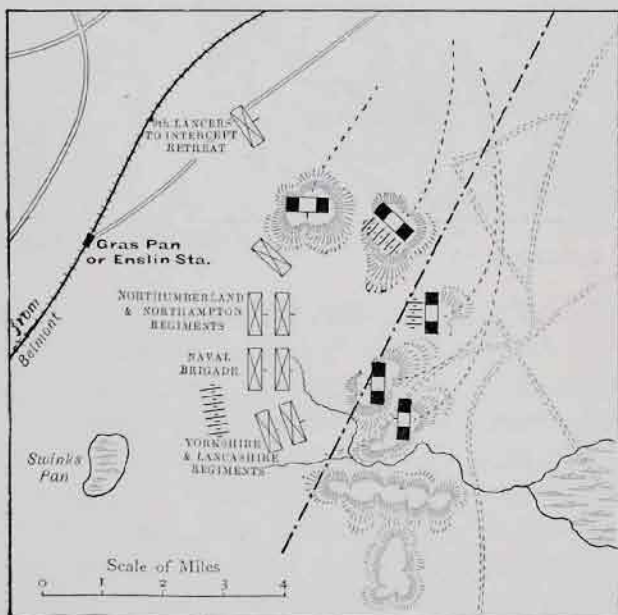


[Photo by K. W. Paul.

THIRSTY SOLDIERS AT THE WATER-WHEEL AT BELMONT. The water is drawn up by means of a chain of buckets passing over a wheel which is actuated by a windmill.

enemy to whom they could not afford to give one point, whose tactics had been excellent, and whose courage he recognised and admired. When called upon to fight for his country, he preferred to fight against such a foe— a foe worthy of his steel. He hoped that he and his men had gained each other's confidence, and that they would all do their duty as Englishmen should do.

He went on to the painful topic of the abuse of the white flag and red-cross flag, describing as dastardly the conduct of the enemy in firing on ambulance waggons, the shooting of a British officer by a wounded Boer, and the use of Dum-Dum bullets; but he refused to believe that these acts were characteristic of the enemy. He would give them credit, until he was convinced to the contrary, that they, like the British, wished to fight "fair and square."



PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF ENSLIN OR GRASPAN.

From Enslin the division marched to Klokkfontein, only eight miles from Modder River. The railway and telegraph were repaired as the column advanced. At Klokkfontein the army suffered the usual torments for want of water. The muddy water of the stagnant pools, which were the only source of supply discovered, was eagerly drunk by the heavy-laden, thirsty men. Word was passed that there would be plenty of the precious fluid next morning at the Modder River, but for only too many in the British column that moment of supreme satisfaction when raging thirst is quenched was never to come.

March to Klokkfontein.

So the column encamped with orders to march at dawn and breakfast on the Modder. Lord Methuen, his staff, even the British scouts, had been deceived by rumours artfully spread to the effect that the enemy would make no stand before Spytfontein, some miles beyond the Modder River. A reconnaissance on the 27th revealed no sign of the enemy. "There was," says Mr. Kinnear, "an absurd contempt for the enemy on the part of the Headquarters Staff, and an indifference most pro-



AN OBJECTION TO WORK.

The loading of a number of pack-mules is apt to be trying to the temper and even to the muscles.



[Stereo-Photo by Underwood & Underwood. Copyright 1900.

THE DRUMMER BOY'S LETTER HOME.
The drum-head makes a very fair writing-table.

nounced as to his whereabouts and strength. At Graspan Lord Methuen expected a brush with 800 Boers. He encountered over 3,000 of the enemy. But this taught no lesson, until we became almost like the courtiers of King Louis, who neither learned anything nor forgot anything." Yet, in justice to a much-criticised general, it should be remembered that Lord Methuen on the afternoon of the 27th personally examined Modder River bridge, and rode within 300 yards of what afterwards proved to be the Boer position. The enemy did not stir or move; no shots were fired; and no sign whatever of the presence of 8,000 or 9,000 men could be detected.

Lord Methuen's available forces.

At Klokkfontein Lord Methuen was reinforced by a fine Highland battalion, the 1st Argyll and Sutherlands. Deducting all losses he had now 8,000 infantry, 400 cavalry and mounted infantry, and 300 artillery with twelve guns. At Belmont, in his rear, was the 62nd Field Battery with six more guns. It will be seen that the column still remained pitifully weak in two essential components of an army—cavalry and artillery.

At dawn of November 28th the division got under arms and cheerfully marched off to disperse the handful of demoralised fugitives who were, it was reported, all that would be encountered at

Modder River. From the Modder it was to bend eastwards to Jacobsdal and come in upon the flank of the Boers at Spytfontein. The early morning air was clear and cold, but the breakfastless men marched joyously down the gentle slopes, eight miles long, towards the eagerly desired water. A few minutes of skirmishing was the most that anyone expected. Yet early in the morning—seemingly while the division was on the march—Lord Methuen received disquieting news. This was to the effect that the Boers were in great force at the Modder. Still he felt no great anxiety; he had been told that the Riet and Modder Rivers were fordable everywhere, and therefore he thought that he could easily outflank the enemy and drive them from their positions. He does not appear to have communicated the news to his subordinate generals and battalion commanders. Indeed, so free from care was he, that he gave his cook orders to get his breakfast ready as his line of men neared the Modder River. Still, the approach to the river was made in very open order and no reasonable precaution was neglected.

The Boers in force at the Modder River.



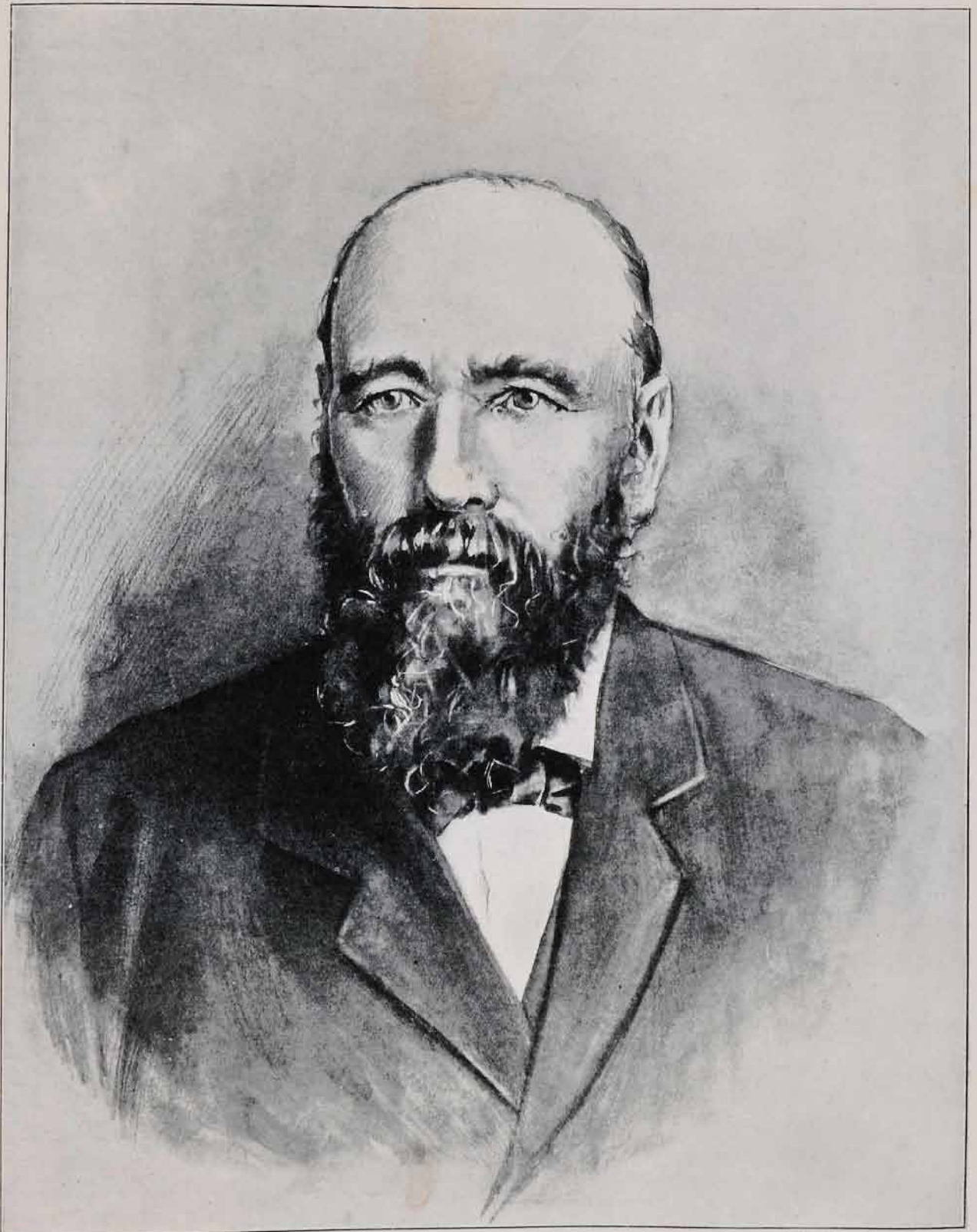
A PLEASURE PARTY ON THE MODDER RIVER.

The Modder, a little above the bridge, is the favourite resort of the jaded Kimberley folk for picnics and boating.

The disposition of the British troops was as follows:—On the right was the Guards' Brigade, with the Scots Guards, Grenadiers, and 2nd Coldstreams in line from right to left, and the 1st Coldstreams following in support. On the left was the Ninth Brigade, under Major-General Pole-Carew, composed of the Northumberland Fusiliers, Yorkshires, and North Lancashires in line from right to left, with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in support. The two field batteries were on the right, where also were the Lancers and mounted infantry. To the rear were the transport and ammunition waggons in charge of the Northhamptons.

About the centre of the British front was the railway to Kimberley, which crosses the Modder upon an iron bridge. That bridge had been entirely destroyed by the Boers, and culverts on the line two miles to the south of the river had been blown up, thereby rendering it impossible for the armoured train with Lord Methuen's column to approach. Half-a-mile to the east of the railway bridge was the confluence of the Riet and Modder Rivers, the Riet coming in from the south-east

and the Modder from the north-east. As far as the confluence, the width of the bed of the Riet is about 300 yards; below the confluence the stream, now known as the Modder, flows in a bed



GENERAL P. J. CRONJE.

[Re-drawn from a photograph.]

Commanded the Boers in the beginning of the investment of Kimberley, subsequently at Magersfontein and Paardeberg, where he surrendered together with 4,500 men to Lord Roberts. Cronje is a man of 65 years of age, who has always been a bitter enemy of England. In 1881 he was in command at the siege of Potchefstroom, where he behaved with terrible cruelty and unfairness to the garrison, which eventually surrendered to him, with the honours of war, on March 21, although an armistice had been in force since the 6th, of which Cronje had kept them in ignorance. It was by him also that Dr. Jameson surrendered on January 1, 1896.

400 to 500 yards wide. Two miles below the railway bridge a dam had been erected to make a sheet of water for pleasure seekers from Kimberley, and the banks of the river were thickly covered with



THE FREE STATE ARTILLERY.

The standing army of the Orange Free State, commanded by Major Albrecht, who sits near the centre of the front row in the photograph, in a light uniform braided across the front.

trees and brushwood. In this sylvan scene straggled a village consisting mainly of hotels, built of corrugated iron, stone, brick, adobe, and mud. In spite of Lord Methuen's information as to the fordability of the river, there were only three drifts—one over the Riet on the extreme British right; the other in the centre close to the railway bridge, and the third on the left just below the dam.

Unknown to Lord Methuen, the Boers had made the most elaborate preparations to meet his force. General Cronje was in command of the Boers, and had with him from 8,000 to 10,000 men, one half of whom were Transvaalers. Entrenchments had been constructed for five miles along both banks of the river. They were masked by shrubs and



MAJOR ALBRECHT.

In command of the Free State Artillery at Modder River.

brushwood, and even the best field-glass could not detect their outline. On the Boer right were the Free Staters under De la Rey; on the left the Transvaalers under Cronje. On the north bank of the river were stationed seven field guns, with one heavy gun—probably a 100-pounder—on high ground, about two miles back. On the tongue of land between the Riet and Modder, ready to enflade the British, were a "Pom-Pom" and two field guns, whilst several Maxims and machine guns were scattered along enemy's front.

The artillery and mounted troops were in advance of the British line. The first glimpse of the enemy was gained about 6.30 a.m., when a body of 500 mounted Boers was made out away on the right.

Battle of the Modder. They rode rapidly towards the enemy's left, at once drawing the cavalry and mounted men in pursuit. Then a Boer gun on the British right opened fire. So far there had been no sign of life west of the junction of the Riet and the Modder, and it was thought that the village was not held by the enemy.

The British 18th and 75th Field Batteries at once unlimbered on the right and opened fire at an extreme range of about 4,500 yards. The Boer artillery on the eastern half of the enemy's position replied, but very languidly. Here, as before at Belmont and Graspan, it was most difficult to locate the hostile guns. They were not massed, but scattered singly, in strongly-entrenched and well-masked gun-pits, so that the only sign of their presence was a flash and faint film of blue-white smoke, which instantly dissolved into the air. For some time this long-range skirmish continued; then, gradually, the Boer guns seemed to be silenced by the British shrapnel, and it was thought that a small rearguard in the British front was falling back under cover of the desultory cannonade.



[From a sketch by a British Officer.]

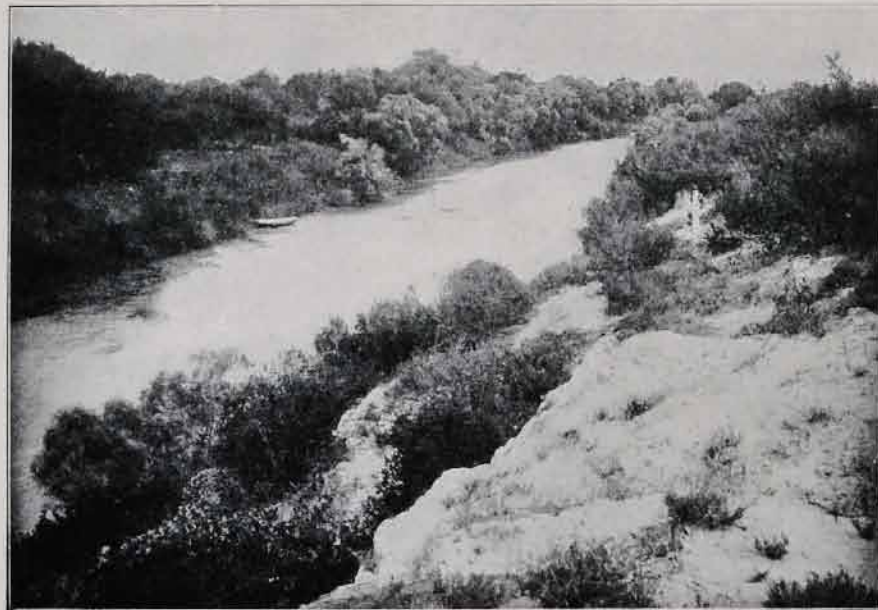
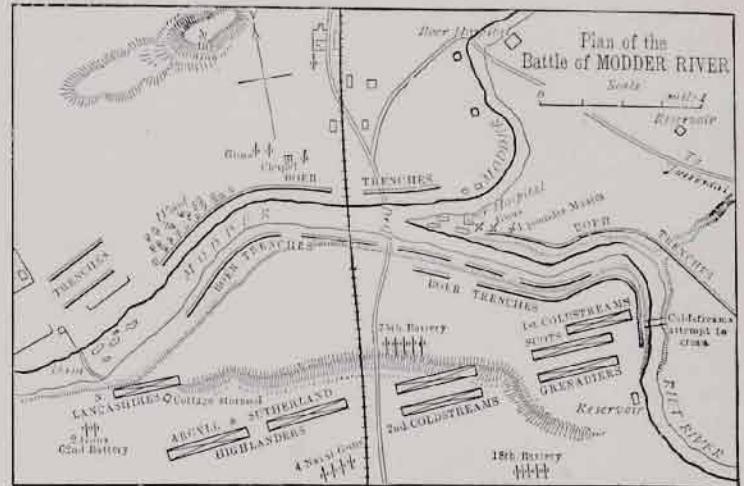
THE BATTLE OF MODDER RIVER, AS SEEN FROM THE GUARDS' LINES.

Accordingly, the Guards received orders to develop their advance. Neglected by the enemy's artillery they pushed rapidly forward and reached a point only about 800 yards from the enemy's trenches, descending the smooth, grassy slope, which led gently down to the river. Far away to the left a thin, long line of khaki-clad men pressed forward, the Ninth Brigade following the example of the Guards. The enemy's plan, it was afterwards learnt from prisoners, was to permit the British troops to approach within 400 yards, and then to open on them from ambush an annihilating fire. But this design was foiled by the clumsy nervousness of the Free Staters in the trenches to the south of the river. When they saw the British troops only 800 yards off them, they held that the enemy was quite near enough, and in defiance of their orders opened a terrific fire.

Along the whole extent of the Boer front ran an appalling crackling uproar, above which could plainly be heard the terrible pom-pom-pom of the Maxim. The effects of this fire were amazing; the leading ranks fell to the earth in an instant, killed or wounded. The Scots Guards' Maxim detachment was

annihilated in half-a-dozen shots by the Maxim 1-pounder; the sergeant in charge was killed, and every man with the gun was placed *hors de combat*. Staggered by the sudden fury and intensity of the fire, which seemed to deliver a continuous sheet of missiles, the soldiers of the Guards and the Ninth Brigade found that they could no longer advance. They scorned the cowardly alternative of retreating, and as the only other course left to them, threw themselves prone on the ground.

The same course was followed by the men in every part of the field, simultaneously, as if by instinct. From the wide extent and vehemence of the fire, it was clear that the British were confronted by a great force, and that a desperate action must be fought before the eagerly longed for water could be reached. It was simply impossible to extricate the British army, the battle having once been joined in this manner. No flank attack could be delivered where almost every man was engaged with the enemy directly before him. Lord Methuen found himself for the second time committed to a struggle which he had not planned, and could do little or nothing but trust to his superb soldiers wearing the enemy down. He telegraphed at once to Belmont for the 62nd Field Battery to march with all possible speed to his assistance, and directed two companies of Munster Fusiliers to entrain and advance to the battlefield. This done, he turned to the control of the battle.



THE MODDER RIVER.

Showing the banks with their lining of bushes, from behind which the Boers opened a murderous fire upon the British at 800 yards.

men—the British soldiers prostrate on the ground, the Boers artfully concealed; and few who fought through that long day in our ranks saw even a single opponent. The men fired at what they thought was the enemy's position, fired at the flash of the guns, fired at the quarter from which came the heavy hammering of the big Maxim. That,

Fusiliers to entrain and advance to the battlefield. This done, he turned to the control of the battle.

The two British batteries on the field pushed in upon the centre of the Boer position, and at a range of about 2,000 yards began to deliver a storm of shrapnel upon the village and the Boer trenches. The whereabouts of these had to be guessed, for there was still no sign of the enemy. The battlefield appeared empty of



BOER ARTILLERY AT MODDER RIVER.

even so, they shot to some purpose was known when after the battle the shield of the Maxim was found splashed gray with British bullets.

After the British infantrymen threw themselves down, their losses were singularly small. Fortunately the soldiers had left their great coats with the baggage, for these, being dark in colour, would have shown up against the brown surface of the veldt and the dingy hue of the khaki, and so have drawn the enemy's fire. At first some officers attempted to stand up and lead their men forward, but such attempts immediately drew a perfect storm of bullets. One brave sergeant who endeavoured to lead a rush was hit half-a-dozen times. The men

**The torture
of thirst.**

suffered agonies from thirst and want of food and the intense heat of the sun. As the morning went on the heat rose to 110°, and the sun's rays scorched and blistered the bare legs of the Highlanders in the most painful manner. If a breath of wind blew to relieve them, it would ruffle their kilts and instantly draw the enemy's fire with deadly effect. The few drops of tepid muddy water in the water bottles were speedily exhausted. In their frantic eagerness to drink, men would rise, though they knew this meant certain death or wounds, and would attempt to crawl to the water carts in the rear. In this manner the Coldstreams lost many men, till it was realised that to bring the carts near the rear was a cruel and irresistible temptation. As for the wounded, they had to lie and suffer

if they could not crawl back to the rear. The bearer companies displayed the utmost devotion, yet they lost so heavily that they could not show themselves within the bullet-swept zone where lay most of the wounded. Nor could ammunition be sent to the firing line; after one or two attempts the men in front had to be left entirely to their own resources.

So hot was the fire, so keen the enemy's watch upon the surface of the plain that the slightest movement attracted a rain of bullets. An officer put up his hand; in a moment a storm of projectiles



(After a sketch by Mr. Fred. Villiers.)

HEROIC ATTEMPT TO FETCH WATER FOR THE FIRING LINE.

The sketch represents some of the men who dashed across the zone of fire, drawing water for their comrades. Many of them were shot down by Boers specially told off for the purpose, long before they could reach the firing line again.

whistled over him. He did not repeat the experiment. "If one asked a comrade for a drink of water," says Mr. Ralph, the correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, "he saw the bottle or the hand that was passing it pierced by a Dum-dum or with a 1-pounder Nordenfelt shell. Or if he raised his head to writhe in his pain he felt his helmet shot away. From the rear ammunition carriers and stretcher bearers walked boldly forward until, the moment they were within range, a sheet, a torrent of bullets and small shells raked the air as jets of water spurt from a flower-sprinkler. But that image is too faint, for the jets were all whistling or shrieking, throwing up fountains of red sand, exploding in hundreds of detonations like echoes of the guns that spewed them. At this, down upon their bellies dropped the stretcher bearers and the cartridge carriers, and there they lay for hours, never rising or attempting to rise without loosening this torrent anew." The Maxim shells rushing through the air "like so many jets of steam released from the highest pressure, and singing like little steam whistles," had great moral effect. One, landing between an unhappy soldier's legs, shattered both his thighs. Yet, speaking generally, the moral effect was greater far than the material.

Among the other torments which were patiently endured, not the least were the ants which sallied forth in thousands and bit and stung the soldiers, when the many ant hills dotted over the plain were broken up by the enemy's artillery.

Hour after hour the fierce, monotonous battle continued, while the pitiless sun waxed higher and higher, and at last began to decline.

Sleep during battle. Always the British field artillery kept its position in the open, its gunners working like demons to save their comrades and shake the enemy's nerves. Always the tempests of bullets passed, for the most part innocuous, over the prone infantry. Always the enemy's rifles crackled and his guns pounded and banged. As the day went on the extreme tension and anxiety yielded to utter lassitude. The nerves could accept no fresh impression, and in the infernal uproar whole ranks were seen sleeping peacefully. Some were even killed or wounded as they slept. As time went on and our men could make no advance and gain no ground, matters began to look more serious. Would twelve guns ever be able to dominate and silence the fire of so strongly entrenched an enemy? To outward appearances but little impression had been made. The Boer guns often seemed to have been silenced, but after intervals of quietude would always reappear and open in another place. Yet the persistent roar of guns behind them cheered and reassured the British infantry, and the persistent rain of shrapnel, though no one in our army knew it, was beginning to weaken the resolution of the Free Staters in the



[Stereo-photo by Underwood & Underwood. Copyright 1900.]

SOME OF CRONJE'S OFFICERS.

The Commandants who fought under Cronje at Modder River, Magersfontein, and Paardeberg; from a photograph taken after their capture by Lord Roberts.



W. W. W. W. W.
J. H. Thorndyke

THE BATTLE OF MODDER RIVER: THE 62ND BATTERY UNLIMBERING UNDER A WITHERING FIRE FROM AN INVISIBLE ENEMY AT 500-YARDS RANGE.

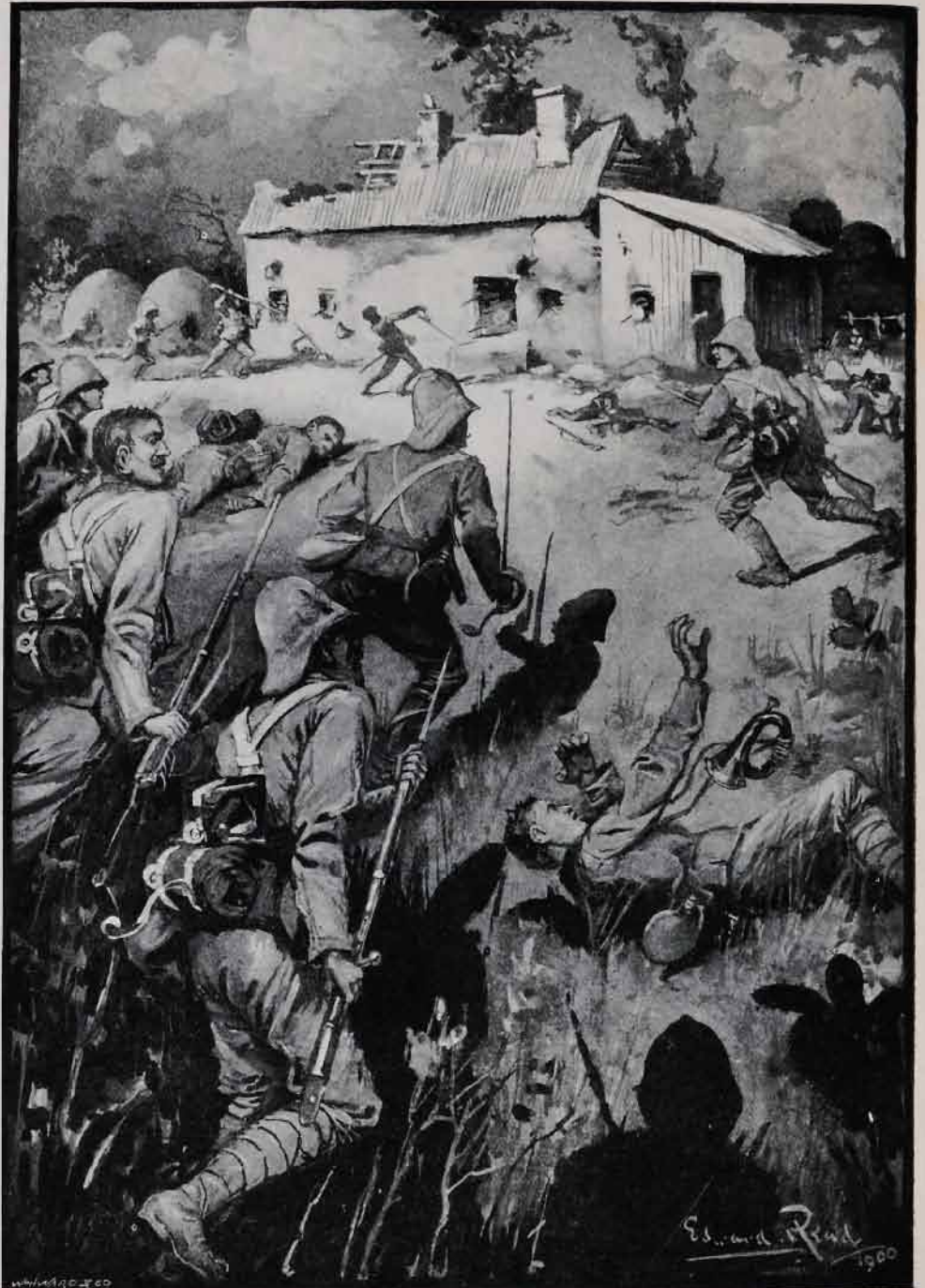
foremost trenches. About noon, it is said, some were shot by their own side for attempting to bolt. And now, as the afternoon wore on, came much-needed help. The 62nd Field Battery, after a twenty-five miles' march, in which four of the horses had fallen dead, dashed upon the field and opened on the Boer left. Says an officer of the battery:—"Things were looking very black when Lord Methuen came up to our

Arrival of an additional field-battery.

Colonel and asked him to send his batteries up closer (we were then 1,500 yards from the Boer trenches, and you must understand that a rifle carries 2,500 yards). Our Colonel did. We then advanced up past our own infantry, and came into action about 900 yards off, closer than artillery had ever taken up position before. After severe loss on our side we managed to silence the Boer guns. The order was then given to retire, and we got out of range and were on the point of congratulating ourselves on being so lucky, when up rode an orderly giving us instructions to go and relieve the Guards. Our Major advanced. . . . We took up our position 800 yards from the Boer trenches, and, by Jove! the Boers let us have a fearful reception. Before I got my horses out they shot one of my drivers and two horses . . . and brought down my own horse. We then got my gun round on the enemy, when one of my gunners was shot through the brain and fell at my feet. Another of my gunners was shot whilst bringing up shell, and I began to feel queer. . . . At last we had a look in, and our shells began to tell; we were firing six rounds a minute, and were at it until it was too dark to fire any more."

Attempts to cross the river.

Lord Methuen had ridden over in the afternoon from the right to the left. On the right a desperate attempt to cross the Riet and get at the enemy had just failed. Colonel Codrington had led a party of Coldstreams, twenty-four men strong, across the river, but they missed the ford and had to swim for it. When they reached the other side they



Edward Read

THE STORMING OF A FARMHOUSE BY THE YORKSHIRES AND LANGASHIRES.

found themselves unsupported and exposed to a concentrated fire, so that there was nothing for it but retreat. Two of the party were all but drowned, when the others, unfastening their putties, made long lines of them and threw them to the exhausted men. It is pleasant to relate that all of this brave little band regained the British lines.

On the left several attempts had been made by the Ninth Brigade, splendidly led by General Pole-Carew, to cross the river, the approach to which had been secured by the Yorkshires and Lancashires. These two battalions stormed a farmhouse and a kraal just to the south of the dam, though the Boers were present in force. Several of the enemy were bayoneted in the mêlée about the house. Further to the left a line of low kopjes was captured at the point of the bayonet, and the British left was firmly based on the river.

The first attempt to cross was made by the Yorkshiresmen, a few of whom pushed into the stream above the dam. They were led by Lord Methuen in person. But the fire was too hot for



H. M. Paget.]

CROSSING THE MODDER BY THE DAM.

[After a photo by R. Thiele.

The photograph represents some of Lord Methuen's men crossing the river after the battle. On the left is the dam by which the Yorkshires crossed under a heavy fire and obtained a temporary footing on the north bank of the river.

anything to live under it, and the detachment was driven back with heavy loss, Lord Methuen himself receiving a painful flesh wound which compelled him to hand over the command. Next, a company of the Highlanders forded or swam the river and reached the further bank, where, on the following day, five of the bravest were found dead in the enemy's trenches. The others were driven back. Once more General Pole-Carew led the brave Yorkshiresmen forward, this time to the dam that crossed the river. Here, under a heavy fire, the men one by one made their way along a rickety iron bar in the water just over the sluices, clinging to the uprights in which slid the sluice gates. One by one, in spite of the fire, they gained the other side, where gradually 400 men formed up—a band of heroes—and began to push forward along the north bank to take the enemy in the flank. General Pole-Carew sent for reinforcements. Colonel Northcott, of the staff, was directed by Lord Methuen to bring them up, but, before he could reach General Pole-Carew, fell mortally wounded by a shell splinter in the neck.

Unfortunately, the success of this flanking movement was not generally known, and the Yorkshiresmen were taken for Boers, so that our troops and batteries, as well as the enemy's, fired upon them. This compelled them to fall back, but their mere appearance on the north bank had finally upset the equanimity of the Free Staters. These had no confidence in themselves or in their leaders; many of them were for the first time under fire, and the fearful sights of the battlefield shook their equilibrium. Most terrible of all was a tall red-bearded Boer who had been wounded fearfully by a shell, and walked to and fro, his whole face one mass of blood, his eyes torn out, calling frantically to his comrades. At 2 p.m. a large number of the



[Photo by Lock & Whitfield.]

COLONEL NORTHCOTT.

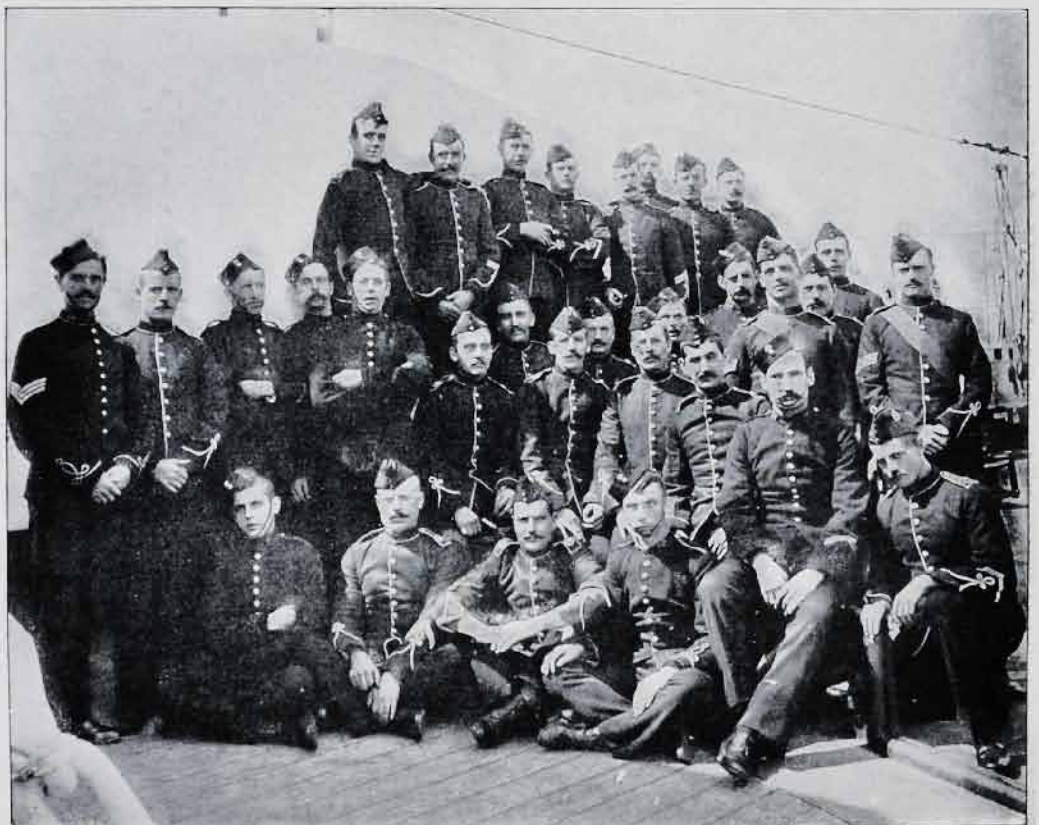
Mortally wounded at the Battle of Modder River while bringing up reinforcements for General Pole-Carew.

Retreat of the Boers. enemy were seen to ride off towards Jacobsdal; at 4.0 there was something resembling a general stampede. The fugitives retired along the deep river bed, and thus their flight escaped the notice of the British column, else the attack might have been pushed, when there is every reason to think a great victory would have been obtained and the enemy's artillery captured. But the most advanced companies of the Guards' Brigade had no ammunition left and none could be sent them; moreover, as it was impossible for a mounted man to show himself within 1,500 yards from the Boer trenches, no orders could be given. It was, therefore, decided to move

three battalions of the Guards under cover of night across the river to the left and to storm the position, and till nightfall to rest content with what had been won.

As evening drew on and the sun sank, the long duel ceased, after eight hours of continual firing, with only two short intervals of abatement. At this point, unknown to the British, the remainder of the enemy precipitately retreated, leaving behind them their guns and many of their wounded. Late in the night they mustered up courage to return and remove all that they had left. The British, for their part, bivouacked on the field, the men sleeping where they had fought. The night was bitterly cold after the sweltering heat of the day, and this, in the absence of their greatcoats, caused the men great suffering.

When morning came, eight shots from the naval 12-pounders gave the signal for a forward move. The scouts and patrols, however, on cautiously advancing towards the Boer lines, found them abandoned. The British army then pushed rapidly across and seized the position vacated by the enemy—victors in one of the strangest battles of modern times.



"THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE."

[Photo by S. Cribb, Southsea.]
Detachment of Royal Marines from H.M.S. *Powerful* who took part in the battles of Belmont, Enslin or Graspan Modder River, and Magerfontein (except two, who were shut up in Ladysmith). All these men were wounded.



[Allan Stewart.]

THE HIGHLANDERS' DASH ACROSS THE MODDER.

In view of the terrific nature of the Boer fire the

Comparison of British and Boer losses.

British losses were by no means heavy. Four officers and sixty-six men were killed, twenty officers and 393 men were wounded, of whom thirty-one died of their wounds, and two were missing—it is to be feared drowned in valiant efforts to cross the river. This made a total of 485 casualties in a total force which at the close of the battle mustered over 9,000. Therefore the

British losses were a little over five per cent. It is impossible to do more than guess at the Boer casualties; probably they were much less than ours, inasmuch as the enemy was the defending force and quite invisible; sixty killed and 300 wounded will be about the truth. It was said, indeed, by prisoners and non-combatants that the Boers lost 160 in killed alone, but this figure is wholly conjectural and very untrustworthy. Their official accounts only acknowledged the loss of seventeen killed and wounded among the Transvaalers, which was certainly an absurd under-estimate. The son of the Boer General Delarey was among those placed *hors de combat*.

Though the battle of the Modder River was not in any sense a great victory, it was a victory extremely creditable to the stubbornness and fighting qualities of the British soldier and to the resolute determination of the much decried British general. To dislodge from the strongest possible entrenchments a force which was at least equal, and perhaps superior in strength, to the British division, which was composed of brave, self-reliant marksmen, mounted, and so without fear for



BRITISH SOLDIERS OCCUPYING THE ENEMY'S POSITIONS AT MODDER RIVER.



AN AMMUNITION TRAIN LEAVING PRETORIA FOR THE FRONT.



BRITISH SOLDIERS PICKING UP WOUNDED BOERS AFTER THE BATTLE OF MODDER RIVER.

The cart has been hacked to pieces with bayonets to make a flat surface to carry the wounded.

(Photo by H. C. Shelley.)

their line of retreat, and which was in artillery quite as strong as Lord Methuen, was a most brilliant feat of arms.

The British artillery especially distinguished itself by the rapidity and accuracy of its fire. Yet there were times when a quicker-firing gun would have been invaluable, especially in preparing for the rushes across the river. As it was, the four naval guns fired 514 rounds; the 18th Battery no less than 1,100; the 75th 900; and the 62nd, which came late, 500. In all, 3,000 projectiles of twelve and fifteen pounds weight were poured upon the Boer trenches.

British artillery fire.

Lord Methuen has been blamed for failing to attempt a flanking attack, when he did discover the real strength and position of the enemy. But, as we have seen, the discovery was made too late to permit of the withdrawal of any considerable force, and the confusion caused by such a movement might well have been seized by the enemy for a counter-attack. Three times during the battle the young bloods among the Transvaalers pressed Cronje to permit them to deliver such an attack, believing that our men were demoralised. Three times he refused.

What rendered the battle so severe an ordeal to the nerves was the new conditions under which it was fought.

Characteristics of the fighting.

Tempests of bullets suddenly descended—no one could say from what quarter. Throughout, the enemy was invisible even to the best field glasses, and this more than anything filled the soldiery with despair of coming to hand-grips—the one kind of battle for which they had been taught to prepare. The new weapons, especially the 1-pounder Maxim, created a terrible impression. In short, the British troops were tried upon this eventful day in the rudest manner. Unhappily, the



CATHERING THE ARMS AND ACCOUTREMENTS OF THE DEAD.

battle produced a feeling of deep depression in Lord Methuen's army, where the soldiers did not realise how much they had achieved. If a rapid advance on the 29th had been possible, it is certain that Cronje and his army would have been driven back helter-skelter. But the mischief of undertaking a difficult campaign with inadequate forces now manifested itself. No large body of



"SLIGHTLY WOUNDED": PHOTOGRAPHED AT MODDER RIVER.

reinforcements was available to carry Lord Methuen's division forward with a rush. There was no cavalry brigade, no horse artillery battery to turn the enemy's entrenchments. Moreover the batteries with the column had not sufficient ammunition for another action, and a halt was imperatively needed to replenish limbers and waggons from the none-too-extensive supplies at the base. In the days of delay which followed the battle, all the results of the victory were lost.

An examination of the Boer trenches revealed the terrible effectiveness of the British artillery fire. The walls and roofs of the houses in the village were wrecked; iron outbuildings were so perforated with rifle and shrapnel bullets that they re-

sembled gigantic colanders; the enemy's trenches were ploughed up by the shells and bullets. About fifty dead Boers were found on the field, either lying where they had fallen or hastily buried. Their trenches were full of all kinds of *débris*; amidst thousands and thousands of expended cartridges were rifles, bandoliers, bottles of Bass, mackintoshes, and odds and ends of equipment. Hundreds of riderless horses galloped over the field. They were captured by privates and sold for a few shillings or a handful of cigarettes.

There were many abuses of the customs of war. The Boers fired upon stretcher bearers and trained their "Pom-Pom" upon the ambulances. They employed expanding bullets, and are said,

The Boers fire on the Red Cross.

though the story wants corroboration, to have placed one of their guns in a place

where it was sheltered by the red cross flag, flying over a neighbouring hospital, and to have removed a Maxim in an ambulance.

The conduct of the Free Staters in the battle roused the fierce resentment of Cronje

Conduct of the Free Staters impugned.

and the Transvaalers. But for these recreants, they said, the British Army must

have been driven back. They communicated to President Kruger the news of their allies' cowardice, and he in turn complained to Mr. Steyn in these terms:—

"It was with regret that we learned that only about 1,000 men of the Free State fought

Kruger's remonstrances.

in the last battle, and that many of the others remained in their camps, while their brothers resisted, and even defeated, their enemy. I should not



[Photo by Gregory.]

"INVALIDED HOME."



SHED RIDDLED BY SHRAPNEL.

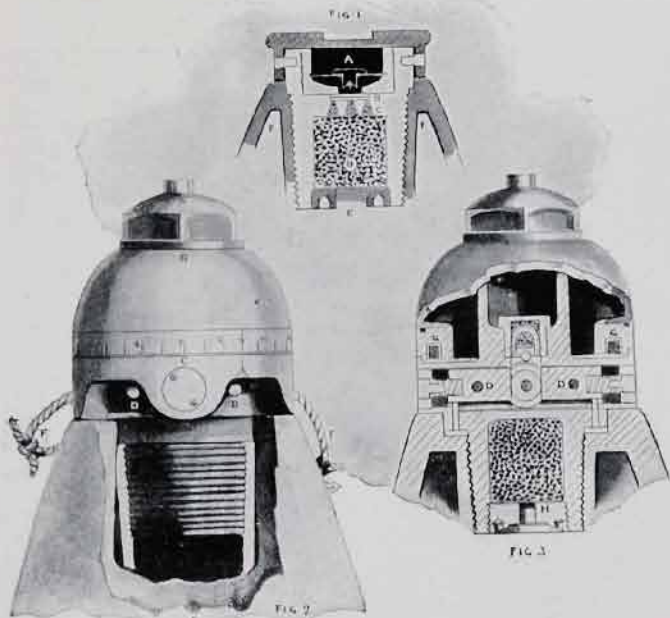
this way, I have no doubt but that the God of our fathers, and our God, will not forsake us, but give us the victory. So let not one be found out of his place at the next engagement. Let each one be found taking his part in the strife. We must remember that we are fighting for all that is dear to us."

be performing my duty were I not to impress upon you all the fact that such behaviour can only lead to disastrous results for our liberty as a people, and may have most unfortunate results for our brothers in the strife.

"I must, therefore, impress upon each and everyone that it is his especial duty to obey the officers in command, and that the officers should accompany the burghers throughout the battles. If we act in



MAKING PONTOONS FOR BRIDGING THE MODDER.



FUZES USED ON BRITISH SHELLS.

Fig. 1 is a percussion fuze, for exploding a shell on coming in contact with any solid object. The steel needle *a* forces the copper washer *b* against the detonating composition *c*, exploding the pistol powder *d*, thus firing the charge in the shell through the aperture *e*. Figs. 2 and 3 represent the exterior and interior of a time-fuze; it is prepared for use by loosening the cap *A*, and turning the dome *B* until the index *C* is set at the required number of seconds, when the cap is again tightened. The safety pins *D* are then withdrawn by means of the cords *E* attached to their heads. On being fired, the centrifugal motion causes the detonating pellet, released by the removal of the safety pins, to press against a steel needle, which fires it and thus sets light to the quickmatch. The fuze composition runs round the channel marked *G*, behind the index, which regulates the amount to be burnt before exploding the charge.

On December 2, Mr. Steyn came in person to Jacobsdal to ply his reluctant burghers with exhortations. He brought with him a special message from Mr. Kruger, in which the Transvaal President expressed his own wish to come to the front and fight. "My age," he said, "does not permit me to join my sons, otherwise I should have been at the front by this time. Your Honour's directions and advice must be before them continuously. For the decisive struggle is fast approaching which is to prove whether or not we shall surrender the country. By no means must we give up the country, even if it costs us half of our men. Your Honour must impress upon the officers and burghers that they must resist to the death. In the name of the Lord, with this determination, and with a prayerful attack, I have confidence that we shall secure the victory. For Christ has said, 'Whosoever would keep his life shall lose it, but whosoever would lose it for truth's sake shall keep it.'"

With Mr. Fischer, President Steyn addressed the men and visited the hospitals.

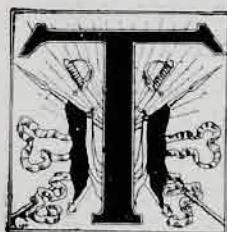


FUNERAL OF GENERAL WAUCHOPE.

CHAPTER X.

THE BATTLE OF MAGERSFONTEIN.

New bridge over the Modder—Lord Methuen reinforced—British communications threatened—Position of Magersfontein—Boer defences—Boer methods—Difficulty of relieving Kimberley—Skirmishing—Lord Methuen's plans—Choice of Sunday—Disposition of troops—Attack on Magersfontein kopjes—General Wauchope's premonitions—Night march—Boers open fire—Demoralisation of Highland regiments—Accounts of the fighting—General Wauchope's death—Collapse of Highland Brigade—Artillery support—Reinforcements—Heroism on the field—Protest against Lord Methuen's orders—Artillery cover Highlanders' retreat—Incidents of the battle—British retirement to Modder River—British losses—Cronje's account—Criticism of Lord Methuen's tactics—Burial of General Wauchope.



THE day after the battle the British column cleansed and occupied the Boer camp, and the Engineers set to work to replace the railway bridge over the Modder. So seriously had the iron girders been damaged that it was necessary to build a new timber bridge, diverting the railway. The

New bridge over the Modder.

work was by no means easy, as the Modder is liable to rise eight feet in a few hours, after the heavy thunderstorms which prevail in the country, so that the new bridge had to be of great strength, while, as the river banks are high, deep cuttings had to be excavated on either side. Yet so skilful and energetic were the railway engineers that by December 7 trains were able to cross to the British camp, and tents, supplies, and heavy baggage were sent forward to the troops. A pontoon bridge had been completed some



GORDONS IN CHARGE OF A PRISONER.
Showing the khaki aprons worn to hide the kilts.

days earlier, thus securing communications with the south. At the same time the search-light with Lord Methuen's army began nightly to exchange signals with Kimberley. Far away to the north, as the night fell, a beam of light struck the sky from the besieged city and spent its strength in the flickering dots and dashes of the Morse code. The welcome news came that all was well, and that the city was secure behind massive earthworks. While the army waited, to rest the men and give



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HENRY EDWARD COLVILLE, K.C.M.G., C.B.

(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)

Commands the 1st Brigade (Guards) of the South African Field Force. He was born in 1832, educated at Eton, and entered the Grenadiers in 1850. Was Aide-de-Camp to the General commanding at the Cape, 1880-81; served in the Sudan Expedition of 1884; the Nile Expedition (I.A.A.G. Intelligence Department), 1884-5; and with the Egyptian Frontier Force, 1885-6, as Chief of the Intelligence Department. He saw service in Burma in 1865, and in the same year was sent to Uganda as Acting Commissioner, and the following year commanded the Unyoro Expedition. Major-General 1898; in command of Infantry Brigade at Gibraltar 1899.

time for the arrival of reinforcements, supplies, and ammunition, it was joined by a regiment of Lancers (the 12th), the G battery of Horse Artillery, one long naval 4.7-inch gun, and four Highland battalions—the 2nd Seaforths, 1st Highland Light Infantry, 1st Gordons, and 2nd Royal Highlanders or Black Watch. Last of all, to complete its artillery, came one battery of 5-inch howitzers, firing 50-lb. shell. Thus, deducting all losses, Lord Methuen

**Lord Methuen
reinforced.**

had 11,000 infantry, 850 cavalry and mounted infantry, and 750 artillery with thirty guns, not counting the naval weapons. On the line of communications were half the Northampton battalion and some small detachments from other regiments.

The last reinforcements arrived from Orange River on December 10. Three days earlier an unpleasant incident showed how easy for an active enemy would be the interruption of Lord Methuen's line of communications. Early on the morning of December 7, a detachment of Northamptons,

who had
British communica-
tions threatened. been left

to hold the railway at Enslin, close to the scene of Lord Methuen's victory of Graspan, heard two loud explosions. A scout was sent out to ascertain the cause, but as the grey light of dawn gave place to clear day, the origin of the explosions was manifest. A force of the enemy from Jacobsdal, 1,500 strong, with three guns, was seen to be in



F. J. Waugh.

[After a photo.]

ARTILLERY CROSSING THE PONTOON BRIDGE OVER THE MODDER WITH ONE OF THE HOWITZERS.



[Photo by W. J. Johnston, Bancharry.]

THE REV. J. ROBERTSON, CHAPLAIN OF THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE, AT MAGERSFONTEIN.

commanding it. The British force, though without artillery and grievously outnumbered, held its own bravely in face of the heavy Boer shell and rifle fire. At last, about noon, the 62nd Battery arrived and opened fire, and the Boers fell back, leaving on the field five dead, among whom was an officer in the uniform of the Free State artillery. The British losses were two

position to the east of the railway and close to it. The line to the north had been broken and a culvert destroyed. Fortunately, the Boers had not yet cut the telegraph wire, and just before they did so, a message was despatched to Modder River camp announcing the enemy's presence and appealing for help. At once Lord Methuen despatched the 62nd Field Battery, the 12th Lancers, and half a battalion of Highlanders to aid the hard-pressed Northamptons.

The Northamptons numbered 200, 140 of whom were posted in a small fort which had been constructed at Enslin round the station; the other sixty were upon a kopje near the fort and

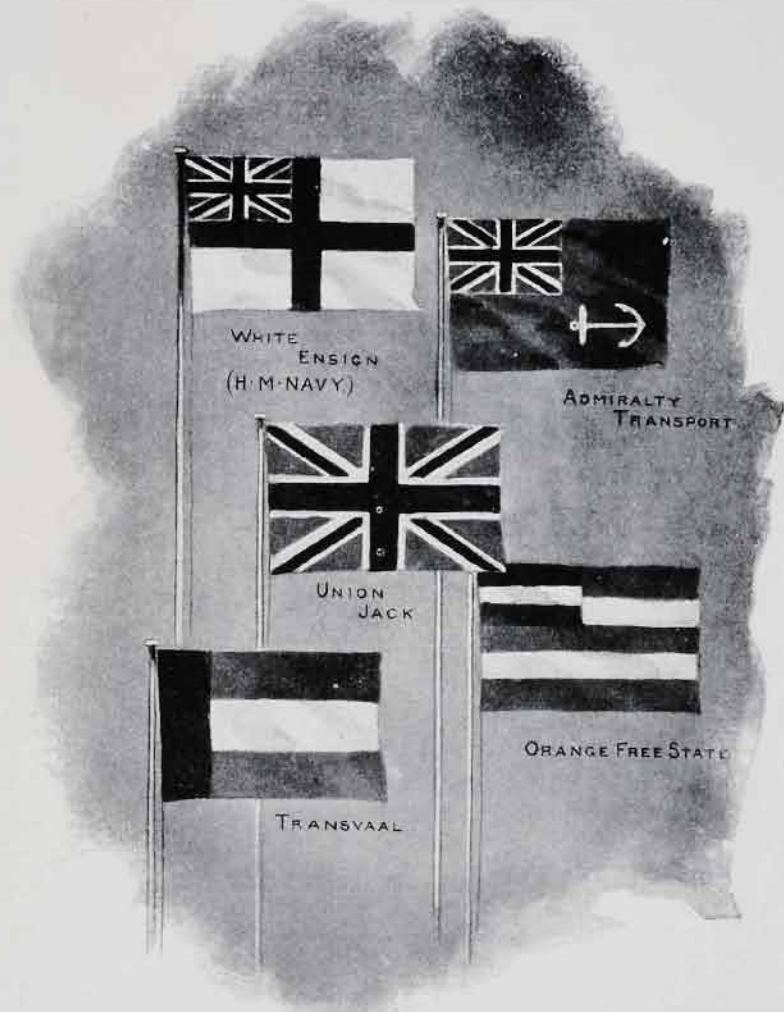
dangerously and nine slightly wounded. General Prinsloo is known to have been in command of the Boers; his object is believed to have been the capture of the howitzer battery, the departure of which from Orange River Station for the north was known to the enemy.

The railway was rapidly repaired and communications reopened. The troops holding it were greatly strengthened by the arrival of the Canadian and Australian regiments at Belmont, thus rendering any further attempts to break the line impossible for a small force.

During the pause, the enemy's position north of Modder River was recon-

**Position of
Magersfontein.**

noitred. It was found that the Boers had retreated only some five or six miles from Modder River, to a line of heights fifteen miles long, which ran in a semi-circle, with Merton Siding as its centre. On the left this line of heights descended in a gentle, grassy slope, covered with thick brushwood and heavily entrenched, to the River Modder, and so could not be turned. Through the centre of the position passed the railway line to Kimberley, between two strongly entrenched kopjes. Away on the enemy's right were yet more kopjes, and to the rear of the main Boer position was a



THE BRITISH AND BOER FLAGS.

The white ensign (having a red St. George's cross and the Union in the corner) is used by Her Majesty's ships; transports fly the blue ensign with the golden anchor of the Admiralty. The Transvaal flag has three horizontal stripes, red, white, and blue, with a green vertical stripe next the staff. The Free State flag is (or rather was) the only flag of any state having orange as one of its colours; it was striped alternately orange and white, with red, white, and blue stripes occupying the first quarter.



"JOE CHAMBERLAIN": THE 4.7-INCH NAVAL GUN SENT TO LORD METHUEN AT MODDER RIVER.

second series of entrenchments at Spytfontein. The key to the whole line of works was Magersfontein, a high hill or group of hills near the Boer centre and to the east of the railway. The strength of the Boers was only vaguely known. The guesses of the scouts and the reports of friendly Kaffirs placed it at anything from 10,000 to 25,000 men. Though considerable reinforcements had been received from Natal before the battle, it is probable that it did not much exceed the former figure. Even so, it was equal or superior in strength to Lord Methuen's division, and had all the advantage of a strong position, yet further reinforced by skilfully constructed earthworks.

Guided by the lessons of the previous battles the Boers had thrown up

their main lines of trenches at the foot of the hills, not on the slopes or summits. Near Magersfontein they had utilised a long, dry watercourse,

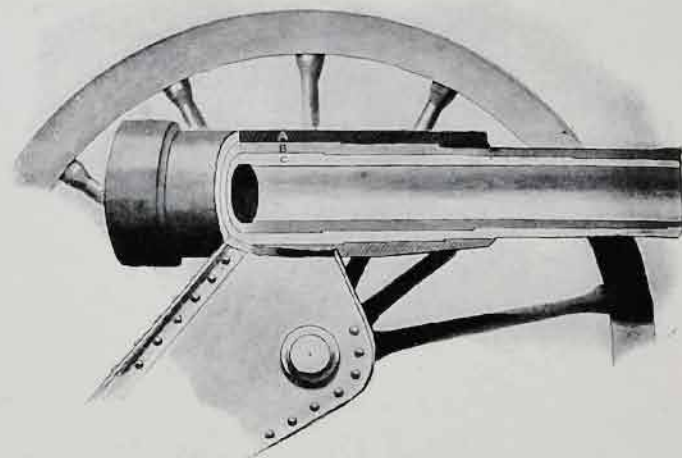
Boer defences. which gave the most admirable protection, and which was further strengthened by trenches and earth-works. In front these works, as at the Modder, were hidden from view by the cacti and brush-wood, which thickly covered the level ground. The trenches were deep enough to give ample shelter to men standing upright; bomb-proofs had been excavated, in which the men lining the defences could obtain perfect security during the artillery bombardment—the only thing feared by the Boers; finally, a high wire fence, by some lucky chance for the Boers, already existed, running along the front of the works, about 300 or 400 yards away, so as to hold assailants under fire and hamper the action of the British cavalry. This was supplemented by several lines of barbed-wire entanglement. The Boer gans were skilfully posted on the heights, as previous experience had shown that, if placed in the trenches, they drew the British fire where it was most destructive. Amongst them were one or two long-range 6-inch Creusots, several field guns, and a number of "Pom-Poms."

An American who visited their position thus describes their plan of defence at this point:—"The Boers know how to select their ground and use it with the greatest judgment. They are confident now that Methuen cannot pass them without losing half his army.

Boer methods. Their new mode of fighting is to put great numbers of their best shots, armed with Mausers and using smokeless powder, out on the flats in rifle shelters. On the sky-line of the hills they post their Martini-Henry men with the old black powder cartridges. The latter are to draw the artillery fire, while the Mauser men in front are to shoot down the English infantry and cavalry at closer quarters. All the men have the greatest confidence in Cronje. He did not believe that the English would attack him for some time after the Modder fight, but declared that, when they did, the more men they brought the greater their loss would be."

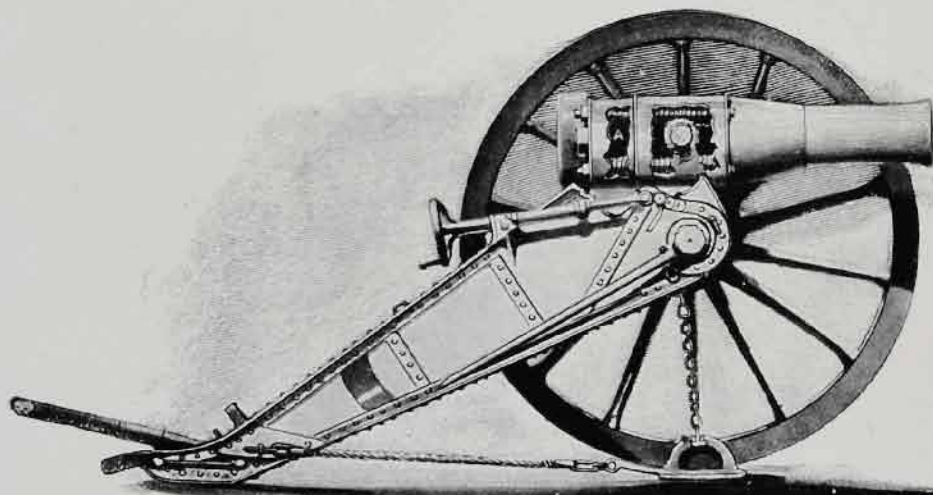
Lord Methuen had positive orders to relieve Kimberley, and the execution of these grew harder with each day's delay. The enemy's position was steadily strengthened; fresh works were pushed out; reinforcements were

called up from all quarters, as the Boers laid enormous stress upon the capture of the diamond city with Mr. Rhodes inside it. There was no obvious way round; to march off to the west and endeavour to turn the Boer right would have led the column through a waterless country, and have left the enemy free to throw their whole force upon the British line of



SECTION OF A 5-INCH HOWITZER.

Showing its inner tube c, on which is shrunk first an outer tube b, then the jacket a. The breech-ring—the projecting portion at the back—serves both to give additional strength to the breech and for the attachment of the hydraulic buffers which take up the "recoil."



A 5-INCH HOWITZER, AS USED BY THE BRITISH AT MAGERSFONTEIN.

Partly in section, showing the hydraulic buffers and the apparatus for raising and lowering the muzzle. This weapon can be fired at an elevation of forty-five degrees; it is intended to throw its shell high into the air so that it shall fall within the enemy's earthworks or other defences.

communications, thus fatally severing Lord Methuen from his base. To march to the east, in the direction of Jacobsdal, would have meant once more crossing the Modder in the face of a highly mobile enemy, who could move two miles to the British one—in other words, a repetition of the Modder River battle. There was only sufficient transport to carry five days' supplies, so that no wide detour was possible. The last course remained—a desperate course as it proved—to take the bull by the horns and assault the Boer position full in the front.



THE BARBED-WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS AT MAGERSFONTEIN.

These entanglements conduced greatly to the defeat of the Highland Brigads. The photograph was taken after the position had been abandoned by the Boers.

On December 6 there was skirmishing between the Boer outposts and the British scouts, two of Rimington's "Tigers" being captured by the enemy and two Lancers wounded.

Skirmishing.

On the 7th Lieutenant Tristram, of the newly arrived 12th Lancers, was so unlucky as to be badly wounded and taken prisoner when on patrol. On the 9th an artillery

reconnaissance was undertaken; it began with an ineffective bombardment of the Magersfontein hills by the 4.7-inch gun. At the same time the cavalry moved out towards the gap of almost level ground between Magersfontein and the Modder and drew a scattering fire, while the horse artillery battery fired a few rounds at a distance of 6,000 yards from the Boer works without producing the slightest impression. With wise self-restraint the Boers avoided disclosing their position, and the reconnaissance taught the staff little or nothing. The greatest difficulty all through Lord Methuen's brief but fierce campaign was to locate the enemy exactly. And in no case could this be accomplished till battle had been joined and the main attack delivered.

Next day, Sunday, the 10th, Lord Methuen made his plans. That

Lord Methuen's plans.

evening the Boer trenches were to be bombarded for two hours just before sunset. During the night the Highland Brigade, under Major-General Wauchope, was to march out and at dawn deliver an assault upon the Magersfontein kopjes. In this terrible enterprise it was to be supported by the Guards' Brigade and the whole strength of the British artillery. The plan was kept absolutely secret and no one outside the staff could more than conjecture what was in hand.



(From a private photo, supplied by Mr. T. Kemp, Dalkeith.)

MAJOR-GENERAL WAUCHOPE.

Entered the Navy in 1859 as midshipman on board the *St. George*. Six years later he entered the Army; served in the Ashanti War, 1873-4, the Egyptian War of 1882, and the Nile Expedition of 1884-5. Commanded the First Brigade at Omdurman and Khartoum, 1898, and the Highland Brigade at Magersfontein, 1899, where he was killed.



DIVINE SERVICE IN CAMP AT MODDER RIVER.

On Sunday there was Church Parade, the troops assembling for divine service in full marching order upon the open veldt. It was a dramatic scene, which came vividly back to many memories

when the bloody work of the following night and day had stretched so many of the worshippers lifeless upon the veldt. It seems unfortunate that Lord Methuen should have chosen Sunday for the beginning of the attack, seeing that, by a tacit understanding between the two opposed armies, this

day was considered one of peace and rest. Putting Sabbatarian prejudices aside
Choice of Sunday. —and they must, as all men would allow, have at times to yield to real military necessities—it may be doubted if there was any necessity on this occasion which enjoined the immediate delivery of the attack. To have postponed it by twenty-four hours would have done no man any harm and would have spared the nation the sorrow of learning that many Boers had been killed by lyddite shells while engaged in prayer and worship. Just as after the battle of Bull Run, in the American Civil War, a popular explanation of the Northern defeat was that the Northern generals had desecrated the Sabbath by attacking on that day and had provoked the anger of God,



1. Lieut. A. S. Grant. 2. Capt. Hon. J. E. T. Cumming-Bruce (killed). 3. Lieut. W. P. Nunnerley. 4. Major P. J. C. Livingston. 5. Lieut. H. C. W. Berthon (killed). 6. Capt. C. Eykyn. 7. Lieut. S. A. Innes (wounded). 8. Capt. E. J. Elton (killed). 9. Lieut. N. N. Ramsay (killed). 10. Lt.-Col. Coode (killed). 11. Capt. W. Macfarlane, Adjt. (killed).

OFFICERS OF THE BLACK WATCH, MOST OF WHOM WERE WOUNDED OR KILLED AT MAGERSFONTEIN.

so in England there were some who attributed the British repulse at Magersfontein to this profanation of a holy day.

On Sunday afternoon the last preparations were made. Messages had been flashed to Kimberley to convey the welcome news that the arrival of the column might be expected at any moment;

Disposition of troops. trains were ready to bring away refugees from the diamond city; everyone was alert and confident. At 2 p.m., without kit, but with half-a-days' rations, the force moved out to battle. First went the Lancers, then the Highlanders with the five batteries of guns and howitzers, and last of all the Guards' Brigade, who followed at sunset. The Ninth Brigade, composed of the Yorkshiremen, Northumberlands, Northamptons, and Lancshires, had the task of guarding the camp. The column struck out to the north-east, deployed its guns, and opened a tremendous fire with lyddite shells and shrapnel upon the Magersfontein kopjes. "The lyddite

explosions." writes Mr. Whigham, the *Morning Post* correspondent, "began along the top of the Magersfontein ridge, each shell throwing up a cloud of wreckage like a gigantic mushroom suddenly springing from the hill top, while the shrapnel of the field and horse batteries searched every nook and cranny of the rocks." Some of the earlier shells fell amidst a number of Boers assembled for prayer and are said to have killed forty, but after this there was little loss, for the reason that there was no enemy on the kopjes. The Boers were lining the trenches at the foot of the hills, where they were in perfect safety, as the artillery made no effort to search these works, which were, indeed, quite invisible. In consequence, they were able to watch this terrific bombardment with the same interest and amusement as if it had been a firework display. Not a shot did they fire in reply, and their calculated silence speedily produced an impression in the British Army that they either had abandoned or would at nightfall abandon their lines.

At 6.45 p.m. darkness came on and the bombardment ceased. The evening was gloomy and the sky heavily overcast, yet a fitful moon showed through the clouds. The troops bivouacked where they had stood during the bombardment, the Highlanders directly to the south of Magersfontein,



F. J. Waugh.

LORD METHUEN WATCHING THE BOMBARDMENT OF MAGERSFONTEIN.

(After a sketch on the spot by W. B. Wollen, R.F.)

the Guards on the right, and the batteries in place, ready to open fire at the ranges which they now well knew. A hasty meal was made of biscuit and bully beef. Silence was maintained and no one might raise his voice above a whisper; no fires were allowed; even pipes could not be lighted. In rear of the infantry Lord Methuen gave General Wauchope his last orders; then the Major-General instructed his battalion commanders as to what was to be done. It was noted by many after that

General Wauchope's premonitions.

sad night that for days before the Major-General had seemed to forebode his swiftly coming end. His very look bore the "reflection of death." In every campaign in which he had fought he had been wounded; now, it was said, he knew that he was fated to die. Yet, like a brave and proud soldier, he never spoke of these things. He was reported to have strongly protested to Lord Methuen against the night attack, and more especially against the order to march in quarter column, though on rough ground at night this was a not unreasonable disposition. Be this as it may, there were no witnesses at the interview, and the story can only be founded upon vague conjecture. It was also said that he had remarked to an intimate friend upon the nature of his instructions, which seemed to him at once too vague in their indication of the enemy's position and too precise in prescribing the formation to be adopted. There

is certainly a concurrence of evidence that the General was rendered uneasy by his orders and anticipated the worst results.

The night march was to begin at 12.30, the Brigade in quarter column, which means that the eight companies of each battalion were to

be in eight
Night march. lines, one behind the other and six paces apart. The four battalions also were behind each other, so that the front of the mass of men was but one company, or about 100 men, shoulder to shoulder, and the depth thirty-two ranks. Thus, half-a-dozen men might be stricken down by a single bullet and a hundred killed by one shrapnel skilfully timed. The reason for the closeness of the formation was the difficulty of keeping the men together in the darkness. Ropes were to



HOW THE MAUSER IS LOADED.

A group of Boers, some of whom are in the act of pressing the clips of five cartridges each into the magazines of their rifles.

be used to enable the troops to maintain their order. On nearing the enemy's position at 3.25 a.m., or just before daybreak, the Black Watch was to deploy on the right to the east of Magersfontein, the Seaforths next to them, and then the Argyll and Sutherlands, with the Highland Light Infantry in reserve. The three leading battalions were to extend, placing each of them two companies in the firing line, two in support, and four in reserve.

The men—even the company officers—knew nothing of what was intended beyond the fact that they were to march out, and, as they supposed, attack the kopjes. They were given no food before they started and had nothing with them but their emergency ration. Some of them, no doubt, were nervous and highly wrought, with the natural anxiety of men going into battle for the first time against a redoubtable enemy, and thus it was that two rifles were accidentally discharged just before the brigade began its eventful march. About 1 a.m. the head of the column began to move off like a phantom host into the impenetrable darkness. The young moon had set and the obscurity was intense. About half-an-hour after the march began, the night turned from sweltering heat to intense cold and simultaneously a torrential rain descended as a violent thunderstorm broke over the troops. The flashes of lightning were vivid and incessant; they affected the compasses which Major Benson, guiding the column, carried, one in each hand, and the resulting uncertainty delayed the advance. Moreover, the apparently level veldt was found upon closer acquaintance to be full of pitfalls in the darkness. At every moment men stumbled over anthills, or boulders, or caught in the six-foot-high Vaal bushes which covered the ground.

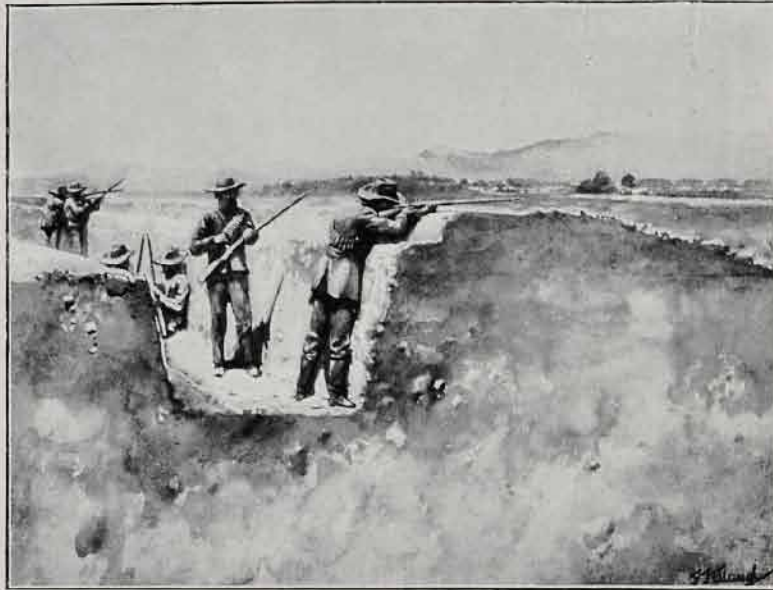
Soaked through, chilled to the bone, sleepless, breakfastless, and weary, the Highlanders continued their advance, and each minute the night seemed to the men's anxious eyes to grow blacker. The ground had not been carefully reconnoitred beforehand, although it is a recognised rule that

night attacks must only be made over country which has been thoroughly examined by the staff; so that it was difficult to avoid some confusion. On the extreme right could now be seen the flashing of a light: its meaning no one understood, but this much was certain, that it was not shown by a Britisher. It caused



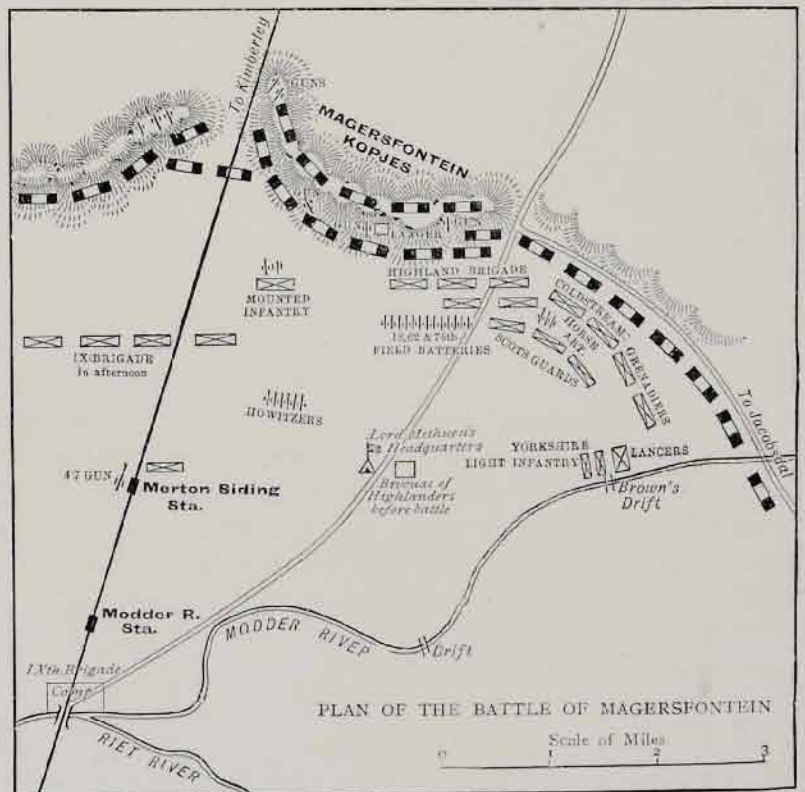
SHELTER TRENCHES.

These diagrams show how some of the Boer trenches would look if cut through. Examples of both kinds were found at Magersfontein. The British in the besieged towns used similar protections. Often sandbags were added for further protection.



a feeling of apprehension, as it revealed that someone amongst the enemy was aware of the march and was following it. On the British left, far ahead in the enemy's position, showed an answering light. It burnt brightly and steadily, and the men watched it with fascinated curiosity. They did not know that at 2 o'clock that morning the enemy had manned the trenches, and was now only waiting their approach to begin the slaughter.

The brigade, still in its close formation, was nearing the foot of the hills, which could dimly be made out looming through the darkness. The Black Watch, in the front of the column, were, unfortunately, in great confusion, having encountered first a high, wire fence, difficult to negotiate, and then a particularly dense and tangled patch of brushwood, in passing through which they were unable to avoid making much noise and losing their formation. This may have delayed the deployment, but if the statement of one of General Wauchope's staff can be believed, neither the staff itself nor the officers of the brigade had any distinct knowledge of the enemy's position, or knew that there were trenches in front of the Highlanders. Be this as it may, already Major Benson had suggested to General Wauchope that, as the hour was nearly 4 o'clock, and the day was already beginning to break, it was time to open out. The General had, it would seem, misunderstood his orders and supposed that he was to maintain close formation up to a point near to the enemy's



lines. It is alleged, with doubtful truthfulness, that again and again he exclaimed, "This is madness!" At last, however, he determined to extend his brigade. The madness, if madness of others it was, had gone far enough. As the Seaforths worked round the thicket to the right and regained touch of the Black Watch, the order to extend was given to the four battalions. But just as the order was issued and before it had been executed, the bright light ahead on the left went out, and at that instant a single rifle was fired.

This was the signal for a deadly volley from the Boers. To the amazement of the Highlanders the ground just in front of them seemed to burst into a sheet of flame, not too yards away. As a matter of fact the distance was 400 yards or a little more, but in the semi-darkness of the dawn, now at last breaking over the hills, and in the bewilderment of the complete surprise, the enemy seemed much nearer. The fire was such as troops in close order had never before in history experienced. From the magazine rifles of the Boers poured a

Boers open fire.

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BOER REINFORCEMENTS LEAVING PRETORIA: COMMANDANT SCHUTTE ADDRESSING THEM.

[Barnett, Photo.]

continuous stream of lead upon the struggling, confused mass of British soldiers, "packed like sardines." The disorder was terrible; in the darkness the men could not discern their officers or sergeants and knew not whom to obey or how and where to rally. All manner of cries and orders were heard:

Demoralisation of Highland Regiments.

"Lie down!" "Extend!" "Fix bayonets!" "Charge!" "Retire!" "No, Forward!" Two companies did charge, but, stung by the hail of bullets from in front and fired into also by the excited men behind, had to fall back. The fatal order

"Retire," pronounced by some unauthorised person, was repeated and caught up. It accorded with the dictates of instinct and of panic fear, and a great part of the Black Watch bolted back in the wildest disorder, breaking the ranks of the Seaforths and throwing them also into dire confusion.

The accounts of the soldiers who fought give a vivid picture of that terrible scene. "The whole of the hillside was lit up with the most damnable discharge of rifles that anyone can possibly imagine,"

Accounts of the fighting.

says a colour-sergeant of the Black Watch. "They seemed to be formed up in tiers all up the hillside, and were pouring magazine fire into us at a terrific rate.

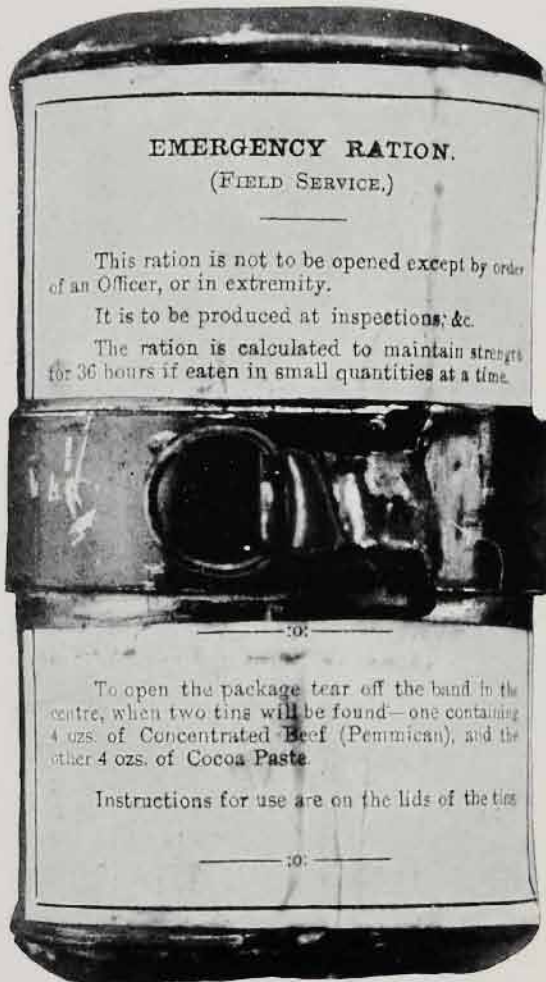
Then came all sorts of shouts—'Lie down!' 'Charge!' 'Extend!' and of the whole brigade there was

only the front rank of 'A' Company of ours that could have used their rifles, as everybody else was straight in rear of them. Well, two companies in front did charge, but were stopped by barbed wire fences and entanglements fifteen yards from the trenches and mostly shot down. Others broke to right and left or retired, and after waiting about a minute for a bullet to hit me, as it appeared impossible to escape one, and as it did not arrive, I thought perhaps it was advisable to go with the remainder. With proper handling we could have cleared the Boers out in two hours; as it was, we were taken into a butcher's shop and left there."

A Seaforth Highlander says:—"When we started to extend they opened fire on us, and such a hailstorm of bullets I don't want to experience again. It was seen that someone had blundered. We were fairly at their mercy; we were in the wrong position and had to retire. And what a rabble—bullets in thousands coming after us; men falling right and left. We rallied up in line and made one effort, and stuck to it, advancing and firing all the time."

"It was not fighting, it was simply suicide. Men were hung on the wire like crows and were riddled with bullets," says another soldier. "Our hearts were broken after the reception we got at the start."

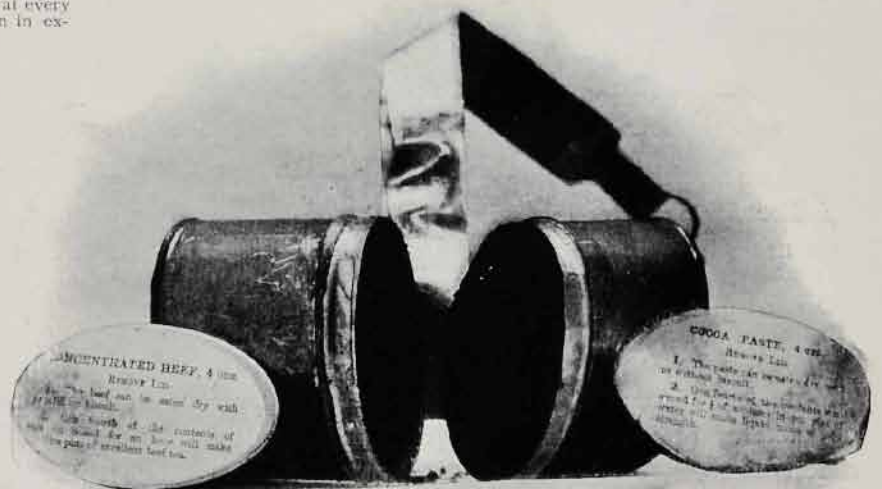
One of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders writes:—"We were just thinking that the Boers had retired, and were about 100 yards from their trenches when we were greeted with a storm of bullets from thousands of men, and the whole brigade fled for their lives. The men's hearts were broken at the start, and they were like children all the day. Men were advancing and retiring by themselves trying to fight, but there were no officers to do the leading so we could expect to do nothing."



THE EMERGENCY RATION

Carried by every soldier in his haversack and produced at every inspection. It was the only food available for the men in exposed positions at Magersfontein.

"We got the word to retire," wrote a private of the Black Watch, "and while we were doing so the bullets were flying like hailstones all round us. It was a miracle how I escaped. I got my rifle blown out of my hand, and a bullet through my helmet, and another grazed my leg, taking away a bit of my spat. I never witnessed such a horrible sight in my life. General Wauchope was shot at the beginning when we charged. When he saw the mistake that happened, he said, 'Rally round, Black Watch; it is not my fault,' and fell riddled with bullets. We formed up again, and advanced to about 200 yards from the hill, and lay down and kept up firing."



THE EMERGENCY RATION OPENED, SHOWING CONTENTS.



Edwards Real.]

THE CHARGE OF TWO COMPANIES OF THE BLACK WATCH AT MAGERSFONTEIN.

But no letter shows better the powerlessness of the men than this from a Highland Light Infantry man:—"What could we do? It was dark; the men did not know where they were. Somebody shouted 'Retire!' and we did—well, not a retire, but a stampede; 4,000 men like a flock of sheep running for dear life. Had we opened out in attacking or skirmishing order, we could have rushed the trenches, but in the formation we were in we were helpless. After they rallied they had not the heart to fight after being led into a trap at the start; but we stood it wonderfully well, although only a half-hearted affair."



THE WATERWHEEL WHICH SUPPLIED THE BOERS AT MAGERSFONTEIN.

Amongst the very earliest victims of the murder-

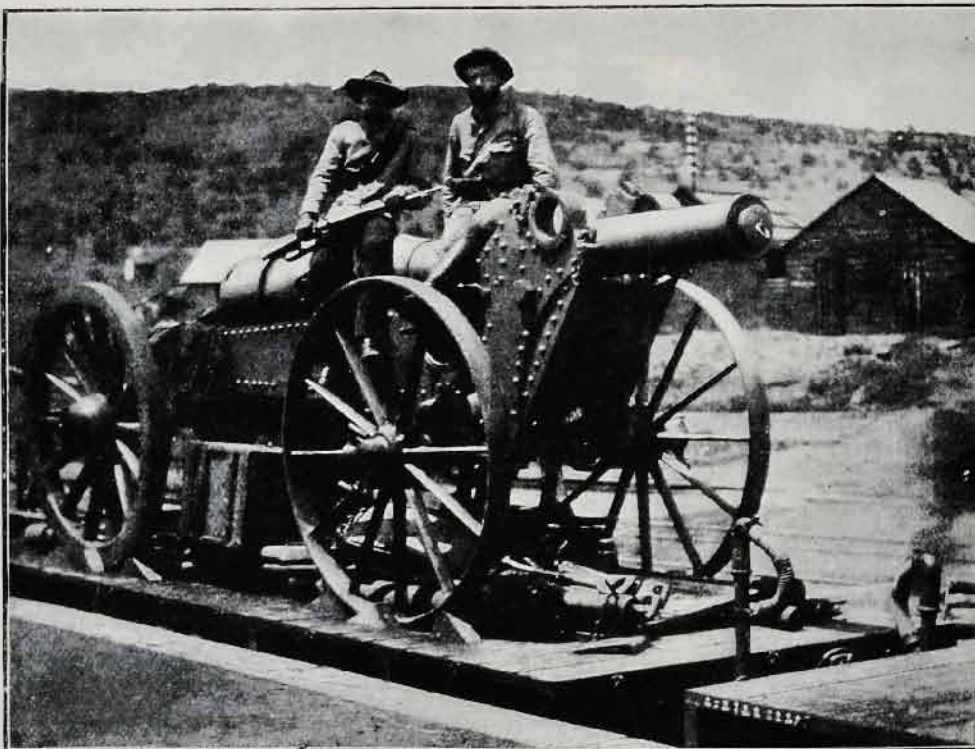
ous fusillade is

General Wauchope's death.

is said to have been the noble and devoted General Wauchope. His body was found well in advance, riddled with bullets. That he ever uttered the words attributed to him, "Don't blame me, my lads, it was not my fault," is not to be believed. The

story-circulated in camp after the battle, but like so many camp legends seems to have no solid founda-

tion. It was alien to the fallen General's character; alien to his high sense of discipline and to his pride as a British soldier. As he had silently obeyed and executed an order which he may well have feared would prove to be disastrous, so he went silently and uncomplainingly to his death, leaving posterity to do his memory justice. As to the time and manner of his death there is some dispute. Many declared that he fell at the first murderous volley; but one private asserts that he lay down with those of the Black Watch who did not bolt, and after some little time



CREUSOT 15-CM. (6-INCH) GUN.

As used by the Boers from the hill-top at Magersfontein, and outside Ladysmith and Mafeking.

determined to go back to the remnant of his brigade, further towards the rear. He was begged not to do so, but rose with four others and was almost instantly killed.

Those who have read of "heroism," of "fearlessness of death," and all the popular phrases which describe the bearing of the soldier

**Collapse of the Highland
Brigade.**

on the field of
battle, may deem
the true story,

which we have given above, ignominious and dishonourable to the Highland Brigade. Yet when the truth is told, such incidents happen on every battlefield, and the best and bravest men are subject to sudden collapse under the conditions that this brigade had to encounter. At dawn it is a physical fact that the intellectual force known as *morale* is at its feeblest. The men were hungry, drenched, cold, confused, surprised, exposed to a more than decimating fire. Death had come suddenly amongst them at an unexpected moment, with all the awful and heart-rending sights of the battlefield. On every side were dead, and dying, and wounded men—a chaos, a babel of cries dominated by the furious rattle of the Boer musketry. The inevitable happened, and the men, without leaders or guidance, went back instead of forward. There are limits to devotion and self-sacrifice.

Nor did the Black Watch fall back far. The men, in spite of the terrible shaking they had received, were speedily rallied; they lay down a thousand yards or more from the enemy's position, and opened a spasmodic fire upon the Boers. The Seaforths rallied, too, and advanced by rushes, drawing close to certain outlying Boer rifle pits. They lost heavily. Officers and men, to quote the letter of an officer who led the rushes, "were bowled over like rabbits." Some of the Black Watch, who had not retired but had advanced in spite of the Boer fire, actually reached and entered the enemy's trenches,

but, unsupported, were made prisoners. In all, of that famous and gallant regiment, about one fourth fell at the first deadly volley from the Boers. In the two leading companies, 200 strong, three-fourths were shot down. A chaplain in the ranks, who was knocked down in the rush to the



[Photo by Horsburgh, Edinburgh.]

GENERAL WAUCHOPE.

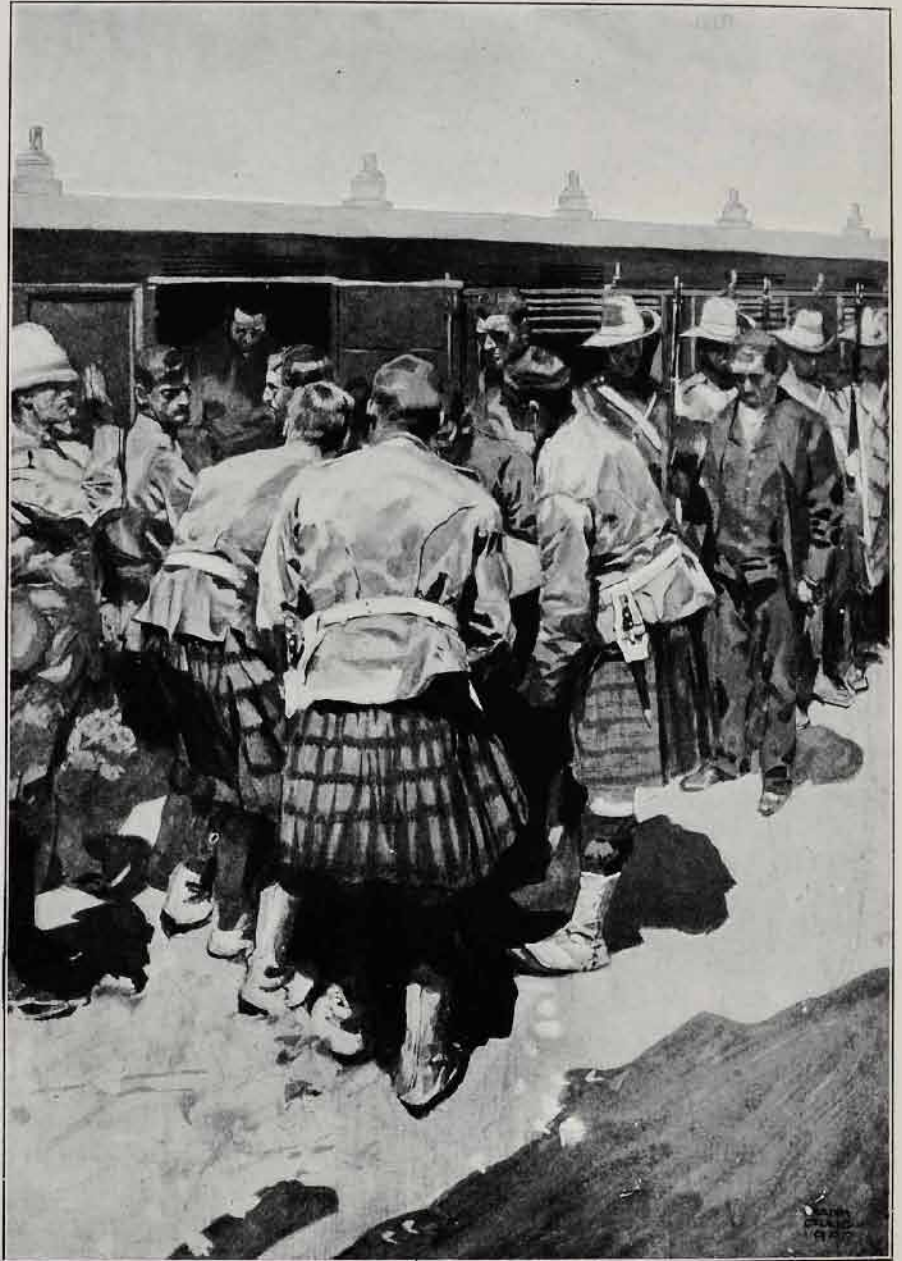
Some particulars of his career are given beneath the equestrian portrait on page 178.

rear, declared that the panic was awful, but that there lived no men who would have done otherwise than they did.

The two other Highland battalions, though greatly confused and involved in the sudden panic, did not suffer as severely, being further to the rear. They were likewise rallied. Things were in this posture: the attack had hopelessly failed, and the ground before the shattered Highland Brigade was strewn with killed and wounded, many of the latter destined to receive wound after wound under the cruel fire when it grew light enough to see more plainly. At once, with a crash and a roar, came a lyddite shell, aimed from the 47 at the enemy's position, bringing the Highlanders welcome news that they were no longer to fight unsupported. Then

Artillery support. followed the din of the thirty British howitzers and field guns, bombarding the Boer trenches might and main to take the pressure off the Scotsmen. Their much-needed aid was not without effect. It was no longer possible for the Boers to fire with complete impunity, and though the Highlanders could not retreat or move without drawing a storm of bullets, they no longer lost heavily. Like the British troops at the Modder River, they lay flat on the ground behind what cover they could find. Yet their trials were by no means at an end. To have to remain prostrate, motionless, without food or water for sixteen weary hours till twilight fell, under a tropical sun, in sight of their own wounded, to whom little or no help or comfort could be given, was a dismaying prospect for men who had already endured so much.

The battle was as good as lost, for one third of Lord Methuen's little army had been stricken down or so demoralised in the brief minutes of the night attack, that little could henceforth be expected of it. To assault the unbroken enemy in the full light of day was a course which could hold forth no promise of success, and which must have involved enormous losses. To withdraw the Highland Brigade was equally impossible. The only plan that could be followed was to bombard the enemy's position assiduously, holding the ground already won, in the hope that the Boers might here, as at Modder River, be cowed by British stubbornness and decide upon an eventual retreat. Lord Methuen reinforced the shaken Highlanders by two



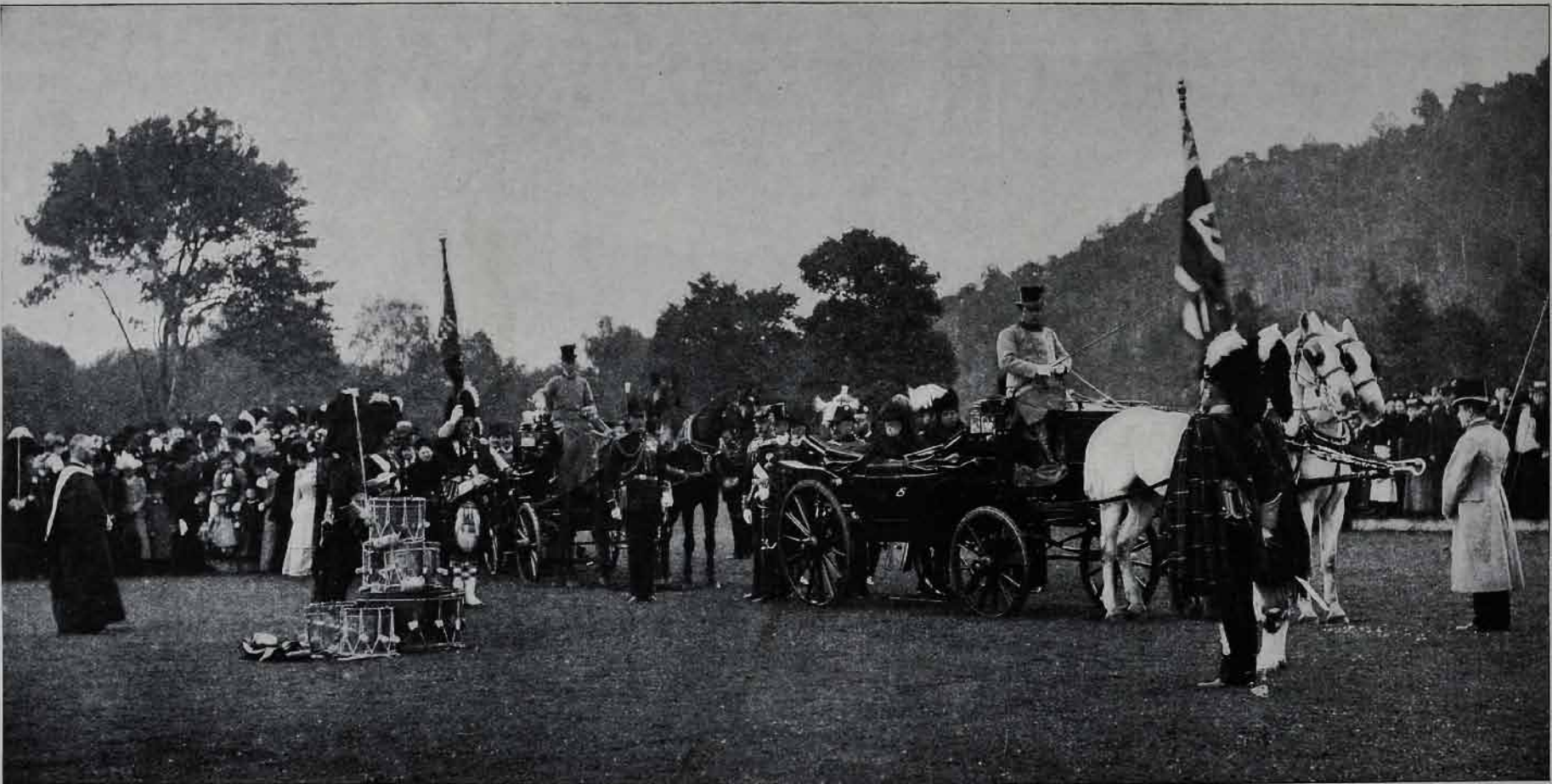
Frank Craig.

[After a photograph.]

PLACING THE BODY OF GENERAL WAUCHOPE IN THE TRAIN AT MAGERSFONTEIN.
General Wauchope was temporarily buried near his men at Magersfontein. His body was afterwards exhumed and carried by rail to Matjiesfontein, in Cape Colony, where it was buried with military honours in a beautiful cemetery four miles from the railway station. A picture of the start from Matjiesfontein station is given on page 172.

battalions of Coldstreams on the right; the two other Guards' battalions were held ready to give support, the Grenadiers on the right and the Scots Guards on the left. The 6th Lancers, the 12th Lancers, the mounted infantry, and G Battery of Horse Artillery pushed in on the extreme right and attempted a turning movement. They were at once very hotly engaged.

The three field batteries — 18th, 62nd, and 75th — which had so distinguished themselves at Modder River, here also proved the salvation of the British column. But for their devoted efforts and the superb conduct of G Horse Battery, the repulse might well have been converted into a complete disaster. The field guns opened at a range of about 2,000 yards, and, as the morning advanced, gallantly pushed forward to a point only 1,200 yards from the Boer trenches, where they were without cover and exposed to the enemy's rifle fire. G Battery had simultaneously closed in to 1,500 yards, and the big howitzers to something under 3,000. At first the



[Photo by Milne, Abovne.]

HER MAJESTY PRESENTING NEW COLOURS TO THE 2ND BATTALION SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS AT BALMORAL, September 29, 1899.

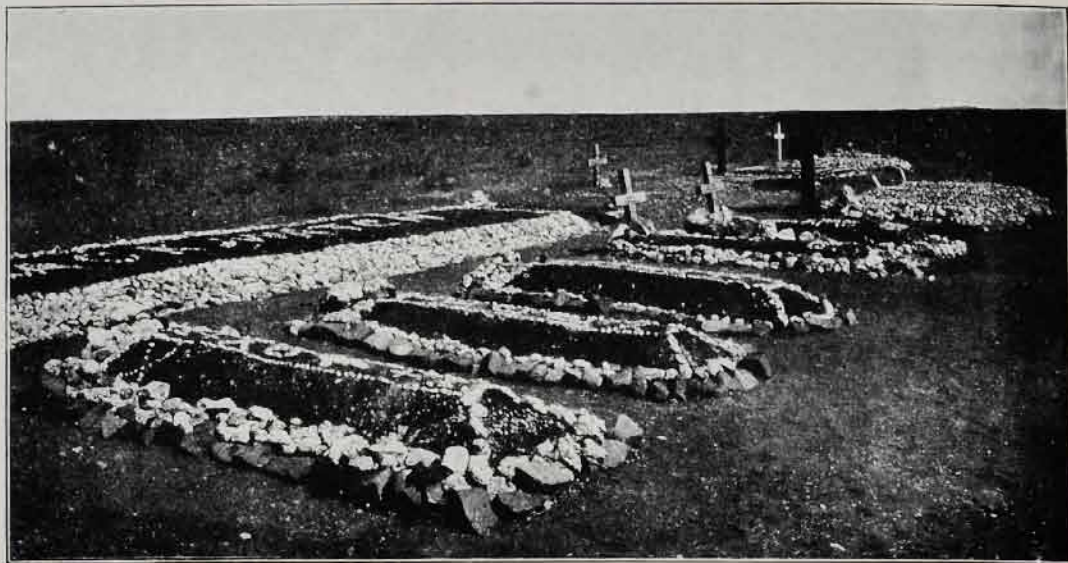
The 2nd Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders, which lost heavily at Magersfontein, had greatly distinguished itself in the Afghan War and the Chitral and Black Mountain Expeditions. Last September Her Majesty presented the battalion with new colours at Balmoral. The Queen, in doing so, said to Colonel Hughes-Hallett: "I rejoice to be able once more to present new colours to this distinguished regiment, in which I take an especial interest from its being associated with my dear son the Duke of Albany." The old colours are deposited for safe keeping at Balmoral. A week or two before Her Majesty had presented new colours to the Gordons.

Boer artillery seemed inclined to engage in a duel with the British guns, but after forty or fifty rounds it ceased its fire. Our weapons were left free to sweep the sides of the kopjes and the closely-lined but invisible trenches with shrapnel. It is not probable that they inflicted heavy losses; the enemy was much too well covered for that. But they absolutely prevented any counter attack during the critical hours of the morning; they shook the accuracy of the Boer fire; they gave Lord Methuen time to make fresh dispositions; and they cheered and encouraged the Highlanders in the fighting line by the sense of moral support which their furious racket caused.

The calm intrepidity of the gunners especially attracted the wonder and admiration of all on the battlefield, and, strange to say, despite their exposed position and proximity to the enemy, they suffered only the most insignificant losses. The horse artillery at first came in for a heavy shelling, but not a driver moved or dismounted. The sergeant-major walked coolly to and fro inspecting the formation and harness, as if he were on parade.

Over the battlefield hovered the great war balloon which had but recently arrived, and from the

car the movements of the enemy to the rear and on either side of the Magersfontein position could be at times discerned. A steady stream of reinforcements was made out coming from Spytfontein and the extreme right of the Boer lines, and there were signs that the enemy was, in his turn, preparing a flanking attack against the British right. Only the steadiness of the Guards and the accuracy of their fire foiled this purpose. To increase the pressure upon the enemy's centre, Lord Methuen about noon sent forward the Gordons to the help of the Highlanders. The Gordons had but recently arrived and had been held back, in consequence, to guard the supply train. They extended and pushed into the fight in separate half battalions, under a vigorous fire,



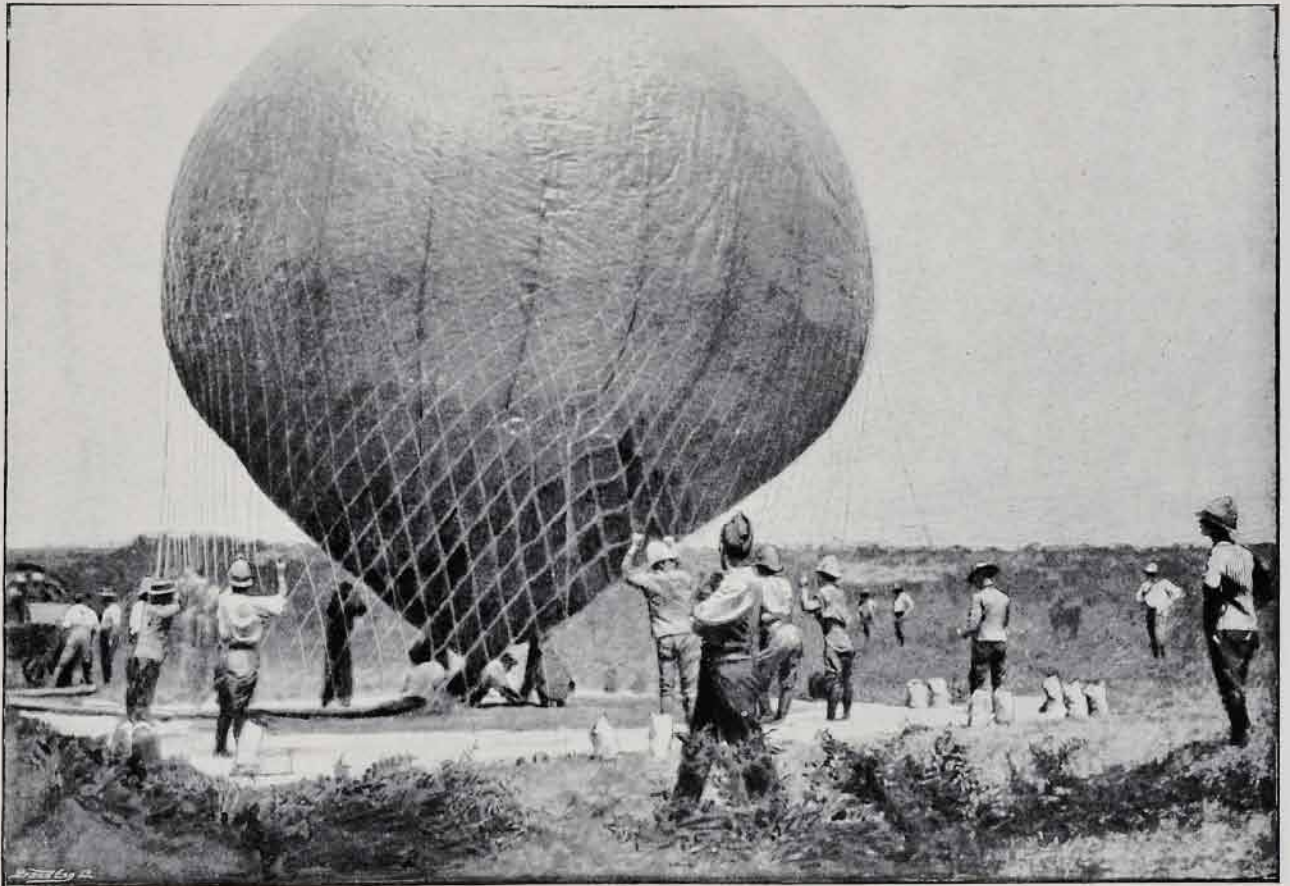
GRAVES OF THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE AT MAGERSEFONTEIN.
The long grave on the left is that of the Black Watch. In front, the single graves of officers killed at the battles of Magersfontein and Spytfontein. General Wainhope was originally buried here (see note to illustration on page 188).



BOER PRISONERS AT MODDER RIVER.

The wounded of the Highlanders, lying close to the Boer trenches, were able to see a good deal of the enemy's movements. One of the Boers, a German in appearance, attracted great attention. Faultlessly dressed, with patent leather boots, and a cigar in his mouth, he was seen walking among the ant hills, alternately using field glasses and rifle, and picking off the British officers. The volleys and individual fire of our men failed to bring him down. He seemed to bear a charmed life.

Here again, as at Modder River, as the sun rose higher and higher and the heat grew intense, the men suffered agonies of thirst. The water bottles had long since been emptied. "The troops," wrote a Black Watch private, "were dying for want of food and water. The sun had risen about eight o'clock, and we lay there getting our legs burned and blistered—frightened to move, as the bullets were flying all around." Great, however, as were the torments of the whole and uninjured, even more terrible were those of the wounded lying out at the very front, close to the Boer trenches,



FILLING THE WAR BALLOON.

and far beyond the reach of aid from the stretcher companies and ambulances. Yet the restraint of the stricken men was wonderful. The wounded, says Mr. Ralph, did not writhe or groan. Only one or two dying men cried for the doctor or begged to be killed. Others exclaimed in a low voice, "Oh, dear, dear, dear!" All wanted water and cigarettes. They accepted their lot with a sad and noble resignation. Many had been hit with expanding bullets, which, in defiance of the conventions of war, the Boers only too often employed. These described the sensation thus: "You feel," they said, "exactly as if you had received a powerful shock from an electric battery, and then comes a blow as if your foot (or arm, or whatever part it might be), was crushed by a tremendous mallet." The Mauser bullets, where they did not hit the bone, merely produced a stinging, burning sensation.

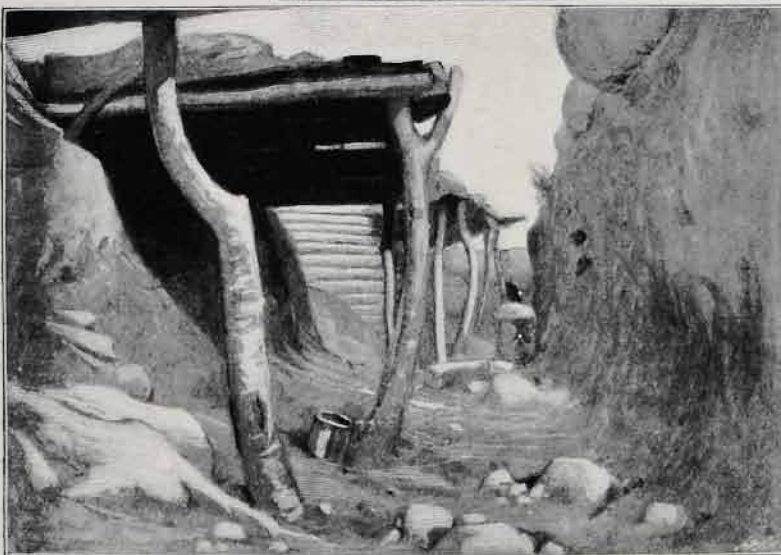
Many gallant efforts were made by the medical officers and others to succour the wounded. Lieutenant Douglas, of the Black Watch, under a tremendous fire, advanced and attended to Captain Gordon, who was badly wounded, and to others of the Gordons. Band-Sergeant Hoare, of the

Seaforths, was equally conspicuous for his coolness and daring. He, unaided, carried a wounded officer on his back 800 yards to the rear. Here, as elsewhere, the stretcher bearers distinguished themselves by their calm disregard of death. Among the many noble deeds of this terrible day, that of Major Lambton, of the Coldstreams, deserves to be

Heroism on the field.

recorded. He refused to allow the bearers to carry him, when wounded, off the field, because this would have drawn upon them a heavy fire and would have imperilled their lives. In consequence, he was left upon the ground thirty-seven hours without food or water.

Meantime, the Gordons and the Guards were gaining ground considerably; the Guards even got near enough to catch a sight of the enemy in their trenches now and then, and to observe that from time to time they refreshed themselves from the gin bottles, which were always found



A SHELTER-TRENCH AT MAGERSFONTEIN.

TRENCHES AT MAGERSFONTEIN
From which the Highland Brigade were shot down. From a photograph taken after their evacuation by the Boers.

in great plenty in the captured Boer positions. Soon after one, Lord Methuen sent orders to the Highlanders to hold their position till nightfall, when the Guards and the Gordons were to assault the trenches at the point of the bayonet. The difficulty of sending instructions to the fighting line upon the modern battle-

field is shown by the fact that Lieutenant Cuthbert, the bearer of Lord Methuen's message, received a volley from the Boers, which killed his horse and riddled his accoutrements, fortunately without touching him. The order had been given in the teeth of the vigorous protests of one of the Guards' Colonels, who pointed out to Lord Methuen the hopelessness of undertaking such an enterprise with weary, hungry men, and without any adequate support. It was not that he or his men were afraid, but that one brigade had already been shattered, so that the virtual destruction of another must mean the complete ruin of the column—perhaps even its envelopment at Modder River camp, with the most disastrous consequences. Were

Protest against Lord Methuen's orders.



(Photo by Russell)

THE MARQUIS OF WINCHESTER.
The premier Marquis of England, killed at
Magersfontein.

Magersfontein taken, the second Boer position remained to be dealt with. Thus there was nothing to be gained by adopting the desperate course of imperilling the safety of the whole division upon another night assault.

And now the continual crackle of the rifle fire, which had somewhat abated for the last two hours, suddenly swelled in volume. Away in the front rose dense clouds of dust as from the march of a large body of men. At first it was thought that the movement proceeded from the Boers; but the painful truth was soon revealed. The Highland Brigade had given way once more. Threatened with a flank attack by the enemy, under a heavy cross fire, the shaken, thirst-tortured infantry could hold its ground no longer. Colonel Hughes-Hallett, whom the death of his senior officers had left in command, saw the plight of his men and gave the order to retire. "Back they came," says the *Morning Post* correspondent, "in a wave that no officer could stop. From a point of vantage on the Horse Artillery hill one could see them swarming like bees over the veldt till they

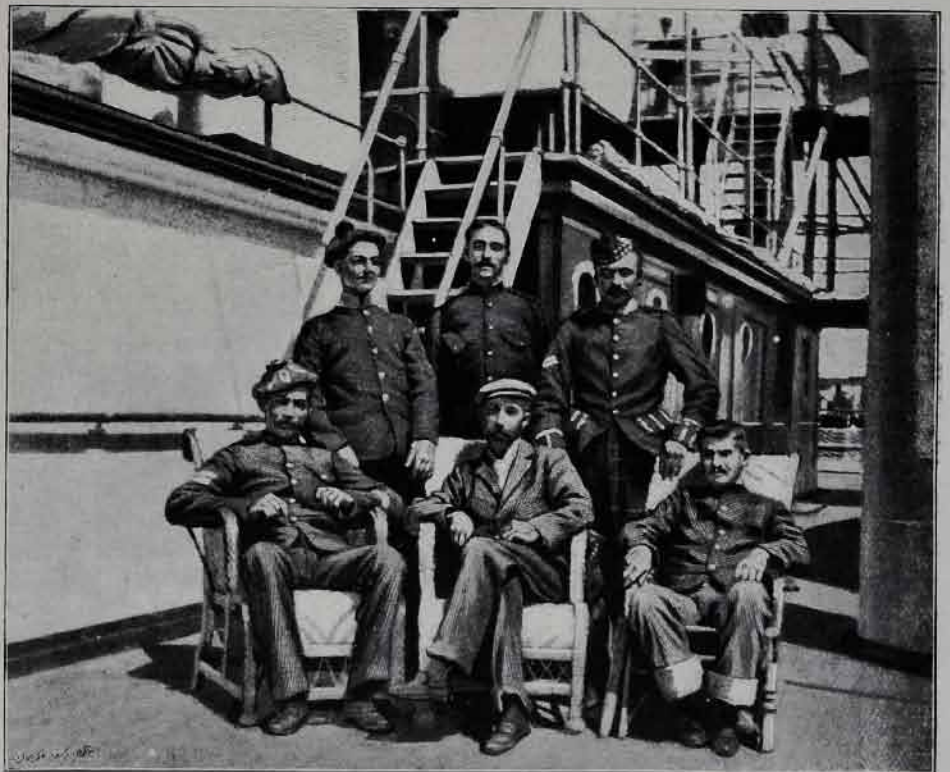
were almost out of range, and the guns were left out in the open with no one to support them. It was, perhaps, the most unpleasant sight that a British soldier of to-day has ever beheld."

Colonel Hughes-Hallett's intention was only to fall back a short distance and not thus to leave the guns exposed; but

Artillery cover the dis-
Highlanders' heartened
retreat. men were

difficult to control. As the Highlanders fell back, the Boer fire became furiously rapid, and only the tempests of shrapnel from the British field guns prevented the casualties from mounting to enormous figures. Some of our guns actually got off not less than two rounds apiece in the minute. Yet, in spite of this all-important aid, the Highlanders suffered severely and had many casualties. The Gordons were left in an exposed position when the Highlanders fell back, and many of them were carried away in the retirement and thus were involved in the confusion. A few, however, stubbornly held their ground and rendered inestimable service.

Their commanding officer, Colonel Downman, was mortally wounded, and was gallantly carried by Captain Towse towards the rear.



"BACK FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH."

This group of men represents as marvellous a series of escapes from death as can well be imagined. The man sitting on the left of the picture, Corporal Williams, was wounded by a Mauser bullet, which entered beneath the left eye, passed through the palate and mouth, and out at the root of the neck. Standing by him is Private Aitchison (A. & S. Highlanders), shot through the forehead an inch above the brow, the bullet passing clean through the head. Next to him is Private Carr (R.H.A.), shot in the middle of the neck, the ball passing through the mouth, concussing the spine. Standing on the right of the picture is Corporal McKenzie; in his case the bullet entered the left armpit, passed through the lung, and emerged just below the heart; he was shot again in the abdomen, the bullet emerging on the left side of the heart. Sitting on the right is Private Roughon (1st Border Regiment), shot through the nose and left temple, the bullet passing through the skull and out at the back of the head. All are perfectly recovered except Private Carr, who experiences some loss of power in the right arm. In the centre is Surgeon Harris, who took charge of these convalescents on board the *Umbara* which brought them home.

The retreat of the Highlanders left the artillery in a position of the extremest peril. A single bold dash on the part of the Boers, and the guns, it seemed to many, must have been lost. They

Incidents were now far in advance of the infantry line and quite without support. Yet the Boers would not venture out of their trenches and trust themselves upon the open ground, and so the opportunity was lost. Only the small Scandinavian contingent, seventy men strong, pushed boldly forward and seized a kopje on the right. But here it was steadily received by the Guards; a murderous rifle fire was poured into it, and of its seventy men, but fourteen escaped unhurt and were taken prisoners. The others were killed or wounded by the rifle fire and shrapnel.



SOLDIERS ON THE VELDT AS SEEN FROM THE WAR BALLOON.

At this moment a corporal of the Seaforths, who had been taken prisoner, disarmed, and placed in one of the advanced Boer trenches, under guard of an armed man, escaped. He snatched up his bayonet, attacked the Boer, and disarmed him in return, carrying off his Mauser and bandolier. With these trophies he safely regained his comrades.

To protect the guns, the Scots Guards were sent forward, and vigorous efforts were made to rally the shaken Highlanders. Major Ewart rode up with a message from Lord Methuen that all he asked was for the men to hold their ground till nightfall. Staff officers, officers, sergeants, and corporals set a fine example, reminding the heart-broken *débris* of what had been the day before the best fighting brigade in the British Army, of the call of duty and honour. The pipers wailed sorrowfully in their effort to stir the men by the sound of the martial notes to which they had often marched to glory. Major Milton, though he had received three bullets and was mortally wounded, was among those who distinguished themselves in the effort to encourage the Highlanders. "Men," he said, "you are not conquered, but repulsed." And it is to the credit of the men that, after the fearful surprise of the night attack, after the long ordeal of the terrible morning, they rallied once more, once more went back to face death and torture, and took ground close to the guns, where with difficulty they found some shelter from the bullets of the Boers. "Whoever," says a German officer, writing of Mars-la-Tour, "has been in so murderous a conflict as this will know what moral force, what confidence in one's own efficiency are requisite for such conduct at a time when nothing remains of a brigade but paper numbers. This force of will is needed in an army that is determined to conquer."

Throughout these tragical events, as in the earlier part of the day, the conduct of the artillery had been beyond all praise. Exposed to every shot the gunners stood firm, even when the troops before them were melting away under the trials of battle. Their magnificent behaviour saved the British Army from a great disaster, for, had they wavered, had they even relented their impetuous fire, Lord Methuen's force must have been riven in two. Magnificent, too, was the conduct of the Coldstreams. They, also, stood like a rock in the rout, though their position was one of great danger. It was at this time that Major the Marquis of Winchester fell dead, "displaying an almost reckless courage." But a few days before, not far from the very spot on which he died, he had jestingly spoken of his rumoured fall in the battle of the Modder River. And now death had claimed him. Throughout the day he had insisted upon walking to and fro along the firing line, instructing the men as to where they were to aim their fire. Bullets rained around him; several passed through his helmet and his clothes, but he seemed to bear a charmed life. The fatal shot pierced his spine.

The fight still grew in fierceness and intensity, though the second crisis had passed when the

Boers failed to take advantage of the confusion of the Highlanders. Away on the left, General Pole-Carew, with the greater part of the Ninth Brigade, was demonstrating along the railway line and feeling the enemy's right to discover if it could be turned, as had been done at Modder River. But these efforts were unsuccessful; the line of entrenchments continued interminably far to the west, and was clearly held by the enemy in sufficient force to render an assault hopeless. Away on the right, the Boers seemed to be developing an attack and could be seen from the balloon concentrating for an advance. Hereabouts there was a considerable gap in the British line between the Grenadiers, on the right of the Coldstreams, and some companies of Yorkshire Light Infantry, who held a drift across the Modder and who were supporting the two Lancer regiments and the mounted infantry. The Yorkshiremen, however, met and defeated the Boer effort. With trivial loss they stormed a ridge held by the enemy, close to the river, and repulsed the counterstroke with a coolness and valour for which they received well-merited praise from Lord Methuen. In this brisk encounter they fired no less than



Edward Reak]

ESCAPE OF A CAPTURED CORPORAL OF THE SEAFORTHS.

22,000 rounds. The Yorkshire Mounted Infantry had already begun to bring in the wounded on this flank and were far away from support when they were vigorously attacked by the Boers. Here Sergeant Casson, Lance-Corporal Bennett, and Private Mawhood did fine service, kneeling down in the open and by a steady and continuous fire checking the enemy. The Lancers' Maxims, too, were invaluable.

The afternoon was now declining, and it was evident to all, except to a few who took the Boer movement towards the British right for a retreat, that the battle was lost beyond hope. But the Guards would none the less have been sent in at dusk had not a fresh misfortune come as a blessing in disguise. Suddenly, after a prolonged silence since the early morning, the Boer artillery began to fire shell and shrapnel at the British guns. Just behind these guns were placed the sad remnants of the Highlanders—a dispirited mass of men in close order. One or two projectiles came shrieking amongst them, whereupon, suddenly and as if at the word of command, the men of the brigade once more precipitately retired, turning their backs upon the enemy and pouring in complete disorder past Lord Methuen's flag. This was the crowning touch—the culminating disaster. There now remained no troops whatever to support the Guards; for the Ninth Brigade would be needed to guard the flanks and the camp.

Lord Methuen now determined to cling stubbornly to his position, in the hope that here, as at Modder River, the enemy might retire during the night. Accordingly, though the infantry and artillery fell back from the most advanced positions, there was no general retreat. The whole force bivouacked on the field. The night, like its predecessor, was bitterly cold. It was again impossible to remove the wounded from the ground before the Boer trenches. Only a very few had been brought in by the devoted efforts of the medical staff and the stretcher bearers. The others had to spend a cruel night, tortured by cold,



CORPORAL MCKAY, OF THE ARGYLL AND SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS, PLAYING TO RALLY HIS FUGITIVE COMRADES.



MAJOR-GENERAL HECTOR MACDONALD, C.B., D.S.O.

[Photo by Lafayette.]

Served in the Afghan War of 1879-80; accompanied Sir F. (now Lord) Roberts on his march to Cabul, and was present at the battle of Kandahar; served in the Boer War of 1881; at Majuba his bravery won his life at the hands of the enemy; he was Garrison-Adjutant at Assiout (Upper Egypt) in 1883, and was in the Sudan during the operations of 1888-91. In 1886 he took command of the 2nd Infantry Brigade under Sir H. (now Lord) Kitchener, and in 1897-8 commanded Egyptian brigades, being present at the battles of the Atbara and of Khartoum. He was appointed an aide-de-camp to the Queen in 1898. While acting as Brigadier-General commanding at Umballa (India), he was summoned to take command of the Highland Brigade, under Lord Methuen, in succession to General Wauchope. The appointment of "Fighting Mac," as he is called, was hailed with satisfaction by the Brigade.

after the sufferings caused by the fierce heat of the day. Many officers and men were twenty, thirty, even thirty-six hours upon the ground, without food or water and with wounds undressed. Further to the rear the wounded were carefully attended to and sent back to camp during the night.

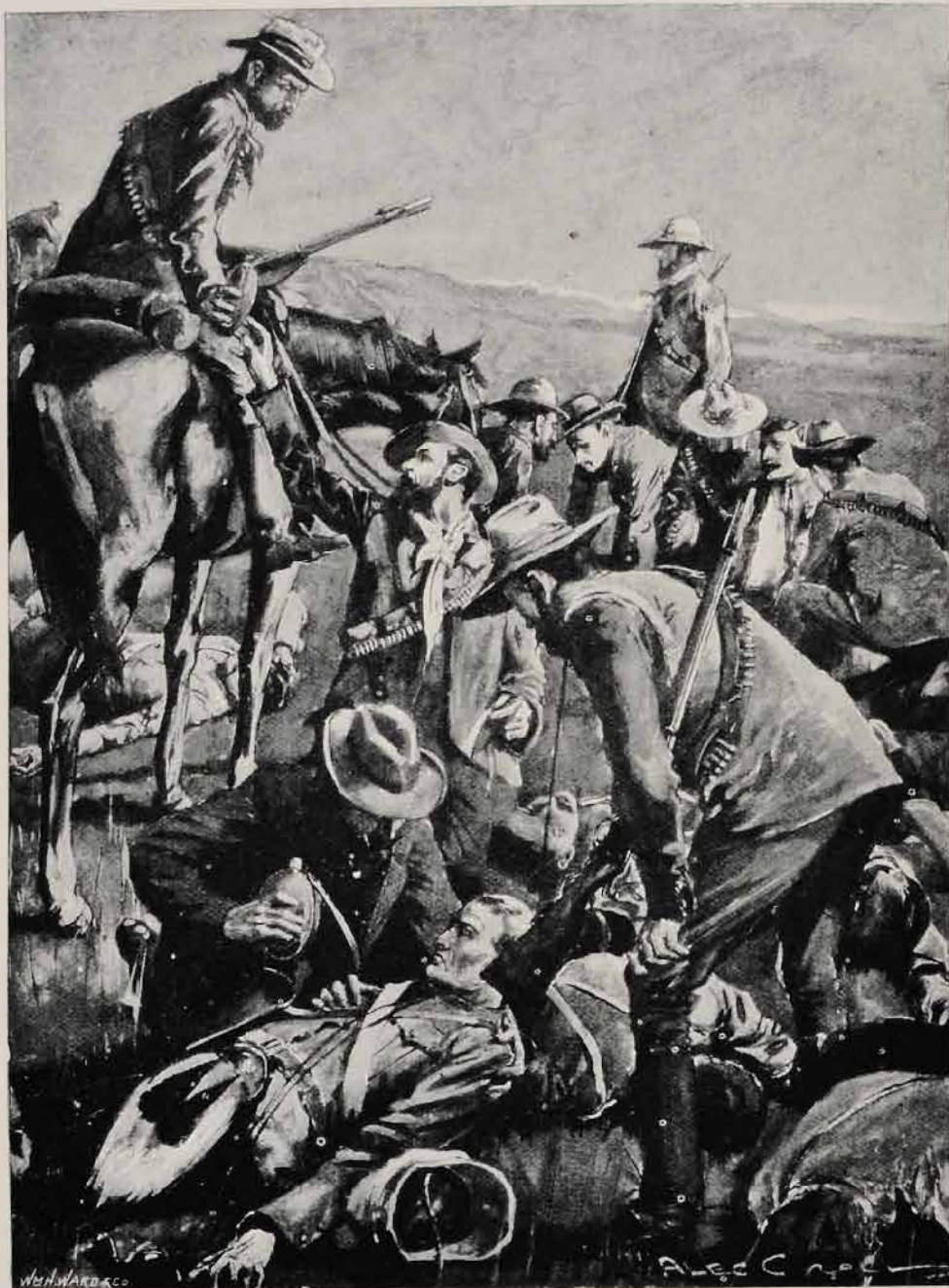
With day, the artillery recommenced its fire. The men of the Guards during the night had entrenched their position and were in good spirits, ready even for an assault upon the Boer lines in broad daylight. Meantime, Lord Methuen scrutinised the Boer trenches and received the reports of

his Intelligence Department. Everything showed that the enemy still held their position. General Colville was for continuing the battle, to wear the Boers down, but the other officers were all for a retirement, and it was evident that what the whole force could not effect upon December 11, was out of the question for it on the 12th, with quite one third its strength for all practical purposes eliminated. During

**British retirement
to Modder River.**

the night the supply train had fallen back to the old camp, and now a general retirement was ordered. The moment the Boers observed that the British force was retreating, they opened a hot fire from all their guns. But the range was long and the effects of the fire insignificant; it did not shake or demoralise the British infantry, who slowly and steadily, as if on parade, marched back the three miles to Modder River camp, defeated but not disgraced.

Very early in the morning, a flag of truce had



W. H. W. & Co.
Alice Ball.]

BOERS TENDING THE BRITISH WOUNDED AT MAGERSFONTEIN.

come in from the Boers requesting Lord Methuen to remove the British wounded who were lying close to the trenches, in the most urgent need of medical help. The motive of this message was kindly and humane, and it should be said that the enemy had treated the Highlanders with tenderness, giving them food and water and roughly bandaging their wounds. The ambulances at once pushed in, drivers and stretcher-bearers being blindfolded by the Boers, who streamed out of their trenches to watch the operations. "They were," says Mr. Ralph, "courteous, helpful, and respectful. By not one word did they give offence." Yet two regrettable incidents occurred. The first was that one of

the ambulance men was found to have a revolver, and was seized and made prisoner by the Boers, despite his explanations and expostulations. The other was that the naval 47 opened fire suddenly upon the trenches. The officer in charge was unaware of the flag of truce, and saw, as he supposed, the Boers issuing for an attack upon our men. Fortunately, his shots had no effect and soon ceased, but the Boers were so incensed at what they considered treachery, that they opened a hot fire upon the Horse Artillery near them. The Horse Artillery made no reply, and, seeing this, the Boers also ceased fire.

Thus the battle had been fought and had issued in a complete check to Lord Methuen's division. The Highland Brigade had temporarily ceased to exist as a fighting force; its shaken and demoralised soldiers needed to be strengthened by rest and drafts of fresh men before they could again be sent into action. "I do not hesitate to admit that for months after Mars-la-Tour," says a German officer, who had passed through an ordeal as terrible as

British losses.



F. J. Waugh.

REMOVING THE WOUNDED, BLINDFOLD.

The British stretcher-bearers, during the truce at Magersfontein, were not allowed to see the Boer defences; they were led along the lines blindfold.

that to which the Highland Brigade was subjected, "the effects of the fire remained on my nerves. Troops that have to undergo anything of the kind are demoralised for a long time—not only rank and file, but officers as well." The subtle force known as *morale*, which is the mark of the good soldier, had been exhausted by the nervous strain of that night and day of continuous fighting.

The losses of the Brigade were, in detail, as follows, according to Mr. Ralph:—

	Killed.	Wounded	Missing and Prisoners.	Total.
Staff	1	2	0	3
2nd Black Watch	73	208	73	354
2nd Seaforths	48	141	8	197
1st Highland Light Infantry	15	77	3	95
1st Argyll and Sutherlands	26	61	19	106
	<u>163</u>	<u>489</u>	<u>103</u>	<u>755</u>

within measurable distance. A second attack met the same fate. The bravery of the English was wonderful against the hail of Mauser bullets that met them. About this time the corps of Scandinavians, who had a great record for reckless courage, charged. They were cut off on a scrub-covered kopje, and lost several killed and wounded and many were taken prisoners. In the afternoon all the British reserves were brought into the attack, which was delivered with sublime courage. The plains north of the Modder River were black with the forces deployed for the charge. But no courage could break through the Boer defences, and late in the day the British retreated to the Modder River, leaving the ground covered with their dead and dying.

"Exclusive of the losses suffered by the Scandinavians, of whom eighteen were killed and forty-three wounded and taken prisoners, the Boer loss was insignificant. The English loss in killed and wounded is calculated to be 2,000. Prisoners we have taken say that the Black Watch was quite cut up."

"But I shall never forgive myself, nor would you if you had seen the poor British mowed down at Magersfontein," wrote an English traitor present



A WOUNDED HIGHLANDER ON THE BATTLEFIELD AT MAGERSFONTEIN.



F. J. Waugh.

CHECKING A FLANKING MOVEMENT.

Lieut. Riley, of the Yorkshire Light Infantry, with a sergeant and two or three privates, made a desperate stand on the extreme right of the British position at Magersfontein, with the object of rescuing a wounded comrade. It afterwards turned out that by this gallant conduct they had contributed materially to the foiling of the Boer attempt to outflank the British.

with the Free State forces, to his father. "But not a man did I fire at. That I made up my mind not to do. . . . You should see our entrenchments, for we burrow under the ground, and never get hit. Millions of pounds must have been shot away by the English gunners, and you, father, will have to pay for all the waste. It made me laugh to see the firing hour after hour and not one of our men hit. The English all start their engagements like that. They fire two days, and as they always follow the same childish plan we know they will not attack until after a day or two's bombardment. Then we come out of our burrows and simply shoot them down like deer. But I have not stained myself with English blood, and don't mean to. . . . It makes me proud of my fellow countrymen, and the good-class Boers regret having to kill such plucky fellows as they come along to their death. Like the Battle of Balaclava, it is not war, but it is magnificent. Poor chaps; I am sure they can never see us. One whole day of hard fighting we never showed ourselves, and I see by the papers that hundreds of English were killed, and especially the Scotsmen. Our loss was trifling. You cannot hit men with rocks protecting them all round, and who are underground when the cannons fire."



MANNING A FORT AT MODDER RIVER.

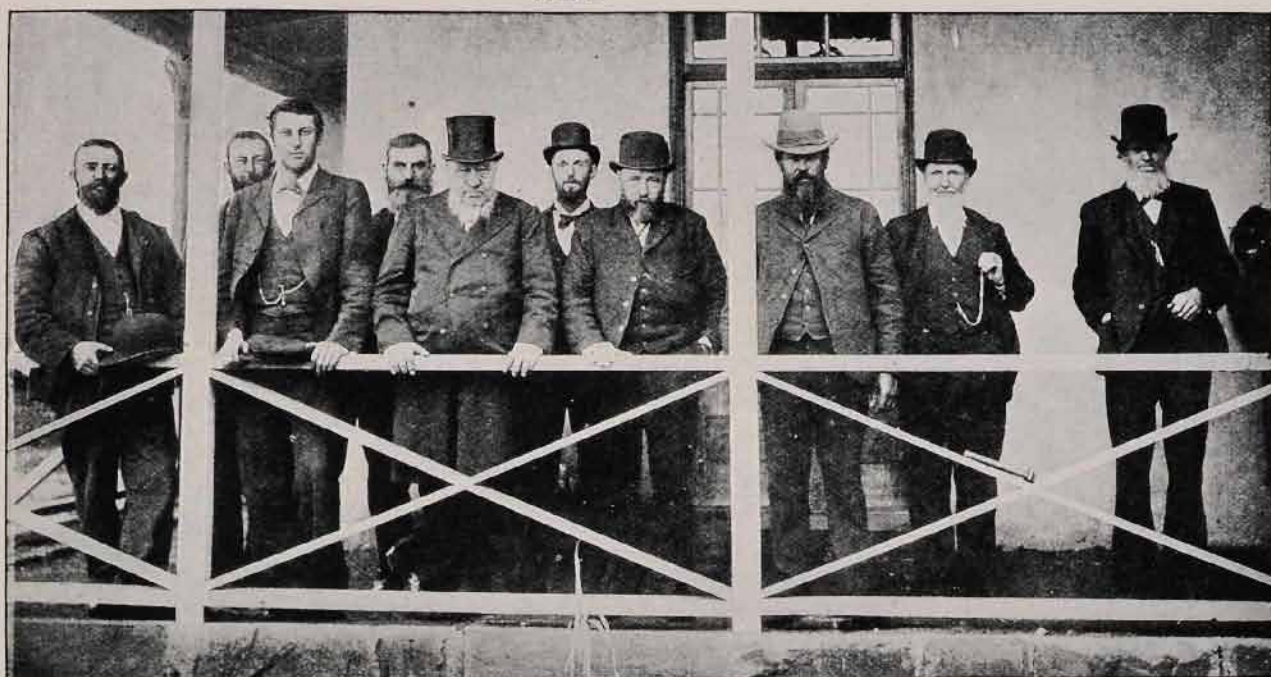
One of the many defensive works thrown up by Lord Methuen after the battle of Modder River.

"Nothing," says Lord Methuen, in his official despatch, "could exceed the conduct of the troops from the time of the failure of the attack at daybreak. There was not the slightest confusion, though the fight was carried on under as hard conditions as one could imagine, for the men had been on the move from midnight and were suffering terribly from thirst. . . . The attack failed; the inclement weather was against success; the men in the Highland Brigade were ready enough to rally, but the paucity of officers and non-commissioned officers rendered this no easy matter. I attach no blame to this splendid Brigade."

In the camp the battle gave rise to much indignant comment upon the manner and disposition of the night attack. It was pointed out that such attacks are exceptionally perilous when made upon a vigilant, well-armed enemy, behind trenches and entanglements. It was asserted that every precaution required by the rules of military science had been disregarded; the ground had not been accurately and carefully reconnoitred; the exact location of the Boer trenches had not been ascertained. The march in close order up to the enemy's position

Criticism of Lord Methuen's tactics.

Venter. Veld-Cornet Coetzee. Vrederechter Coetzee.



Eyn DeKock (Landdrost). Erasmus (Sec. to President). Kruger. Cronje. Veld-Cornet Tante. Rev. Coetzee (Dopper Minister). Lessing.

PRESIDENT KRUGER AND SOME OF HIS SUPPORTERS.

This photograph, although not of recent date, is interesting because it includes, besides the President, several men whose names have become familiar during the war.

was, indeed, defended by some as being both the natural formation for such a movement by night and the formation sanctioned by the drill book. But the experience of Lord Methuen's brief campaign had at least shown that open order could be used on a fairly fine night, and if the terrible weather of the night of December 10-11 rendered a night march impracticable, it was said that the attempt ought to have been postponed to some more favourable opportunity. The strongly-held opinion was that General Wauchope, an officer famous for his carefulness and attention to detail, had religiously carried out his instructions. But the official despatch clearly proves him to have deployed long after the hour which had been fixed in conversation with Lord Methuen.

Shortly after the battle Lord Methuen made a somewhat infelicitous speech. Addressing the men of the Highland Brigade, he sympathised with them over the heavy losses they had sustained. "The advance," he said, "was executed exactly to the time and place that I had given orders for, and we were within an ace of carrying the position in a short and decisive engagement. Everything depended upon one word; that word was 'Forward!'" No doubt there was this much in what he said, that had the Highlanders dashed at the trenches when they received the first fatal volley, they would have captured the position. But the General must be a judge of human nature and must know exactly what he can expect of his troops. The Highland Brigade was not composed of automata, and a strain had been imposed upon the nerves of the men which it was quite beyond their power to resist.



(Photo by Staff-Sergt. Ryan.)

MATCHES AT A PREMIUM.

An orderly of the R.A.M.C. using a burning-glass to light his pipe.

Among the few Boer prisoners taken in this engagement was a double-dyed traitor and thief named Greener. This man, a Sergeant-Major of the Royal Engineers, had been detected in wholesale theft at Aldershot. Deserting the colours and betraying the country which had given him birth, he fled to South Africa and took service with the Boers. So far as we can discover, the extraordinary leniency of the British suffered this rogue to retain his life. By any other nation he would have been summarily executed under the orders of a drum-head court martial.

After the action the chaplain of the Highland Brigade gave the dead Highlanders the solemn rites of Christian burial. He went to and fro among the enemy, who received him with an honourable regard when he came to inquire after the wounded and missing. "He told me," says Mr. Ralph, "that there were Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen among them, as well as the mercenary Germans and Scandinavians, serving for a gold krüger a day—which is to say, a pound sterling Dutch. . . . Everybody was courteous." And though they blindfolded the bearers and ambulance men, they did not fear his presence, open eyed, in their midst, nor did they put him under oath as to what he might reveal or hide. Their confidence, it need scarcely be said, was in no way abused.

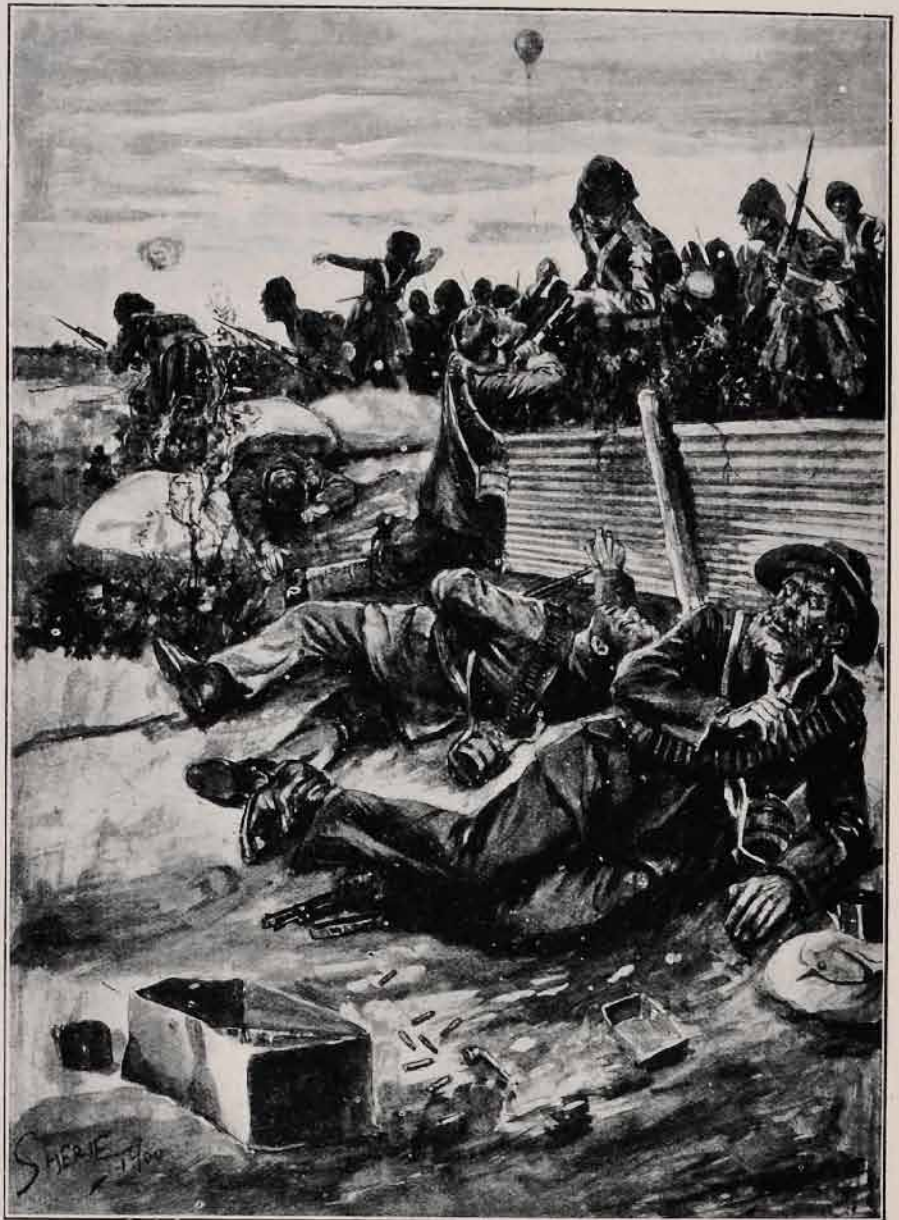
With the men he had so valiantly led was buried the fallen

**Burial of General
Wauchope.**

General. The piper wailed
"Lochaber

no more" as they bore him and his stubborn countrymen from the battlefield to the fast-growing burial ground near Modder River town, where lie the bravest of the brave. "There," says the *Daily News* correspondent, "moved with slow and solemn tread all that remained of the Highland Brigade. In front of them walked the chaplain with bared head, dressed in his robes of office; then came the pipers with their

pipes, sixteen in all, and behind them, with arms reversed, moved the Highlanders, dressed in all the regalia of their regiments, and in the midst the dead General borne by four of his comrades." The sad impressiveness of the funeral service was deepened by the circumstance that away to the north stood the defiant enemy—that round the grave were gathered, in battle-torn uniforms, the men who had faced the storm of bullets and borne the brunt of the fatal assault, only to win the bitterness of defeat. The bright hopes with which they had set out had been shattered and, it might be said, were buried in this grave with the fallen General. Man had proposed; God had disposed.



(After a Sketch by Mr. Fred Villiers.)

A BOER TRENCH CAPTURED BY THE BRITISH AT MAGERSFONTEIN.
This trench, which was in an advanced position, was stormed and captured by the Highlanders. All its defenders, forty-seven in number, fell to their bayonets.



CAPETOWN HIGHLANDERS.

General Sir F. W. E. Forestier-Walker, commanding lines of communication, inspecting Volunteers on Green Point Common; Capetown Highlanders marching past.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NATION UNDER DEFEAT.

Critical position of Great Britain—Her prestige in danger—Crass ignorance of military affairs—German system—Responsibility of Statesmen and Generals—Government unprepared—Necessity of reorganisation—Former national crises—Measures taken for defence—Change of Generals—Lord Roberts' military career—Lord Kitchener in the Sudan—Embarkation for South Africa—General Hector Macdonald—Offers of the Colonies—Australian and Canadian contingents—Mr. Sedden's loyal speech—Volunteers from Asiatic dependencies—London's contribution—Imperial Yeomanry—Gloomy outlook.



THUS three times within the space of a single week had the British columns marched forth to defeat. The Army Corps, the much-trusted Generals, had gone out to South Africa, and yet there was nothing of that irresistible tide of success which, it was fondly hoped, would sweep away the Boer oligarchy. The results of the week's

battles were 2,600 British soldiers dead, wounded, or in the enemy's hands, and complete checkmate in every field of the war. Kimberley, Mafeking, and Ladysmith

had not been relieved; far from it, the forces which were to have achieved this eagerly desired result were themselves, it seemed, in grave danger. Lord Methuen might at any time be cut off from his base; General Gatacre might be driven back to the sea; even General Buller, with 20,000 British troops on the line of the Tugela, might be in peril, if only the Boers were equal to their opportunities. And dangers even more terrible than these loomed upon the stormy horizon. How if the Cape burst into rebellion and the Dutch there threw in their lot with their victorious kinsmen? How if our enemies of the Continent seized upon the occasion to overthrow the Empire? Nowhere had Britain a friend. France, Russia, and Germany were equally outspoken in bitter and contemptuous criticism. Not the Governments, but the nations of the Continent hated and envied us in equal degree, and if only the signal for attack had been given, would have rushed upon us with malignant ardour. But the Governments, though they bore us no goodwill, waited and hesitated. Much depended upon Russia, and the Czar, the young Nicholas, played a part at this juncture which the British nation will remember with gratitude. He set his face firmly against any treacherous attack. He restrained his war party and declined to profit by our troubles. He may have felt that war with England would



S. Begg.)

(By permission of the "Illustrated London News," from the large photograph published by them.

HER MAJESTY RECEIVING NEWS FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

have brought our one friend, Japan, into the field with consequences not altogether pleasant for Russia, but none the less we may honour him for his chivalrous attitude.

And the most grievous feature of our defeats was that they were inflicted by a people numerically weak, without an army in the true sense;—by a number of peasants and farmers, upon the very flower of the British Army. The strongest, the best appointed, and, it was hoped, the best led force that had ever left our shores, equipped with all the contrivances of modern war, with field telegraphs, war balloons, howitzers, naval guns, and lyddite shells, had failed. It had failed completely—almost beyond repair—and it could place to its credit not a single great success. One or two battles in which we had gained the day, with heavy loss and without inflicting proportionate damage upon the enemy, had, indeed, been paraded as glorious victories, but their very insignificance, in relation to the task to be accomplished, was a sad commentary upon the depths to which we had fallen. It was not that the British soldier had failed in courage. That “last validity of noble veins” he still retained. Upon every field of the war his demeanour had compelled the



F. J. Waugh.

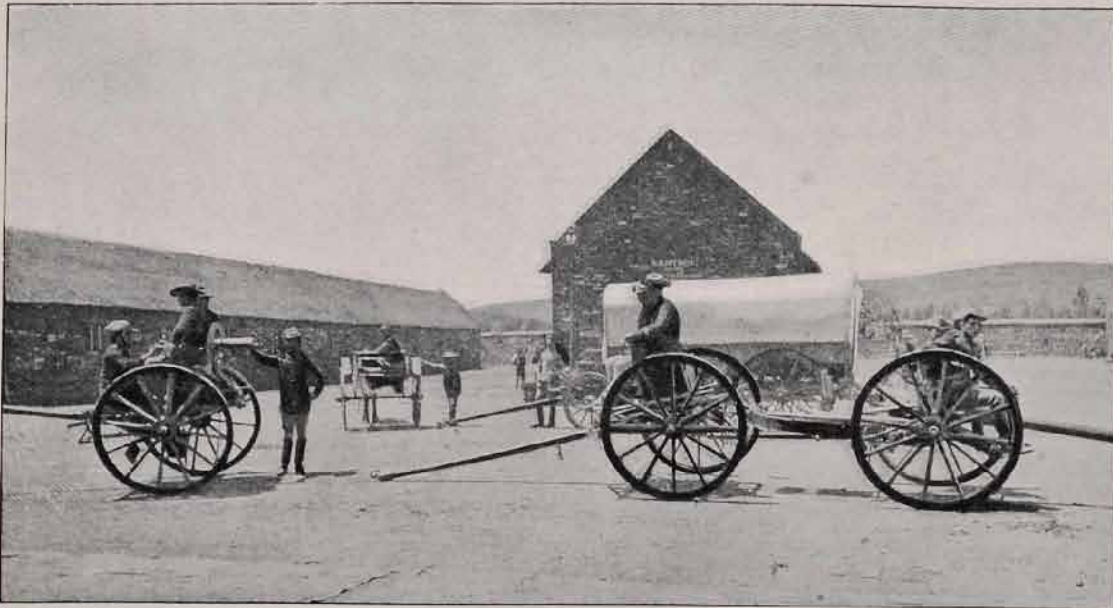
WHY THE BOERS WERE ABLE TO HOLD US IN CHECK.

It is clear now that the earlier victories of the Boers were largely due to their prudent habit of keeping out of sight.

enemy's admiration. Our military annals, splendid though these are, contain nothing finer than the advance of the Dublin Fusiliers at Colenso, of the Guards at Belmont, and of the Marines at Enslin, or the conduct of General Pole-Carew and his devoted band in the anxious hours when the Modder River fight swayed to and fro and the balance inclined against us. And yet, though hundreds of brave men now lay festering in the sun or in their shallow graves on the far-off veldt, and hundreds more filled those homes of silent agony, the hospitals, nothing had been accomplished. The fame of the Army, the prestige of the nation, the very existence of the Empire, were in grievous peril.

Thus in a few short days had the British people been brought face to face with the tragic realities of war. The scales fell from all eyes; it was clear to every man that this was a struggle for life or death, a struggle in which defeat must mean the loss of South Africa and the shaking of the British Empire to its very foundations, and in which victory at the best could never regain for us what we had forfeited—our reputation before the world. Not yet did the nation know, or it might well have shivered, the hesitation, the doubts, the ignorance of the true meaning of events which

marked its leading men. Not yet did it fully comprehend the grave defects which had characterised



TWO OF THE GUNS CAPTURED FROM DR. JAMESON IN A FORT AT PRETORIA.

The photograph is almost the only one which has been taken within any of these forts. Observe the loop-holed wall beyond the sheds

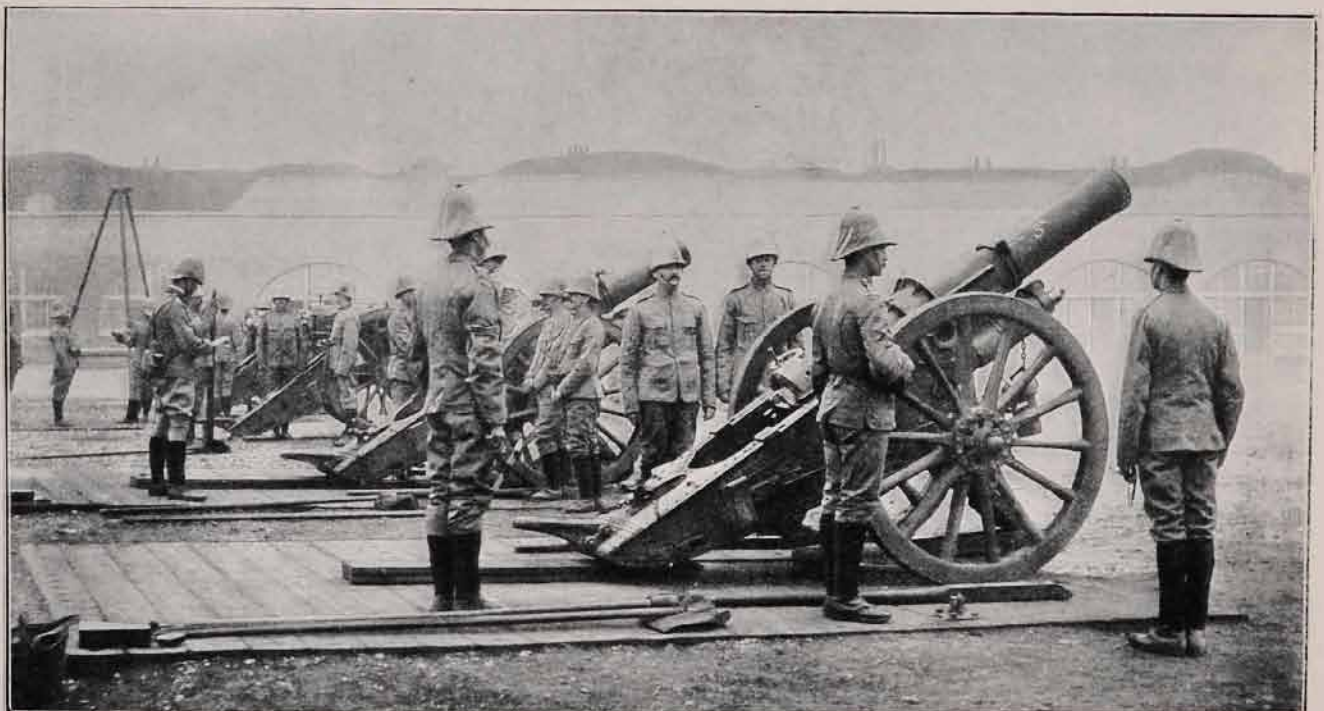
neglecting the study of war. "Above all for empire and greatness," said our own immortal Bacon,

Crass ignorance of military affairs.

"it importeth most that a nation do profess arms as their principal honour, study, and occupation." But the people had never troubled about such things; it was taught and it knew nothing of the conduct of war: its press gave space to the trivialities of sport, none to the serious business of arms; its Parliament emptied as if by magic when naval and military affairs were discussed; its Government and Cabinet were composed without exception of men ignorant of war. For generations attention had been riveted upon the question which of two parties was to govern, regardless of the consideration that there can be no country to rule unless there is an armed force prepared to overcome the enemies who may assail that country's existence. We had told one another that we were a great, a strong, an invincible

its army in the field. It had illusions still of which two more months of unsuccess were at last to deprive it; it had yet to learn how all precautions had been neglected; and blind animal courage substituted for skilful leading.

Terrible, indeed, is the price which a nation must pay for



A 64N. HOWITZER BATTERY.

The first two guns are shown elevated to an angle of thirty-five degrees, which is the position in which they are usually fired.

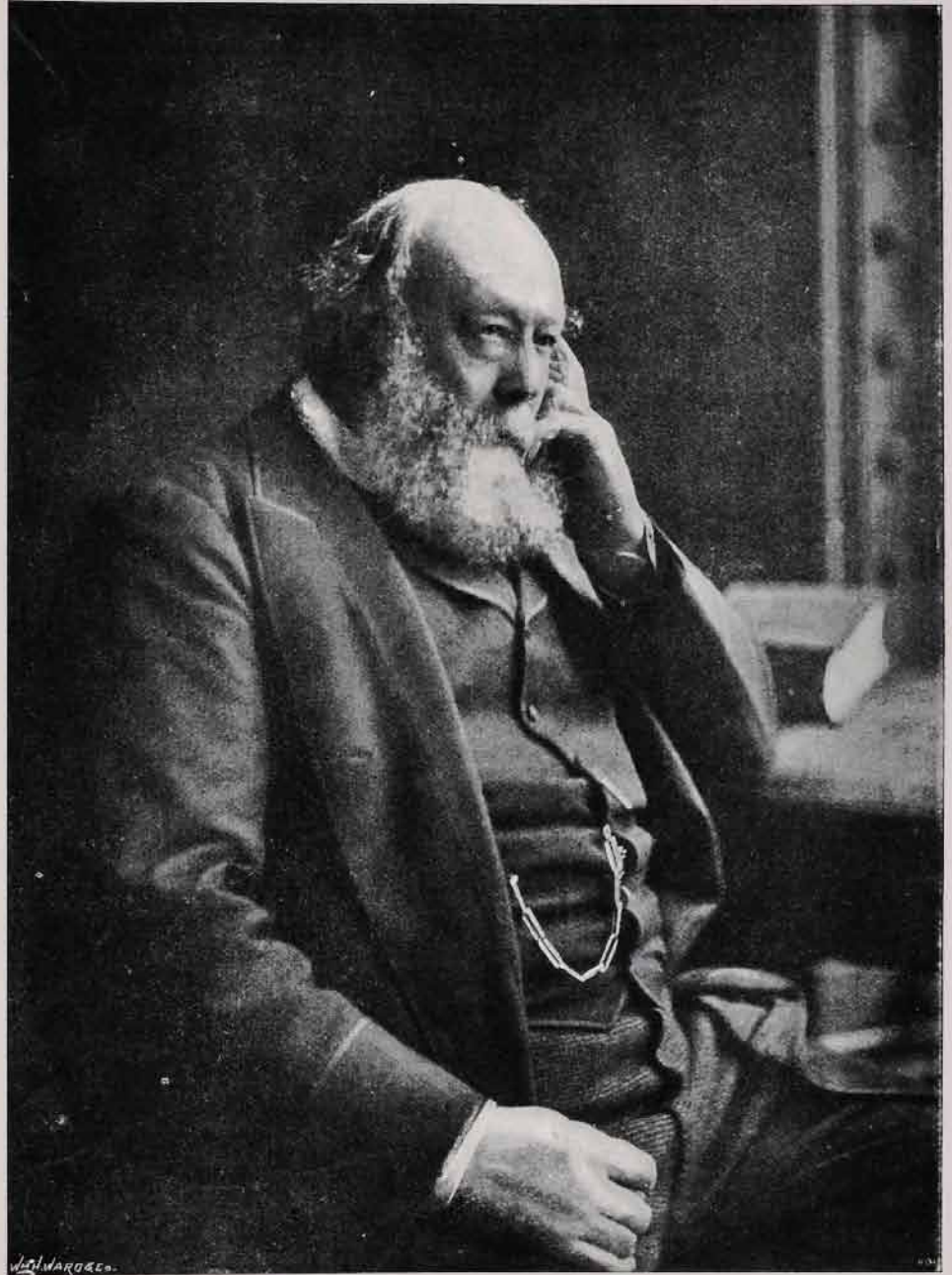
(Photo by Crill.)

people. We had come to believe—or the less instructed of us had come to believe—that an Englishman was far more than a match for any foreigner. We had been ruled by "majorities of politicians, without the knowledge requisite in the governors of a great empire, believing that every interest should be subordinated to their preservation of place." In the words of Lord Charles Beresford, in twenty years there had been but three men in the House of Commons who understood the problem of national defence. One of these—perhaps the ablest—Sir Charles Dilke, had met the common fate of men who strive to warn their country; he had been quietly brushed aside by the politicians as a mere alarmist. Yet he had steadily predicted the breakdown of the Army in its first serious war, and his prophecy had come true.

And now when defeat came no one was responsible. "In German system. Germany,"

said a German commentator, "had the Army failed as the British Army has failed, had the War Minister organised defeat and been caught unprepared, that minister would have been execrated as a traitor and imprisoned in a fortress for the rest of his natural life." But, then, though we had copied much from Germany—all the trifles which do not go to make success—we had neglected the real virtues of the German system—its magnificent education, its careful study of war, its unceasing preparation, its constant manœuvres, its lofty sense of duty to the nation, and its organisation by which there is a man to hang if things go wrong.

The mistakes of generals in the field kill hundreds, the ignorance of ministers in the Cabinet slays thousands. And for the terrible roll of wasted lives, for the long-drawn agony of the heroic defenders of Ladysmith and Mafeking, it is needful that someone should be hereafter called to account. Our soldiers, we have seen, did their duty. They faced death and mutilation because they had learnt in a noble school to offer



THE MOST HONOURABLE THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.,
Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

(Photo by Russell.)

Responsibility of Statesmen and Generals.

up the last and greatest sacrifice—life itself—sooner than face dishonour. To men who bear themselves thus, both statesmen and the nation owe a duty in their turn. They must provide the best weapons, the best training, the best leadership, the best equipment, that the sacrifice may not be made in vain; they are responsible in the sight of posterity and of God, if they needlessly waste human lives or bring sorrow and bereavement upon thousands of homes; they are not asked, like our devoted reservists, private soldiers, and officers, to face the scorching heat and the devouring thirst of the march, the chills of the sodden bivouac, the blood and torture of battle; they have not to confront death:—the one has only to be ready to resign place and power, and the other to watch carefully and intelligently and to be prepared to make pecuniary sacrifice.

UNDER-SECRETARY FOR WAR.



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MR. GEORGE WYNDHAM, M.P.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War since October, 1898. Born in London, 1861; educated at Eton and Sandhurst; entered the Coldstream Guards in 1883; and served in the Suakin campaign and at Cyprus, 1885; Private Secretary to the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, 1887-92; Captain of Cheshire Yeomanry.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR.

PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE WAR OFFICE.



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THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE, K.G.

Secretary of State for War since 1895; was Under-Secretary for War, 1872-74, and Under-Secretary for India, 1880; Governor-General of Canada, 1883-88; Viceroy of India, 1888-93.

Yet how many statesmen have resigned for the Army's sake, and how many of the public have troubled about or interested themselves in the Army's efficiency?

It was urged, indeed, as an excuse for our failures that other armies had made deplorable mistakes—notably the German in the war of 1870. This no one will deny. But the point

The Government unprepared. is that in spite of these mistakes the German Army won every battle, and that the German government and nation had taken every step which science and the sense of duty could suggest to prepare for war. Could as much be said of Britain? Those who have followed the story will have marked the lack of transport and of cavalry, the insufficient proportion of artillery, the want of maps, and the delay in the preparation of troopships. They will have noted that the reports of the Intelligence Department as to the enemy's strength were put on one side and neglected. They will know that the strenuous warnings of Sir Alfred Milner and of the

Natal Government as to the imminence of war were calmly disregarded. They will remember that defects in the Army, pointed out year after year by critics in the House of Commons and in the press, had remained unremedied. They should reflect that the Army and its leaders had been denied the inestimably valuable exercise of annual manœuvres until the last year before the war. Even then the manœuvres were not of a nature to yield real instruction. And the mere fact that in the gravest

THE HEADS OF THE WAR OFFICE.



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FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT WOLSELEY, K.P.
Commander-in-Chief of the Army since 1895. (See note to portrait on page 59.)

emergency ministers turned to Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, showed that they had not chosen, as they ought to have chosen, the generals who were believed by all to be best qualified for a difficult campaign.

NOR are these small things, nor has their importance passed away. Far greater conflicts may lie before us in the near future, and we may have to encounter, not undisciplined peasants, but armies amply



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GENERAL SIR EVELYN WOOD, V.C.

Adjutant-General to the Forces since 1897. Born 1838; educated at Marlborough; Barrister, 1874; entered the Navy, 1852; served with the Naval Brigade in the Crimea, 1854-5; joined the 13th Light Dragoons, 1858; served with 17th Lancers in India, 1858; in the Ashanti, Kaffir, Zulu, and Transvaal Wars, 1879-81; commanded at Chatham, 1882-3; raised the Egyptian Army, 1883; and served with the Nile Expedition in 1892-5, since which time he has held the command of the Eastern (1886-8) and Aldershot (1889-93) Divisions.

supplied with cavalry and artillery—armies which can attack as well as defend. The future safety of the Empire depends upon our so organising and constituting our military system that we shall never again be taken by surprise, and never

Necessity of reorganisation.

again be found inferior in the field. Our Army, our generals, had become the slaves of routine, as a wise foreign officer wrote. They had failed to understand what the Boers had fully grasped—the need of high intelligence as well as brute courage in the fighting man, and the immense potentialities of modern weapons. It is not the least unsatisfactory reflection that the fighting men whom we recruited at the eleventh hour for war from the ranks of our Colonists, proved themselves as good as our professional soldiers. That this should be so illustrated the inefficiency of our military training. For in what other profession could thousands of tyros hope to vie with the experts?

“War is an affair of the immortal soul,” it has been said. It is the final test of the greatness of a nation. The Power which cannot hold its own upon the field of battle has deserved humiliation, and has been “weighed in the balance and found wanting.” It is character which gives victory in war; and the whole purpose of life is to create and refine character.

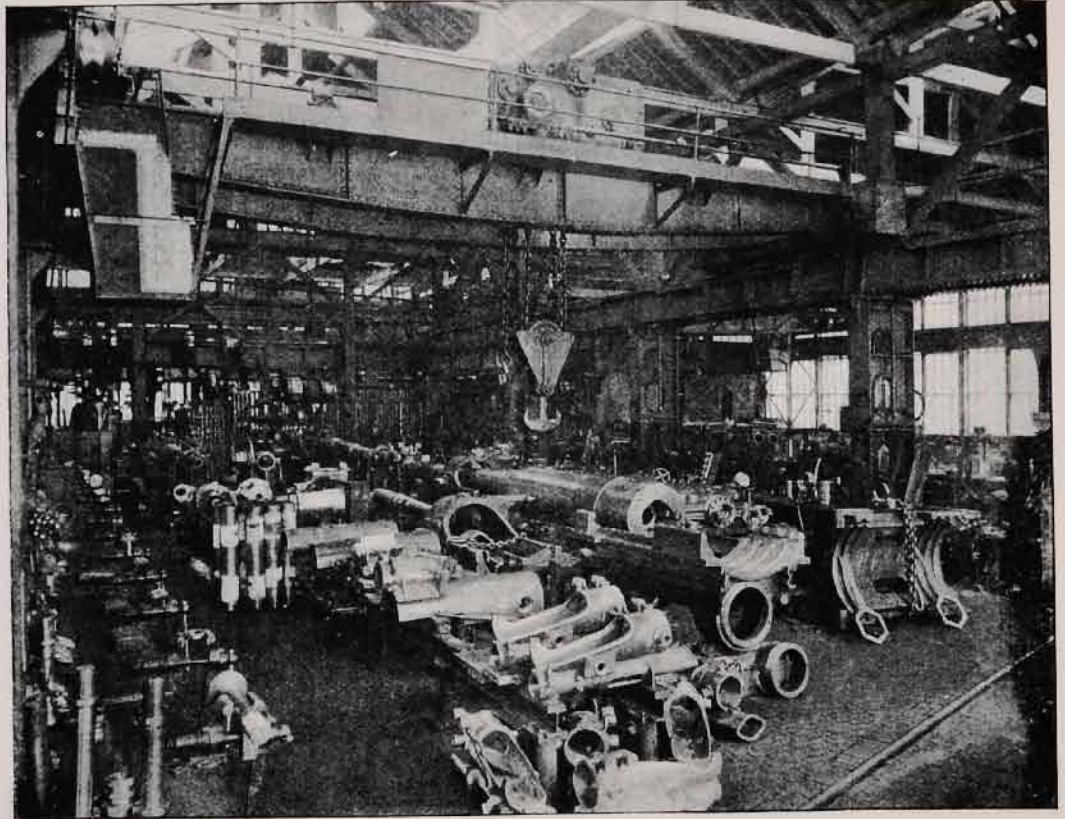


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SIR R.H. KNOX, K.C.B.

Permanent Under-Secretary of State since 1897. Born 1836; entered the War Office, 1866; Accountant-General to War Office, 1882-97.

Character is required in the soldier to carry him through the dangers of the battlefield and the hardships of campaigning; in the nation to enable it to face temporary reverses with courage, and to accept the loss of those near and dear with resignation; and in the statesman to enable him to resist injudicious clamour for economy, and to make sure that the preparations for war are adequate and complete. The statesman must foresee and lead: if he does neither he is unfit for his post of trust.



BIG GUNS IN PROCESS OF MANUFACTURE.

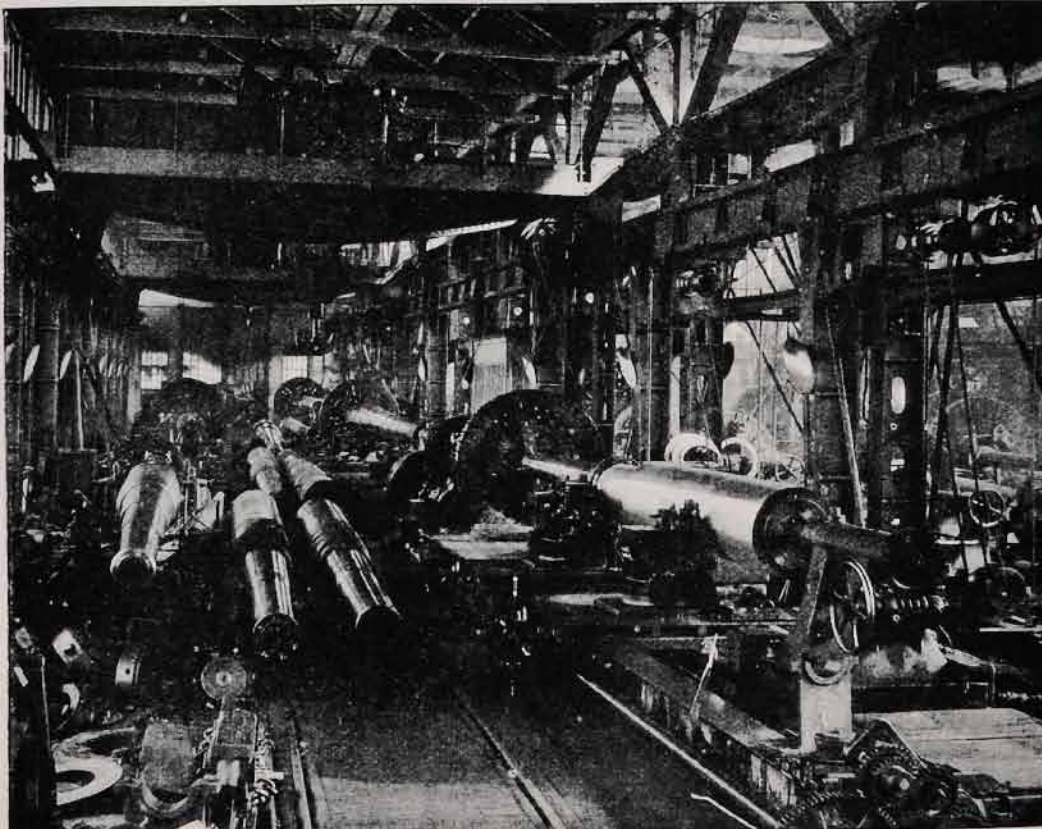
This is one of the workshops at Sir W. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co.'s celebrated factory at Elswick. A large naval gun may be seen just beneath the travelling crane.

Not since the far-off times of Trafalgar had the national danger been so great. In the Crimea

it could truthfully be said that the British

Army
Former national
crises. was
uni-

formly successful, and that the horrors of the winter of 1854-5 were due simply and solely to a defective commissariat. Besides, there we had been outnumbered by the enemy; here we outnumbered them. Then we had had the alliance of France, Sardinia, and Turkey, the friendship of Austria, and the not unfriendly neutrality of Prussia; now we were assailed and vilified by the people of every great nation in Europe. The



GIANT LATHES AT THE ELSWICK WORKS

And some of the big guns which have just been turned upon them.



WARRIOR-FARMERS: COMMANDANT DE WET AND HIS SONS.

Indian Mutiny as a crisis could not be compared with this, for in India, when once reinforcements had arrived, there was a continuous series of successes. Not since the time of the American War of Independence, more than a hundred years back, had we encountered such frequent reverses. Yet though it was accustomed to easy victories, the English race did not quail under the blow. No voice outside the ranks of the least of the Little Englanders was raised for a surrender. With one accord men called upon the Government to take the fullest measures to restore the fortunes of the war. Everything demanded would be granted; nay, the press, with a wise foresight which deserves the gratitude of the country, urged the Ministry to far greater armaments than those which the Cabinet had in mind. It would have been well in this matter if the press had had its way.

To take steps to meet the danger, the Committee of the Cabinet for National Defence—a committee which had the radical defect of being composed wholly of civilian ministers without military knowledge or experience—was held on December 16, the morning after the final news of General Buller's defeat at Colenso reached London. The members of the committee were Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lansdowne, and Mr. Goschen. Their deliberations were secret; the measures upon which they

**Measures taken for
defence.**



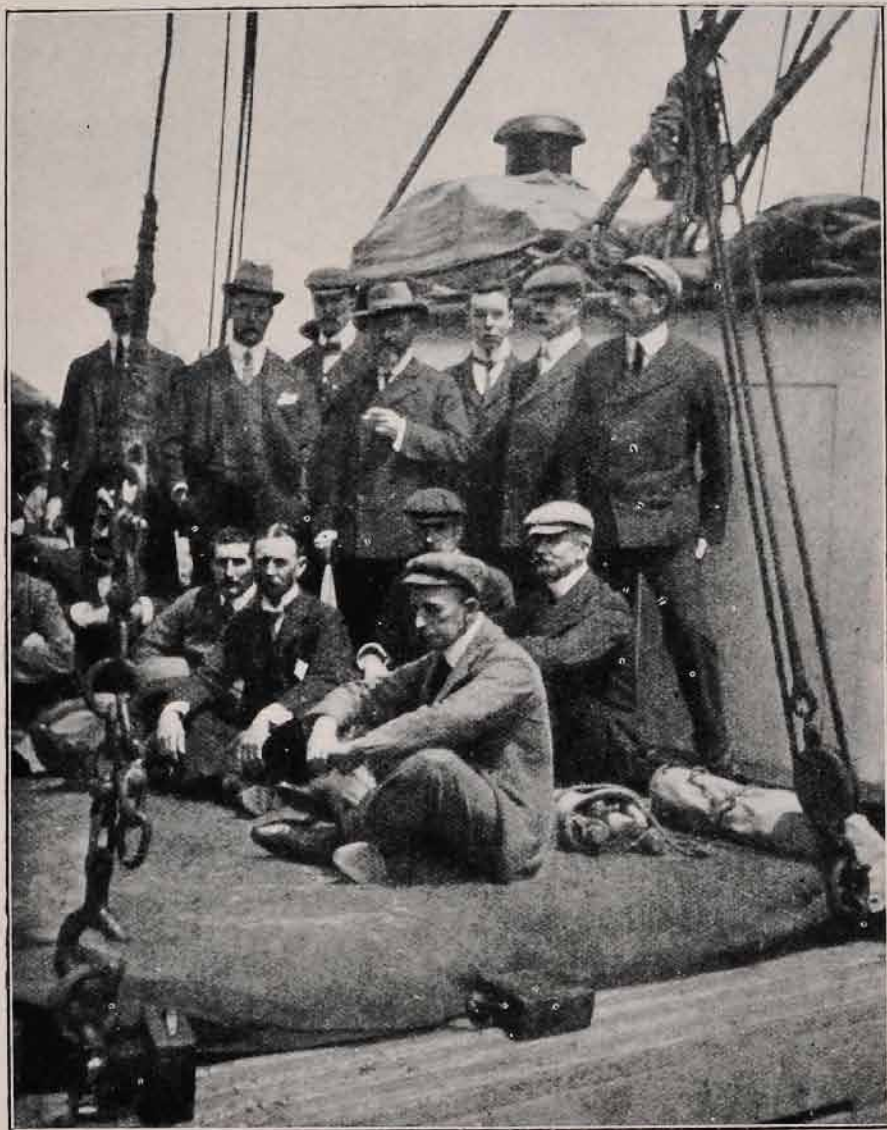
A PROSPEROUS BOER CATTLE-FARM.

[Photo by N. P. Edwards.]

finally decided were in no way heroic—were, indeed, hardly adequate to the perils of the situation. It had been expected that they would call for 40,000 or 50,000 volunteers, place under arms the Volunteers and Militia, and mobilise a good part of the fleet, at the same time despatching to South Africa the largest possible number of trained soldiers, and making the utmost use of the zeal of the colonies.

Actually the steps taken were these: All the Reserves not yet embodied were called out. The Fifth Division was already on its way out, and a Sixth Division had been offered General Buller

upon November 30. Now it was definitely announced that both a Sixth and a Seventh Division would as soon as possible proceed to the front, and be followed, probably, by an Eighth Division. Strong reinforcements of artillery, including five batteries of horse artillery, nine of field artillery, and three batteries of the invaluable 5-inch howitzers were to be despatched as fast as they could be mobilised, thus almost doubling our strength of guns in the field, and adding 102 more field-guns to the 114 pieces sent out with the Army Corps. Besides these, it was intimated that more siege-guns, including huge 6-inch howitzers and heavy weapons of position, would be provided when they could be supplied by the manufacturers and the Royal Arsenal. The Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, whose action had hitherto, if report could be believed, been restricted by the Treasury and financial considerations, was to be given a free hand to raise as many colonial volunteers as possible in the Cape and Natal. Of the Militia, two battalions had already volunteered for service outside the British Isles, and were about to embark for Malta, whilst a third was destined for service in the Channel Islands;



A DISTINGUISHED GROUP.

This group, photographed on board the *Carisbrooke Castle*, which arrived at Capetown, November 14, 1899, includes several men who have distinguished themselves in the war. The foremost officer is Capt. Manns; seated immediately behind him is the Earl of Dundonald, the inventor of the "Dundonald Galloping Carriage" for light guns, and grandson of Lord Cochrane, the naval hero of the beginning of the century. Next to him, the end figure in the seated row, is Col. Martin, who commanded the 21st Lancers in their celebrated charge at Oudurman. Next to the Earl of Dundonald on the other side is Capt. French, employed at the base drilling the South African Light Horse, and sitting close beside, and a little behind him, is the Duke of Hamilton, whilst the Hon. G. Saumarez sits with his face partly hidden behind the chain. In the standing row the officer on the extreme right is Major Hoare; next to him is Carlisle Carr, who swam the *Tugela* under fire and brought over the ferry-boat. The gentleman standing with his hands in his pockets is A. P. Bailey, of Johannesburg, who gave a complete ambulance to the Government.

nine more battalions were to be asked to tender their help for garrison purposes in our coaling stations and imperial fortresses, and an additional number of battalions was to be called up for home service to supply the places of those who, under this arrangement, would be sent abroad. A corresponding number of regular troops would thus be released for service in the field. And now at last the Volunteers, whose patriotic self-sacrifice had hitherto received such scant acknowledgment at the hands of the War Office, were to be called upon to show what stuff they were made of. They were to be asked to furnish contingents for more serious work than Easter "reviews" or Hyde Park parades.

Two distinct volunteer forces were to be raised in England for work in South Africa: the first, to be known as Imperial Yeomanry, was to provide 8,000 mounted infantry. It was to be organised in battalions 464 strong, each composed of four companies of 116 officers and men. The second force, recruited from the ranks of the Volunteers, was to supply an infantry company for each regular battalion in the field, or, in all, a total of about 9,000 men. The City of London was itself to organise and equip a small force of four guns of the Honourable Artillery Company, two companies of mounted infantry, and a battalion of infantry. Finally it was announced that the patriotic offers of our great colonies would no longer be declined.



Photo by Art. Repro. Co.
A BUGLER OF THE CITY OF LONDON IMPERIAL VOLUNTEERS.

But even more important than these additions to the material strength of our forces in South

Change of Generals.

Africa was the change in generals. Sir Redvers Buller himself is believed to have suggested to the Home Government after his Colenso defeat that it would be well to place Lord Roberts in supreme command, and this step was now taken by the Committee of Defence. If such advice were given, it was a fine, magnanimous and disinterested action to General Buller's credit, and one for which the nation may well honour him. As Lord Roberts' chief of the staff, the ablest and the greatest of our younger generals was selected, the He was in the Sudan, but, when asked this anxious and difficult post under the new commander-in-chief, he replied, with alacrity: "Delighted to serve in any capacity under Lord Roberts."

The new commander-in-chief, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar, was in his sixty-eighth year, yet, despite his age, he had retained the vigour and energy of youth. Nineteen years before, in 1881, he had gone out to South Africa to avenge Majuba, and had been recalled when Mr. Gladstone changed his mind and decided to make a humiliating compromise with the Boers. Now he was to achieve the work which then Fortune had withheld from him. No soldier was more beloved and venerated by the nation, to which his name had long been a household word. The feeling of admiration and respect for him was strengthened by the thought that he went forth fresh from the bereavement caused by the loss of his only son, the gallant and devoted Lieutenant Roberts, who had laid down his young life in the desperate attempt to save the guns at Colenso. In sacrificing his private sorrow at the public



Photo by Bassano.

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR CHARLES WARREN, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., R.E.

Born 1840; entered the army in 1857; conducted excavations in Palestine, 1867-70; Commissioner for delimiting Griqualand West, 1870-7; commanded the Diamond Fields Horse in the Kafir war of 1877-8; served also in Griqualand, 1878; commanded an expedition into Arabia Petraea for the punishment of the murderers of Professor Palmer, 1882; and the Bechuanaland Expedition in 1882-3; Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, 1886-8; commanded Straits Settlements, 1889-94, and Thames District, 1895-8; appointed to the command of the Fifth Division of the South Africa Field Force, November 13, 1899.

Sirdar, Lord Kitchener of Khartoum. by telegraph whether he would take

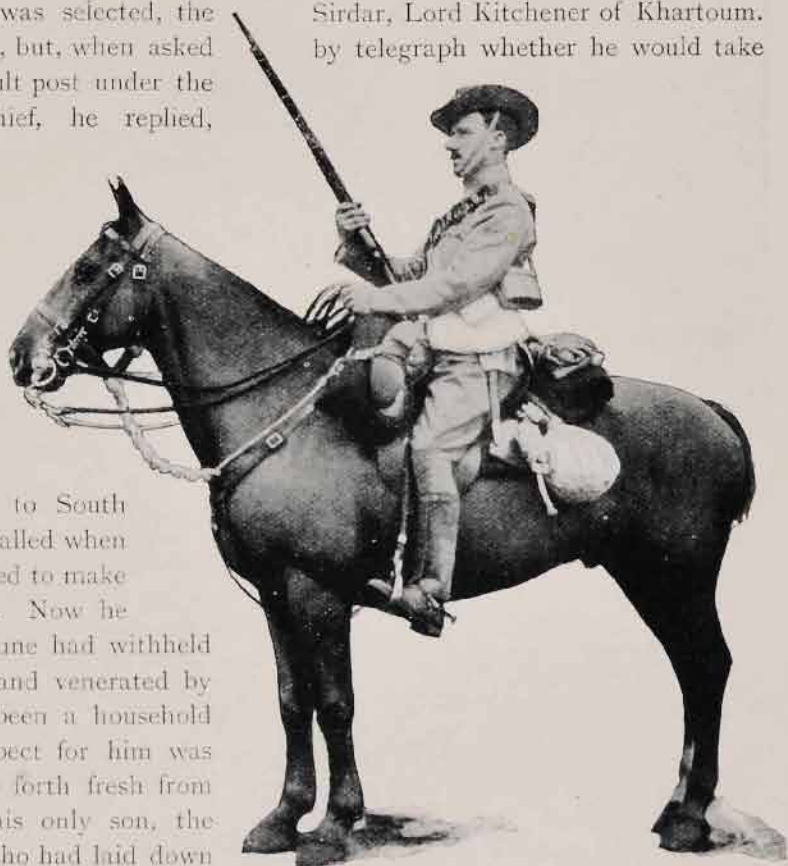


Photo by Gregory.

A SERGEANT OF THE IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

call, the Field-Marshal set a heroic example of resignation under affliction. If he was popular in the best sense with the nation, he was adored by the Army, which knew him for an officer of the most remarkable personal courage, strategic insight, and equability. In the Indian Mutiny he had won that highest distinction our Army can give—the Victoria Cross—by attacking two Sepoys and capturing from them a standard. His serenity of temper and self-restraint were extraordinary. When at Poplar



A. J. Gough.]

HOW LORD ROBERTS WON HIS V.C.

The Victoria Cross was awarded to Lieut. Frederick Sleigh Roberts, Bengal Artillery, for distinguished bravery at Khodagunge on January 2, 1858. Two Sepoys were seen in the distance going away with a standard. Lieut. Roberts went after them and engaged them both. They pointed their muskets at him, and one of the men pulled his trigger, but the cap did not explode, and Roberts immediately cut him down and seized the standard.

Small in stature as great in mind, he was known among his men by one of those affectionate nicknames which testify to a commander's popularity with his soldiers. Just as Marlborough was christened by his troops "Corporal John," just as Napoleon was to his men "the little Corporal," so Lord Roberts was "Bobs" to his followers.

In his character was that strength which simple faith and reliance upon a Higher Power gives to the greatest among men. "Pray as if everything depended upon God, act as if everything rested with

Grove he saw his whole plan for the capture of the Boer army deranged by the hesitation of a subordinate, though other great leaders would have stormed with rage, he uttered not a complaint or a reproach. Closing his field glass, he rode off in silence. As a leader of men, his sympathetic Irish temperament enabled him always to win the enthusiasm of his troops. They would have followed him anywhere. A few words from him at once raised the courage of the shattered and decimated Highland Brigade and restored to it the spirit which had marked it before Magersfontein. A telegram in his magic style cheered Mafeking in its sore distress and raised the spirit of its garrison to elation; his praise supported his noble army through the trials of the weary march to Bloemfontein; a speech from him renewed the flagging energy of thirsty, famished men. His exquisite tact smoothed the ruffled Colonials, who had, in the earlier stages of the war and by other commanders, been studiously disregarded and snubbed.

yourself"—the motto of the saint—was, it may be, one secret of his success. "He has never been known to use an oath," writes Mr. Ralph in his exquisite sketch of this noble figure. "And, indeed,



(Photo by the London Stereoscopic Co.)

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS OF KANDAHAR AND WATERFORD, V.C., K.P., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.H.

This portrait, perhaps better than any other of the many which exist, brings before one the true character of this great soldier. There is no fencing with the steady, penetrating, and yet not unkindly gaze of the eyes. The whole face speaks of that perfectly-balanced combination of justice and mercy, vigour and refinement, inflexibility and consummate tact, which have made Lord Roberts equally loved and feared. "His army," says Mr. Julian Ralph with absolute truthfulness, "will do anything for him; march longer, starve harder, go without tents, blankets, and rum more days and weeks, and die in greater numbers for him than for any other man alive."

there must be comparatively few men whose religion influences them so deeply as does his in every affair of life. He never parades his piety, never forces it upon those around him. Yet on every Sunday since he joined his army he has attended Divine service. Not a word has he ever spoken to his staff suggesting or ordering their presence—yet he is certain to attend the weekly service—an example to the army so modestly and so persistently presented that it cannot help but be powerful. When he took the sacrament at Driefontein, the other day, in the face, one might say, of the whole

army, it was without a hint of the parading of religion. All saw in it an act of simple faith. It is almost as hard to reconcile his gentleness and sympathy with the firm—sometimes stern—course which a general so supreme in command, and at the head of so large an army, must often have to follow. I have asked many of his friends how he can be both sorts of men at once—how he can possess traits which we imagine must war with one another. 'He does possess them, that's all,' is the best answer I have had; 'I don't know how, but he does.' "

As with Lord Nelson, to look upon him was to love him. "I have known many great faces, but that of Lord Roberts is a face apart. I fancy that, in the minds of their worshippers, some of the soberer gods of the old mythologies had faces like his," wrote Mr. Ralph. And the face portrayed the man, at once stern and gentle, noble and humble, patient with the vast patience of one who knows men and their petty failings, steadfast and strong.



W. W. Ouless, R.A.

[By permission of Messrs. Graves.

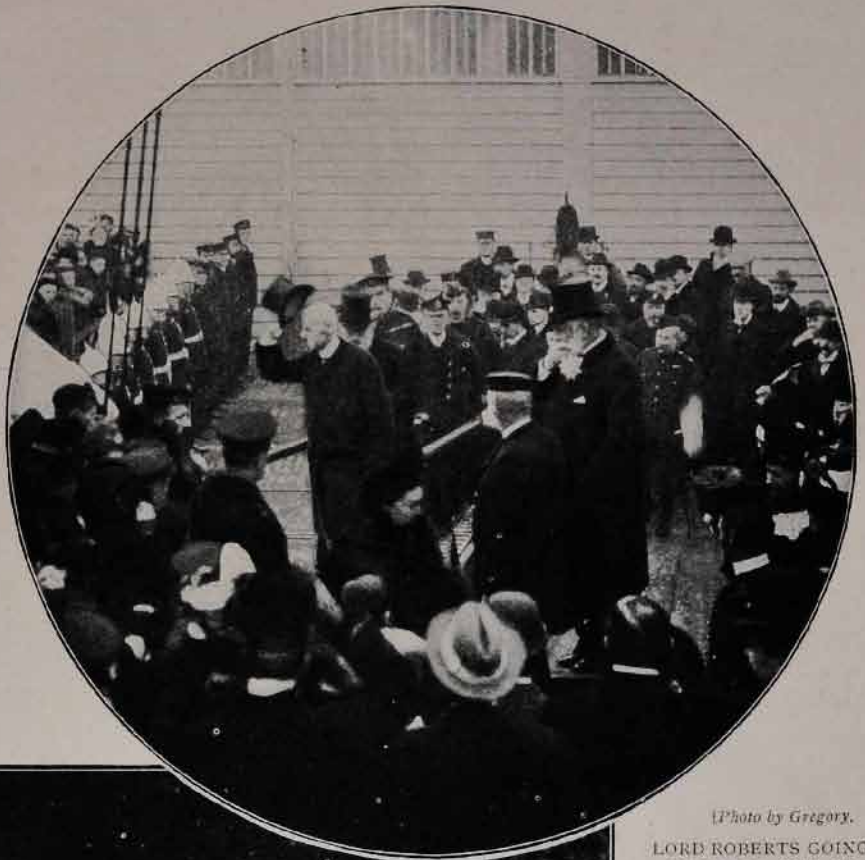
LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR FREDERICK SLEIGH ROBERTS (NOW LORD ROBERTS).
In the bearskin coat which he wore in Afghanistan.

For the command in South Africa Lord Roberts had many peculiar qualifications. He was no stranger to the art of making war against a brave, half-civilised enemy in difficult and mountainous country. If in the Abyssinian War of 1868 he had seen nothing worth the name of serious war, he had in the little wars with the hill tribes on the Indian frontier, and especially in the second Afghan war, gained valuable experience. In many ways the Afghans resembled the Boers. Both peoples were soldiers by instinct and expert shots, with a talent for taking cover. The Afghans in the war of 1877-8, the Boers in the struggle of 1899-1900, were both for the first time acting in masses with the help of artillery. Both could rely upon the great distance to be traversed by the British troops

and the comparative barrenness of their country, which yielded scanty supplies of food and forage, as their best auxiliaries. But of the two races the Boers were incomparably the more formidable enemies.

Lord Roberts' generalship in the Afghan War had been of a very high order. In command of the Kuram column he distinguished himself early in 1879, so that in the autumn of that year he was appointed to lead the army which was to avenge the murder of the British Resident at Cabul. On October 1 his real advance began. It was made with startling rapidity, and on the 13th he marched through the streets of Cabul. Here his small army had to pause, as in March and April 1900 the British Army had to halt at Bloemfontein, and the enemy rallied, inflicting more than one minor reverse upon his troops. But it was his great march from Cabul to Kandahar, in the summer of 1880, which best

Lieut. Kennard. Miss Harris.



(Photo by Gregory.)

LORD ROBERTS GOING ON BOARD THE S.S. "DUNOTTAR CASTLE" AT SOUTHAMPTON.

Lady Roberts accompanying him to witness his departure, December 23, 1899.



Capt. Johnson.

Admiral Sir R. Harris.

Lady Harris.

(Photo by E. Kennard.)
Lord Roberts.

LORD ROBERTS AT ADMIRALTY HOUSE, SIMON'S BAY.

illustrated his judgment and daring. Cutting loose from his base, living on the land as General Sherman had done in the famous march to the sea, he led his little column, 10,000 strong, on August 8, out of his camp at Cabul. On the 31st he entered Kandahar, having covered in the twenty-three

days 320 miles, and this in sweltering heat. So rapid were his movements that he everywhere forestalled his enemies and met with no opposition on the march. Not only was Lord Roberts great in war; in the quiet times of peace he strove earnestly for military reform. He especially distinguished himself during his Indian and Irish commands by the

emphasis which he placed upon good shooting and the development of the soldier's intelligence. He did not want his men to be the soulless automata of the eighteenth-century barrack square. It is admitted by all, that under him the Indian Army was raised to a pitch of efficiency which it had never possessed before, and which, perhaps, has not marked it since. Some who did not know him may have feared that here was another reputation, won in savage or barbarous warfare, going



SOUNDING THE "CHARGE."

A cavalry trumpeter carries both a bugle for field calls, and a trumpet for the more elaborate camp and barrack calls.

to be lost in that land where the fair fame of so many had suffered swift eclipse. They may have asked themselves, if he failed with Lord Kitchener, who was left. Yet those who knew him and had served under him felt no such concern. To them his success was certain.

His chief-of-the-staff, Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, was in his fiftieth year, but already, as the reconqueror of the Sudan, was by far the most famous and trusted of the younger British

generals. His earlier years had passed uneventfully, but with that energy and intense earnestness of purpose which distinguishes the genius from the common-place man, he studied and learnt Arabic, while most of his fellow-officers were amusing themselves. Present at the bombardment of Alexandria, in spite of and not because of orders received, he was employed by Lord Wolseley when



MAJOR-GENERAL LORD KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., R.E.

Chief of the Staff to Lord Roberts in South Africa since December 23, 1899. Heratlo Herbert Kitchener was born in 1850, the son of the late Lieut.-Colonel H. H. Kitchener. He was educated at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and entered the Royal Engineers in 1871. He was engaged in the Palestine Survey, 1874-5, and the Cyprus Survey, 1878-82. Commanded the Egyptian Cavalry, 1882-4; served in the Sudan Campaign, 1885; Governor of Suakin, 1896-8; Colonel, 1898; Adjutant-General of the Egyptian Army, 1888-92; Major-General, 1896; commanded Dongola Expeditionary Force, 1896; and the Khartoum Expedition, 1898, in which campaign he finally overthrew the power of the Khalifa.

that General came to Egypt for the Tel-el-Kebir campaign. Thenceforward, Kitchener belonged to Egypt, and his career is inseparably entwined with Egyptian history. He saw the sad tragedy of the abandonment of the Sudan; he smarted with his countrymen at the bitter shame of the betrayal of Gordon, and took part in the expedition which came too late to save the martyred general. His eyes must have fastened upon that prophetic page in Gordon's journals:—"I like Baker's description of Kitchener. 'The man whom I have always placed my hopes upon, Major Kitchener, R.E., who is one of the few *very superior* British officers, with a cool and good head, and a hard constitution combined with untiring energy.'"

His experience was wide and various. It was not only in the conduct of war, but also in civil administration that he had made for himself a name. Though he never courted popularity and had



R. Caton Woodville.]

[By permission of Fishburn & Jenkin, Doré Gallery, New Bond Street, publishers of the large Engraving.

THE GORDON MEMORIAL SERVICE: THE SUPREME MOMENT OF LORD KITCHENER'S CAREER AS SIRDAR, September 4, 1898.

The battle of Omdurman and the capture of Khartoum were followed by a ceremony surely as touching as any in history. To the rear of a salute from the gunboat on the Nile, the British and Egyptian flags were run up side by side, and cheers for the Queen were led off by the Sirdar himself. Then, amidst a silence broken only by the guns, "four chaplains," says Mr. G. W. Stevens—"Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist—came slowly forward and ranged themselves, with their backs to the palace, just before the Sirdar. The Presbyterian read the Fifteenth Psalm. The Anglican led the rustling whisper of the Lord's Prayer. Snow-haired Father Brindle, best beloved of priests, laid his helmet at his feet, and read a memorial prayer bareheaded in the sun. Then came forward the pipers and wailed a dirge, and the Sudanese played 'Abide with me.' Perhaps lips did twitch just a little to see the ebony heathens fervently blowing out Gordon's favourite hymn; but the most irresistible incongruity would hardly have made us laugh at this moment. And there were those who said the cold Sirdar himself could hardly speak or see, as General Hunter and the rest stepped out according to their rank and shook his hand. What wonder? He has trodden this road to Khartoum for fourteen years, and he stood at the goal at last."

no influence of any kind, his sheer ability carried him forward. That unerring judge of men who trained Sir Alfred Milner, Lord Cromer, selected Kitchener as Sirdar in 1892. The new Egyptian commander made of the army under his charge a miracle of efficiency at an insignificant cost. Quietly, methodically, he organised and prepared for the reconquest which, he knew, must come in time, when the conscience of the British nation awoke. He made no mistakes; he took the utmost pains to find out what the enemy was doing, conscious that victory in war largely depends upon perfect information. The Egyptian Intelligence Department was as efficient as the Egyptian Army. And when at last the long-desired hour struck and the British and Egyptian troops marched southward into the desert "to avenge Gordon," everything was ready, everything went like clockwork. Firket, the Atbara, and Omdurman followed in regular and mechanical succession. The man "who

had made himself a machine" did his work surpassingly well.

All that the nation heard about its new general delighted it. The very gossip which was meant to discredit him only increased his reputation. His dislike for triflers and idlers, his aversion from all kinds of favouritism, his determination to insist upon strict discipline, competence, and knowledge in those whom he employed, might estrange from him the darlings of fortune, but were a recommendation to the people of England. He was outwardly cold and stern, like many deep natures, but no general is unpopular with his troops if he always succeeds. With Lord Kitchener the men felt instinctively that every thing would be foreseen, all precautions taken, and nothing overlooked. They knew that everyone would do



THE REAL KRUGER.
Two Portraits taken on April 24, 1900

his duty, or if not that the Sirdar would want to know the reason why.

Lord Kitchener, then, took with him to Africa the prestige of a great name, the reputation of continual success, and the habit of handling large masses of troops. No living English general, not even Lord Roberts, had ever had under him in war so many troops as Lord Kitchener led into the field in 1898, when he marched to Omdurman 8,200 British and 17,600 Egyptian soldiers, with sixty-four field guns and Maxims. Last, but not least, Lord Kitchener had seen little of the mischievous kind of fooling which at Aldershot, under the specious guise of Field Days, served rather to render our generals inexpert and our soldiers careless of the methods of war, than to familiarise them with something approaching the real conditions of battle. His training had been that of actual war, his power of organisation was undoubted, and even his bitterest detractors had to confess that he was a successful



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ARRIVAL OF LORDS ROBERTS AND KITCHENER AT CAPE TOWN, January 4, 1900.

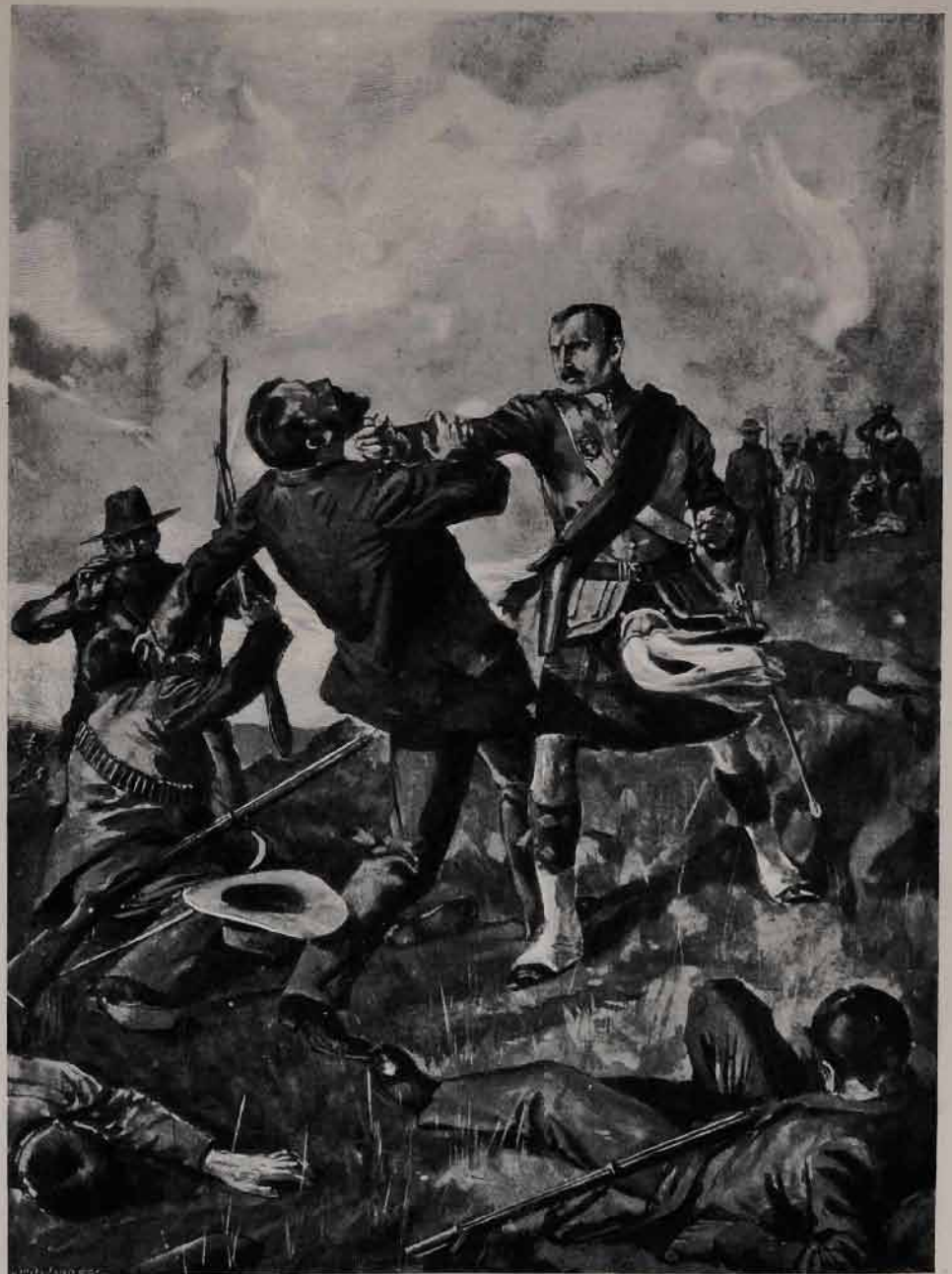
leader. But what, perhaps, most recommended him to his country was his seriousness of purpose and his concentration of aim. His very face bore in every line the look of iron resolution, of a spirit which fears nothing and calculates everything. And that, perhaps, was why the swift genius of Mr. Steevens christened him "the machine." For he rose superior to the accidents of fortune and the tragedies of life; nothing seemed to shake his coolness or weaken his purpose. Here was a general who would never show the not ignoble weakness which wrecks so many would-be leaders—the unwillingness to incur losses, the inward rebellion against sending brave, devoted men to death. Yet that his nature was not without a strain of sentiment was proved by that strange commemoration service, held on the scene of Gordon's death, in sight of the still reeking battlefield of Omdurman, which set the seal upon the purpose of ten long years, and to some extent obliterated the shame felt by his countrymen for the death of that noble man.

The interest which attached to Kitchener's personality was enhanced by the fact that he was something of a riddle to his countrymen, who suspected that under the outer veil of iciness which marked him, as it marked Moltke, lay concealed the warmer qualities of the heart.

On Saturday, December 23, Lord Roberts left London to embark upon the *Dunottar Castle*. A great popular demonstration marked his departure. An immense crowd, in which were merged and lost members of the Royal Family, Cabinet Ministers, guardsmen, soldiers who had in the already far-off past marched with him to victory, and the great unwashed, were impartially assembled upon the platform of Waterloo. It was noticed that nearly all were in black—a sombre hue typical at once of the nation's sorrow under its defeats and of its sympathy with the general in his personal bereavement. Amidst a thunder of cheering the new Commander-in-Chief stepped into the train, already in motion. The cheers continued till he was lost to view. Thus, with the knowledge that he bore with him the regard and devotion of his race, he went forth to his work.

At Southampton the demonstration was repeated. Meantime Lord Kitchener embarked in the cruiser *Isis* at Alexandria on the 22nd. The *Isis* steamed her fastest—eighteen knots—to Malta, where she met the *Dido*, and that good warship covered the rest of the distance to Gibraltar, where the *Dunottar Castle* was to be met. The extreme haste gave evidence of the seriousness of the emergency. From Gibraltar the liner headed for the Cape by the usual route, and the time of the voyage was used by the Field-Marshal and his Chief-of-the-Staff to work out their strategic plans for the new campaign that was to change disaster into triumph.

Other changes and new appointments in the higher ranks of the Army were made about this same time. From India General Hector Macdonald was summoned to lead the Highland Brigade. He was an officer of extreme popularity and with a remarkable history, which proves that in the British



A. C. Ball.]

HECTOR MACDONALD AT MAJUBA.

When the Gordon Highlanders were beaten back on the disastrous day of Majuba, Lieutenant Macdonald, still un wounded, rallied his men for a last stand. He was disarmed, but met the onslaught of a group of Boers with his fists, knocking down three of the enemy in succession. His pluck was appreciated; a Boer who had felt the weight of his blows called to one of his fellows, who was in the act of covering Macdonald with his rifle, to "spare that brave man." He was spared, and of course taken prisoner; but General Joubert treated him with consideration, even returning to him his sword—the sword which had but recently been presented to him by his fellow officers at Kandahar.

Army, as in the hosts of Napoleon, "a career is open to talent." Beginning life as a draper's assistant, he enlisted in the ranks. Under Lord Roberts in Afghanistan he rose like a rocket, winning by superb bravery step after step—corporal, sergeant, colour-sergeant, and lieutenant in quick succession. He fought at Majuba, where his splendid courage led the Boers to spare his life. With the Gordons he held the kopje on the western face of the mountain to the very last, and all but two of his men were killed or wounded. He was one of the distinguished group of officers



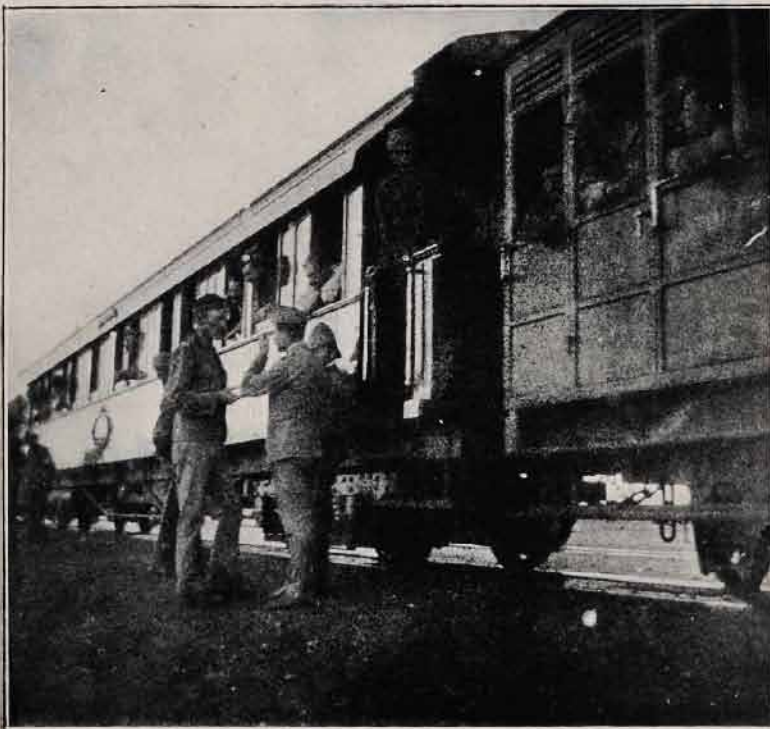
LORD ROBERTS AND HIS CHIEF-OF-STAFF, LORD KITCHENER.
This photograph was taken at Cape Town, when the two generals were on the way to inspect the City Imperial Volunteers.

who, as time went on, found employment in the Egyptian Army, where his great military aptitudes were given full scope. He shared in all the Sirdar's victories, and at Omdurman, in command of the First Egyptian Brigade, showed admirable generalship, contributing in no small degree to that great success.

The news of the British reverses was expected by all the enemies of England—enemies within and without—to prove the final blow to the British Empire. "The British Colonies," said one of the more moderate French journals, "will

certainly secede when disaster weakens the

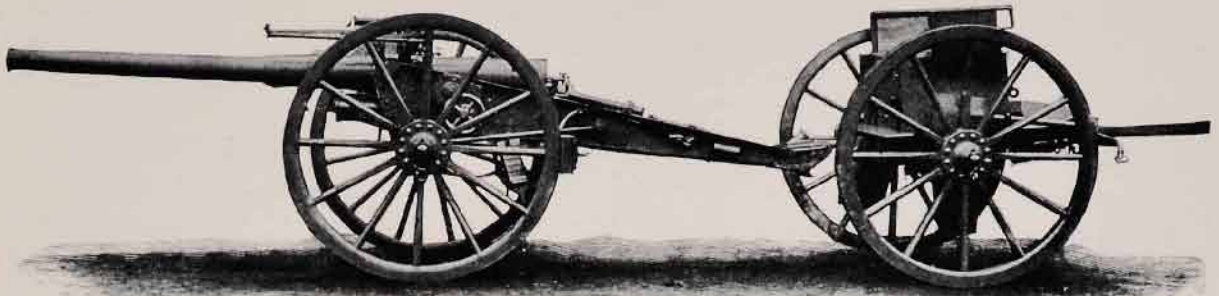
Mother country's grasp upon them." Mr. John Morley in his famous article, "On the Expansion of England," had argued before the war, in much the same style, that at the first sign of peril the Australians and Canadians would "cut the painter." "Is it possible to suppose," he had asked, "that Canadian lumbermen or Australian sheep farmers would contribute anything towards keeping Basutos and Zulus quiet?" The question was answered, and answered speedily and dramatically, when upon the top of the sad messages announcing from South Africa defeat upon defeat, came telegram after telegram from the great self-governing Colonies, offering far more than money—their own flesh and blood. Then it was seen and realised at last that the Empire was one and indivisible—that it was something which, like the Church, neither



GENERAL HECTOR MACDONALD AND HIS FORMER SUPERIOR.

On his way to the Modder River, General Hector Macdonald encountered Col. Macbean of the 1st Gordon Highlanders, under whom he had served as Colour-Sergeant of the 92nd, when Macbean was Captain of the same Company.

distance nor climate could disunite. Never before in history had the Colonies of a great state spontaneously offered for distant service thousands of men. And thus were triumphantly justified the foresight which had led England to concede to her settlers the largest measure of self-government and the new spirit of pride in the Empire which had first found definite expression in the celebrations of 1897. Then Colonial troops had marched in all the pomp of peace through



Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth, & Co.]

12-POUNDER GUN AND LIMBER.

This gun is one of a battery presented to Lord Roberts by Lady Menx, manufactured at the Elswick Works and manned by Elswick Volunteers.

the streets of the capital; now they were to march of their own free will to the bloody work of a desperate war.

On December 14, before the news of Colenso was known, the Premier of New South Wales had telegraphed to Mr. Chamberlain asking him whether the Home Government would care for more men from New South Wales. A statement to that effect in the Sydney Parliament was greeted with the wildest enthusiasm, the members rising and singing "God save the Queen." Mr. Chamberlain lost no time in replying. His answer ran:—

Australian and Canadian contingents.

"The Imperial Government is prepared to entertain the offer of further troops, mounted men preferred. It is indispensable that the men should be trained and good shots, supplying their own horses." Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, West Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania, all agreed to contribute men. The total strength of the new contingent was fixed at 1,000 mounted infantry, but this total was largely exceeded. A field battery and a field hospital were despatched in addition by the New South Wales Government, while New Zealand supplied four Hotchkiss guns. The patriotism of the Colonial Parliaments was equalled by the patriotism of the peoples who had to find the men and money. Great landowners came forward with offerings of horses; citizens subscribed thousands of money for the perfect equipment of the force and the pensioning of dependents of the men who volunteered. Doctors in good practice volunteered to accompany the troops, and the difficulty was not to obtain men, but to settle who was to go and who to stay behind. Ten thousand men could with ease have been enlisted in a week. The Colonial Administrators were not content with sending help; they sent it quickly, and their forces were the first of the new levies to appear in the field. Moreover, they quietly assembled and drilled yet a third contingent, to be ready for the worst. The total strength of the second contingent was, as far as can be ascertained, as follows:—New South Wales 900 men, Victoria 300, New Zealand 234, Queensland 150, South Australia 100, West Australia 90, and Tasmania 45.



Italian. Russian. Austrian.

American. French. German.

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FOREIGN MILITARY ATTACHÉS

Commissioned to accompany the Commander-in-Chief in South Africa.

From first to last Australia placed over 8,000 men in the field, or nearly a complete division. As an example of the general enthusiasm may be mentioned the fact that an insurance company offered a pension of a pound a week for life to the first Australian who won the Victoria Cross, an honour which fell to Trooper Morris, of the New South Wales Lancers.

Canada had offered a second contingent as far back as November 7, so that her Government may claim the credit of first realising the danger. The offer was not accepted till the December defeats had taught the British Ministry the perils of the situation. On December 18, Sir Wilfrid Laurier held a Cabinet Council and instructed the Militia Department to prepare the new contingent with the utmost expedition. Its strength was fixed at three squadrons of mounted rifles and three batteries of artillery, mustering a total of 1,044 men. The Premier of the North West Territories announced, even before



F. W. Burton.]

[After a photo by J. B. Hawden.

FROM CANADA'S SNOWS TO AFRICA'S BAKING SANDS.

The farewell parade of D Battery, Royal Canadian Artillery, in Ottawa.

the appeal was made, that he would undertake to raise 1,000 expert horsemen and good marksmen at twenty-four hours' notice in his territories alone. When the call for volunteers came, here, as in Australia, many times as many men offered themselves as could be accepted. Finally, the strength of the second Canadian contingent was raised to 1,300 men with six 12-pounder guns, but even so, it was far below the wishes of the people. The men who were picked were active and intelligent, accustomed to an outdoor life, sitting their horses like centaurs. They speedily showed in war that they were a full match for the Boers, man for man, in marksmanship, the art of taking cover, and stubborn courage, while they had that high spirit which preaches attack rather than defence, and which the Boers, among their many fine qualities, altogether lacked.

Among Canada's most splendid contributions was Lord Strathcona's Corps. At his own expense, over and above the contingent 1,300 strong, he raised in the North West 400 "rough riders," armed them, and equipped them for service. They were all unmarried men of fine physique, and, like



(Photo by Lafayette.)

THE RIGHT HON. SIR WILFRID LAURIER,
The patriotic French-Canadian Premier of Canada.

all the Canadians sent to the front, good horsemen and excellent shots. Nor was the Canadian Agent-General content with this magnificent gift. He conveyed the corps at his own cost to Capetown, so that the 400 men were landed in South Africa without the expenditure of a penny by the British Government.

A speech of Mr. Seddon's, the Premier of New Zealand,

Mr. Seddon's loyal speech.

made at this time, perhaps best explains

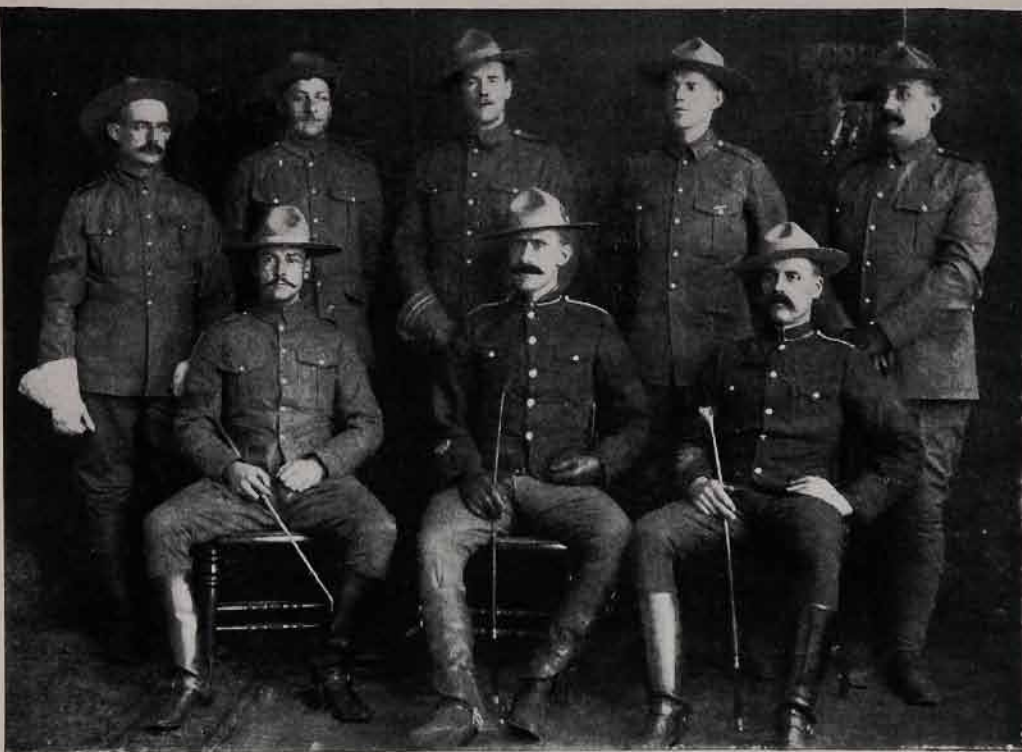
the enthusiasm of the colonies and proves the fervour of their devotion, though he was himself speaking only for New



(Photo from Mrs. Craigmile, Banchoy.)

TROOPER TOM MORRIS,
Of the New South Wales Lancers; the first Colonial to be recommended for the V.C.

Zealand. "At the present time," he said, "fighting men, not fault-finders, are required in the interests of the Empire. The war is only nominally with the Boers; actually it is with all those who are jealous of the growing power of the British Empire, and who, rejoicing at our reverses, are aiding and abetting the Boers. The reverses suffered are only temporary: they will be followed by the invariable, inevitable success of British arms. The people of New Zealand are determined that the prestige of the British Empire, to which they belong, shall be maintained at all hazards. Though New Zealand is Radical and Democratic, even termed by



STALWART CANADIANS.

(Photo by Notman, Montreal.)

This group consists of volunteers, all over six feet in height. Three of them are bankers; several are members of the North-West Mounted Police.

some Socialistic, there is in the present emergency an amount of imperial patriotism in the country not to be surpassed elsewhere in Her Majesty's dominions."

The feeling of Australasia and

Volunteers Canada from Asiatic dependencies.

echoed wherever the British flag flew. In India, native princes offered their purses, their armies, and their swords. Native regiments voluntarily subscribed a

day's pay to the War Fund.

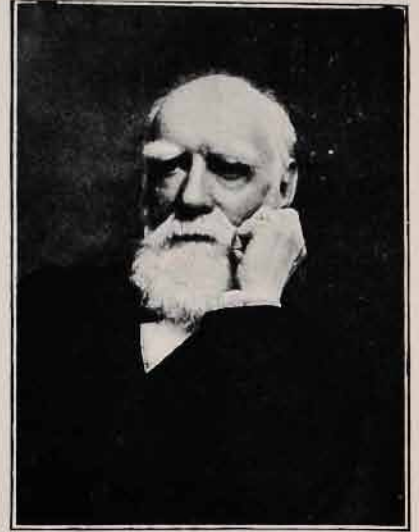


(Photo by Talma, Melbourne.)

THE RIGHT HON. R. J. SEDDON,
Premier of New Zealand since 1893.

In India, in Ceylon, and in the Straits Settlements, small corps of mounted volunteers were raised and despatched to the front. There would have been no difficulty in providing hundreds of men in India alone, and that without drawing upon the garrisons, but the Europeans could not well be spared from their posts. In South Africa itself volunteering proceeded with the greatest alacrity, and some thousands of men were raised in Cape Colony among the British and the loyal Dutch.

At home the call for volunteers met with an eager response. On Monday, December 18, the 3rd Durham Light Infantry (Militia) volunteered to a man for foreign service. The 3rd York and Lancaster Regiment on parade on the

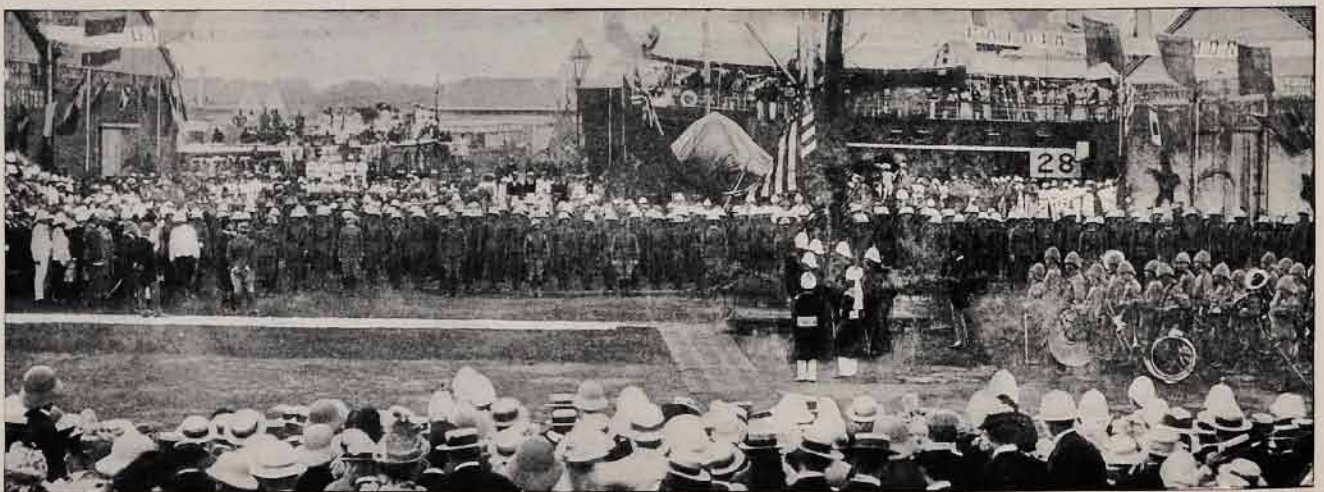


(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)

LORD STRATHCONA,
High Commissioner for Canada in England.

same day was addressed by the colonel, and those who would volunteer ordered to slope arms, whereupon every man responded. The Cornwall, East Surrey, West Surrey, Gordon Highlanders, Royal Warwickshire, and Yorkshire Artillery Militia all followed suit. In no case did any militia battalion when invited to give its services show the smallest reluctance. The volunteers were equally eager and enthusiastic. Thus the colonel of the 3rd Middlesex Volunteer Artillery, when asked how many men would give their services, answered, "The whole regiment will do so if required." It may be questioned if sufficient use was made of this eagerness, and bitter complaints were heard from the volunteers as to the unreasonable severity of the medical examination of those finally selected.

The City Council, at a meeting held on December 20, decided to select detachments of twenty picked marksmen from volunteer regiments and to form them into its battalion of City Imperial Volunteers, 1,000 strong. The sum of £25,000 was contributed to the equipment of this force by the City Funds, and the freedom of the City was promised to every volunteer in the organisation. Of this and other patriotic movements in the Empire's capital we shall have more to say shortly. Private individuals came forward with the most splendid generosity to contribute to the fund raised to defray the cost of the force. Messrs. Wilson, of Hull, the great shipowners, offered free of charge the use of a fitted transport for three months—an offer which was.



INSPECTION OF LUMSDEN'S HORSE BY THE VICEROY OF INDIA, AT CALCUTTA.

In the photograph the Viceroy, Lord Curzon,* in light coat and hat, is seen amidst the group on the left, on his way to the dais after the inspection.

it was calculated, equivalent to the gift of £15,000. Besides the infantry battalion, the City provided a battery of four guns and a detachment of mounted infantry. All ranks and all conditions showed equal alacrity in helping the cause. Those who were of fighting age and physique were ready to give their lives; the rest contributed money to the best of their ability. Working men subscribed their



HIT!

A wounded New South Wales Mounted Rifle.

pence and shillings to keep in comfort the wives and children of their comrades who had gone to the front. And unquestionably the manner in which the nation had done its duty by raising hundreds of thousands for the wives, widows, and children of the soldiers, and for the comfort of the wounded contributed in no small degree to the alacrity with which the call to arms was met. The soldier was everywhere what he should always have been—a privileged and honoured man.

For the raising and equipment of the Imperial Yeomanry, 8,000 strong, private effort and subscription were entirely responsible. The work of organisation was undertaken by Lord Chesham, and in every county committees were formed to further the recruiting of the corps. The idea was to enrol young men who were good riders and good shots, and it was carried out with very fair success. There was no want of men; the only difficulty was to find suitable men. The great nobles and wealthy families of the country were forward in volunteering. The Duke of Marlborough, Earl Dudley, Lord Alwyne Compton, the Marquis of Hertford, the Hon. T. A. Brassey—a well-known writer upon naval matters—and the Hon. Schomburgk K. M'Donnell, private secretary to Lord Salisbury, were a few typical names from the long list of those who sacrificed comfort and ease for a life of pain and hardship in South Africa. Among the various corps raised were companies of rough riders, composed of "bachelor gentlemen" who provided their own arms, and several companies the ranks of



[Photo by Surgeon-Major Deavor.
FROM FAR BURMA.

A volunteer, mounted on his little Burmese pony.



VOLUNTEERS FROM
CEYLON.

[Photo by Skene, Colombo.

The contingent of Ceylon Mounted Infantry (mostly tea-planters, and good riders and marksmen) leaving Colombo for the Cape, Feb. 1, 1900.

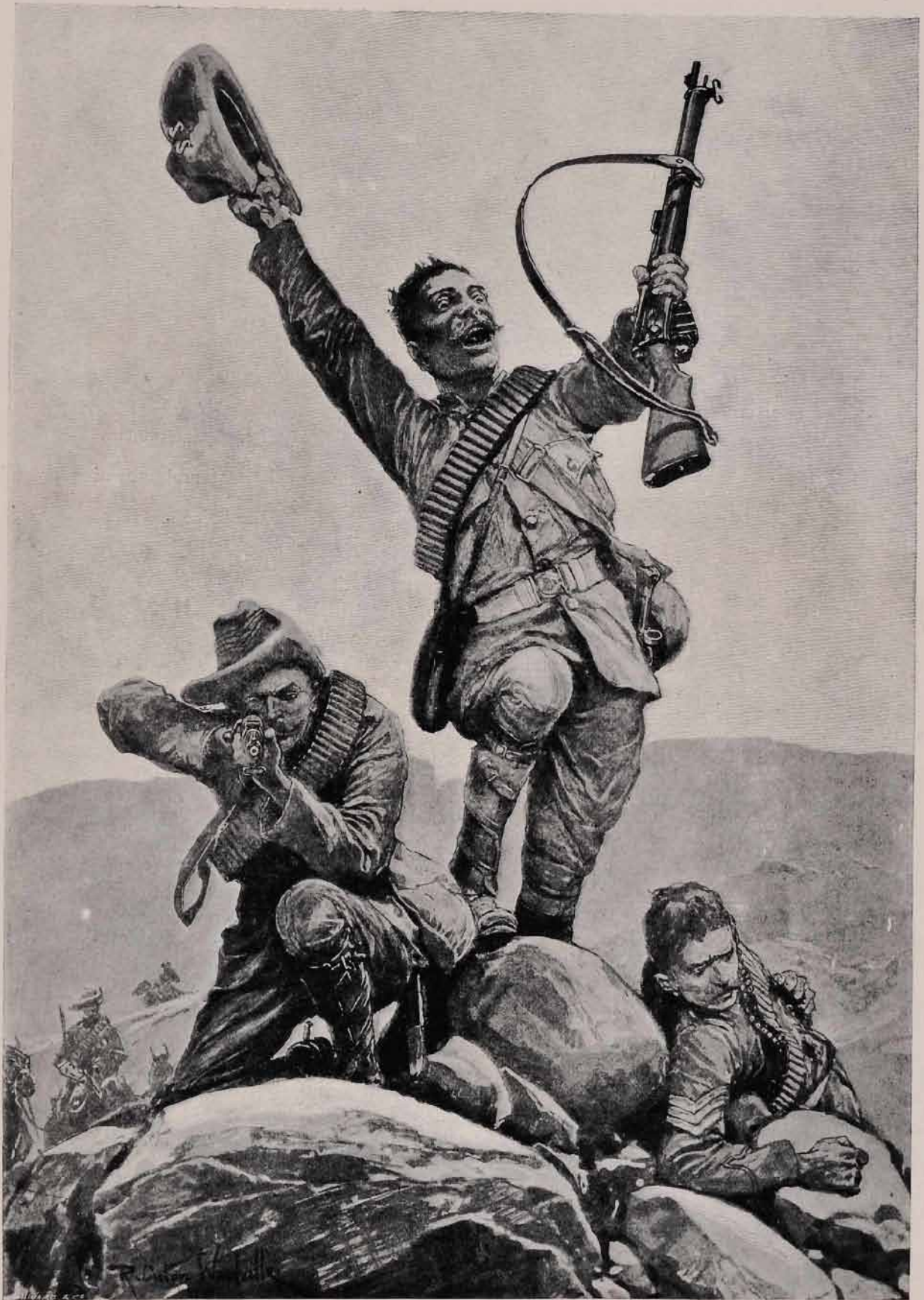
which were entirely filled by gentlemen. In all, nineteen battalions were enlisted, in each case four companies strong, the companies numbered consecutively from 1 to 76. More might have been raised, but in March, 1900, enlistment was stopped by the Government.

In this national uprising passed the last days of

Gloomy outlook. December

and the first weeks of January. It was a sad Christmas and a sad New Year, and there was ample cause for gloom in the country. Yet the eagerness with which England and the Colonies had replied to the call to arms was a source of encouragement and hope, though the

question might still be asked, with some uneasiness, whether even now a sufficient force was being prepared for the difficult work of a prolonged war of conquest. Still, 50,000 men of the regular army or the volunteers, 15,000 of the militia, and some 10,000 colonists were now preparing to take the field in South Africa. The new generals who were to organise victory by throwing this great



R. Canton Woodville.

FIRST ON THE TOP!
Some of London's Volunteers show their mettle.

SOME NOBLEMEN AT THE FRONT.

*(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)*

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

*(Photo by Russell & Sons.)*

LORD ALWYNE COMPTON.

*(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)*

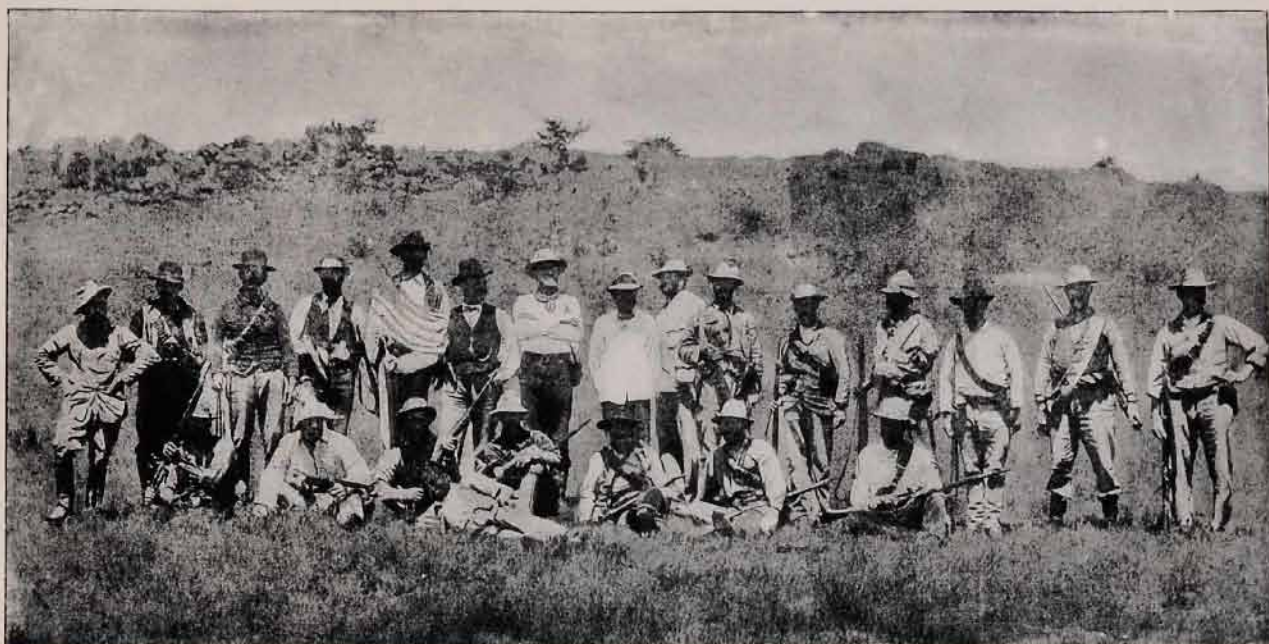
THE HON. T. A. BRASSEY.

force into the balance were already upon their way to the scene of action. But weeks, if not months, must pass before the new divisions and battalions could enter into line, and in that time much might happen. Could Ladysmith, could Kimberley, could Mafeking, protract their resistance through this period of delay? That was the question which rendered this period one of such harassing anxiety, for the fall of these places would unquestionably be followed by the great insurrection of the Cape Dutch, which was the last and crowning calamity to be feared. It is very clear that the Boers had all along counted on this movement on the part of their blood relations in British territory; and it is equally certain that they would not have counted in vain had they themselves shown a more daring and enterprising spirit. In every direction disloyal Afrikanders were doing their utmost to assist the Boers and to hinder the British; their sons were they "knew not where;" they had left their homes on mysterious, or not mysterious, hunting expeditions, rifles in hand and good horses beneath them. More rifles were only awaiting a safe opportunity for producing them. The guarding of lines of communications had to be as strenuous as if the Cape Colony had been an enemy's country. Much more, therefore, than the fate of the garrisons themselves depended on the power of the beleaguered towns to hold out until the British forces could assume the offensive.

*(Photo by Russell & Sons.)*

EARL DUDLEY.

*(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)*THE HON. SCHOMBERG McDONNELL,
In the uniform of the City Imperial Volunteers.



AMERICANS IN THE BOER ARMY BESIEGING LADYSMITH.

This photograph shows Mr. Webster Davis, rifle in hand, amidst the American mercenaries serving with the Boer army. Mr. Davis was formerly Assistant Secretary of the Interior Department of the United States Government. He proceeded to South Africa during the course of the war, and after following some of the Boer commandos into the field, he returned to America, where he took a prominent part in a pro-Boer agitation, making public speeches in favour of the independence of the Boer Republics.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FLANK MOVEMENT IN NATAL.

Further preparations for the relief of Ladysmith—Burial of Lieutenant Roberts—Destruction of Colenso road-bridge—Picket surprised by Boers—Fifth Division reaches Natal—Want of howitzers—Arrival of a balloon and traction engines—Christmas in camp—Disposition of relief force—Boer positions—Mr. Winston Churchill escapes—Boer attack on Cæsar's Camp—Messages from Ladysmith—Relief force attacks Colenso—Advances on Springfield and Hussar Hill—Fail to draw the Boers—Further message from Ladysmith—Storm ends a desultory movement—The flag still flying in Ladysmith—Heroes in rags—Mud everywhere—Composition of the relief force—The army moves—Hampered by baggage—Difficulties of the march—Dundonald seizes Zwart Kop—The pont intact—The Boers entrenching—General Buller's plan of attack—The crossing of Potgieter's Drift.



AFTER the disastrous reverse at Colenso a long pause followed before the relief army in Natal again took the field. The pause was necessary to allow of the bringing up

Further preparations for the relief of Ladysmith.

sary to allow of the bringing up of reinforcements in men and artillery, since, on the one hand,

the battle of Colenso had demonstrated clearly that General Buller's 25,000 men were not equal to the work

of forcing a passage to Ladysmith, and on the other the transference of ten British guns to the enemy had fatally weakened the British artillery. It is to be noted, however, that the Boers made little use of the captured guns; they professed to regard them, perhaps correctly, as of antiquated pattern with insufficient range, and preferred their own Krupps, Creusots, and Maxims, not being hampered by an organisation which considers it part of its duty to remain always a little behind rivals and competitors in its armaments. In this and in other directions the "simple farmers" showed that their simplicity was superior in its shrewdness to the learning of the British artillerists.

Two days after the battle the gallant Lieutenant Roberts, who had fallen mortally wounded in the effort to save the guns, died and was buried with five soldiers who, like him, had succumbed to their wounds. He lies at Chieveley in sight of the stubborn lines of entrenchments



(Photo by Capt. Fox.)

LITTLE MILK CARRIERS

Bringing supplies to a picket under fire on the Tugela.

which on that mournful Friday repulsed the onslaught of the finest infantry in the world. To pay him the last honours General Clery and his staff were present at the funeral.

Burial of Lieutenant Roberts. Thus was all his early promise, all the hope of his family, laid in an untimely grave. He never knew that he had won the coveted honour of the Victoria Cross; life and glory slipped from him at once in painless forgetfulness. What England lost we can only guess from the achievements of his heroic father.

In the days after the battle the Boers displayed their wonted inactivity. They made no attempt to annoy General Buller seriously, and were content with sending small parties of skirmishers

Destruction of Colenso road-bridge. south of the Tugela, who hung round the British camp at Chieveley, sniping water parties, patrols, and outposts. On December 19 the naval guns opened a heavy fire on Colenso road-bridge, which was still standing, with the object of destroying it and cutting off the retreat of the Boers who were south of the river. The existence of a Boer bridge north of Hlangwane was not known at this date. After three hours of continuous shelling a projectile struck and exploded a Boer mine, placed in the structure of the bridge, and a whole span was destroyed. From day to day the naval weapons fired a few shots at the Boer lines, whenever a party of the enemy was seen, and thus caused the Boers some loss. But these were the only incidents which broke the repose of the British camp. The soldiers, indeed, chafed at the monotony and inaction; they were eager to bring the war to a close and to return home; they feared, too, for Ladysmith, and would have



GRAVE OF LIEUTENANT ROBERTS, V.C., AT CHIEVELEY.



A BOER QUICK-FIRING GUN AND ITS CREW

wished to be allowed perpetually to harass the enemy. On the 20th a

Picket surprised by Boers. picket of seven men belonging

to the 13th Hussars was surprised by the Boers, through the negligence of a corporal. The enemy surrounded the handful of men and fired upon them, killing two. The other five escaped. Next day, however, the British cavalry had their revenge; nine Natal Carbineers lay in ambush near the bodies of the slain Hussars, and, when a small party of Boers approached to plunder the dead, fired on them, killing or wounding four.

In the week which followed the battle reinforcements began to arrive. Sir Charles Warren with the Fifth Division, 9,000 combatants strong, had left England in November, and a part of his command had reached South Africa even before the week of defeats. At first it had been intended to use his division in the central field of war, for the operations around Colesberg, and two battalions, the 2nd Royal Warwick and 1st Yorkshires, with his cavalry regiment, the 14th Hussars, were sent to that point. But when General Buller urgently needed more men, he had to call for the rest of the division, which sailed round to Durban and concentrated at Estcourt, six battalions and three batteries strong. It was thus composed:—



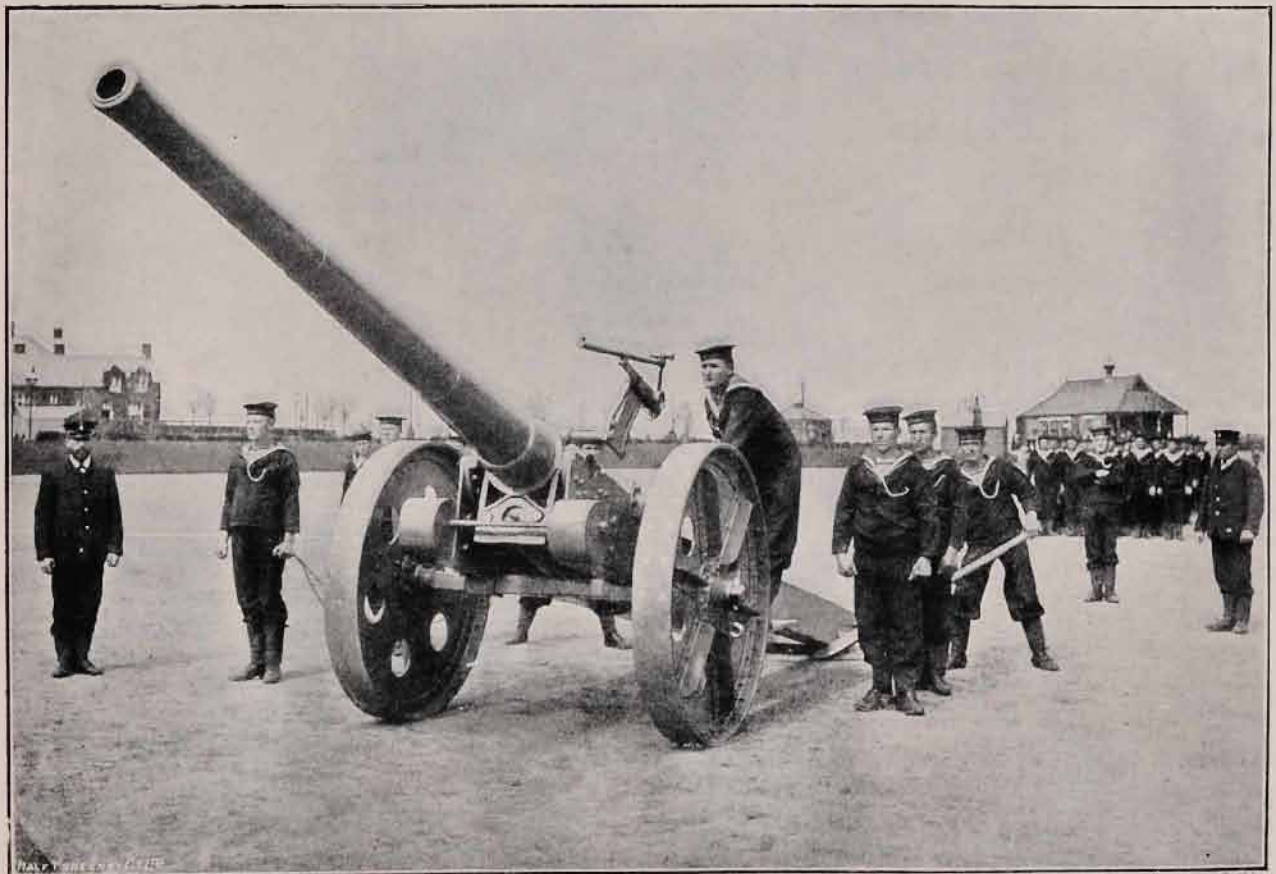
THE GUN OF THE 66th BATTERY WHICH WAS SAVED BY CAPT. SCHOFIELD AND LIEUT. ROBERTS (see page 99).

Tenth Brigade.

MAJOR-GENERAL J. T. COKE.
2nd Dorsetshire. 2nd Middlesex.

Eleventh Brigade.

MAJOR-GENERAL E. R. P. WOODGATE.
2nd Royal Lancaster. 1st South Lancashire.
2nd Lancashire Fusiliers. 1st York and Lancaster.
19th, 28th, and 78th Field Batteries.



SIGHTING THE 47 NAVAL GUN.

This photograph gives some idea of the great length of the weapon, which accounts in no small measure for the accuracy of its fire.

[Photo by G. 160.]

These reinforcements numbered about 7,000 combatants. In addition, one extra field battery, the 73rd, and a single howitzer battery, the 61st, were sent to Natal, bringing up the total of batteries to ten, of which, however, two, from the losses in guns, horses, and men at Colenso, had virtually ceased to exist. Even at full strength ten batteries, or sixty field guns, would have been a miserable proportion for an army of 30,000 infantry and cavalry, and there were deep and well-founded complaints among the correspondents—who, perhaps, accurately reflected the feeling of the younger officers—

Want of howitzers. as to the paucity of howitzers, after the proved efficiency of these weapons at Omdurman. "Here they are simply clamouring for guns, guns, guns," wrote an officer of the Fifth Division, "and guns we send them, undrilled, unready, outclassed in range, and with raw horses and raw reservists. . . . To cross the river and face the Boer position with only 30,000 and no heavy artillery to speak of must mean heavy loss, and we feel very bitter." All these complaints were fully justified by events, yet British Ministers were, at the very hour when this was



[Facsimile of a sketch on the spot by F. A. Stewart.]

THE PICKET OF THE 13TH HUSSARS IN DIFFICULTY (see page 256)

written, professing that the British artillery was all that could be desired and more than ample in strength, and British "experts" were explaining at home that the folly and wickedness of the Boers in arming themselves with "guns of position" were the causes of all the evil. Unhappily, it turned out that the enemy's "guns of position" could be moved and handled just as readily as our short-range field pieces.

With the additional guns came a tardy balloon. Even here there had been some miscalculation, as the balloon had been constructed for work at the altitude of Aldershot, and not for the high

Arrival of a balloon and traction engines. plateaux and rarified air of mountainous Natal. It was, in consequence, deficient in lifting power, though even with this defect it was able to render valuable service. Other adjuncts were a dozen powerful traction engines for use with the transport. They performed splendidly, climbing mountain sides and fording sprufts with an agility not to be expected from their ponderous nature. "They require few attendants, don't gibe, and each can easily haul twelve tons," wrote Mr. Burleigh. The ox-waggon of South Africa carried only a quarter of a ton, so that one traction engine was equivalent to forty waggons.

In spite of the sad memories of Colenso, the army managed to spend a cheerful Christmas in camp. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" is the spirit of the soldier—not in any irreligious sense, but in the sense that continued familiarity with death and the knowledge which all have that their turn may come on the morrow, mercifully assuages the bitterness of sorrow for the fallen. Were it not so a camp would indeed be a melancholy place. The blue-jackets turned out with effigies of John Bull and Mr. Kruger, the latter somewhat battered—it was explained from "the effects of lyddite"; the soldiers diverted themselves with sports and pastimes; at night the camp fires resounded with familiar choruses; and had any Boer looked in upon the scene he would, doubtless, have wondered at the lightness of heart with which the British Army made war. Yet over all brooded the shadow of the coming battles and bloody conflicts which were at last to win the



[Sketched by a correspondent with the Boers.

HOW THE BOERS GOT THEIR HEAVY GUNS INTO POSITION.

difficult way to Ladysmith; and to the north could be heard from time to time the thunder of the Boer guns bombarding the besieged town, and the thud of the Boer shells.

The relief force was temporarily scattered at the close of the year to facilitate supplying it with food and water. Two brigades were left at Chieveley, two more



A TRACTION ENGINE STUCK IN THE MUD.

Disposition of relief force.

were placed at Frere, and at Estcourt was Warren's Division. On December 30, fifty Boer waggons were seen returning from foraging in the district between the Little and Big Tugela, but nothing was done to intercept them. Meantime the cavalry and mounted infantry executed frequent reconnaissances upon the Boer flanks. A body of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry pushed out on the left towards Springfield and Potgieter's Drift without encountering the enemy. It was observed, however,

that the Boers were constructing trenches and works along the line of frowning heights which fringe the northern bank



THE QUEEN'S CHOCOLATE BOX.

With her customary kindness and forethought, Her Majesty caused to be despatched to the troops in South Africa, shortly before the close of the old year, a very large number of elegantly designed blue, red, and gold tin boxes containing chocolate in cakes, at once the most sustaining and appetising form of food. Every soldier at the front had a box specially assigned to him; in nearly every case they were duly delivered, and in all they were immensely appreciated. Often they were sent home by the recipient untouched, that they might be treasured as heirlooms.



A REGIMENTAL COOK AT CHIEVELEY.

chapter in some wild romance.

Mr. Winston Churchill escapes.

After the armoured train affair he was sent to the State Model Schools in Pretoria, where the British officers were confined. The place was built of brick, standing in a gravelled playground, which was surrounded by a ten-foot-high iron fence except on the east, where was a high wall. Inside the fence were armed sentries, stationed at intervals of fifty yards. Attempts to bribe the sentries to connive at Mr. Churchill's escape failed. At night the yard was brilliantly lit by electric lights,

of the Tugela, continuing westwards from Colenso until the great dividing chain of the Drakensberg is reached. They were known to have bridged the Tugela far above Potgieter's Drift, and even at Springfield and on the line of the Little Tugela they were seen raising fortifications from time to time. Already they anticipated a turning movement by the west and were making ready, with their usual wise prevision, to meet it in the most unpleasant manner.

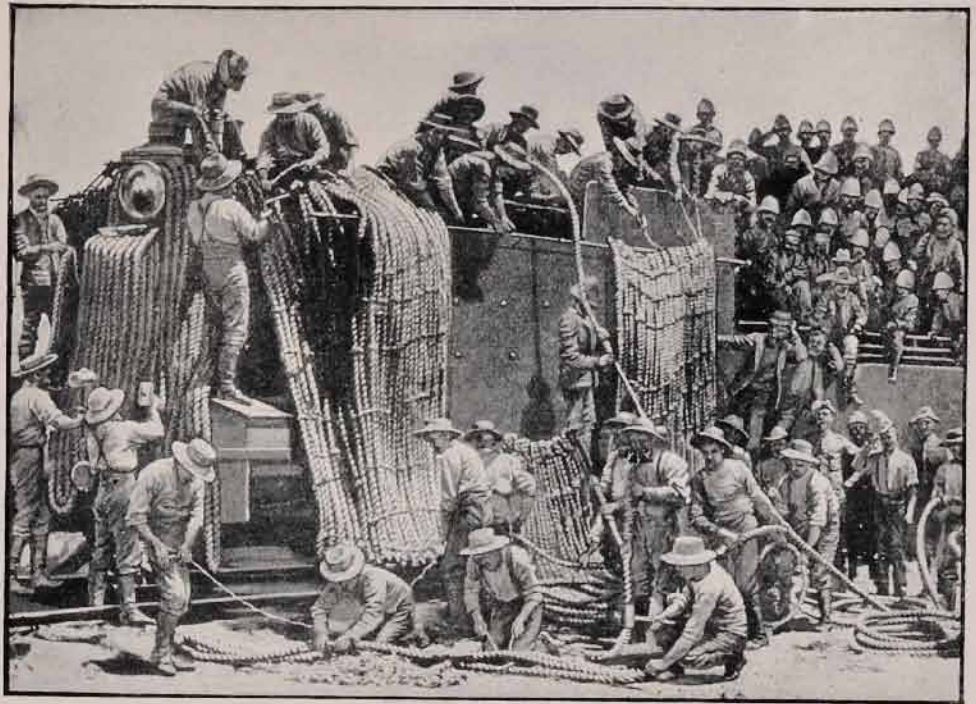
It was about this time that Mr. Winston Churchill rejoined the army in Natal, after effecting an escape from his Boer prison which reads like a



SERVING OUT CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS AT CHIEVELEY.

Messrs. Lyons thoughtfully provided 10,000 puddings for the troops, most of which arrived in time for Christmas.

placed in its centre. These, however, blinded by their glare the sentries who stood behind them and cut off the view of the eastern side of the enclosure at a point where stood the offices of the school. If the two nearest sentries under the eastern wall had their backs turned, escape was possible for one or two determined men. December 11 was fixed by Mr. Churchill and a friend of his, Captain Haldane, for the attempt. But the sentries gave them no chance. On the evening of the 12th Mr. Churchill alone made a second effort. For an hour he watched the sentries through a chink in the offices; the moment at last came when they



BLUEJACKETS PROTECTING AN ARMOURD TRAIN WITH ROPE FENDERS.
This train ran on the line between Pietermaritzburg and Colenso.

turned their backs and began to talk. In an instant he laid hold of the top of the wall, scaled it, and dropped over it into the garden of a villa. There he threw himself down under some bushes and waited. The villa was brilliantly lighted up and full of people; presently two men came out of it and stood, it seemed, watching him. A cat and a dog scurried past him, rustling the leaves and

fixing attention on the very place where he lay in ambush. Yet he was not seen. The two men turned and went out of the garden, and he followed them boldly, with four slabs of chocolate and £75 as his equipment.



UNSHIPPING STORES AT DURBAN FOR GENERAL BULLER'S ARMY.

Once in the streets of Pretoria he steered by the stars to where he conjectured the Delagoa Bay railway to lie. He struck a railway—it seemed to be the right one—and walked along it till

he passed a station; then he stopped and hid, determined to board a passing train in motion. Readers may guess the pluck and coolness required for such an undertaking. A train came in sight



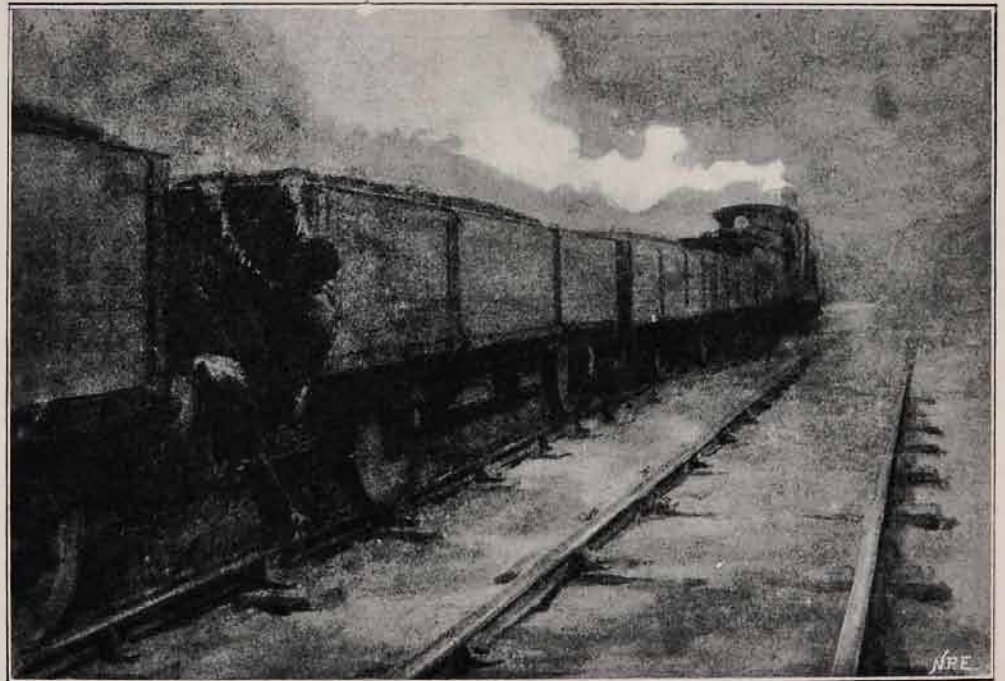
J. Nash, R.I.]

[From a sketch by Winston Churchill.]

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL SCALING THE WALL OF THE PRISON AT PRETORIA.

at last; stopped at the station; started and thundered past the fugitive. "I hurled myself at the trucks," writes Mr. Churchill, "clutched at something, missed, clutched again, missed again, grasped some sort of handhold, was swung off my feet—my toes bumping on the line—and with a struggle seated myself on the couplings of the fifth truck." The truck was laden with empty coal sacks, and under these Mr. Churchill buried himself and slept.

When he woke it was still night. Fearing discovery by day, he leapt from the train with no more hurt than a severe shaking, and as dawn came hid in some broken ground amidst trees. He drank at a pool of water and ate one of his cakes of chocolate. And then, thinking over his situation—to quote his own strangely moving words—"I realised with awful force that no exercise of my own feeble wit and strength could save me from my enemies, and that without the assistance of that High Power which interferes more often than we are always prone to admit in the eternal sequence of causes and effects I could never succeed. I prayed long and earnestly for help and guidance. My prayer, as it seems to me, was swiftly and wonderfully answered. I cannot now relate the strange circumstances which followed, and which changed my nearly hopeless position into one of superior advantage.



J. Nash, R.I.]

[From a sketch by Winston Churchill.]

MR. CHURCHILL BOARDING A GOODS TRAIN.

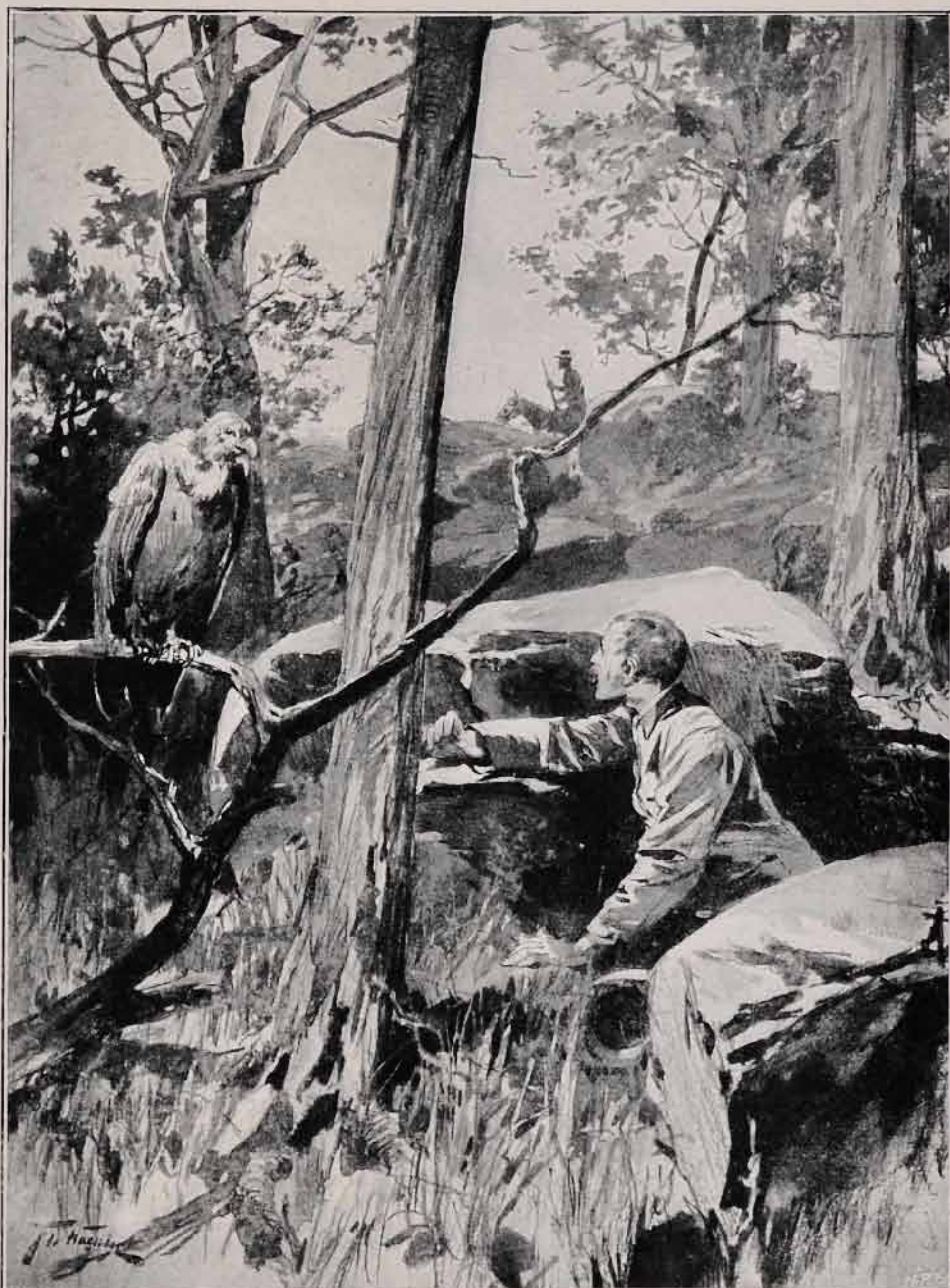
But after the war is over I shall hope to somewhat lengthen this account, and so remarkable will the addition be that I cannot believe the reader will complain." "More things are wrought by prayer Than this world dreams of," echoes the poet. And fresh from contact with the Boers, who yet

believed in God, the fugitive sought and found that help without which the best efforts of man cannot prosper.

That night Mr. Churchill once more set out along the railway, walking and hoping to board a train. But no train came, and progress was slow and difficult. Five more days and nights he spent in this fashion; on the sixth his chance came. He found in a siding a train labelled Lourenço Marques; boarded it and wormed his way to the bottom of a truck laden with sacks of wool or some other soft material, and lay there *perdu* for two-and-a-half days, till at last Delagoa Bay was reached. Once the truck was searched, yet he was not discovered. At Delagoa he took steamer for Natal, sending on the way an earnest appeal to the British nation to persist in the war and despatch to South Africa a quarter of a million men. Thus providentially set free by the Hand which carries through dangers and trials the men who have a great work to do in the world, he rejoined General Buller's army in time to share the hopes and sorrows of the famous flank march.

The early days of January passed and the signs of an immediate advance accumulated. In all the camps action was in the air; the last touches were being put to the transport; an embargo was laid upon all news which might instruct England or the enemy of what was in preparation. These indi-

cations could not have escaped the watchful eye of the Boer Government, and early, very early, in the morning of January 6 the Boers struck their blow. At 2 a.m. the British camp at Chieveley was awakened by the distant tumult of a heavy artillery fire away towards Ladysmith. The thunder of the guns was continuous and ominous. All the morning it lasted, while the British soldiers listened, and chafed, and wondered, and, as the truth dawned upon them, prayed that Ladysmith might that day uphold the honour and greatness of England.



F. de Haenen.]

(from a sketch by Winston Churchill.)

WAITING FOR NIGHT.

After dropping from the goods train, Mr. Churchill hid for fourteen hours in a wood, consumed with thirst, and watched, as he relates in his letter to the *Morning Post*, by a vulture, "who manifested an extravagant interest in my condition, and made hideous and ominous gurglings from time to time."

The morning passed in anxiety and the growl of the guns ceased. The day was black and stormy, but at times the sun broke through the clouds and the heliographs flashed fitfully. From Ladysmith came these messages of alarm:—

Messages from Lady-smith.

"9 a.m. Enemy attacked Caesar's Camp at 2.45 this morning in considerable force. Enemy everywhere repulsed, but fighting still continues."

"11 a.m. Attack continues, and enemy has been reinforced from south."

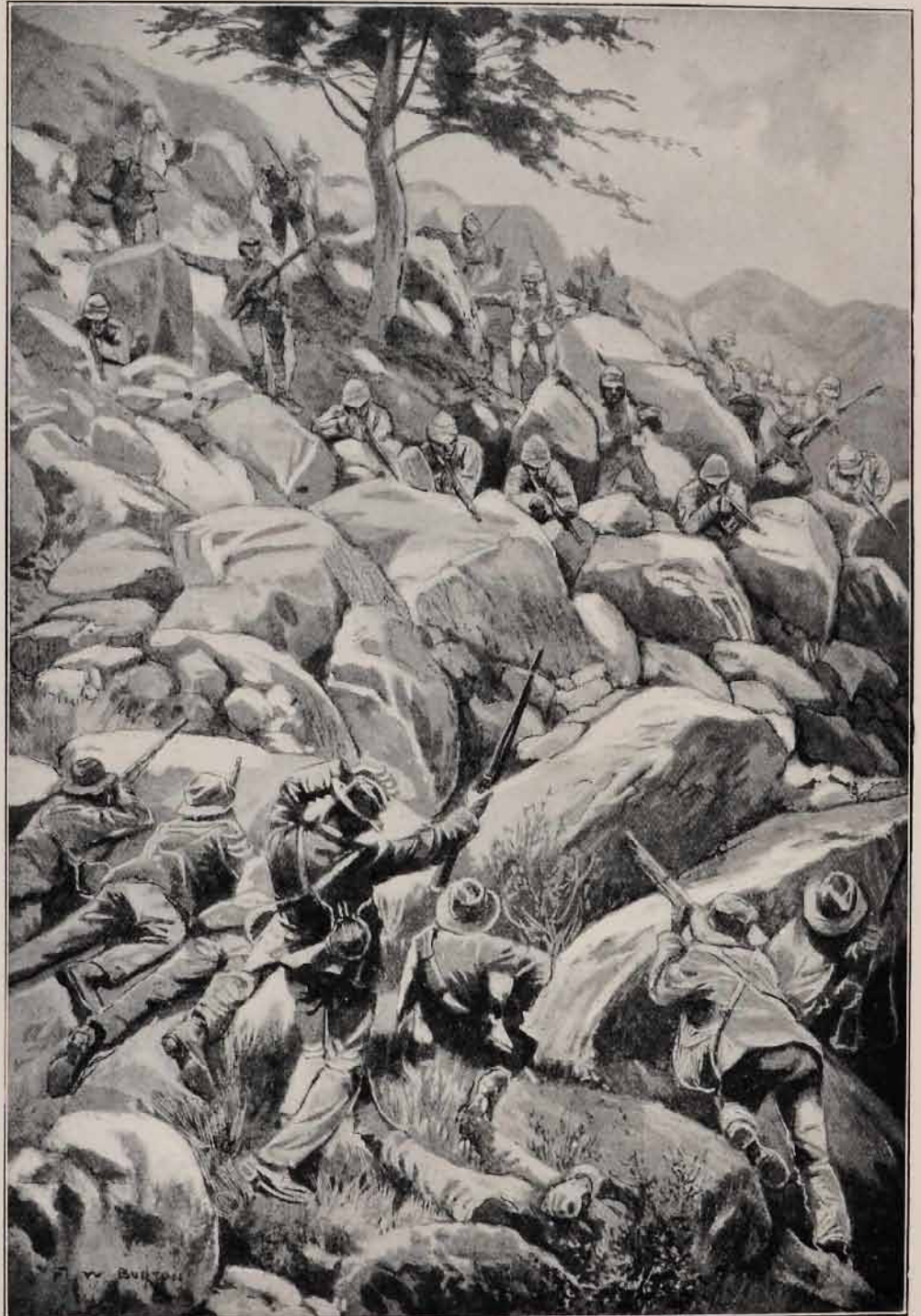
No sooner was the danger realised—the fact understood that a British garrison was fighting for its very life almost within sight of a British army of 30,000 men—than it was felt that this army could not stand by inert and unhelping. But the scattering of the British relief force precluded all serious attack; it was impossible in the time available to bring up the men from Frere and Estcourt; the most that could be attempted was to send in the two brigades at Chieveley to make a show of assault upon the Co-

Relief force attacks Colenso. lines, and

so prevent the Boers from weakening their strength at this point. Even so the demonstration was tardily made. It was soon after 2 a.m. that the Boer artillery began its fierce bombardment of Ladysmith; it was not till 2 p.m. that General Hildyard's and General Barton's Brigades, with three batteries of artillery, marched out of camp and swept down the open, undulating plain which intervened between Chieveley and Colenso. Now,

Advances on Springfield and Hussar Hill.

too, the naval guns opened a heavy fire upon the Colenso works. The Boers could be seen riding back in small parties from the direction of Ladysmith towards Colenso, so that the spell was working. On the flanks the 13th Hussars moved out to Springfield and Thorneycroft's men deployed in the direction of Hlangwane, advancing to



F. W. Burton.

THE BOER ATTACK ON CAESAR'S CAMP.



(Photo by C. Knight, Aldershot.)

GENERAL SIR REDVERS BULLER, V.C.

Commander-in-Chief of the forces in South Africa up to the date of Lord Roberts's arrival. A brief account of General Buller's military career is given on page 77.



THE NAVAL 47 GUNS SHELLING THE COLENZO LINES.

Hussar Hill. The infantry opened out in scattered order, and pushed forward towards the battleground of December 15. The field batteries opened fire and there was a dress rehearsal of a battle—con-

Failure to draw the Boers.

tinuous long-range firing on the part of the British, to which the enemy only replied with the shots of a few marksmen from near the village of Colenso.

The vast entrenchments, stretching mile after mile, were silent; the enemy's artillery obstinately refused to disclose itself. Just at this point another message, terrifying in its suggestiveness, came through from Ladysmith:—

“12.45 p.m. Have beaten enemy off at present, but they are still round me in great numbers, especially to south, and I think renewed attack very probable.”

After this came silence. Black clouds covered the sky; the sun failed; and the



CHURCH STREET, PIETER-MARITZBURG.

British headquarters and army were left in heart-breaking suspense.

The attack on Colenso was not pressed. Ladysmith was fighting for its life; thousands of British soldiers were burning to give Sir George White the best aid that could be given, by a vigorous assault upon Colenso, which by all appearances was not strongly held, and from which we now know that



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF PIETERMARITZBURG, LOOKING EAST.

Pietermaritzburg, called after two Boer leaders, Pieter Retief and Gert Maritz, is the seat of Government in Natal, and since the beginning of the war has served as the official military base for the operations in that colony. The town has normally a population of about 20,000, of whom half are whites. It is beautifully situated amid sloping hills and fertile pastures, and is 70 miles distant from Durban. It is a metropolis in miniature, and the churches, hotels, banks, clubs, town hall, legislative council buildings, museum, and library are worthy of the capital of the "Garden Colony."

the Boers had withdrawn 7,000 men, and yet there was nothing more than a long-range interchange of fire. General Clery in command—for General Buller was seemingly not present—rode out well in advance of his men, but even this daring and calculated exposure of himself and his staff did not draw the Boers. It was a melancholy day, unsatisfactory in every sense, and, had the enemy's assault on Ladysmith succeeded, would have provoked bitter outcry at home, where the difficulties which faced the relief column were, perhaps, not fully appreciated. As the afternoon closed upon the desultory and ineffective demonstration, the storm broke over the country with appalling violence. Thunder and lightning, hail and rain, raged over the frowning heights before the British soldiery, and intense darkness put a stop to the one-sided engagement. Dripping and depressed, the men marched back to camp, uncertain as to the fate of Ladysmith.

Storm ends a desultory movement.

Rain and gloom continued all next day, broken only by a flash of sunlight, which brought yet more disquieting news. The fresh message from Sir George White was this:—

"January 6, 3.15 p.m. Attack renewed. Very hard pressed."

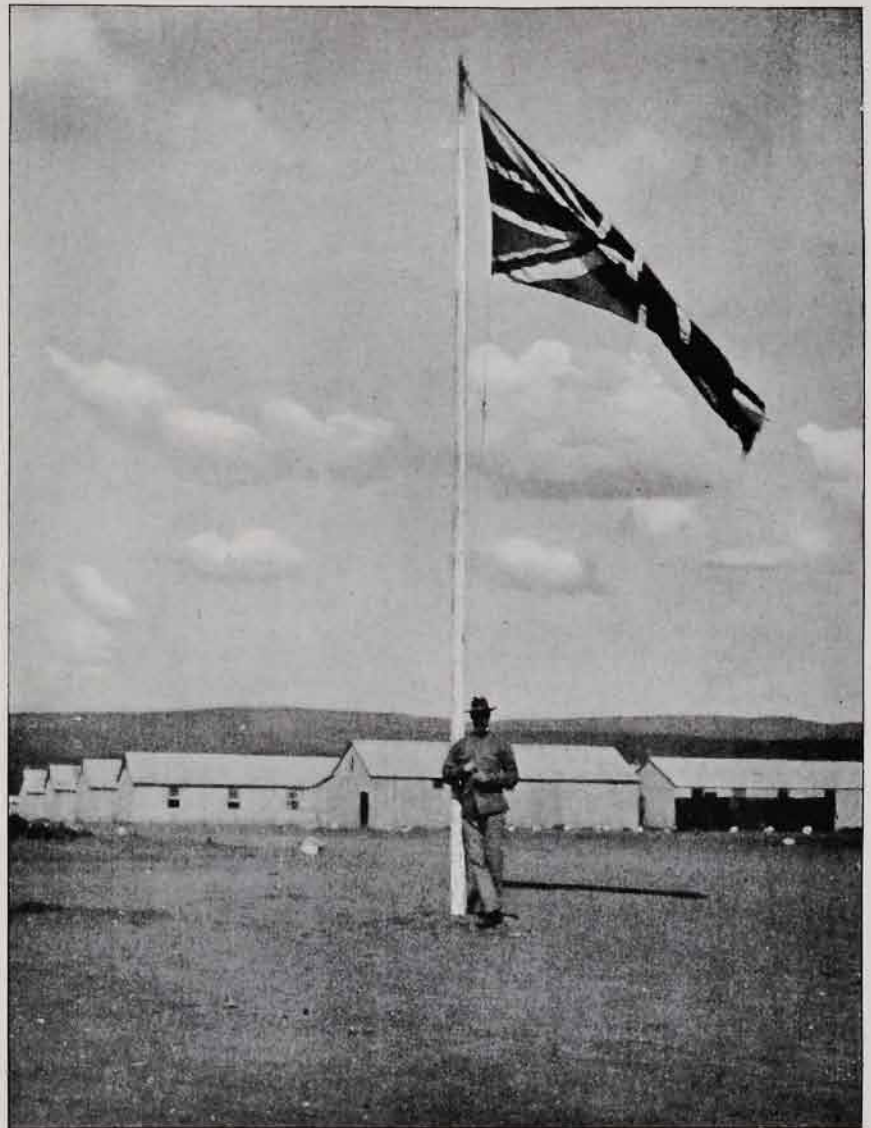
The Boer guns could not be heard, so that, for all men knew, the garrison had fallen. Yet one of those strange rumours, which

The flag still flying in Ladysmith.

in the old-world days told the Greeks, as they joined battle at Mycale, that their countrymen, hundreds of miles away, had on the same day beaten back the barbarian, ran swiftly through the camp. How or whence it comes, this sudden and unaccountable second-sight, no man can tell, and psychologists can but conjecture.

For the story told with substantial truth that at 5 p.m. of the previous day, at which precise hour General Ian Hamilton and the Devons had sent the foe reeling down from Wagon Hill, the Boers had been repulsed and 400 of the enemy taken prisoners. Not till the following day was definite news forthcoming. Then it was known that with terrible loss the heroic garrison had driven back the Boers and kept the British flag flying over Ladysmith. Ian Hamilton, the wounded of Majuba, had been the hero of the defence.

Satisfaction reigned in the camps, though there were some who asked, when the losses were known, how it would be if the Boers repeated their assault. But now the signs of immediate movement filled the air and fixed all attention. The relief army was preparing to strike its second blow.



THE UNION JACK AT LADYSMITH:
The flag which was never hauled down throughout the siege.

On the 6th the base hospitals at Pietermaritzburg had been cleared of the wounded; on the 8th the Frere hospitals were like-

wise emptied, and that evening 700 civilian stretcher-bearers, or "body-snatchers" as they were called by the troops, arrived at the front. They were a nondescript lot of men, ill-clad, poorly-shod, but, as their deeds upon the battlefield showed time and time again, surpassingly brave. For them there were no laurels, no honours, no mentions in despatches, not even the *gaudium certaminis* which so often paralyses the sense of fear. Yet they did their duty and something more; with placid devotion they followed the fighting line, and many of them laid down their lives in noble efforts to succour the wounded and dying.

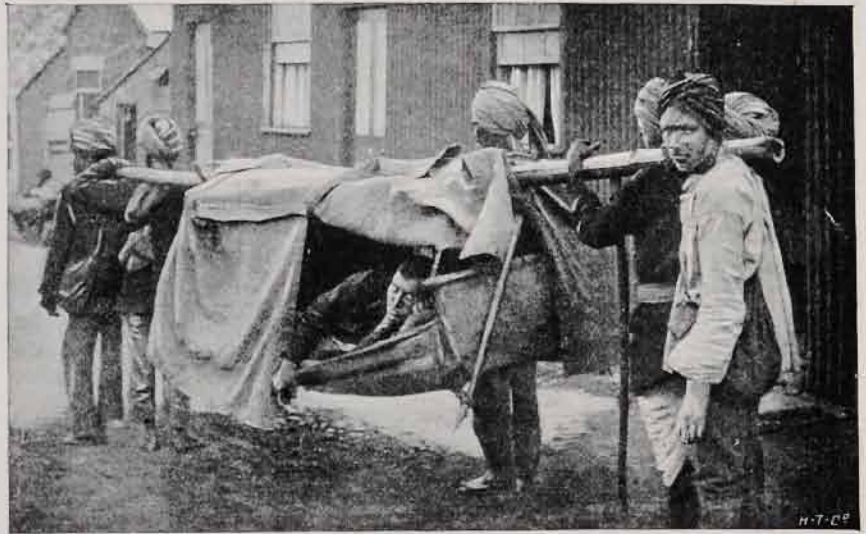
All honour, then, to this ragged corps! In the last few days torrents of rain and continual thunderstorms had made of the veldt a morass, of the roads bottomless sloughs of despond, and of the spruits and watercourses, which furrowed the country side, roaring torrents; but the plight of Ladysmith admitted of no excuses or delays. On January 9, at last, the advance began. From Estcourt, Sir Charles Warren's Division pushed forward to Frere, after a terrible march through the mud, and slush, and tropical rain. "The hills," writes Mr. Atkins, the *Manchester Guardian's* correspondent, "seemed to melt down like tallow

under heat; the rain beat the earth into liquid, and the thick, earthy liquid ran down in terraced cascades. . . . From Estcourt to Frere the division waded, sliding, sucking, pumping, gurgling through the mud; the horses floundered or tobogganed with all four feet together; the waggons lurched ankle-deep into heavy sloughs and had to be dragged out with trebled teams of oxen." "Crossing the swollen spruits was fearful," writes an officer. "At one place my horse fell and I went into the water head over heels and had to swim. The whole veldt was one sea of deep, slushy mud." At one point a strange river appeared—a roaring torrent

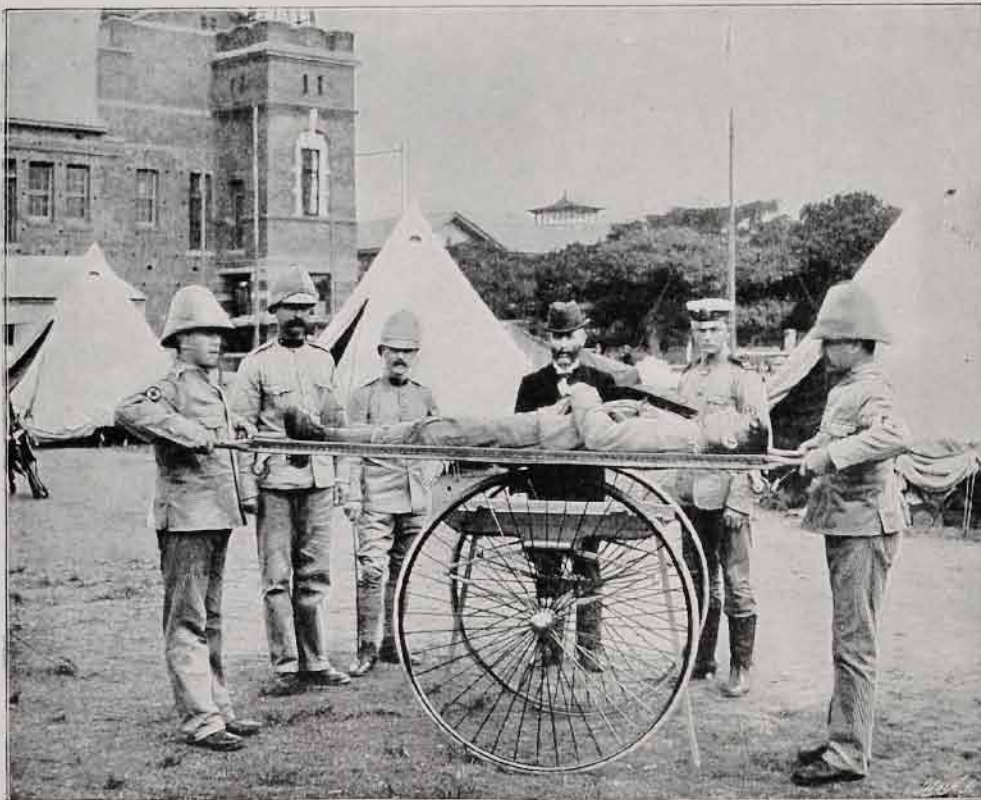
Heroes in rags.

Mud everywhere.

Lt. & Q.M. Brook R.A.M.C.
Major McCormack, R.A.M.C.



INDIANS CARRYING A WOUNDED OFFICER IN A DHÓOLIE.



FOR THE GREATER COMFORT OF THE WOUNDED.
The McCormack-Brook wheeled stretcher-carriage is largely used in South Africa.

of a few hours' growth—and checked the column. An engineer officer sounded and reported ten feet. The pontoons were called for, when a bold colonial rode up, looked at the stream, spurred his horse in, and quietly sped across. As the rest of the column followed him, there were many jests at the expense of the engineer officer. The men had a miserable bivouac that night at Frere, where most of the wet soldiers had to lie out in the mud. Yet the men bore the discomfort cheerfully, with the spirit of Mark Tapley, and made the best of a bad job.



HOW THE MOUNTAIN BATTERY IS CARRIED.

(Photo by Middlebrook.)

The photograph shows the form of saddle which is used for transporting the portions of a mountain battery. One mule is laden with the "chase" of the gun itself, another with the breech, and two more with the wheels and the trail.

The army was now reorganised for the work before it. The following was its new composition:—Under Sir Charles Warren for the flank movement were the Second and Fifth Divisions; General Buller kept only the corps troops under his immediate orders.

Composition of the force.

SECOND DIVISION.

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR F. CLERY.

Second Brigade.

MAJOR-GENERAL HILDYARD.

- 2nd East Surrey.
- 2nd West Yorkshire.
- 2nd Devonshire.
- 2nd West Surrey.

7th, 64th, and 73rd Field Batteries.

Fifth Brigade.

MAJOR-GENERAL HART.

- 1st Connaught Rangers.
- 1st and 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers.
- 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.
- 1st Border Regiment.

FIFTH DIVISION.

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR C. WARREN.

Fourth Brigade.

MAJOR-GENERAL LYTTELTON.

- 1st Rifle Brigade.
- 1st Durham Light Infantry.
- 3rd King's Royal Rifles.
- 2nd Scottish Rifles.

19th, 28th, and 63rd Field Batteries.

Eleventh Brigade.

MAJOR-GENERAL WOODGATE.

- 2nd Royal Lancaster.
- 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers.
- 1st South Lancashire.
- 1st York and Lancaster.

CORPS TROOPS.

GENERAL (COMMANDING-IN-CHIEF) SIR R. BULLER.

Tenth Brigade.

MAJOR-GENERAL COKE.

- 2nd Dorset.
- 2nd Middlesex.
- 2nd Somerset.

Imperial Light Infantry.

Cavalry Division.

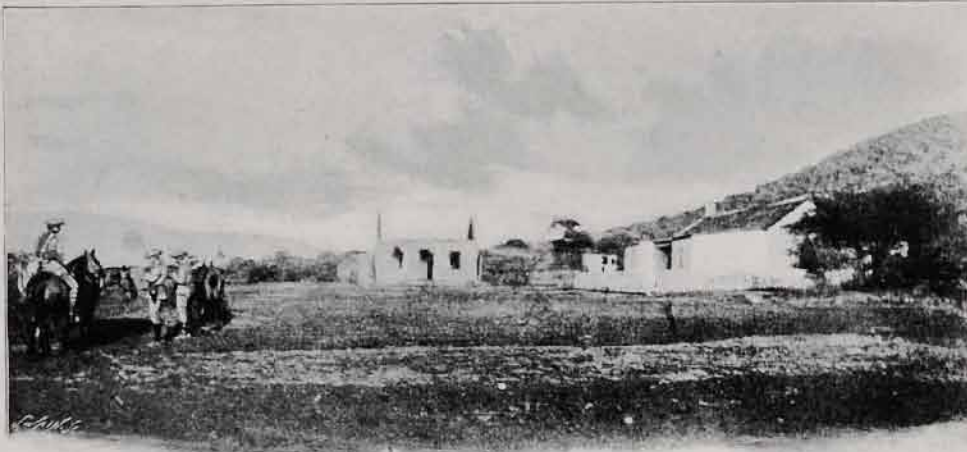
MAJOR-GENERAL LORD DUNDONALD.

- 13th Hussars.
- 1st Royal Dragoons.
- South African Light Horse.
- Thornycroft's Mounted Infantry.
- Bethune's Mounted Infantry.
- Natal Carbineers.
- Mounted Infantry King's Royal Rifles.
- Imperial Light Horse.

Naval guns (two 4.7 in., eight 12-pounders).

78th Field Battery, 61st Howitzer Battery, 4th Mountain Battery.

General Barton with the Sixth Brigade was directed to entrench himself at Chieveley, and was given as his artillery the other six naval 12-pounders, two dummy 4.7's which the ingenuity of the bluejackets had constructed, and the remnants of the field batteries destroyed at Colenso. To guard Frere camp, the Composite Rifle Battalion, made up of drafts for the regiments in Ladysmith, was detailed. The total force available for offensive action was, when all deductions had been made, 15,000 infantry, 2,500 cavalry and mounted men, and fifty-eight guns, excluding the Mountain Battery, which was of no use in the



THE PRICE OF LOYALTY IN NORTHERN NATAL:
A farmhouse laid in ruins by the Boers.

field, and was never employed because of its want of range and power. The general theory in the British camp was that the advance would be made by the right flank in the direction of Hlangwane and Weenen, which many thought was the easiest line of approach to Ladysmith. Circumstantial reports had already reached Durban to the effect that a part at least of Sir Charles Warren's Division was marching along the Weenen road. But these conjectures were falsified by events; it was by the left flank that General Buller had determined to make his next throw.

The 10th, after the deluge of the 9th, was sunny and intensely hot. The earlier hours of the day the men spent in drying their dripping belongings, while the hundreds of transport waggons were packed with twenty days' stores and provisions for the whole force. As the



[Photo by Bassano.]

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR C. F. CLERY,
K.C.B.

In command of the Second Division in Natal since October 1896, with local rank of Lieut-General. He entered the Army in 1858; was Professor of Tactics at Sandhurst from 1872-5; Deputy-Assistant-Adjutant-General in Ireland (1875-7), and at Aldershot (1877-8); was Chief Staff Officer of the Flying Column in the Zulu War, 1878-9; Brigade-Major at Alexandria in the Egyptian War of 1882; Assistant-Adjutant-General in the Sudan Expedition in 1884; Deputy-Adjutant and Quarter-Master-General in the Nile Expedition of 1884-5; Chief of Staff in Egypt 1886-8, and Commandant of the Staff College 1888-93. He commanded the 3rd Infantry Brigade at Aldershot 1895-6, and was Deputy-Adjutant-General to the Forces from that date until he left for Africa.



GRILLED STEAK À-LA-BOERS.



GENERAL WARREN'S BRIGADE MARCHING OUT FROM FRERE.
The depressions seen in the middle distance are called by the Boers "dongas."

afternoon drew on and the heat of the sun abated, the march to the west began. Battalion followed battalion, brigade followed brigade, and last of all came interminable strings of ox-waggons, carts, ambulances, cannon, and all the vast paraphernalia of an army in motion. The men turned their backs upon Colenso and the scene of the defeat of December 15; they strode blithely along towards the Upper Tugela—into a land new to most, a land of promise and hope. Nor could they know that they were facing disaster upon disaster, defeat piled upon defeat, or that after a month of march, and battle, and toil they were doomed to return empty-handed

The army moves.



(Photo by Middlebrook.)

AN ARMY ON THE MARCH: GUNS AND AMBULANCE CARTS CROSSING A DONGA.

and rebuffed. No such thoughts troubled the hearts of the men; for them it was enough that the hour of action had come, and that vengeance was at last to be taken for Colenso and the dismal past.

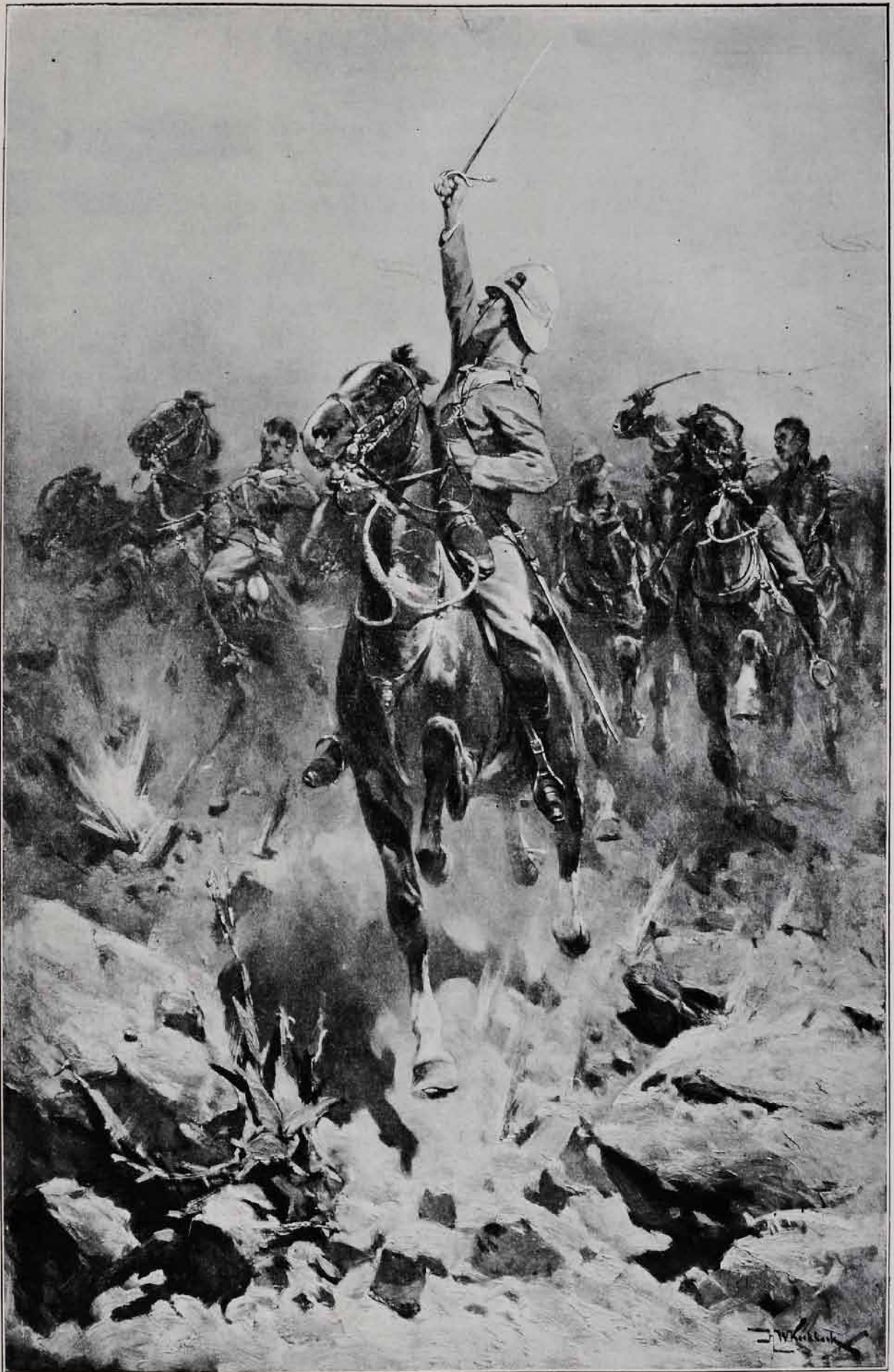
The march of the column was vexatiously slow. The exceeding badness of the tracks—for to call them roads is impossible—the quantity of water in the spruits and rivulets, and the enormous amount of baggage caused continual halts in the centre and rear of the column. A hundred years ago Napoleon wrote that no army carries with it so much baggage as the British, and his criticism was justified. In the interval we have not improved. Says Mr. Churchill: "The vast amount of baggage this army takes with it on the march hampers its movements and utterly precludes all possibility of surprising the enemy. I have never before seen even officers accommodated with tents on service, though both the Indian frontier and the Sudan lie under a hotter than the South African sun. But here to-day, within striking distance of a

**Hampered
by baggage.**



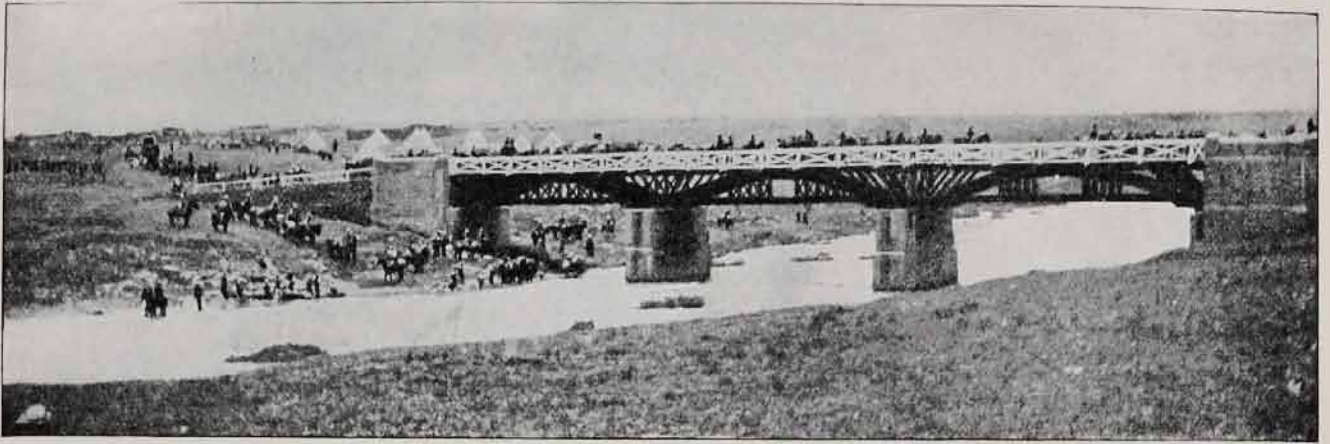
AMMUNITION CARTS AT A DRIFT: MULES OBJECTING TO CROSS.

mobile enemy whom we wished to circumvent, every private soldier has canvas shelter, and the other arrangements are on an equally elaborate scale. The consequence is that the roads are crowded, drifts are blocked, marching troops are delayed, and all rapidity of movement is out of the question. Meanwhile the enemy completes the fortification of his positions and the cost of capturing them rises. It is poor economy to let a soldier live well for three days at the price of killing him on the fourth." The Boer somehow managed to do without these elaborate arrangements. He found it possible to subsist without being constantly accompanied by a supply train; he carried a sufficiency of food with him, and slept in the open, or in some rough improvised shelter behind a heap of stones. With his strip of dried beef, bag of biscuits, 200 rounds of ammunition, and his rifle, he could cover in one day the distance which the British Army could only accomplish in three. And as Napoleon has said that the strength of an army should be gauged by its numbers, multiplied by the number of miles it can move in a given time, it followed that four or five thousand Boers were a match for General Buller's whole army.



Painted by H. W. Koehkoek.]

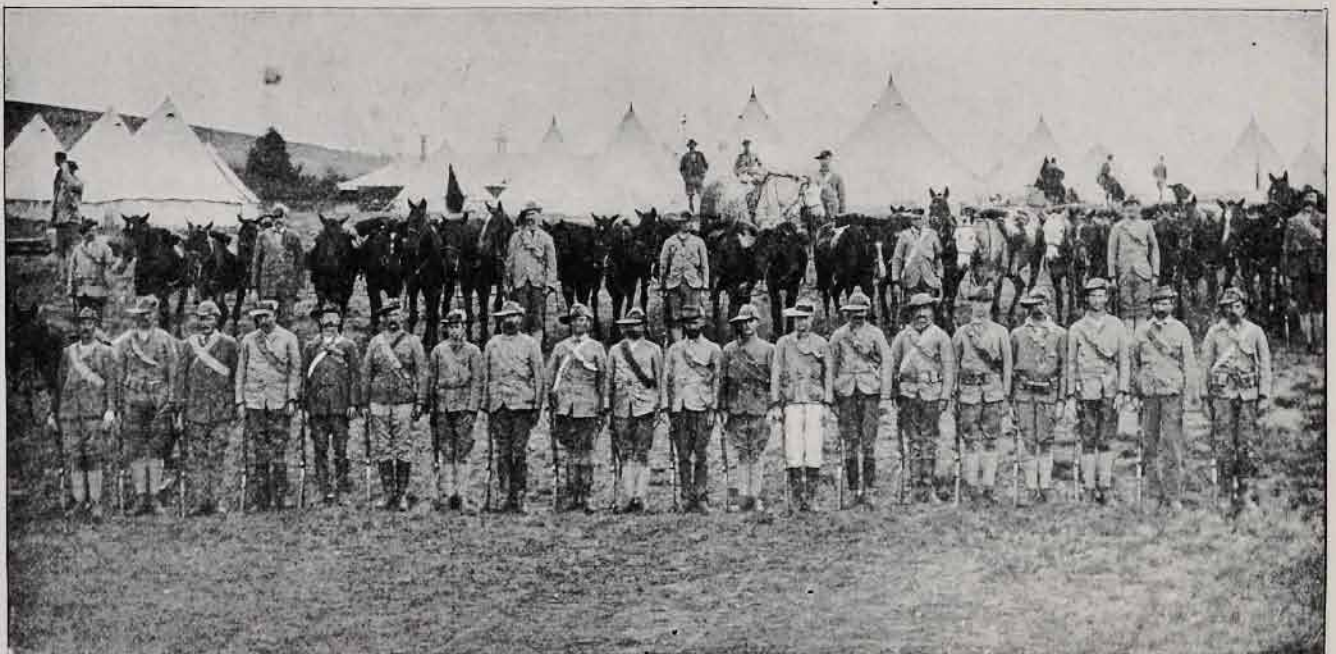
HORSE ARTILLERY IN A TIGHT PLACE.



SPRINGFIELD BRIDGE: THE PIVOT OF THE FLANKING MOVEMENT.

On this occasion the average of the infantry was scarcely a mile an hour. At the start Sir Charles Warren's men had to ford the Blaauw-krantz in flood, and the drifts were choked with waggons, carts, and refractory teams of oxen and mules. "The passages through the spruits were nightmares," says Mr. Atkins, "carts overturned in the water, wheels off, mules mixed up, fighting and knotted in their harness and half drowning, oxen with their heads borne down under water and heaving with all their mighty strength to the opposite bank, a gun or a waggon stuck, and the river of traffic looping round it as water flows round an island; spare teams of oxen moving about to help the unfortunate out of difficulties, a traction engine with one wheel almost buried in soft mud and two other engines pulling at it." One ox-waggon which stuck close to Frere station could not be moved by eighty oxen, and must have been abandoned but for the traction engines, one of which was harnessed to it with a steel hawser and hauled it triumphantly out of difficulty. The march, in consequence of these incidents, which, at first diverting enough, rapidly palled upon the men, was weary to a degree. Great caution had to be observed, for though the Tugela was in heavy flood and the Boer bridges broken, no one could be certain that the enemy had not some force south of the river carefully watching the British flanks and ready to cut off stragglers and vehicles in difficulty. The first halt for the infantry of the Second Division was to be made at Pretorius' Farm, six miles on the Frere side of Springfield and

**Difficulties of the
march.**

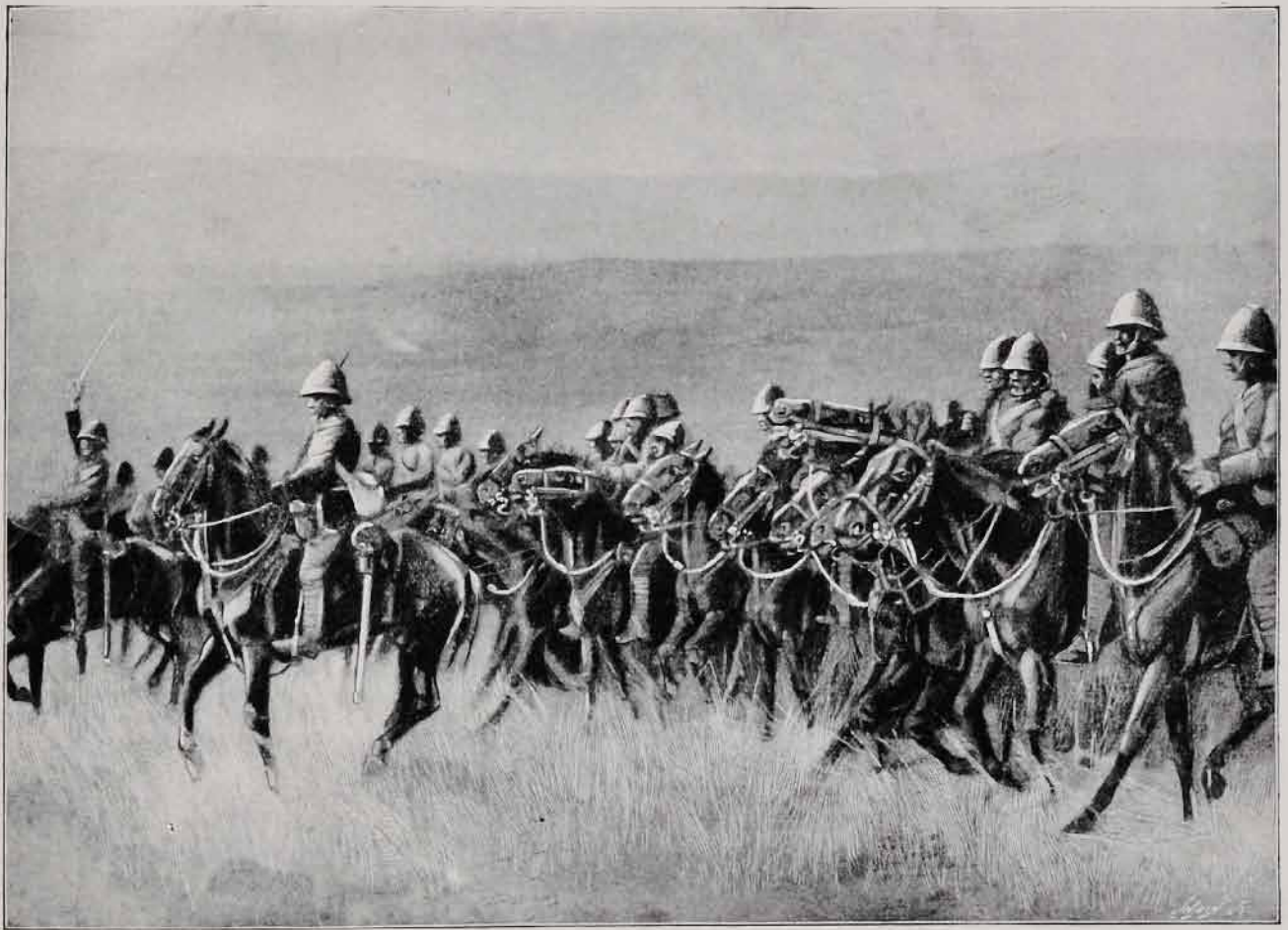


MURRAY'S MOUNTED SCOUTS;

Natal farmers who volunteered when the Boers invaded that colony.

ten miles from Frere, and for the Fifth Division at Springfield itself; but that point was not reached by many of the men till long after midnight. At midnight the weather had broken once more and a terrific thunderstorm swept over the hills, drenching the tired men and inflicting upon them the misery of a sodden bivouac after their hard day's march. They slept as best they could, wrapped in their great-coats and blankets, in the mud and slush. Hildyard's Brigade, with the two great 47's dismounted from their carriages and placed upon carts, had already struck into the column, half way to Pretorius' Farm, coming from Chieveley, so now the turning force was complete.

All the 10th and 11th the troops were on the march, streaming westwards in an unending column. On the 11th the cavalry under Lord Dundonald pushed forward, in advance of the army, to seize Springfield bridge—a long, wooden structure which spans the Little Tugela, and which,



From an instantaneous photograph by the Biograph Co.

LORD DUNDONALD'S CAVALRY ON THE WAY TO POTGIETER'S DRIFT.

according to spies' accounts, had been left standing by the Boers. The country through which the troopers rode was pleasant upland, recalling to many the Yorkshire moors or the fells of Cumberland, only that far away, to north and west, rose in a fantastic wonderland of rugged heights the summits of the Drakensberg. Valleys with verdant herbage ran up into the mountains and were lost in the browns and purples of the savage rocks. It was a scene of beauty in the soft glow of the afternoon sun, with the white mists of night already rising from the valley bottoms—a delectable country, but void and untenanted by man. The sparse farms were empty; the war had driven away their owners—some to the British Army to avoid being commandeered and insulted by the invader, others to the Boer forces in guilty alarm at the approach of the "rooineks." And, strangest of all, there was no trace of the enemy. His scouts and pickets were nowhere seen; as the troopers moved cautiously and inquiringly over the broken terrain, no volleys flashed out from the folds of the spruits.

Would it be so when Springfield bridge was reached, or must a battle be fought before the British could win possession of the Little Tugela?

At length the bridge came into sight. It was uninjured, and there was still no enemy. More than this, word came from the patrols in advance—Murray's Natal Mounted Scouts—that they had scoured the country beyond, up to Potgieter's Ford and the Big Tugela, and found it also empty. The bridge was crossed, and now it entered Lord Dundonald's head, in spite of his orders, which required him only to "seize Springfield Bridge," to push on yet further, and endeavour to secure Potgieter's.

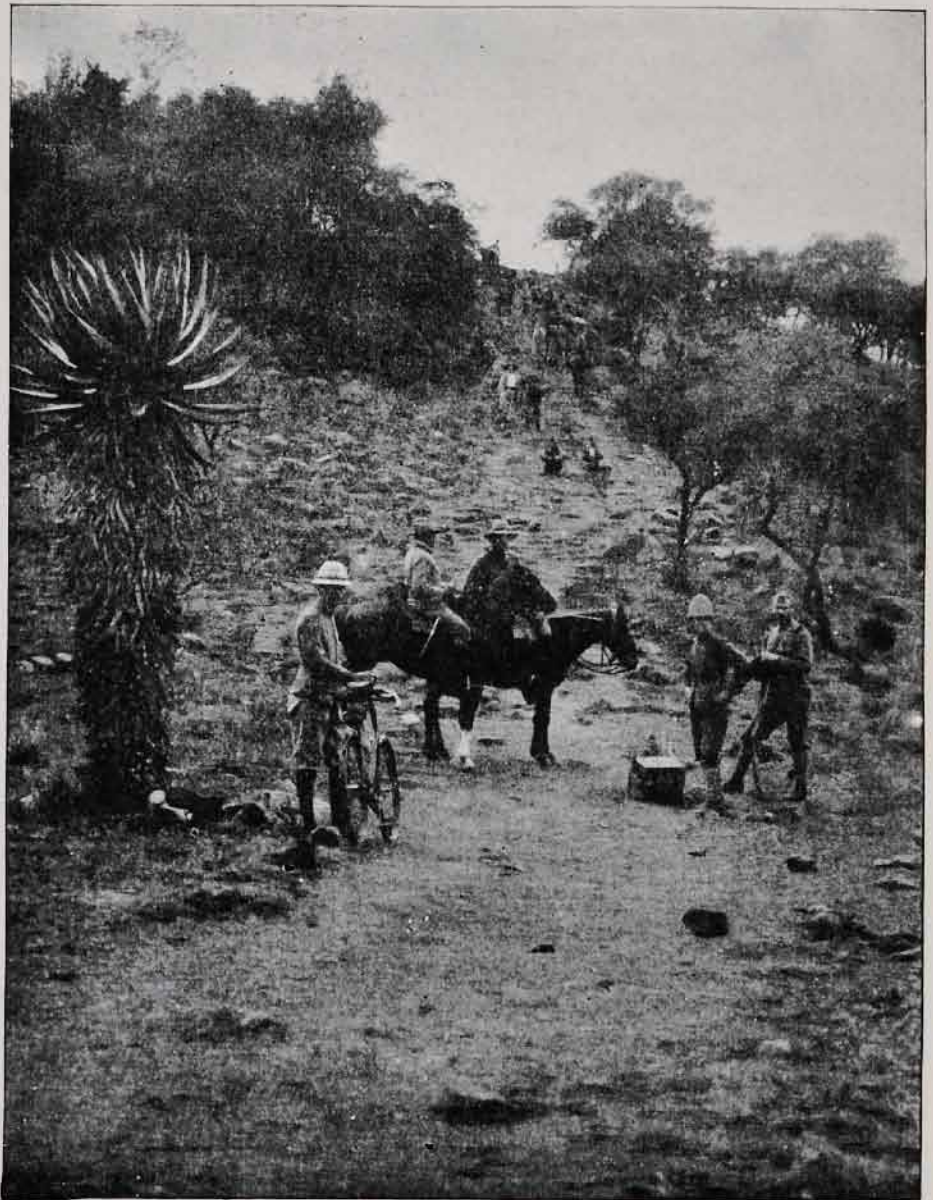
The danger was that this ostentatious abandonment of the district by the Boers might mean some devilish trick—some ambush of the kind to which our army had now grown accustomed in South Africa. In that event no support would be at hand, for the infantry and artillery of the Fifth Division would be nine miles behind at Springfield. Yet, weighing the chances, Lord Dundonald dashingly determined to take the risk. He detached 300 men with two guns to hold the bridge; with the South African Light Horse—a splendid body of men—a company of mounted infantry, and four guns of the 78th Field Battery, he struck out resolutely for Potgieter's Drift, and the great hill

known as
**Dundonald seizes Pot-
gieter's Drift.**

Spear-
man's

Hill, which commands it. At 6 p.m. the goal was reached. There was still no enemy; only half-a-dozen Boers could be seen, and these, wonderful to relate, were washing themselves in the river, and scuttled off like terrified insects when the cavalry came into view.

The 700 British troopers started to climb the hill, dragging with them the guns, with inconceivable toil, and as night fell reached the summit. It was found to be fortified with trenches, laboriously excavated, and stone walls or schantzes, raised by the enemy—evidence at once of Boer activity and insight. Messages were forthwith sent back to Pretorius' Farm to apprise General Buller of the success achieved and to ask of him immediate support. For if the Boers should attack—and even with the Tugela in flood they might know of drifts or have bridges ready—Spearman's Hill could scarcely be held by this handful of men. The night was an anxious one, but it passed without incident. With day the real danger vanished, and all eyes could drink in the wonderful panorama that lay below.



THE FIRST STEEP BIT ON ZWART KOP.

Up which guns and ammunition had to be dragged by hand labour. Zwart Kop looks down on Potgieter's Drift from the east, as Spearman's Hill does from the south-west.

(Photo by *W. J. M. Brooks*.)



TRANSVAAL COINS.

The illustration shows the reverse side of some of the Transvaal coins. The head of President Kruger (as below) appears on the obverse of each. An artificial value attaches to some of them on account of the very limited number issued.

The hill pitched precipitously down, with an occasional shelf or terrace, 700 feet into the Tuge'a below. The river ran, a brown streak of muddy water, flecked with foam, betwixt high rocky banks, through a valley of enchanting beauty. It curved and doubled back upon itself in the most sinuous fashion; from under Spearman's Hill two tongues of land projected northward fenced in by the two inverted U's which the stream hereabouts described. Between these two tongues and on the north of the river an undulating plain rose gently to the mountains, which ran parallel to the river course and shut it in. Exit from this plain there was none without scaling the mountains; on three sides, south, east, and west, was the river, on the fourth the mountain ridge. Thus there was no means of outflanking the enemy when once the army had crossed the river. A frontal assault would be inevitable; and already the Boers could be seen in small parties on the crest of the mountain line, building schanzes, digging trenches, and improvising defences.



OBVERSE OF A TRANSVAAL CROWN-PIECE.



POTGIETER'S DRIFT: BRITISH FORCES CROSSING.

In the panorama the most striking object was the great mountain known as Spion Kop or Taba Myama—though the latter name is applied rather to the western part of the crest and slope, and Spion Kop to the eastern summit. It dominated the whole region, rising away to the north-west of Spearman's Hill, at a point where the chain of hills tends upwards to the north-west to meet the Drakensberg. It was flat-topped and grassy on the summit; then it fell away in sheer cliff, but with a narrow and steep incline at one point to the south, where it could just be scaled; then again its lower slopes descended in gentle undulations to the Tugela. On the northern side, so far as could be ascertained, its slope was gentle. So incorrect were the British maps that it was placed many miles out of its position, far away to the west, and this though it was a mountain famous in history as the point from which the Boer leaders gazed upon Natal and "saw the land that it was good." And beyond it rose the dim outlines, blue with the morning haze, of the troubled sea of mountains which fills Northern Natal; on the horizon the Biggarsberg; then the hills near Elandslaagte, Bulwana and the crests held by the British garrison at Ladysmith; then again to the left the craggy fortresses of the Drakensberg, with waterfalls pouring down

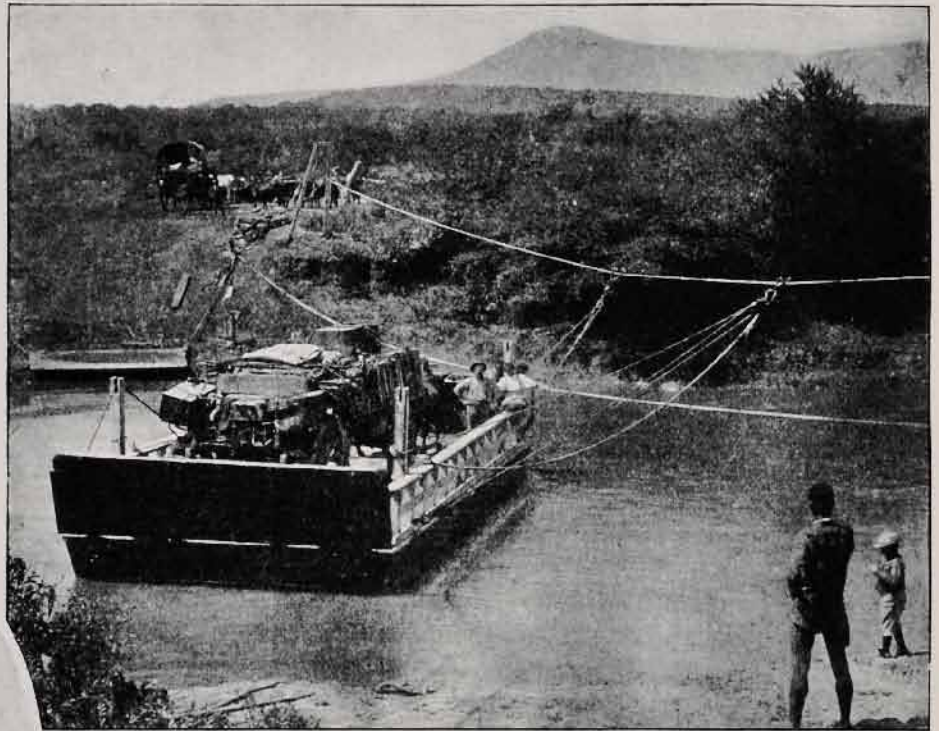


[Photo by Lambert Weston.]

LIEUTENANT T. H. CARLISLE, S.A.L.H.

This is the officer mentioned on page 214 (note to illustration) under the name of Carlisle-Carr, who with six of the South African Light Horse swam the Tugela and brought over the pont.

flood, varying in width from 100 to 300 feet. To pass the drift, which is always difficult and dangerous except when the stream is exceptionally low, marks on the rocks have to be consulted. The road does not run direct across the river, but makes a wide bend; it descends to the river bed from the level of the surrounding veldt by a very steep and narrow cutting. There are huge boulders in the stream, hidden in its turbid waters, which render the crossing particularly awkward for waggons. Into this treacherous torrent presently plunged Lieutenant Carlisle and six of the rank and file of the South African Light Horse—Sergeant Turner, Corporals Barkley and Cox, and Troopers Godden, Howell, and Collingwood—all volunteers, and swam for the other side to seize the pont. They reached it safely, released it, and started in it to recross, but in mid stream were fired upon by the Boers. Fortunately, only Lieutenant Carlisle was slightly wounded. A covering party of twenty British troopers returned the fire with small effect. In the course of the morning the 1st Durham Light



A PONT OR FERRY ON THE TUGELA.

their precipitous walls, and melancholy corries and patches of green upland pasture breaking their sombre tints of purple and grey. It was an enchanting vision that unfolded itself—Nature in her grandest and sublimest aspect. Just under Spearman's Hill lay the spidery line of the ferry; the pont itself was at the opposite side of the river, but the rope was intact.

The Tugela at this point swirls along a rocky bed with precipitous banks at the rate of ten miles an hour when in flood, varying in width from 100 to 300 feet. To pass the drift, which is always difficult and dangerous except when the stream is exceptionally low, marks on the rocks have to be consulted. The road does not run direct across the river, but makes a wide bend; it descends to the river bed from the level of the surrounding veldt by a very steep and narrow cutting. There are huge boulders in the stream, hidden in its turbid waters, which render the crossing particularly awkward for waggons. Into this treacherous torrent presently plunged Lieutenant Carlisle and six of the rank and file of the South African Light Horse—Sergeant Turner, Corporals Barkley and Cox, and Troopers Godden, Howell, and Collingwood—all volunteers, and swam for the other side to seize the pont. They reached it safely, released it, and started in it to recross, but in mid stream were fired upon by the Boers. Fortunately, only Lieutenant Carlisle was slightly wounded. A covering party of twenty British troopers returned the fire with small effect. In the course of the morning the 1st Durham Light

Infantry and 2nd Scottish Rifles, speedily followed by the rest of General Lyttelton's Brigade, arrived, and Spearman's Hill was at length secure.

From Spearman's Hill the Ladysmith heliograph could be seen endeavouring to call up the British. The signalmen were speedily in communication, when they learnt that Sir George White's officers could make out the enemy in large numbers moving west and south to the threatened point. And the men on Spearman's Hill, for their part, could see hundreds and thousands of small dark figures at work upon the slopes and crests of the mountains

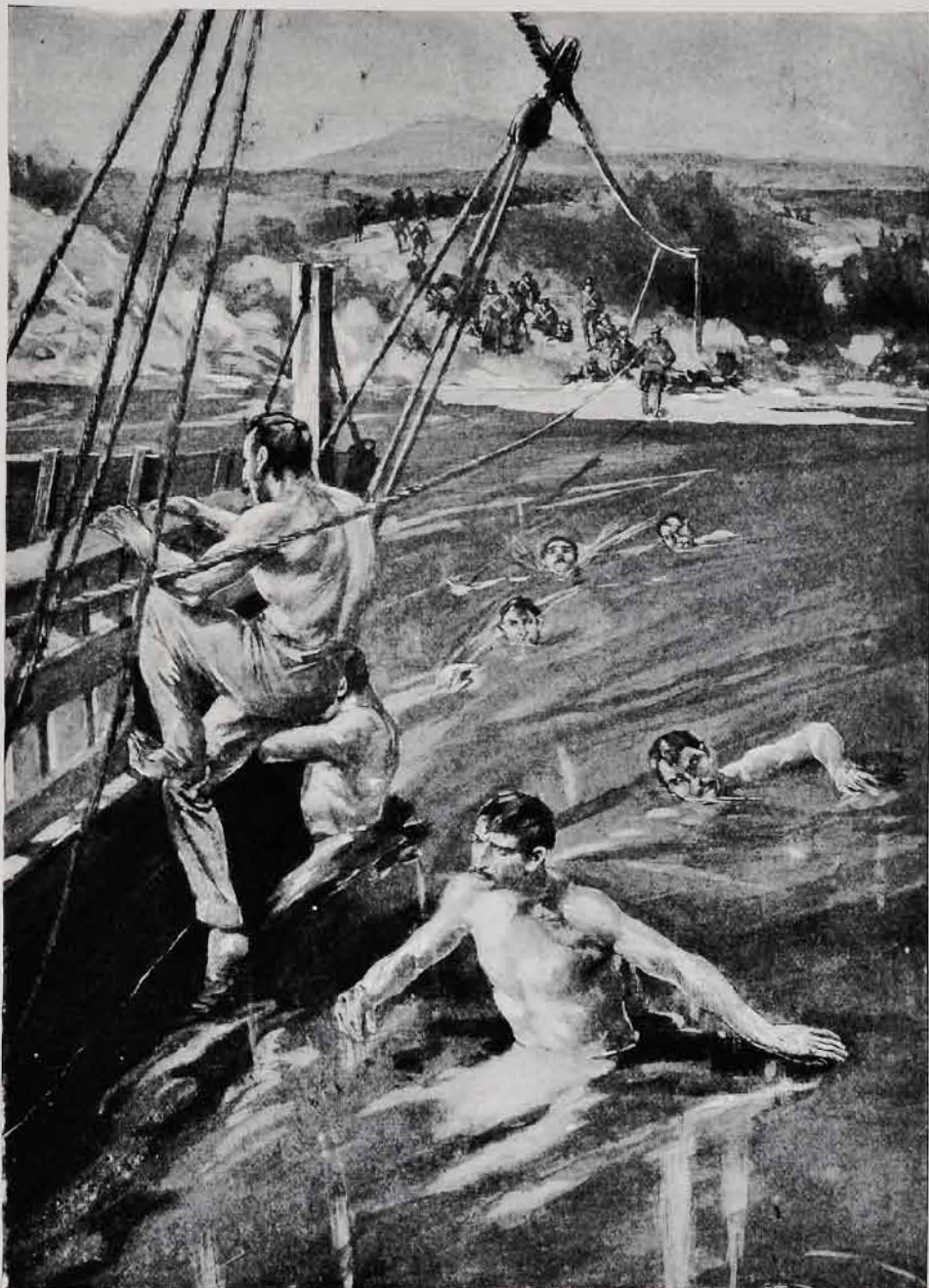
The Boers entrenching.

opposite. "Every favourable bit of ground they could be seen inspecting," says Mr. Burleigh, "while hundreds toiled in every direction. Their object was unmistakable — to draw line after line of trenches and to erect forts which would command every inch of ground from the river front up to and beyond the crested ridges four miles north. Besides that, to the west, they were crowning lofty Spion Kop with defences and gun-positions." In a word, while the British infantry were slowly and painfully marching to find the enemy's right flank, the Boers by virtue of their mobility had already prolonged that flank so far to the west that it could not be turned. Yet the confidence in the British army as to the success of the move was so great that already officers were betting two to one on the relief of Ladysmith before the lapse of another week.

After the seizure of Spearman's Hill and Potgieter's Drift, a long interval of apparent inactivity on the British side followed. The naval guns

arrived at Potgieter's Drift and were placed in position on the hill, but they refrained from shelling the Boer lines. General Buller fixed his headquarters hard by at Spearman's Camp. Meantime, the British troops anxiously watched the

Boers. "What are we showing ourselves and our guns here for?" was the question which they asked each other, to draw the not too satisfactory answer, "To give the enemy plenty of time to get



Atec Hall.]

THE CAPTURE OF THE POINT AT POTGIETER'S DRIFT.

General Buller's plan of attack.

ready." Yet, as a matter of fact, this criticism was not altogether just. Though in the light of after events it can be seen that a rapid blow would have had many chances in its favour, though, as Napoleon said, "Celerity is better than artillery," such action must have carried with it grave risks. General Buller, preferring caution and sure-going, wished to attract all the attention of the enemy to Potgieter's and then to strike elsewhere. Five miles west of Potgieter's were two fords known as Trichard's and Wagon Drifts; five miles east another known as Skiet Drift. Roads to these ran from Springfield, and the movement of troops along the roads could not be seen by the enemy, owing to the heights which fringed the south bank of the Tugela. When all his preparations were complete, ample supplies of food and ammunition accumulated at Springfield, and his army concentrated, General Buller had determined to move General Warren across at Trichard's Drift with instructions to turn the enemy's right. Thus the apparently foolish and purposeless demonstration at Potgieter's was not without its object. Great delay was caused by the state of the unmetalled roads and the



BREAKING CAMP: OX-WAGGONS MOVING OFF.

immense difficulty of moving over them 650 ox-waggons. Between Frere and Springfield there were no less than three places where all the waggons had to be doubled-spanned and where some even required three spans. There the oxen had to be detached from two waggons and attached to a third, while the vehicles behind them were brought to a dead stop. The marching of the troops was not altogether well-managed, since the men had alternately to run and halt, than which nothing could be more wearying.

At last, on January 16, a supply of seventeen days' provisions was ready at Springfield. The position of the British Army was now as follows:—At Spearman's Camp and Potgieter's Drift were General Coke's and General Lyttelton's Brigades, forming the centre of the British Army. Watching Skiet Drift, near which the enemy had been seen in some force, and guarding the British right, was the greater part of Bethune's Mounted Infantry. At Springfield the main force was concentrated—three brigades strong, with six batteries, under the command of Sir Charles Warren. On the evening

of the 16th this force marched north-westwards to Trichard's Drift, where it was to pass the river next day. With it went the Cavalry Division under Lord Dundonald. Sir Charles Warren's orders were, having crossed the Tugela, to advance north-westwards along the front of the Boer position, leaving Spion Kop on his right, and swinging his force round the westward extremity of the Boer line of defence, in the neighbourhood of Acton Homes. Thence a comparatively open stretch of country extended to the neighbourhood of Ladysmith.



THE SCOTTISH RIFLES' MAXIM ON ZWART KOP.

To draw off the enemy's attention from this, the decisive movement, a demonstration in

force was to be made from Potgieter's Drift. As columns of dust rose from the direction of Springfield, betokening the advance of Warren's three brigades, the camp at Spearman's Farm showed signs of activity. The infantry struck their tents; the cavalry, whose camp was in full view of the Boer lines, left theirs standing and marched off to the west; all the naval guns pushed forward to good positions on Spearman's Hill. Then, first

The crossing of Potgieter's Drift.

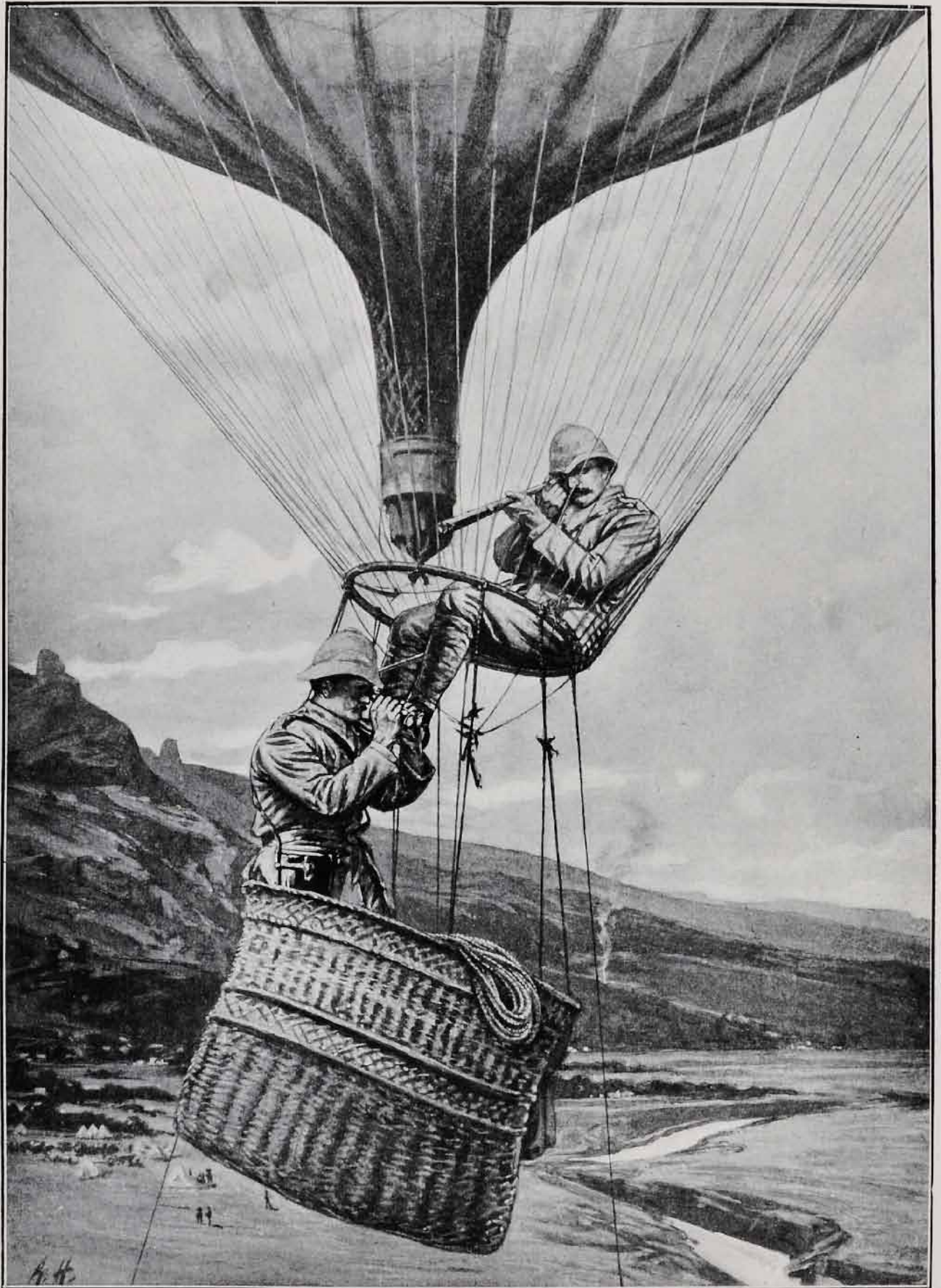
Lyttelton's and afterwards Coke's Brigades deployed and in open order descended to the river. The Scottish Rifles and Durham Light Infantry led the way. One officer, Captain Harrison, advanced into the water carrying with him a rope; the stream had fallen and now ran only waist deep at the ford. Then came two or three more men, and last a long line holding hands. Simultaneously a number of pontoons were got to work, and the ferry, which had stuck obstinately and refused to move, was repaired by the Natal Naval Volunteers. Away in front the Boers watched without firing a shot. They could be seen manning their trenches on the hills, but they gave no sign of life, intending, perhaps, as at Modder River and Colenso, to allow the "rooineks" to approach within some hundreds of yards, and then to massacre them with their magazine fire at their leisure.

First one and then another chain of infantry made the passage with much floundering in the water. The companies, as they crossed one by one, formed up on the opposite bank. When the two leading battalions were complete they advanced rapidly for a mile along the undulating plain to the north of the river and seized a line of low kopjes. The night drew on with troops everywhere in motion.



DINNER HOUR IN CAMP.

A trumpeter of Thorneycroft's Horse going the rounds.



DIRECTING THE ADVANCE ON POTGIETER'S DRIFT FROM THE BALLOON
The Boers made ineffectual attempts to destroy the balloon by shell-fire.



PERILOUS DUTY; A DESPATCH RIDER WAYLAID BY BOERS.

CHAPTER XIII.

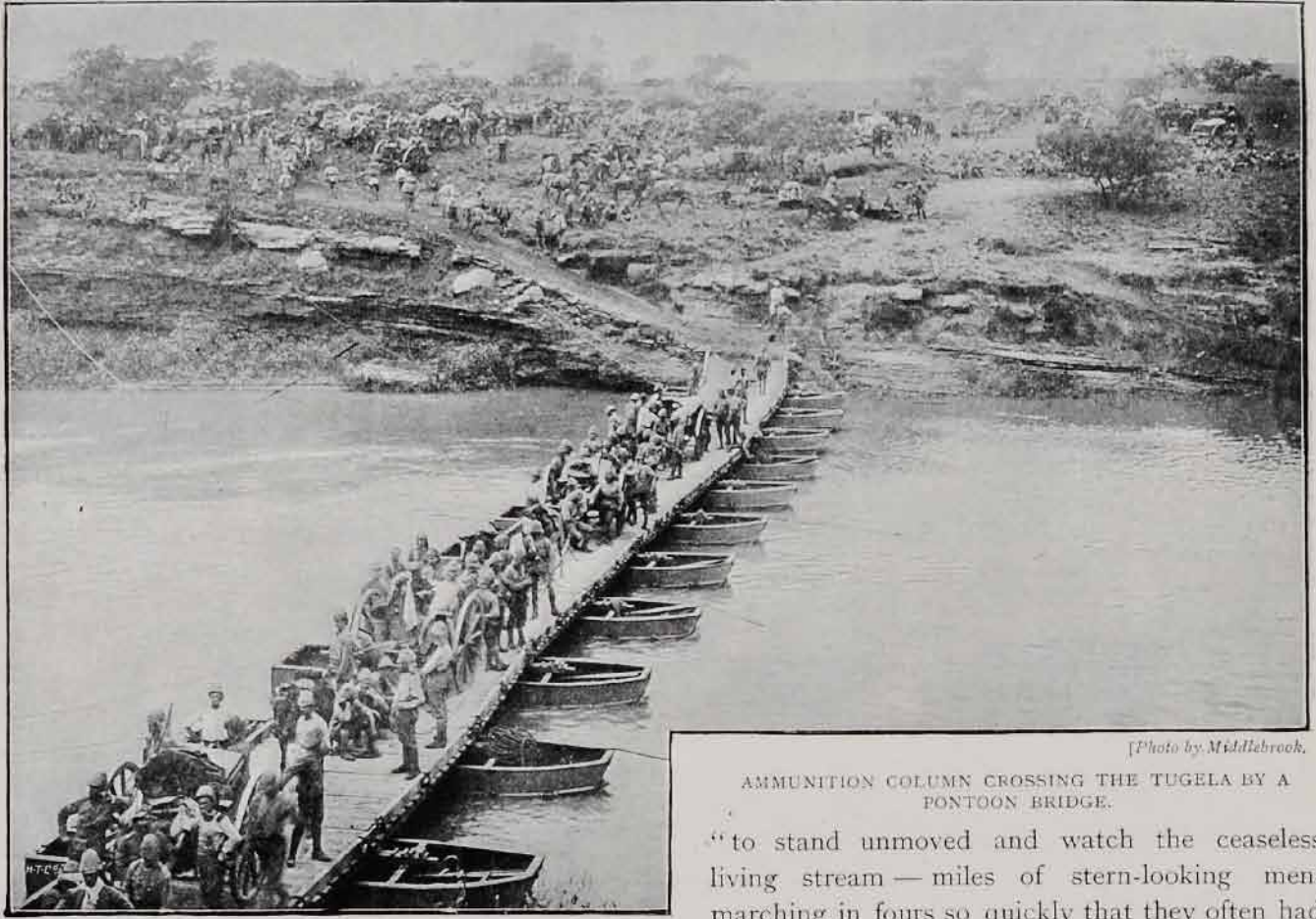
SPION KOP.

Warren's Divisions cross the Tugela—The enemy entrenching—The artillery and transport cross—A long delay—Spion Kop bombarded—Lyttelton's feigned attack—The cavalry seize Acton Homes—Desultory movements before Spion Kop—Change of plan—Advance on the left ordered—Capture of Three-tree Hill and Bastion Hill—Death of Major Child—Assault ordered and countermanded—Lyttelton's advance—Warren telegraphs for howitzers—Rumoured relief of Ladysmith—Another day of little progress—Pathetic humour—Assault ordered and postponed—Another council of war—Warren reinforced—The storming force—Ascent of Spion Kop—A Boer picket surprised—The storming force halts too soon—Tardy reinforcements—Botha determines to recapture the hill—Positions of the opposing forces—The Boers bombard the British position—Woodgate wounded—Thornycroft put in command—A frightful struggle—Lack of artillery support—Boer attempts to rush the position—The King's Royal Rifles storm a ridge—Desperate straits—Confusion of commands—Thornycroft determines to withdraw—Scene on the hill after the battle—Losses in the action—The retreat—Causes of the defeat.



ALL through the night of January 16-17 General Lyttelton's Brigade was crossing the Tugela at Potgieter's Drift, fording the river or ferrying over in the pontoons and ferry-boat. Before dawn the six 5-inch howitzers had followed the infantry and taken their post in the line of kopjes, at One Tree Hill, the foremost point which the British advance had reached. Meantime, General Hildyard with the Second Brigade, to impress the Boers with the belief that the main attack would be delivered from the east, and to divert attention from the west, had deployed his men and made as if to cross at Skiet's Drift. But, as night wore on, he too, had stolen off towards Trichardt's Drift, ten miles to the west, whither in eager haste all Sir Charles Warren's force was marching. Three brigades of infantry, six batteries of artillery, and almost all the cavalry and mounted infantry were concentrating upon this point. Rain fell in torrents, hampering the movement and delaying the transport; yet before dawn the combatants were in place and ready to begin. "It was not possible," says Mr. Churchill,

Warren's Divisions cross the Tugela.



[Photo by Middlebrook.]

AMMUNITION COLUMN CROSSING THE TUGELA BY A PONTON BRIDGE.

"to stand unmoved and watch the ceaseless living stream — miles of stern-looking men, marching in fours so quickly that they often had

to run to keep up, of artillery, ammunition columns, supply columns, baggage, slaughter-cattle, thirty great pontoons, white-hooded, red-crossed ambulance waggons, all the accessories of an army hurrying forward under cover of night—and before them a guiding star, the red gleam of war." The march through the mud, however, had wearied the men; still more so the alternations of running and halting, which showed that the staff, from unfamiliarity with the work of handling and moving large bodies of troops, had made faulty arrangements. And thus, when in the small hours of the early morning the column, anxious for action, looked down upon the river, and up across it at the solemn precipices of Spion Kop beyond, nothing happened. Perhaps the pontoons to bridge the stream had dropped behind on the muddy roads; perhaps the general thought it inexpedient to launch weary troops forthwith against the enemy. But to the men the delay seemed exasperating; they knew that they would pay dearly for it with their lives and that they had made haste in vain, since the Boers were to be allowed time to extend their lines yet further to the west, once more compelling a frontal attack.

The night and the early hours of the day passed in inactivity. On the hills opposite the Boers were already at their work of raising stone breastworks and laboriously digging and blasting entrenchments, while hour after hour reinforcements poured in. To the Boer the spade was a weapon only one degree less useful than the rifle. Our soldiers, taught to despise cover and untrained in the use of entrenchments, watched with mingled contempt and apprehension these proceedings of the enemy, and, as line after line of defences showed faintly on the green and brown surface of the hills, wondered at the measured deliberation of their own generals, contrasting strangely as it did with the furious energy of the men opposed to them. At last, about 8 a.m. of January 17, the crossing began. A patrol of Light Horse rode down to the river; the Devons and West Yorkshires followed; the field batteries on the heights overlooking the drift drew up in line and prepared to open; from the right through the morning air came the thunder of the howitzers and the heavy thud of the naval guns on Spearman's Hill, telling that General Lyttelton was already in action. The uproar of battle re-echoed through this remote mountain land and reverberated in the lonely eyries of Taba Myama. Thick wet mist still enveloped the hill-tops and

**The enemy
entrenching.**

gave the country an air of eeriness and mystery; it lifted only towards mid-day as the sun's rays dispelled it. The West Yorkshires were the first to cross, ferried over in pontoons; the engineers set to work to build two bridges, both above the drift, the one of pontoons and the other of trestles. The first was completed in a couple of hours. The work was scarcely interrupted by the Boers. A handful of snipers fired a few shots at the British covering party of infantry and killed a soldier of the Devons, but beyond this the enemy showed no disposition to harass the attacking force, although, had they done so, there is little doubt that they could have inflicted considerable loss. Their unwillingness to leave cover, on this as on many other occasions during the campaign in Natal, permitted operations to be carried on with comparative safety, which a more enterprising enemy could have rendered highly dangerous, or even disastrous. With the Boers it was an object to risk as little as possible their lives and limbs; on our side the error was quite in the opposite direction.



A. J. Gough.]

DROWNING OF A TROOPER OF THE 13TH HUSSARS.

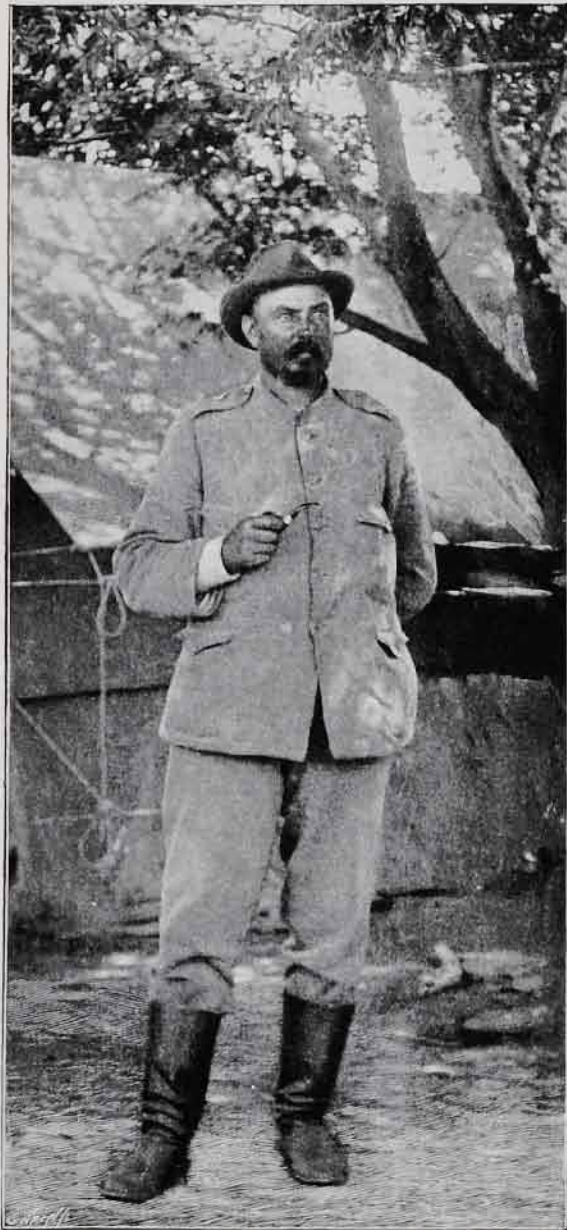
Several men and horses were swept away by the current in the crossing of Wagon Drift, and one trooper was drowned in spite of Captain Tremayne's gallant attempt to rescue him.

The British field batteries opened fire and searched the north bank of the river with a storm of shrapnel, while the infantry discharged a few volleys. There was no return of their fire by the Boers, and the cannonade died away.

After the West Yorkshires and Devons, General Hart's Irish Brigade streamed across the river and marched to a bivouac on the further bank. The cavalry and mounted infantry had to use a difficult and dangerous ford, known as Wagon Drift, a mile lower down the stream.

The artillery and transport cross. Owing to the swiftness of the current, which runs here at something like ten miles an hour, there were some misadventures; several men were swept away, and were with difficulty rescued by their comrades; one unfortunate trooper of the 13th Hussars was drowned although every effort was made to rescue him. It now only remained to pass the artillery, the transport, and the waggons of the column across, but this proved by far the most tedious and troublesome part of the

operation. Nearly 500 ox and mule-waggons, in addition to ambulances, guns, and ammunition waggons, were sent over. The work occupied all the afternoon and evening of the 17th and the morning of the 18th. The rest of General Hildyard's Brigade and the whole of General Woodgate's Brigade



COMMANDANT GENERAL LOUIS BOTHA.

Was born in Natal some thirty-six years ago, and settled down in the Transvaal when he had nearly reached man's estate. He does not come of a fighting stock, but has hitherto been known as a successful farmer. In the early days of the war, however, he showed such conspicuous military ability that he was, upon Joubert's death, and despite his comparative youth, elected Commandant General of the Boer forces. He is fairly well educated for a Boer, and talks English fluently when he pleases. He is married to a lady of Irish descent, whose maiden name was Emmet, and who claims relationship to Thomas Addis Emmet, the United Irish leader of 1798, and to Robert Emmet, executed for high treason in 1803.

had already joined the battalions which were bivouacking without tents on the north of the stream. The army was across and ready to strike a blow when its transport would permit, halted in a land which was an earthly paradise—"a country of arable soil and splendid pasture, where brown-clad doves emit plaintive love songs, of twittering tom-tits and green-plumaged sunbirds, of huge, gray-coated secretary birds and gaudy butterflies that would gladden the heart of the entomologist."

The afternoon and evening of the 17th passed in inactivity so far as the infantry and artillery were concerned. Only a few shots were fired

A long delay.

by the artillery to disconcert the Boers. There was much questioning in the British camp as to the reason for the long delay, since to the men rapid movement seemed essential for success against the enemy. The Boers could be seen everywhere, well out of range, at work upon the lines of defences on the hills and kopjes. The British army was sitting still and giving General Botha—who was now in command of the Boers at this point—ample time to concentrate his forces and make all his dispositions. The wait at Potgieter's was easy to explain, for that had not been the point chosen for the decisive attack. But the wait after crossing at Trichardt's Drift admitted of no such simple excuse. Everything depended upon celerity. The facts were that General Warren did not venture to leave his baggage in charge of a small rearguard and to push on along the Boer front, and that the crossing of such a river as the Tugela, with its high banks, awkward approaches, and difficult fords, was necessarily a slow and troublesome work, giving the enemy abundance of opportunity to gather men and oppose a determined resistance.

On the 18th General Lyttelton's Brigade advanced in widely extended order from One Tree Hill—as the chief of the kopjes near Potgieter's

Spion Kop bombarded.

Lyttelton's feigned attack.

Drift was named—towards the Boer lines, supported by the fire of the naval guns and howitzers. The shells searched the eastern face of Spion Kop, which had been assiduously

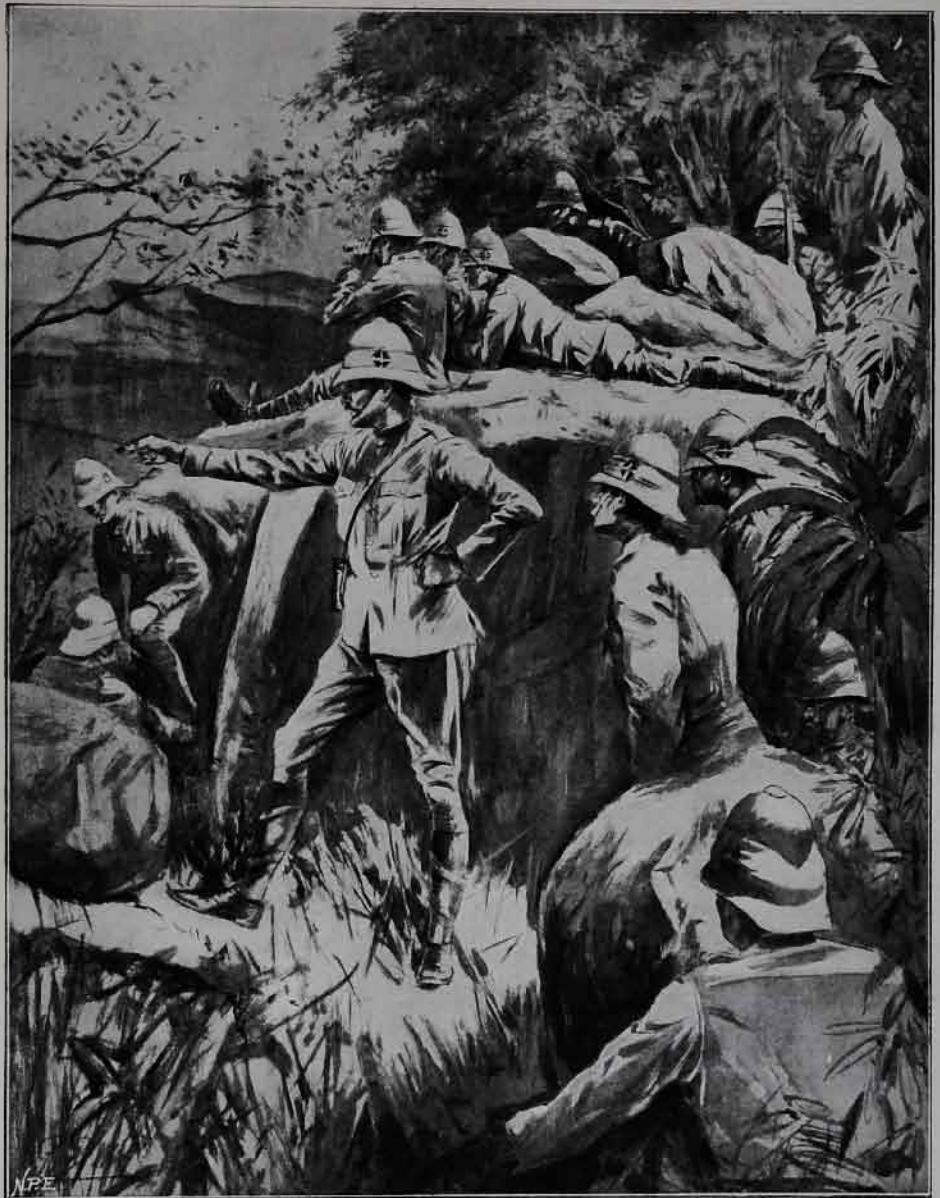
bombarded on the previous day, causing the Boers, as they themselves admitted, heavy losses, and interrupting communication between their camps and laagers. Clouds, now yellow and green with the fumes of lyddite, now brown with the dust which its explosion threw up, flecked the slopes of the hills. But the enemy made no reply whatever. The great war balloon rose slowly into the air near One Tree Hill, and the officer in the car signalled that he could see the Boers lining their entrenchments, but could discover no guns. Thereupon the British infantry—the Scottish Rifles on the left, the 3rd King's Royal Rifles in the centre, and the 1st Rifle Brigade on the right—pushed forward in a convex line, making all possible use of cover. The object was to draw the enemy, to distract

their attention from Sir Charles Warren, and to discover their positions. But they obstinately refused to be drawn; instinctively they had divined our purpose. Only from the hill on the British right front, known as Brakfontein, came a few shots which wounded two men. A second line of kopjes, one mile in advance of One Tree Hill, was reached and gained without incident, and there the brigade halted till night, and then under cover of darkness fell back.

During this interval of inactivity and demonstrations the mounted men under Lord Dundonald had been employed on more serious work. While Sir Charles Warren was collecting his baggage

The cavalry and transport, seize Acton Homes. and moving his infantry force

slowly a couple of miles northward, under the shadow of Spion Kop, the cavalry and mounted infantry rode six miles up the road to the north-west to the hamlet of Acton Homes. About mid-day a small force of Boers was made out, also moving west, and Major Graham of the Natal Carbineers, with 350 men of that body, of the Imperial Light Horse, and of the King's Royal Rifles' Mounted Infantry, was permitted to snare it if he could. He pushed forward rapidly, unobserved by the enemy, and seized a point commanding the road, where his men lay in ambush and waited. The Boers with unusual carelessness had sent out a German to scout, who reported that the way was clear. They came on unsuspectingly, and, but for a carbineer who fired before orders had been given, would have been destroyed to a man. As it was, at 300 yards range, they received a deadly volley and at once broke and ran over the



“THE OUTLOOK” OVER THE TUGELA.

An officer of the Scottish Rifles explaining to his men the dispositions of the enemy.

smooth, open plain, some to the nearest kopje, others, more daring, across the veldt towards the Boer camps some miles away. The party which had taken refuge in the kopje was speedily surrounded, and an attempt was made—and abandoned when the Boer fire showed that it must cause unnecessary loss—to rush the position with the bayonet. “We got within fifty yards of the Dutchmen,” said one of the King's Royal Rifles, “but it was too hot to go further.” So the storming force retired, and a steady rifle fire was directed upon the kopje to bring the Boers to their senses. Once they showed the white flag without ceasing their fire, but the British troops had been warned what to expect, and paid no attention. Then a second time the white flag fluttered up and the shooting of the Boers stopped;

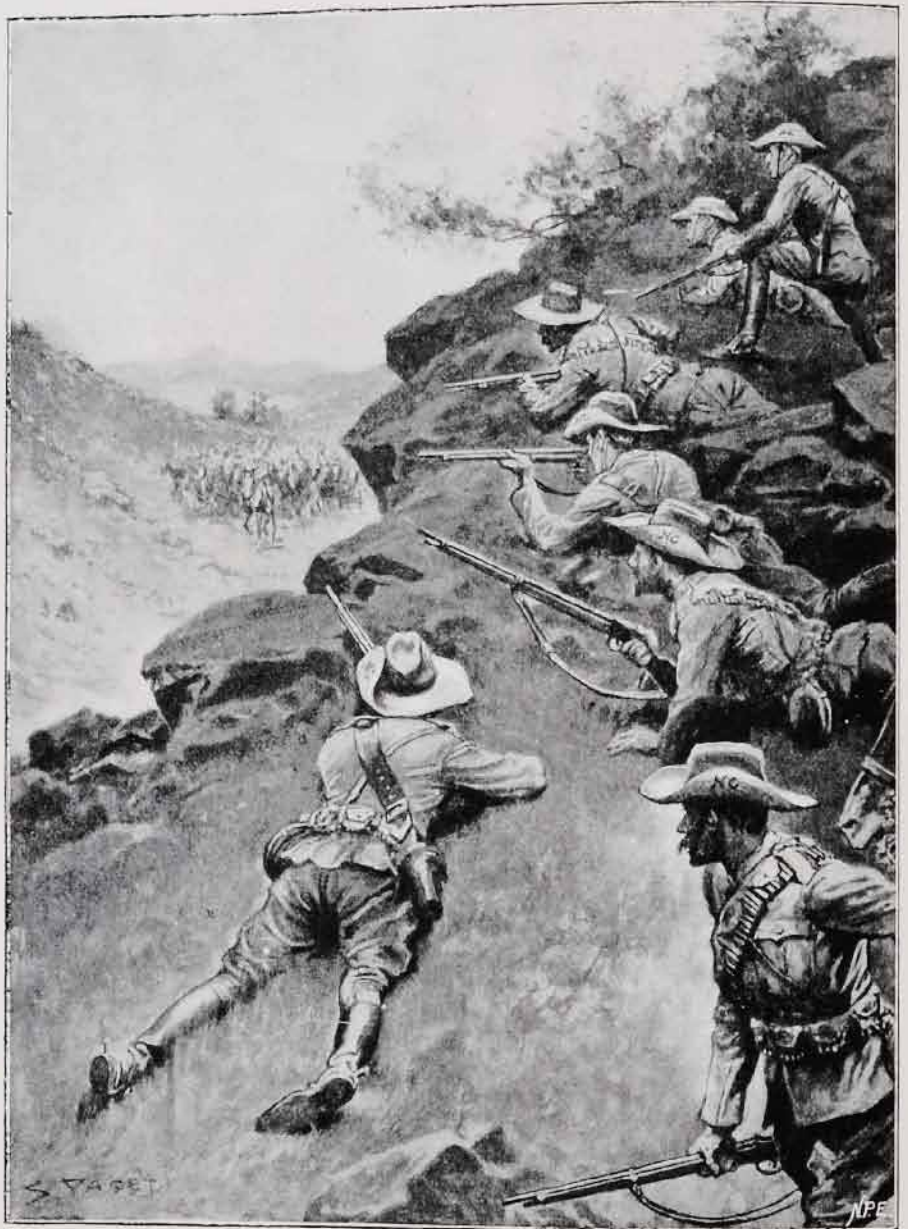
with difficulty the British officers checked their indignant men. Several of the enemy rose and held up their hands; the kopje was taken. Twenty-four unwounded Boers were made prisoners, and, in addition to these, eight were found badly wounded. Ten more lay dead on the kopje, among them Field-Cornet de Mentz of Heilbron, who, though badly wounded at the beginning of the fight, had continued firing till he bled to death. Besides these losses, the party of Boers which had made its escape eastwards had also suffered to the extent of fifteen or twenty killed and wounded. The British casualties were only four—two men shot through the head and killed, and an officer and a private wounded. The affair, however, had no serious results and no strategical importance, though it showed that our Colonials were fully a match for the Boers in wiliness. To the Natal Carbineers the credit belongs.

No sooner had the enemy surrendered, than the British soldiers vied with each other in striving to comfort and succour the Boer wounded. The soldiers crowded round them, "covering them up with blankets or mackintoshes, propping their heads with saddles for pillows, and giving them water and biscuits from their bottles and haversacks. In an instant anger had changed to pity. The desire to kill was gone," wrote Mr. Churchill. The British mounted troops were ordered to return after their success, as the news had been heliographed from Ladysmith that a large force of Boers was moving with guns to cut them off, and they were beyond the reach of infantry support. Thus the original intention of seizing the Boer line of communications to the Drakensberg was abandoned without further effort.

On the 19th, in very leisurely manner, Sir Charles Warren began his infantry movement along the western foot of Spion Kop.

**Desultory movements
before Spion Kop.**

That height was the pivot upon which the Boer centre rested; its slopes and precipices parted the two wings of the British army—the right wing under General Lyttelton at Potgieter's, watching the eastern face of the great mountain, the left wing, five miles away, watching the western face and endeavouring to work round it without delivering a frontal attack upon the works which crowned its ridges. The artillery vigorously shelled the Boer lines; the naval guns from Spearman's Hill enfiladed the eastern ridge of Spion Kop, and two brigades of British infantry in skirmishing formation pushed forward up the rocky slopes and ridges in the direction of Spion Kop, at once to guard the baggage from molestation and to occupy the enemy.



BOERS AMBUSCADED BY BRITISH AND COLONIAL TROOPS UNDER MAJOR GRAHAM OF THE NATAL CARBINEERS.



[Photo by Gregory

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR CHARLES WARREN, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., R.E.

A few facts concerning Sir Charles Warren's career are given below the small portrait on page 215. He was appointed by Lord Roberts (April 26, 1900) Military Governor of Griqualand West "while that part of the country is in a disturbed condition."

The transport was forwarded to Venter's Laager, an advance of four whole miles in the day, while the mildest kind of long-range fighting proceeded, and the troops wondered whether "make haste slowly"—"slowly" in this case being at the pace of the snail—was wise tactics. On the right of the British troops the Boers looked down from the hills—it might seem with ironical contempt—upon the half-hearted, purposeless moves of the great army below. They were active enough in ever extending their lines of defence to the north-east, whatever the British were doing. Yet, prudently guarding against possibilities, their heavy waggons were already on the road to the Free State and the Transvaal. Sir George White, they argued, might well break in upon their retreat if General Buller's army gained any success. In the afternoon the action slowly relaxed its vigour;



BRITISH SOLDIERS TENDING BOERS AFTER THE BATTLE AT POTGIETER'S DRIFT. (See page 265.)

the steady and continued rifle and cannon fire gave place to desultory sniping, and the troops bivouacked in their aerial perches among the rocky ridges.

"In war," says the great Prussian organiser of victory, Scharnhorst, "what the general does matters little. Everything depends upon the unity of action and vigour with which he does it." And

Change of plan.

so it was no very reassuring symptom when, after reaching Venter's Laager, Sir Charles Warren assembled the generals, the staff, and the commanders of the artillery and engineers, and pointed out to them that there were two lines of advance—the one devious and round-about, by way of Acton Homes, the other passing up by Fair View and the centre of the Boer position to the western side of Spion Kop, at a point where the summit of the ridge dropped considerably. To move by Acton Homes, he urged, was impossible, as his food and provisions would not permit of it. To take waggons up the Fair View road would necessitate sending all the transport back to the south of the Tugela and capturing the enemy's positions by a frontal attack, the men marching with three or four days' provisions in their haversacks. The assembled generals acquiesced;

and thus, in spite of a general order, which is said to have been issued by General Buller at the beginning of the flank movement, to the effect that there would be "no turning back from the relief of Ladysmith," the original flank movement was abandoned. A message was sent to General Buller couched in the following terms:—

"Sent 7.54 p.m. Received 8.15 p.m.

"Left Flank, 19th January.

"To the Chief of the Staff,

"I find there are only two roads by which we could possibly get from Trichardt's Drift to Potgieter's, on the north of the Tugela, one by Acton Homes, the other by Fair View and Rosalie: the first I reject as too long, the second is a very difficult road for a large number of waggons, unless the enemy is thoroughly cleared out. I am, therefore, going to adopt some special arrangements which will involve my stay at Venter's Laager for two or three days. I will send in for further supplies and report progress.—WARREN."



Second Row: Lt. W. Vanden.
Front Row: Prince von Jutzzenka.

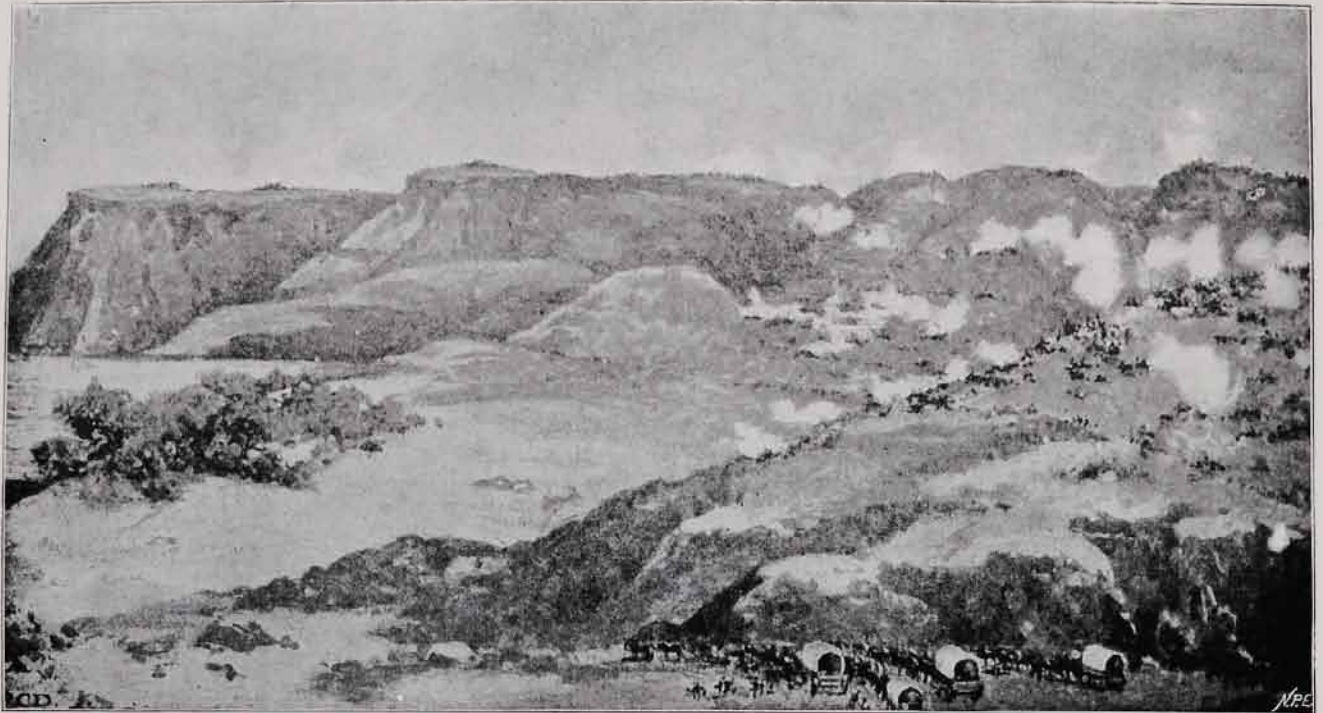
Lieut. von Quitzow.
Lieut. von Zelewski.

Lieut. Grothaus (Transvaal) Artillery.
Dr. Elsberger.

OFFICERS OF THE GERMAN CORPS UNDER GENERAL LOUIS BÖTHA.

It will be observed that it did not in clear language state that a frontal assault was to be substituted for the flanking movement, yet it contained enough to tell the Commander-in-Chief in Natal that a radical change of policy was purposed. Sir Redvers Buller appears to have offered no objection. He answered to the effect that further supplies would be sent.

It would be supposed that this discovery might have been made by a personal reconnaissance two days earlier, as soon as General Warren's troops had effected their passage at Trichardt's Drift. The saving of these two days might well have meant the difference between victory and defeat. Even if the maps were bad—and General Buller described the march as a march "into an unknown country," while it is a fact that Spion Kop was not shown in the sketch of the country round Ladysmith, issued by the Intelligence Department—an examination of the lie of the land by the generals must have disclosed on the 17th what does not appear to have been realised till the evening of the 19th. The desperate straits of Ladysmith rendered prompt and rapid action of the most vital importance.



F. C. Dickinson.]

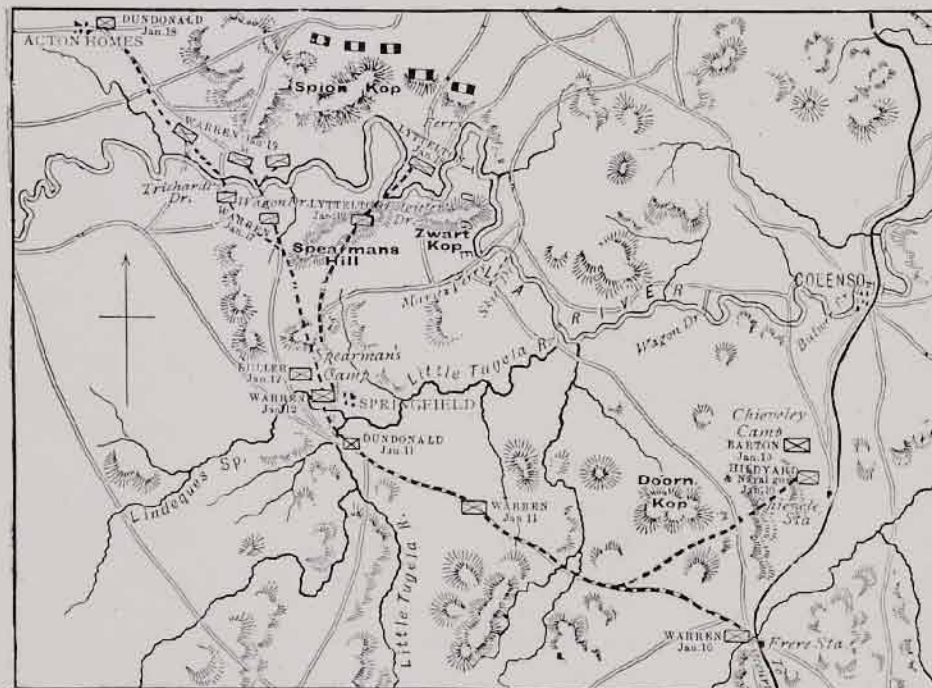
THE ACTION AT THREE TREE HILL.

(After a sketch by a British officer.

In this sketch the Boer position is along the crests of the hills. Halfway up the hill near the centre the British are seen advancing; on the nearer hill are two batteries of Royal Artillery, and the Lancasters and Lancashire Fusiliers "sniping"; in the foreground the ambulances. In the actual battle little or no smoke was to be seen; it has been exaggerated in the sketch in order to make the positions clear.

Yet two days were spent in bringing the transport across, and then in making the discovery that it was the most dangerous encumbrance and had better have been left on the south side of the Tugela.

On the 19th there had been nothing more than long-range skirmishing in which the British losses were comparatively small. On the 20th it was determined to force the attack. Accordingly, on the night of the 19th, General Warren instructed General Clery, with General Hart's and General Woodgate's Brigades, and the six field batteries, to push the advance on the extreme left,



Advance on the left ordered.

against the enemy's positions on the long ridge which ran down from Spion Kop to the north-east. The ground over which the British troops were to advance is described as a succession of ridges, intersected at right angles by watercourses, cutting deep gorges in the mountain side, and thus sundering and separating the attacking force. Of shelter there was little or none; the advance had to be made from ridge to ridge, always under the fire of the vigilant enemy.

During the night of the 19-20th a forward move was made. General Woodgate pushed out from the British

MAP SHOWING THE MOVEMENTS OF SIR CHARLES WARREN'S ARMY UP TO THE NIGHT OF SPION KOP.

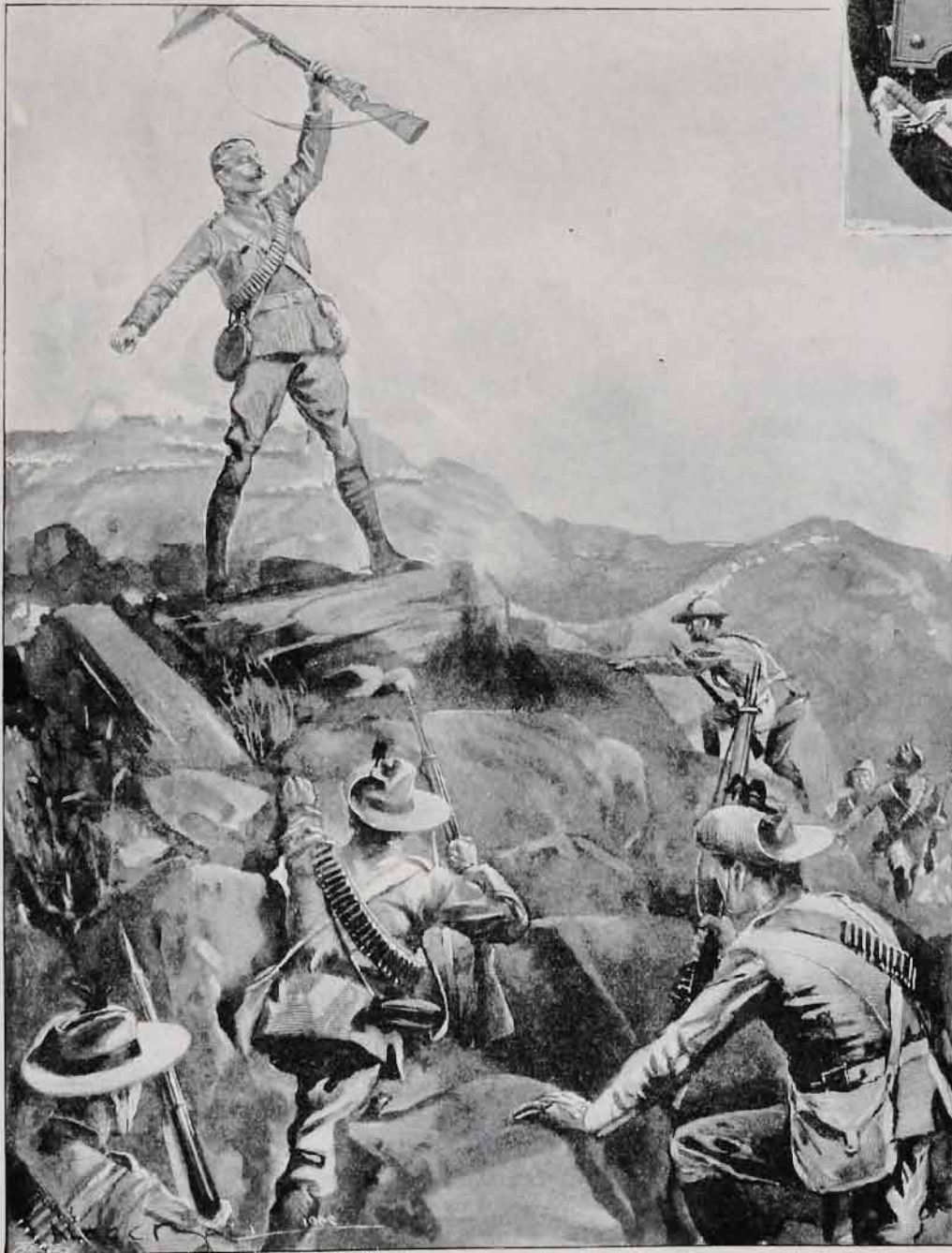
camp and seized Three Tree Hill—a bastion jutting out from the north-western flank of Spion Kop. The Boers offered no resistance. The hill was the centre of a vast amphitheatre, crowned on all sides by Boer entrenchments; and though far below the crests which towered above it, it was the best artillery position that could be found, and here three of the British field batteries were planted. When day broke, the battle opened with the usual bombardment on the part of the field guns, the naval guns from Spearman's Hill and the howitzers from Potgieter's shelling the Boer position on Spion Kop from the other side. All day "the

Capture of Three Tree Hill and Bastion Hill.



(Photo by Bartlett, Shrewsbury.)

MAJOR CHILDE.

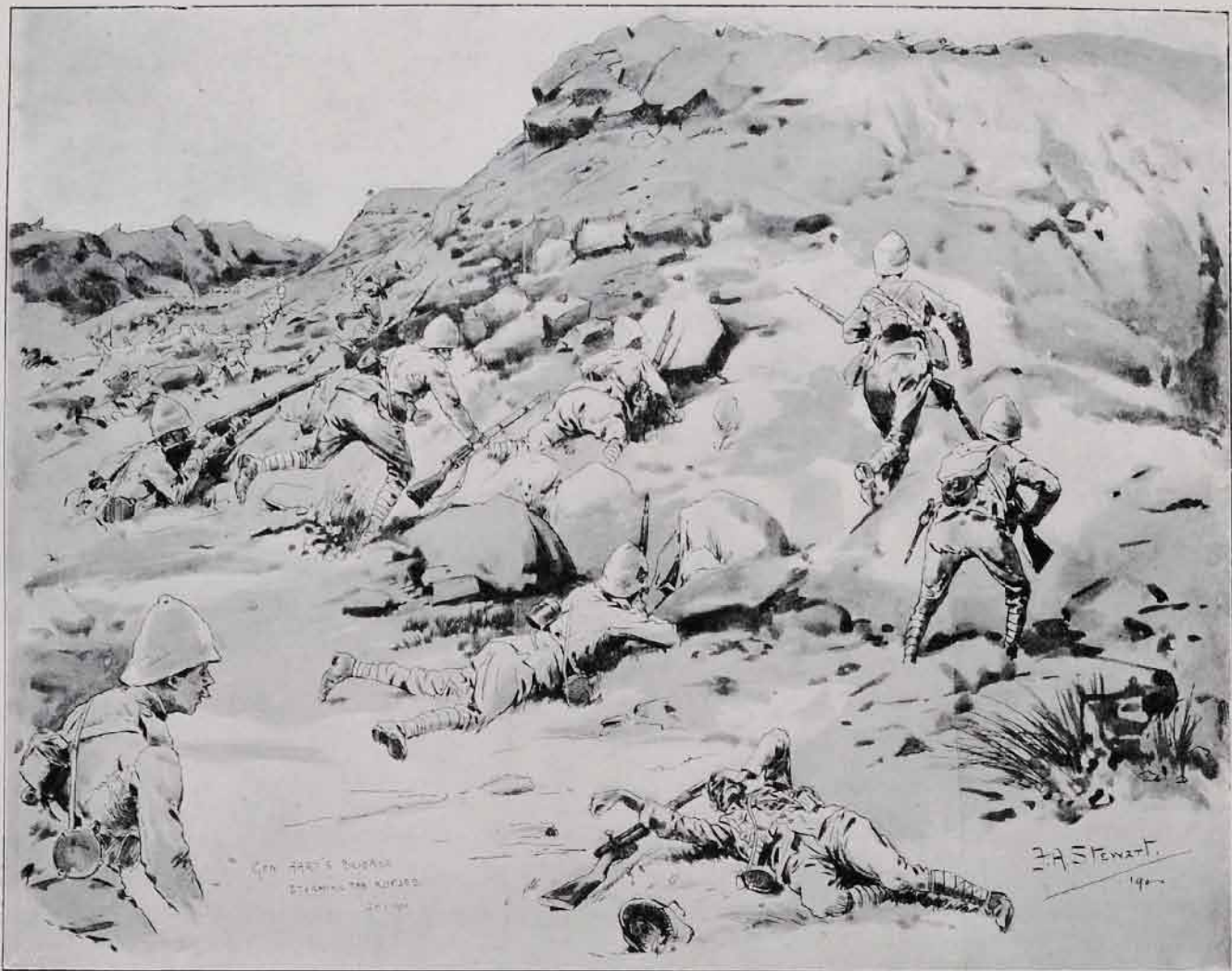


Atc Hall's

PRIVATE TOBIN CAPTURES BASTION HILL.

hills crashed with guns and rattled with musketry. At a little distance you might have supposed," writes Mr. Atkins, "that the resonant noises came from some haunted mountain, for the hills looked sleepy, and peaceful, and deserted, and there seemed to be no reason for all these strange sounds—the bark of field guns, the crackle of musketry, the rapping of Vickers-Maxims, and the tat-tat-tat-tat-tat of Maxims." All day the thin straggling lines of British infantry pushed slowly forward—almost invisible upon the

slopes of the hills—but in spite of splendid efforts the progress was painfully slow. The advance was made at first by small scattered parties of men, quickly following each other and using all the cover



THE IRISH BRIGADE STORMING THE KOPJES NEAR WARREN'S CENTRE. [From a sketch on the spot by F. A. Stewart January 20, 1900.]

that could be found, hurrying from kopje to kopje. Then in heavier masses the main body of the infantry followed. General Hildyard's Brigade was on the left, General Hart's in the centre, and General Woodgate's on the right. On the extreme left were the cavalry and mounted infantry, who accomplished the one great feat of the day—the capture of Bastion Hill.

Bastion Hill, like Three Tree Hill, ran out at right angles from the main range of Spion Kop. By Lord Dundonald's order the South African Light Horse under Major Childe were sent to examine it, and if they did not find it strongly held, to seize it. They extended, approached under a heavy fire from the Boers at over 7,000 yards—a range at which British field artillery is useless—and climbed in open order its steep, almost precipitous sides. A private named Tobin led them all. Alert and agile, he bounded up the slopes, and reached the summit ten minutes before the rest of his comrades. All watched him, expecting every instant to see him fall, but he found only a picket of Boers, who fled at his appearance. Turning round, he waved his helmet on his rifle, and the Light Horse rushed up and occupied the hill. There was something ominous in the ease with which it had been taken, and the Boer reason for leaving it unfortified was soon manifest.

Behind it rose a crescent-shaped ridge, hardly visible from below, but which was now seen to command it. The top of Bastion Hill itself was bare of shelter, and upon it from this further crest was poured a murderous



[Photo by Caney.]

CAPTAIN C. A. HENSLEY.

Killed at Venter's Spruit (see page 275).

Hill itself was bare of shelter, and upon it from this further crest was poured a murderous

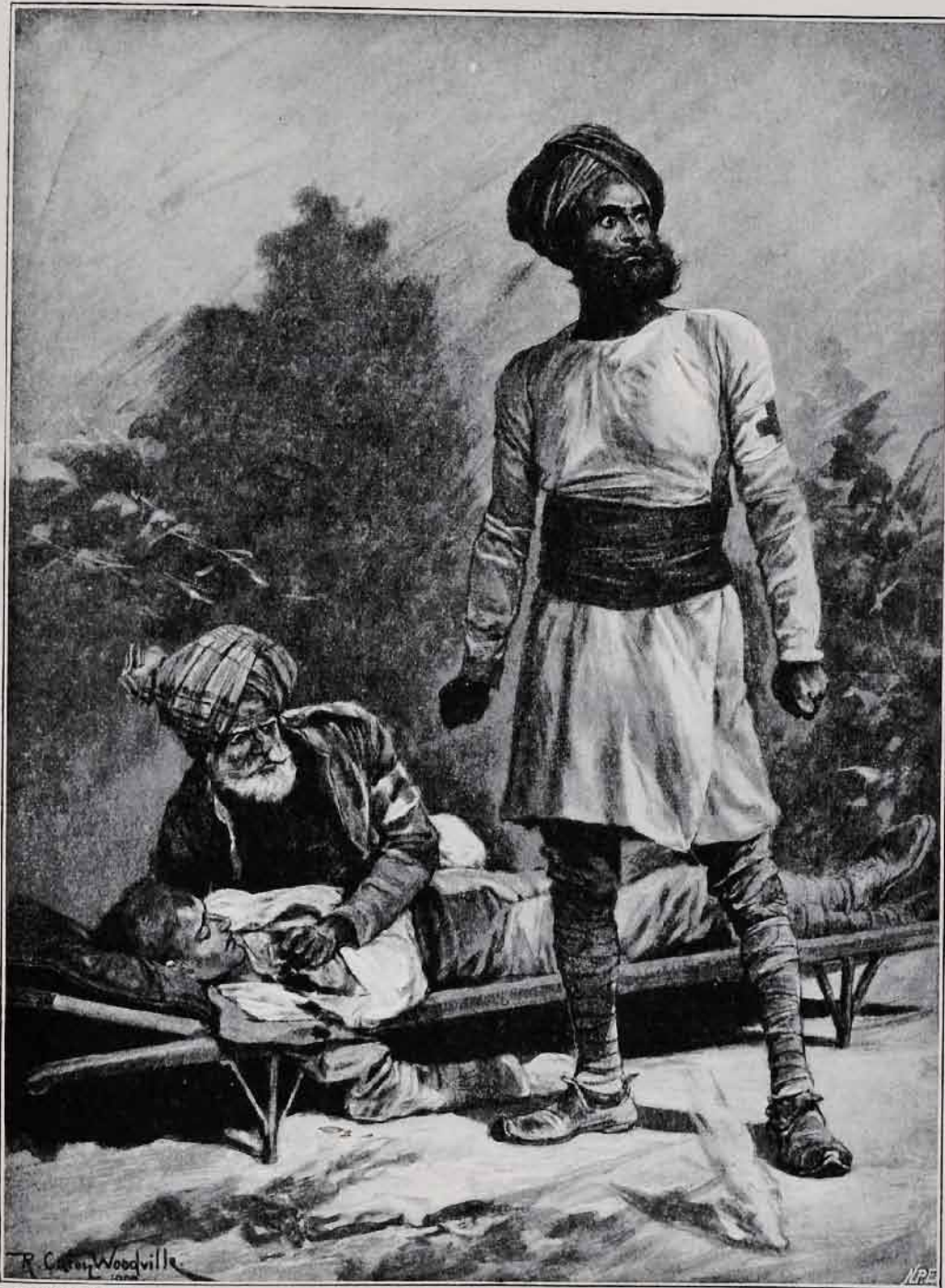
fire—shrapnel and rifle. Towards evening Major Childe was struck and killed by a well-timed shrapnel, which laid low six of his brave troopers. Upon him, in the days before the battle, the presentiment of death had sat heavily. Grey though he was, this was his first action, and he had asked the night before that on his grave should be placed this epitaph, with its words of eternal hope and consolation: "Is it well with the child?" And she answered: "It is well." His wish was fulfilled. Beneath Bastion Hill he lies to-day, and on the cross which marks his grave these simple words are carved. Around him, on the solemn hills, within sight of his resting-place, sleep the valiant comrades who in these sorrowful days of defeat laid down their lives for their country. And his epitaph is theirs.

Death of Major Childe.

Nearer Sir Charles Warren's centre the Irish Brigade under General Hart displayed all its usual and reckless valour. The men went forward with dash and fury, eager to wipe out old scores, and, had they been given a free hand, might have secured then the success which a month later their efforts and self-sacrifice achieved. Upon them the Boer artillery opened with great effect, the Pom - Poms and captured British 15 - pounders from Colenso maintaining

Assault ordered and counter-manded.

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R. Gibson-Woodville.

THE DANGERS OF MERCY: INDIAN AMBULANCE BEARERS UNDER FIRE.

a rapid fire. The guns were hard to locate, and so were not easily silenced by the British batteries. There fell Captain Hensley, who had fought all through the war, in Natal, at Dundee, at Farquhar's Farm, and at Colenso—a man greatly beloved. Towards the middle of the afternoon it was determined to press home the assault on the enemy's position. The British batteries accordingly redoubled their

fire; the grass along the amphitheatre of hills took fire, and great clouds of smoke rose, blowing down upon the Boer marksmen. But for some reason or other, not for the first time, the generals changed their minds. The assault was countermanded, and the troops fell back a very little from the most advanced positions. As the evening wore on, General Hildyard extended his left to Bastion Hill, driving back a small Boer commando, and sent a force of infantry to relieve the South African Light Horse. With darkness the firing died down, and the troops had again to bivouac on the bare mountain sides. The day had been one of scorching heat, and to it, as is not unusual at high altitudes, succeeded a night of bitter cold. The British casualties in General Warren's force from the arrival at Trichardt's Drift to the evening of the 20th were 34 killed, 293 wounded, and 2 missing, so that the losses were fast mounting up. What were the enemy's casualties it is impossible to say, but by their own accounts they suffered heavily from our shell fire. The Boers claimed a victory, and asserted that General Botha had checked the British advance. Nor were they altogether wrong, since we could show only the most trivial advantage gained. The one point in our favour was that



THE ROYAL LANCASTER REGIMENT CROSSING A DRIFT (WITH THEIR BOOTS ON) ON THE WAY TO SPION KOP.

the British casualties could be replaced, whereas the Boer casualties could not. Throughout the day the conduct of the civilian stretcher-bearers excited the most unstinted admiration and praise. They went forward stolidly to the very firing line, and could be seen bending over the dead and succouring and removing the wounded with faithful devotion and superb coolness amidst the hail of bullets and shells. The Boers fired on them with the utmost impartiality, for the enemy either could not or would not see the red-cross badge. Not a few of the bearers were themselves killed or wounded.

The conduct of the day's fighting provoked some bitter, perhaps intemperate, complaints of the British generals' tactics. It was said of one of the Brigade Commanders that "he took personal command of the York and Lancaster and the South Lancashire regiments, and ordered a futile bayonet charge at an enemy nearly fifteen hundred yards away. This attracted such heavy fire that the two regiments sought shelter and declined to follow their officers another yard."

On the afternoon of the 20th, to support Sir Charles Warren's attack, General Lyttelton advanced directly upon the Boer trenches which lined the eastern slope of Spion Kop and the southern slope of Brakfontein. This was a totally distinct movement from Sir Charles Warren's, and was directed from Potgieter's Drift. The howitzers and naval guns aided the infantry with their fire. At the same time Bethune's Mounted Infantry were ordered to move along the river to the east; they speedily came into contact with the enemy in strong force, and as their orders were to do nothing more than demonstrate, retired. But the presence of the enemy in strength in this quarter, close to Skiet's Drift, seriously menaced the British line of communications. Meantime, General Lyttelton pushed up to within 1500 yards of the main Boer entrenchments, and after long-range firing slowly fell back, with two killed and fifteen wounded or missing.

On January 21 Sir Charles Warren renewed the engagement on the left. The day again opened with an artillery bombardment conducted by the



(Photo by Chas. Knight.)

MAJOR-GENERAL HART.

Sir Reginald Clare Hart, K.C.B., V.C., C.B., R.E., Major-General, commanding the Fifth Brigade of the 2nd Division, was born in Ireland in 1848; passed the Staff College as Lieut. R.E. 1869; Brev. Col., 1886; Director of Military Education in India, 1888-96; served in the Afghan War of 1879, the Ashanti Expedition, 1881, and the Egyptian War, 1882; commanded First Brigade in the Tirah Campaign, 1897-8, in which he won his V.C.; commanded Belgaum District of Madras, 1896-9, and the Quetta District, 1899, until he left for Africa.

six field batteries. But though the guns fired thousands of shells they produced little effect. Being so far below the level of the Boer trenches, they could not direct their fire to advantage, and they failed to silence the enemy's works or to overpower the Boer artillery. This latter could use its range to advantage, while good positions for the British guns



(Photo by Barnett.)

RUSSIAN DOCTORS WITH THE BOER ARMY PICKING UP BRITISH SHELLS.

could not be found. Three Tree Hill—the trees on which had already vanished—was too far off for the capacity of our 15-pounders; on the steep slopes where the infantry were fighting it was impossible from the nature of things to handle artillery. Howitzers alone could do the work, and there were but six howitzers in General Buller's whole

Warren telegraphs for howitzers.

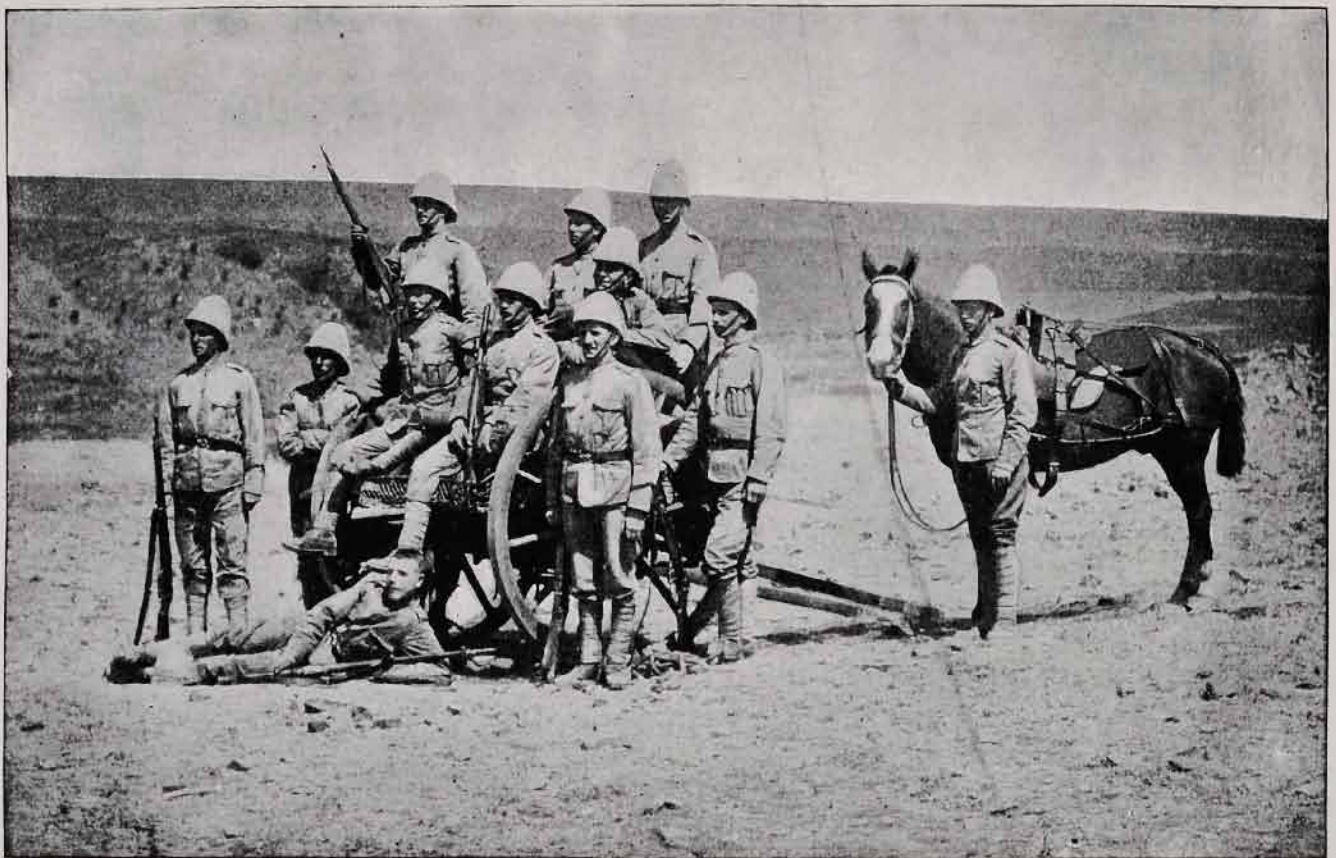


INDIAN AMBULANCE CART WITH BULLER'S ARMY.

army, and all these at Potgieter's Drift with General Lyttelton. For them Sir Charles Warren telegraphed, but to move them from One Tree Hill to Three Tree Hill over mountains and along bad roads was necessarily the work of some time. Four were sent and arrived early in the morning of the 22nd.

All the morning of the 21st the advance continued in the centre and on the extreme left, where Generals Hildyard and Hart were engaged. The Boers were massing in this quarter, and two batteries had to be moved from the British right to the left to give additional support to the troops. As on the previous day, General Hart's Irishmen were again foremost in battle—"perched on the edge of an almost precipitous hill"—and suffered heavily. The men were gladdened and roused to the most desperate efforts by a rumour which ran along the line, to the accompaniment of cheering, that Ladysmith had been relieved by Lord Dundonald's cavalry while the enemy's attention was occupied by the infantry attack.

**Rumoured relief of
Ladysmith.**



ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS AND THEIR MAXIM, FORMING PART OF HART'S IRISH BRIGADE.

Like other rumour: this story was absurd; it needed little reflection to show that if the mounted men had not been able to remain at Acton Homes without fear of being surrounded, they could not have pushed through the very heart of the Boer position with waggons and stores. Their arrival in Ladysmith without supplies would have been only a serious embarrassment for the garrison; to move with a heavy train of transport under the Boer trenches was almost impossible.

A curious fact, which illustrates the difference between British and Colonial methods of fighting, was observed on this day. A squadron of South African Light Horse held a kopje all day under heavy fire, but, by carefully taking cover, without losing a man. Near at hand two companies of British regulars held a hill under much the same fire, and, untrained in the art of concealing themselves, lost no less than twenty men.

The fighting on the 21st precisely resembled that of the 20th. *Ground was gained, but so slowly that it became evident the advance to Ladysmith at this rate would be the affair not of weeks but of months. Bastion Hill, captured on the previous day, had to be abandoned, as it was found

Hill taken by assault, January 24

Spion Kop.

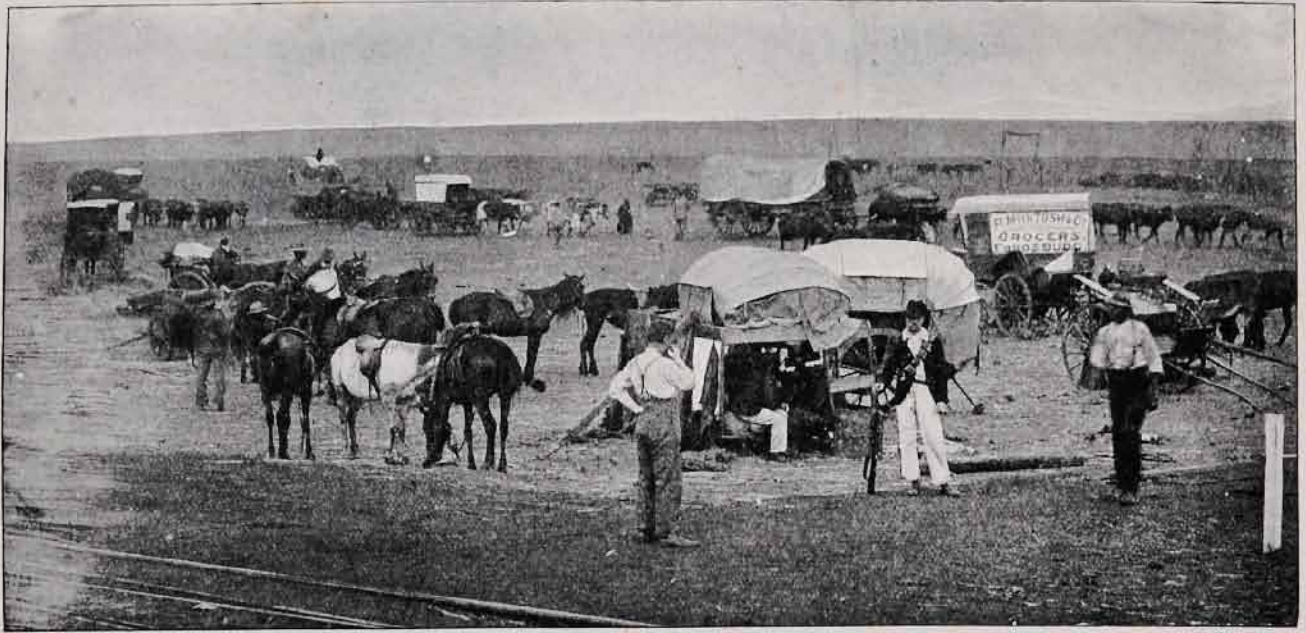
Shells from Mount Alice bursting.



Frank Dadd, R.I., and S. J. Dadd.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE FIELD OF BATTLE BEFORE SPION KOP.

[After a sketch made on the spot.]



ARRIVAL OF SUPPLIES FOR THE BOERS INVESTING LADYSMITH.

shelterless and useless. Its loss was of no importance. And if the advanced Boer line of trenches was taken, with considerable loss, behind it showed a second line at a distance which varied from 400 to 1,000 yards, composed of earth redoubts, stone breastworks or schanzes, and deep trenches blasted or hewn with pickaxes and crowbars in the friable rocks. These defences gave ample cover; the artillery could not properly reach them; rifle fire made no impression upon them; and in front of them stretched a smooth, grassy slope forming a superb glacis. The text-books were useless; theory gave little help, for it had been anticipated that artillery would so shake the defenders' nerves as to destroy the accuracy of the enemy's fire and render assault possible. But whenever an attempt was made to rush the Boer positions, the enemy showed in the most unpleasant fashion that their nerves were not shaken and their fire was as well aimed as ever. Undoubtedly it would have been possible, with such superb troops as the seasoned veterans of Colenso, to storm the Boer line, but only with the heaviest losses. What prevented the attempt being made was the fear that behind this second system of defences might lie a third, and behind that again a fourth, so as to render the effort unavailing. Yet there were voices raised for this desperate and determined course, and a bold general might well have decided upon it, as likely to prove less bloody and less trying in the end than these days of protracted and ineffectual skirmishing.

The painful fact was that Sir Charles Warren's army was assaulting a fortress of immense strength held by splendid soldiers—assaulting, too, without the assistance of an overpowering artillery and long-range field guns. No effort was spared by the brigadiers and subordinate officers. General Hart, sword in hand, was in his usual place, the van; the bravest of men, he sent his staff to cover, that the risks he faced might not be theirs. But the hopelessness of the work was slowly dawning upon everyone. At the close of the day, when the firing ceased, the army had again to mourn grievous losses. Twenty-four were killed, 223 wounded, and four missing, yet practically nothing had been accomplished beyond a display of splendid courage and endurance. Once more the troops bivouacked amongst the rocks, but it was evident that their efforts could not be indefinitely repeated.

A few incidents may be chosen from the many reported by the chroniclers of this arduous day to show the spirit of our troops and the tragi-comic humours of the battlefield. A lad of nineteen, says Mr. Churchill, sat behind shelter in the Irish Brigade's firing line. "His right trouser leg was soaked with blood. I asked him whether he was wounded. 'No, sir; it's only blood from an officer's head,' he answered, and went on munching his biscuit." Two soldiers sat side by side in one of the lulls of firing, the one eating biscuit, the

Another day of little progress.

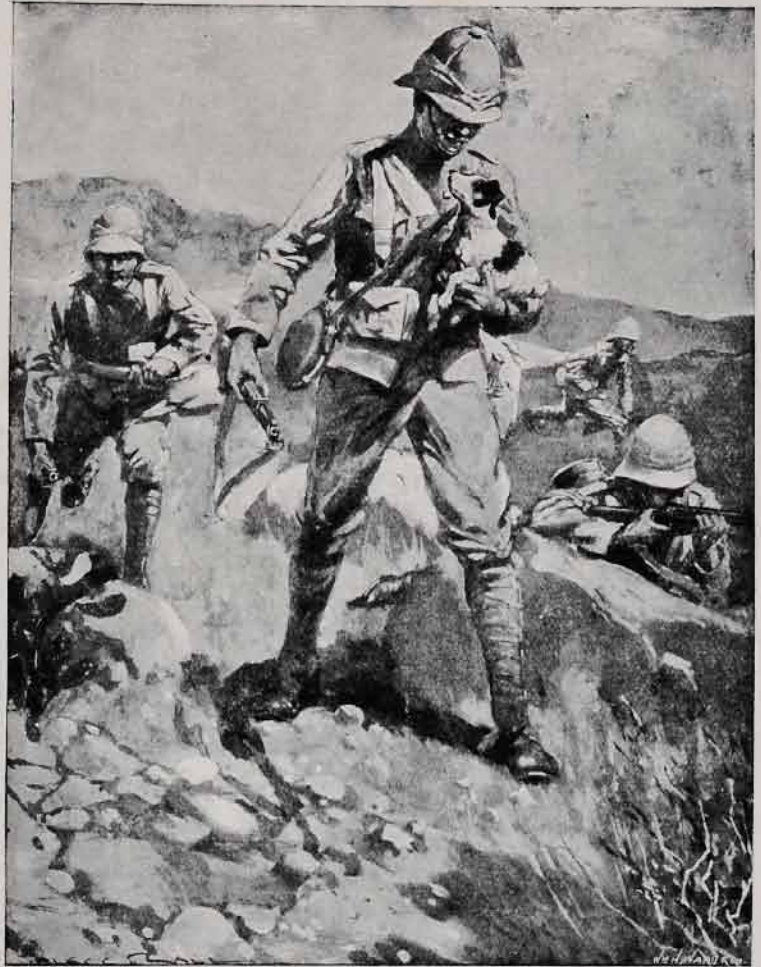
Pathetic humour.

other flicking stones at him. Something struck the eater a sharp blow on the neck, and he turned angrily to the other man. "What did you throw that stone at me for?" "I didn't throw it." "Liar!" And the two were ready to fight, when the red stain showed that the second spoke the truth. It was a bullet. A private was seen trudging into the firing line with a puppy under his arm. Did he wish for companionship in the loneliness of a modern battle, where each man has to stand or fall by himself?

On the 22nd General Coke's Brigade marched to reinforce General Warren, from Potgieter's Drift; the howitzers arrived, and two on each flank began to fire, while the infantry held the ground already won and made no more effort to advance. There was, all this and the following day, a desultory engagement in which no advantage was gained by the British troops. Early on the 22nd General Buller rode over to see what progress had been made. A council of war was held, and it was decided that the last hope of success was to storm Spion Kop. To reach this decision had

Assault ordered and postponed.

taken nearly a week—a week of useless marching, counter-marching, and bloodshed for the army, a week of starvation and agonised suspense for Ladysmith. The orders were issued to General Coke



Alec Bull.

TOMMY'S TRUSTY COMRADE

to assault Spion Kop that night with his Brigade. The General, however, objected most strongly—and with good reason, after Stormberg and Magersfontein—to making such an attack over ground which he did not know and had not personally reconnoitred. In response to his objections Sir Charles Warren postponed the attempt till the night of January 23.



POISONOUS BULLETS TAKEN FROM A BOER PRISONER AT SPION KOP.

These bullets have a coating of metallic oxide, which could not fail to poison any wounds they might make. It is, perhaps, not necessary to suppose they were intentionally poisoned, but the use of bullets in such a condition shows a callous and criminal disregard of the laws of civilised warfare.

been considered the refuge of the irresolute. General Buller—Commander-in-Chief of the Natal army—"pointed out" that for four days Sir Charles Warren "had kept his men continuously exposed to

The morning of this day a fresh council of war was held, though councils of war have ever

shell and rifle fire, perched on the edge of an almost precipitous hill; that the position admitted of no second line, and the supports were massed close behind the firing line in indefensible formations," and that "it was too dangerous a situation to be prolonged." But the Commander-in-Chief gave no orders; he only told his subordinate either to attack or withdraw, and shrank from the responsibility of making the decision himself. To use his own phrase, he still "advocated" a turning movement by the left. But finally he assented to the storming of Spion Kop—it was the second time this question had been debated—though he thought General Woodgate better suited for the work, inasmuch as General Coke was still lame from a broken leg.

Throughout this day the troops were exposed to a heavy shell fire, which, without causing many casualties, was yet exceedingly galling, and it grew hourly clearer and clearer that there were

**Another council
of war.**



(Photo by the Absent Minded Beggar Corps.)

THE 2ND LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS EMBARKING AT SOUTHAMPTON, December 2, 1899.

This battalion greatly distinguished itself under General Woodgate in the "week of battles" leading up to the attack on Spion Kop, and furnished the largest contingent for that bloody battle.

no other alternatives but General Buller's "withdraw or assault." Steps were taken to prepare for the attack on Spion Kop. Careful reconnaissances were made, and the Imperial Light Infantry and other reinforcements were added to Sir Charles Warren's command. From Chieveley, where General Barton's Brigade had exchanged long-range fire with the Boers on the 19th and 23rd, two battalions were withdrawn and added to General Lyttelton's Brigade. In this direction nothing of importance had happened. On the 19th a picket of South African Light Horse, while scouting along the Tugela to the west of Colenso, had been ambushed by the Boers and six men captured; on the 23rd a patrol near Hlangwane had been surprised, but was able to make its escape. It was clear, however, that the enemy were in no great strength at Colenso, so that the two battalions left at Chieveley were ample to hold the rail-head. It is now known that General Joubert expected the main attack at Potgieter's Drift, and had concentrated most of his men opposite this point, leaving his left at Colenso and his right beyond Spion Kop,

Warren reinforced.

towards Acton Homes, excessively weak. On the Spion Kop side, according to Boer accounts, General Botha had but 2,000 men. The Boers persistently understated their real force, but it is possible that their strength in this quarter did not exceed 4,000.

At six in the evening the storming force paraded. It

The storming force.

was composed of eight companies of the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, six companies of the 2nd Royal Lancaster, two companies of the 1st South Lancashire, 190 dismounted men of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, and half of the 17th Company of Royal Engineers—in all about 1,800 men. The officers—General Woodgate himself—carried rifles. The orders were the usual ones for night attack—no firing, but attack with the bayonet. The night was favourable—intensely dark with a fine rain—but if this concealed the approach of the forlorn hope from the enemy, it added greatly to the difficulty of climbing the precipitous mountain. Before the foot of the height was reached it was 10 o'clock.

The ground traversed up

to this point had been rough in the extreme, steep hillocks alternating with deep-cut watercourses and mimosa copses. Over these the men blundered in the dark, taking every precaution to hide their movements from the Boers. Smoking and talking were forbidden; the little force picked its way in silence. All was still but for the fitful sputtering of the rifle fire exchanged between the outposts, which echoed in the mountain hollows on the left. The cannon on Three Tree Hill were silent; the bivouacs and positions of the two combatant armies were veiled in darkness. Only from Three Tree Hill came the gleam of lanterns—the signals telling the column that all was well.

At this point began the real ascent of the mountain by an exceedingly steep and narrow path, which worked up the almost precipitous slopes. After a short halt, General Woodgate and Colonel

Ascent of Spion Kop.

Blomfield led the way, in front of the Lancashire Fusiliers, and the whole force in Indian file moved upwards with the utmost caution. The mountain side abounded in boulders and brushwood, offering the best of cover for the enemy; there were many points where the track, which was at best only a goat path, ran along narrow ledges with a sheer



MAJOR-GENERAL WOODGATE.

[Photo by Bassano]

Edward Robert Prevost Woodgate, C.B., C.M.G., was a son of the Rector of Belbroughton, Worcestershire. Born 1845; entered the Army as ensign in the 4th (King's Own Royal Lancaster) regiment in 1865; served with the Abyssinian Expedition against King Theodore, 1868; in the Ashanti War of 1873-74; on the staff in the Zulu War of 1878-9, when he obtained the Brevet of Major; served as staff officer in the West Indies, 1880-5, and as regimental officer in India, 1885-89; promoted Lieut.-Col., 1893; C.B., 1896; and Colonel, 1897; appointed to command the Regimental District of the King's Own at Lancaster, September, 1897; raised the West African Frontier Regiment in Sierra Leone, and suppressed the native rebellion, 1898-9; invalided home and made C.M.G., and given command of Leicestershire district. In December, 1899, he was appointed to the command of the Ninth Brigade in South Africa; he led the assault on Spion Kop, and was killed while defending the position gained upon that hill, January 24, 1900.

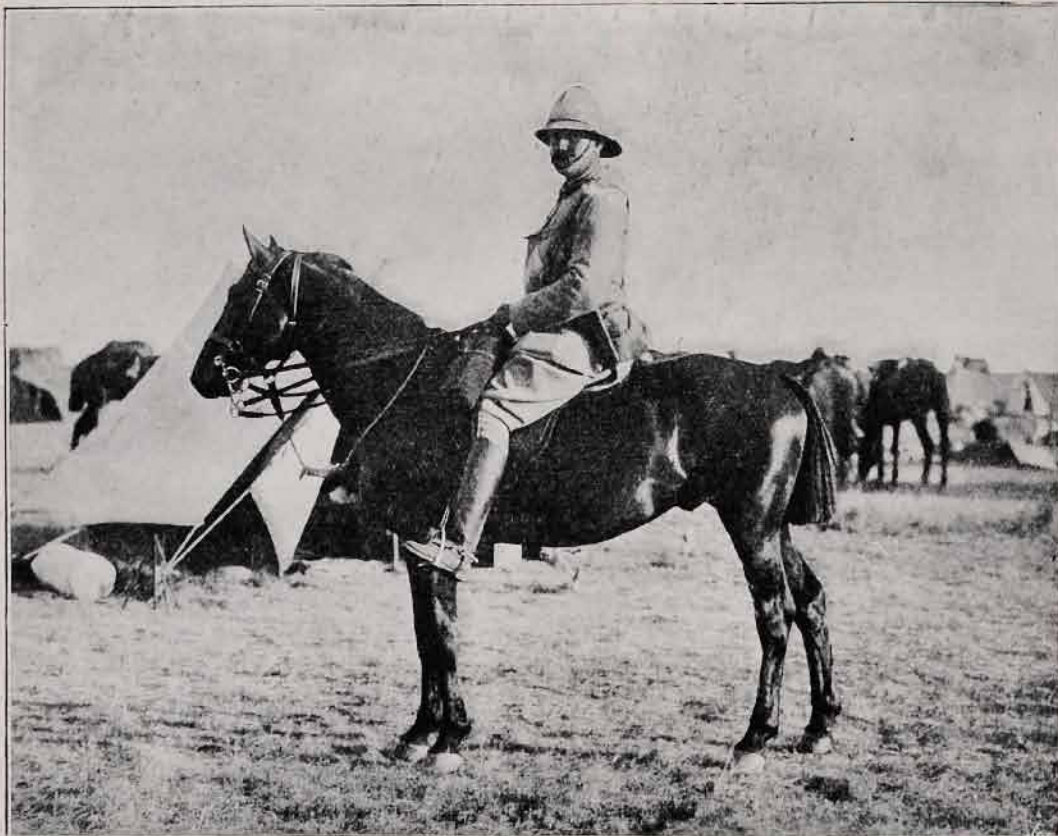


THORNEYCROFT'S HORSE IN CAMP AT PIETERMARITZBURG.

Photo by Caney.

drop on the outside, and here a single determined enemy might have caused heavy loss and even defeated the assault. Along this difficult and tedious route crawled the infantry in light marching

order, expecting each moment to hear among the rocks the crack of the Boer rifles. But no sound or cry of alarm came, and, shrouded in obscurity, the forlorn hope slowly neared the shoulder where was known to be one of the "mauvais pas" of the mountain. Hereabouts a large white spaniel suddenly emerged from the darkness, and discovery seemed certain. Yet the animal came quietly up, and allowed a soldier to catch it, when it was promptly led to the rear.



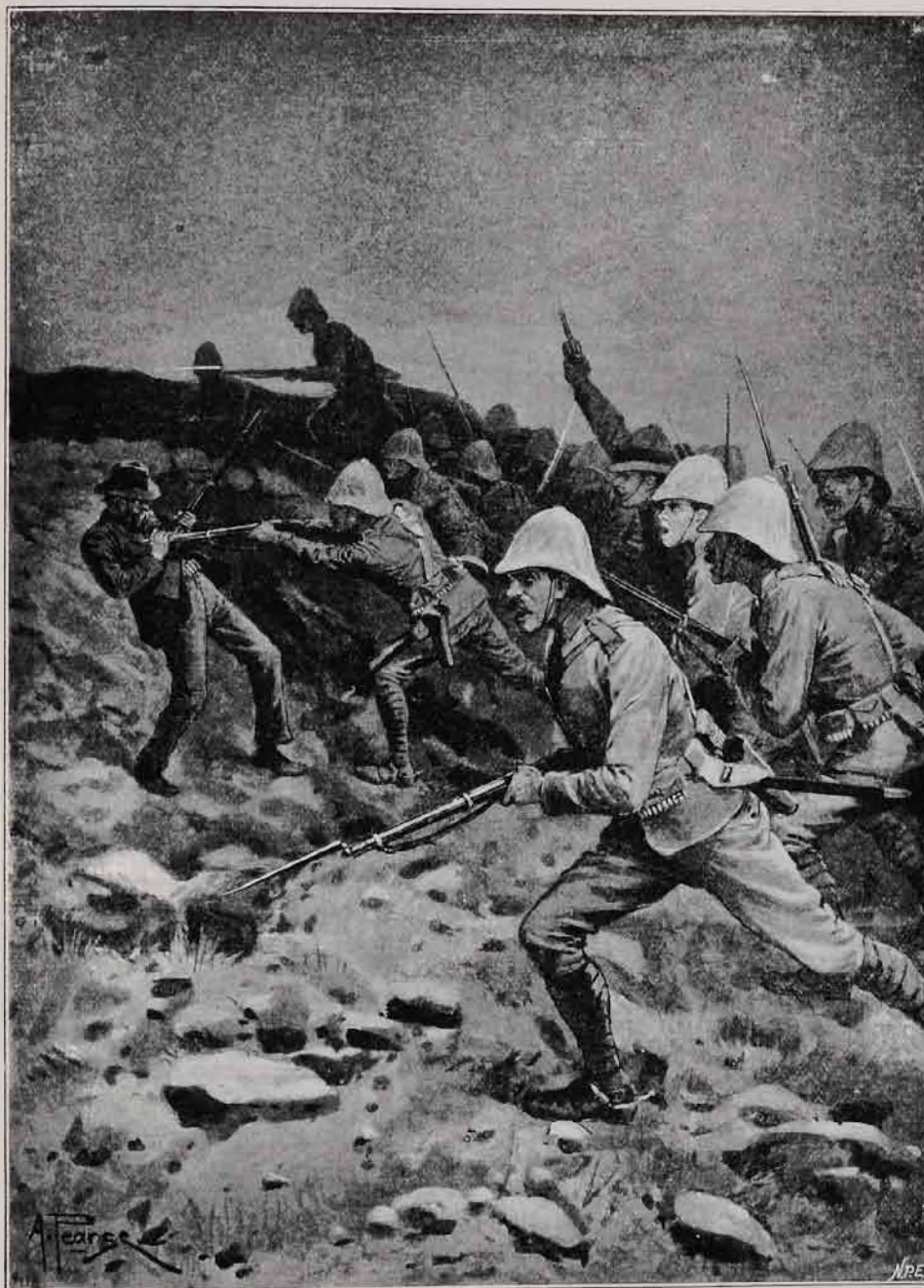
LIEUT.-COL. (LOCAL BRIGADIER-GENERAL) THORNEYCROFT.

Lieut.-Colonel A. W. Thorneycroft, in command of Mounted Infantry in South Africa, was born in 1859. He was originally in the Militia; joined the Royal Scots Fusiliers in 1879; fought in the Zulu campaign, and in the Transvaal War of 1881, when he defended Pretoria; was appointed Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General in Natal in September, 1899, and formed the regiment of Irregulars which did service at Colenso and Spion Kop. Colonel Thorneycroft is a brave and daring leader and a great sportsman, and has trained his men to be excellent scouts.

Those who have clambered among our British hills—and better those who know the Alps—will realise some of the perplexities of this night ascent. At times the path was lost, and was recovered with difficulty; no lantern could be used in awkward places, and the men had simply to trust to luck and to the fidelity of the guides, helping each other at every turn, and giving a hand at the points where the way was dangerous. General Woodgate, who was in bad health and had constantly to be assisted, was always in the very forefront. Progress was necessarily slow, and the greatest care had to be taken to prevent the men losing touch of each other. When the shoulder of

the mountain was reached, Colonel Thorneycroft deployed his men to the left, while General Woodgate, with the Lancashire Fusiliers, took post in line on the right. The most critical moment of the assault had come.

It was now half-past three of the morning of January 24—a day hereafter to be one of dark memory in the British army. Impenetrable blackness shrouded the summit of the mountain; a thick, wet mist encompassed it, and hid from the sight of the expectant officers and men the details of the strange new land upon which the forlorn hope had debouched. It could be felt rather than seen that the shoulder opened out to a plateau, which rose steadily towards the north, but how far it extended was not known. From below it had appeared only a narrow ridge, bounded on all sides, except that from which the night assault had been delivered, by sheer precipices, and the utmost caution had to be used in the obscurity, as at each step an abyss might open before the feet of the



A. Pearce.]

[After a sketch by Ernest Prater,

BAYONETING THE BOER SENTRY ON SPION KOP.

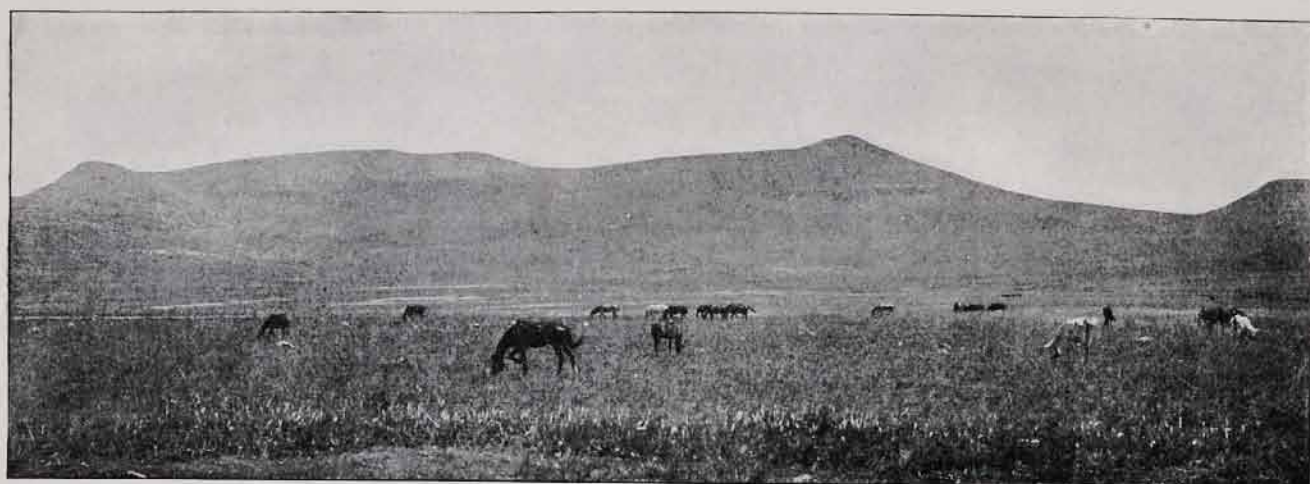
advancing line. In the preternatural stillness which prevailed upon the mountain top there was no token of the enemy's presence. No outposts had been encountered; the only sign of life visible was when from time to time the mist lifted, and far below and behind the lights of Three Tree Hill could be discerned twinkling in the darkness. The land seemed to lie lapped in sleep. And then suddenly the looked-for challenge came. Out of the mist sounded the shrill cry of a man in mortal terror.

It said in Dutch, "Halt! Who goes there?" Instantly General Woodgate answered "Waterloo!"

A Boer picket surprised.

There was the flash of many rifles, a rush, a scuffle, and the Lancashire Fusiliers were among the Boers. It was only a weak picket, ten or fifteen men strong; the Boer sentry was bayoneted at once; half-a-dozen others who had taken refuge behind a stone wall were surrounded, and, though they made a gallant stand, were overborne by numbers. In this fight Colonel à Court, of General Buller's staff, had a narrow escape. Closing with one of the enemy, he tried to use his Mauser pistol, but in this critical moment found the safety catch was set, and had to snatch up a great stone, with which he felled his opponent.

This brush with the Boers took place a little south of the real summit, at a point where stood a grove of mimosa bushes, and where there was fair cover. But from this point onward no difficulty was encountered; the slope relented; the ridge opened out into one of those table-lands which are a feature of South African mountain scenery. Breathless and weary, the men pushed forward without any opposition, their movements veiled in the mist through which the first grey light of dawn was



GENERAL VIEW OF SPION KOP FROM ACROSS THE RIVER.

[Photo by Middlebrook.]

now breaking. They stood upon "a fog-bound island in the air." The plateau, 400 yards wide, seemed to trend away interminably to the north-east. And here the first great mistake, as after events proved, was committed. Instead of pushing on to the uttermost extremity of the summit, the forlorn hope halted about 5 a.m. at a Boer trench which was captured without episode. Possibly the troops, wearied by their seven hours' climb in the darkness, were incapable of any further desperate effort. They must needs be prepared to maintain their position throughout the day—a day which might well be one of the fiercest fighting—and so rest was essential.

The storming force halts too soon.

Some attempt was made to provide cover while the mist still veiled the mountain top. Yet, by reason of this very mist, the exact position of the enemy could not be ascertained or the defences constructed where they were most needed. The surface of the hill was not favourable to entrenching; it was of rock, friable indeed, but not to be cut with spades, and the covering of earth was of the thinnest. Perhaps the weariness of the infantry and the want of sufficient entrenching tools would have precluded the construction of serious defences even had the ground been wholly favourable. The men were in no condition to set to work as navvies. All these things must be remembered when it is asked why the troops did not entrench themselves. Here, as at Majuba, the omission was fatal; here, as there, the same explanation will suffice for the neglect of so obvious a precaution. What trenches were made were only scratched in the thin soil, a few inches deep, and though serviceable enough against rifle fire, were utterly ineffectual against artillery. Stones to build breastworks were wanting; there were many boulders on the summit, but these were too large to be moved. The Boer works were remodelled as well as was possible under the circumstances. This done, the little force waited for the lifting of the mist, when the ordeal of battle would begin, and when for the first time the exact situation could be discerned.



BOERS FIRING A KRUPP HOWITZER.

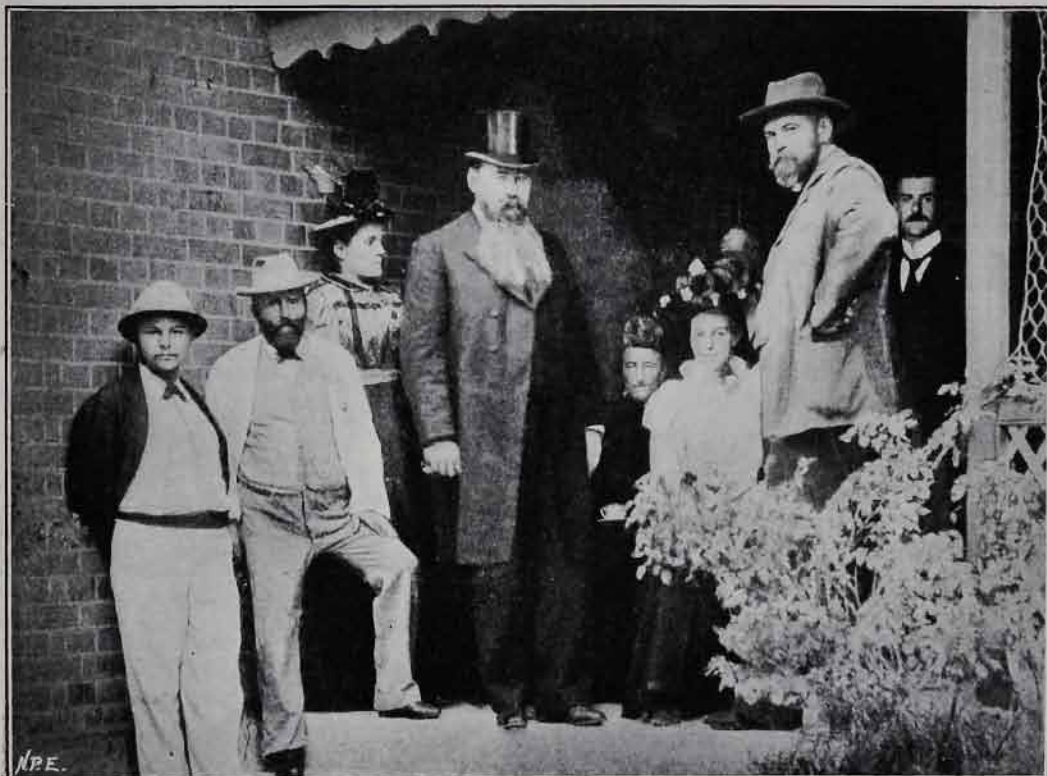
The photograph was taken outside Ladysmith; guns and gunners were removed to Spion Kop when Warren developed his attack.

Far below, the main body of the British army had heard the rattle of the Boer outposts' first volley and the sound of cheering, succeeded by silence, which told that the summit was won.

Tardy reinforcements.

As the dawn broke they prepared for another day of battle, supposing that this achievement would be followed by a general assault upon the enemy's positions. But reinforcements were not promptly sent to join the forlorn hope in its cloudland. No attempt was made to push artillery up to its support; the mountain battery, which was with the army for this special work, was not sent forward—and it is possible that its weak short-range pieces firing smoke-producing powder would have been only a source

of embarrassment and loss. The way was so steep that it was doubted whether heavier guns could be sent up. Already there was evident that same want of energy and determination to conquer at all costs which had exerted such a detrimental influence on the fighting of the past week. From out of the mist could now be heard the occasional crack of rifles, indicating that the outposts on the mountain were exchanging shots. It was clear



[From a photograph taken at Newcastle Station.

PRESIDENT STEYN'S VISIT TO NATAL.

that the enemy had not fallen back, but was, on the contrary, prepared to dispute the very possession of Spion Kop.

Meantime, the remnants of the Boer picket had reached General Botha's headquarters and given the alarm. With quick decision and judgment, which proved his capacity, the General ordered that the mountain should be recaptured at all costs. It was the key of the position, unlocking the door to Ladysmith. Through the mist horsemen sped to the camps of the commandos, bidding them ride hard to the rescue. From all points the

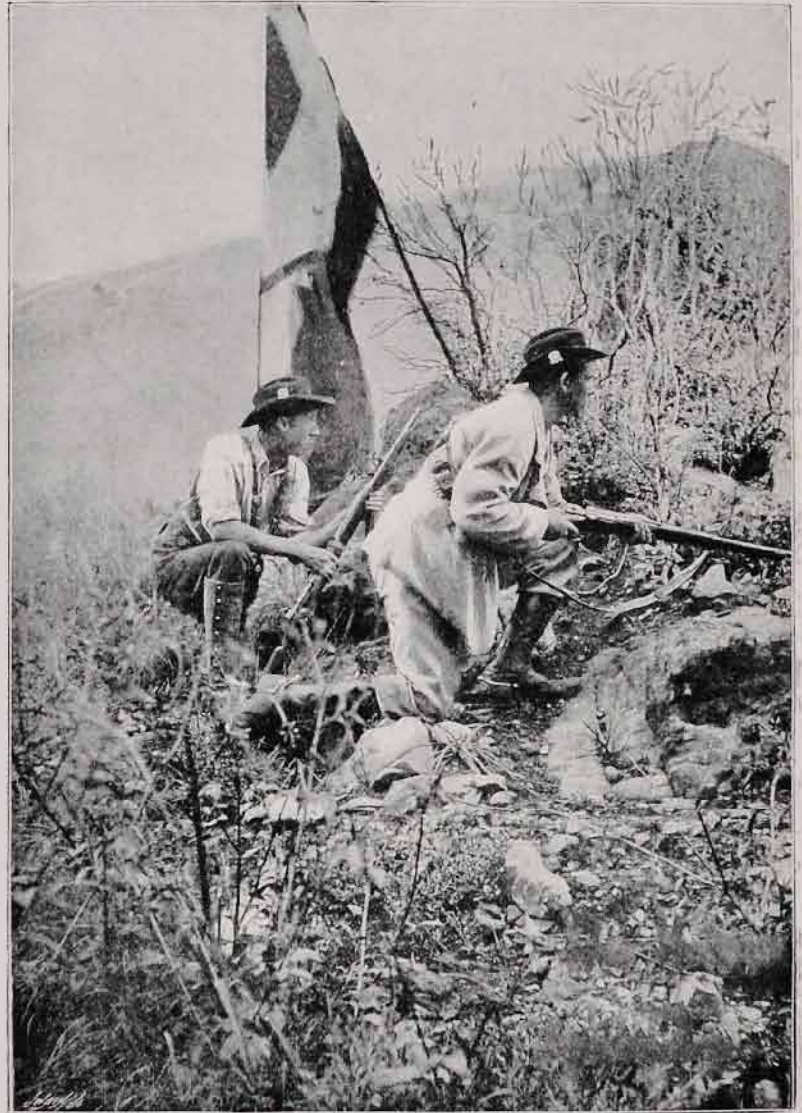
Botha determines to recapture the hill.

Boers began to stream along the ridges which meet at Spion Kop, and prepared to assault in their turn, encouraged by President Steyn, who was present upon the field in person. Their cannon, four Krupps or Creusot weapons, one at least of heavy calibre, and four or five "Pom-Poms" were trained in readiness for the mist to lift, to shower death and destruction upon the forlorn hope. A party of forty men worked forward along the ridge, and, even before the sun dispersed the clouds, opened a sniping fire.

As the sun came through the mist, bringing the certainty of a fiercely hot

Positions of the opposing forces.

day, the British garrison could at last perceive the real situation. The summit of Spion Kop had been but half occupied; the northern end was in the hands of the Boers, who held a trench upon it. Moreover, the tableland on the summit sloped down to the north, and lay open to the enemy's fire from kopjes, rising from the long mountain ridge, which surrounded it on three sides. The ridge forked at Spion Kop, whose summit thus formed a projecting natural bastion; one line of heights ran up to the north-west in the direction of Acton Homes—the line of heights which Sir Charles Warren's infantry had assailed day after day—another ran due eastward, prolonging the Boer positions in front of Potgieter's Drift. The British force on



[From a photograph.]

TWO OF THE DEFENDERS OF SPION KOP.

Spion Kop was thus most critically placed. It had no guns, yet it was exposed in the closest of formations to gun fire; reinforcements could only reach it by a long and arduous climb, whereas the Boers, by pushing their men along the ridges which they held, could arrive comparatively fresh; it could be attacked from every side except the south by a converging and enfilading fire; its cover was all but useless, for it was now seen that the trenches faced in the wrong direction. Added to this there was the curious want of attention to detail which had neglected the laying of a field telegraph so as to connect the summit with headquarters; a want of oil for signal lamps; and a paucity in the numbers of heliograph-operators and flag-signallers with the forlorn hope. This neglect of the means of communication disastrously affected the operations at every turn. Generals Warren and Buller did not know what was happening on the summit, and never went there to see.

The British artillery, if report can be believed, fired repeatedly on the British troops, through inadvertence and ignorance of the precise positions occupied. Finally, when uncertainty as to who was in command on the mountain arose, it could not be immediately solved by an appeal to headquarters.

From the British position on Three Tree Hill a breathless watch had been kept on the clouds that veiled the summit. As the fleecy whiteness was dispersed about 8 o'clock, the roll of musketry began. At the same time the artillery opened fire, the naval guns shelling two precipitous kopjes which rose just to the east of Spion Kop, while the field guns on Three Tree Hill thundered at the western ridge. The Boer guns had already broken silence and commenced a furious bombardment of Spion Kop, raining shells upon General Woodgate's force. Simultaneously the Boer marksmen in small parties poured in a deadly rifle

The Boers bombard the British position.



F. J. Waugh.]

THE FIGHT ON SPION KOP.

This drawing is based on a Boer photograph taken on the spot immediately after the battle. The concentrated fire of the enemy was so terribly effective that our men were compelled to shelter themselves behind the dead bodies of their comrades.

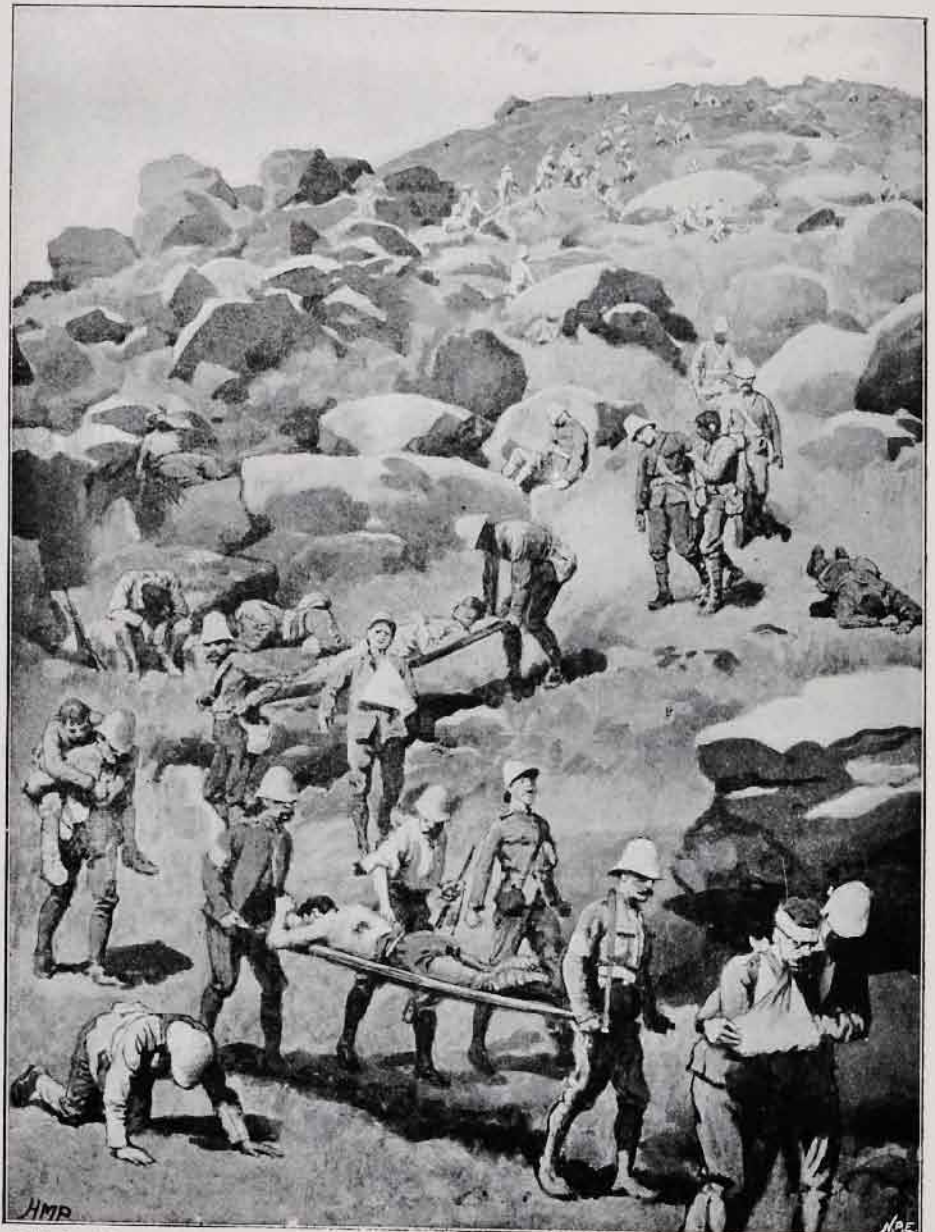
fire from the kopjes on the three sides of Spion Kop; they began, too, to work towards the British trenches, taking all possible advantage of cover. All the early morning men were pouring in, and the assailants grew steadily in strength. The crackling of the rifles swelled into a heavy and continuous roar, and upon the portion of the mountain held by the British, shell, 94 lb., 15 lb., 12 lb., and 1 lb. in weight, fell at the rate of seven to ten a minute, throwing up dense clouds of dust, blowing human beings into unrecognisable fragments, inflicting the most ghastly wounds, terrifying those whom they did not slay. A cyclone of death had smitten the summit. No words can describe the appalling uproar and confusion; all around the thunder of the guns and the incessant roar of rifles; on the summit clouds of dust and the yells and oaths of the combatants; the groans of the wounded; the shrieks of the dying—man slaying man with every terrible circumstance that the imagination can picture.

Under the stress of this terrible fire the British infantry held firm, Thorneycroft's volunteers on the left, Blomfield's Lancashire Fusiliers on the right. If a man showed his head or lifted his arm he was

as good as out of the battle; so deadly, so overwhelming was the Boer fire, that he was sure to be hit. From the summit already trickled a steady stream of men towards the rear—towards the point where among the mimosas a hospital had begun its merciful work. With the wounded were a few unwounded—stragglers and skulkers—but not many. The British soldier in these dreadful moments is rarely untrue to the call of duty. He was at a grave disadvantage, for the rifle with which he was armed was awkward to load lying down; the Boer weapon with its clip holding five cartridges could be charged easily in a second or two. It may be that this was a trifle, but none the less the defect made its presence felt. So fierce, so breathless was the battle that no one had time for thought. From general to private on the summit the one concern was to hold the ground, to beat back the enemy, who came on like demons, to fling the dead from the trenches, and to remove the wounded. Here, as in the earlier battles of the war, there were some wonderful escapes. Colonel Thorneycroft, a man of great stature and extraordinary personal courage, was always upright among his men—always a mark for the enemy's bullets, which tore and riddled his clothing, but, strange to say, left him unharmed. General

Woodgate had set a splendid example, walking coolly to and fro till, some time before 10 a.m., he was struck in the eye, while watching through his glass the effect of the British fire, and mortally wounded. He was borne off the field murmuring, "Let me alone! Let me alone!"

"It was as though hell had been let loose," was the concise description of a wounded officer. From below the sight was dreadful enough. "I saw three shells strike a certain trench within a minute," writes Mr. Atkins; "each struck it full in the face, and the brown dust rose and drifted away with the white smoke. The trench was toothed against the sky like a saw—made, I supposed, of sharp rocks built into a rampart. Another shell struck it, and then—heavens!—the trench rose up and moved forward. The trench was men; the teeth against the sky were men. They ran forward bending their bodies into a curve, as men do when they run under a heavy fire; they looked like a cornfield with a heavy wind sweeping over it from behind. . . They flickered up, fled rapidly and silently across the sky, and flickered down into the rocks without the appearance of either a substantial beginning or end to the movement."



[H. M. Page.]

A LONG LADDER OF PAIN.
Bringing down wounded men from Spion Kop.

[From a sketch made on the spot.]

The Boers suffered heavily in their turn, but not so heavily, as they were in open formation, with better shelter, and out of sight of the British gunners. They had not to face the fearful shell fire which made of the British position a veritable shambles. As they gained ground and were able to enfilade one of our most advanced trenches, the situation grew more and more critical. Colonel Crofton, of the Royal Lancasters, upon whom the command had now devolved by seniority—General Woodgate having fallen—was greatly alarmed. Towards 10 o'clock he heliographed to headquarters this startling message: "Reinforce at once or all lost. General dead." It was clear that a crisis had arrived demanding every effort. Sir Charles Warren replied by ordering up General Coke with the 2nd Middlesex, 2nd Dorsetshires, and Imperial Light Infantry—the last a volunteer battalion raised at Durban, which was now to have its terrible baptism of fire—and by a message that Colonel Crofton must hold out to the last and must not think of surrender. But Colonel Crofton's words had roused the uneasiness of General Buller, who from Spearman's Hill was watching the battle. Apparently unaware that General Coke was

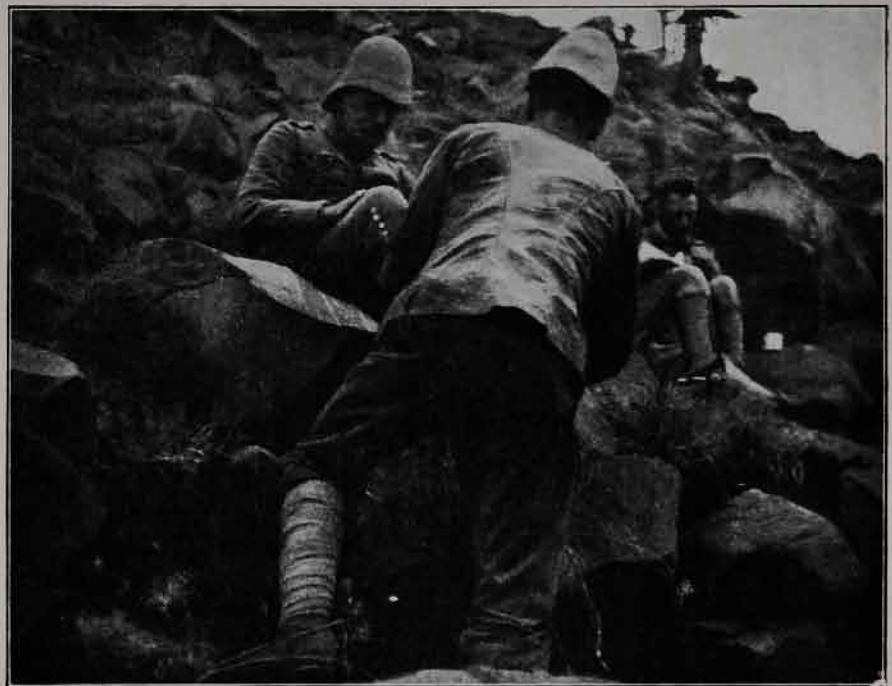
on the way up, he telegraphed to Sir Charles Warren at Three Tree Hill—"Unless you put some really good, hard-fighting man in

Thorneycroft put in command. command on the top, you will lose the

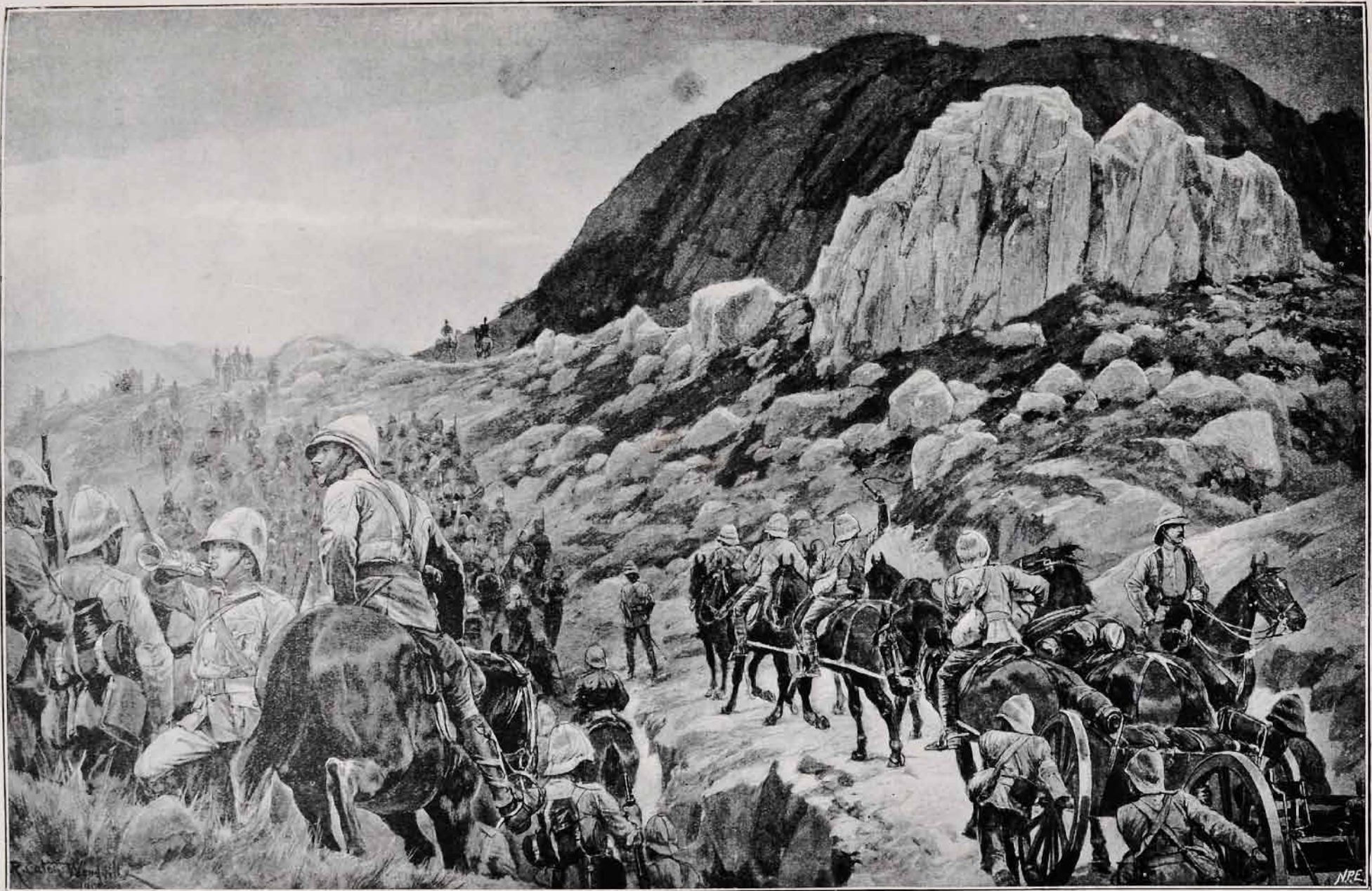
hill. I suggest Thorneycroft." General Warren complied with his Commander-in-Chief's "suggestion." Colonel Thorneycroft was appointed to command, "with local rank of Brigadier-General." Thus the confusion was made worse, as half the men on the top and most of those on their way up were unaware of this change. It was as at Sedan, where, in the space of a few hours, there were three commanders, with fatal results.

Besides the Middlesex Regiment, the Dorsets, and the Imperial Light Infantry, who had earlier in the morning moved up to the head of the valley dividing Three Tree Hill from Spion Kop, and who were now sent up to the actual summit of Spion Kop, other help had been despatched. With a soldierly intuition which did him infinite credit, General Lyttelton at Potgieter's Drift had seized the extremity of the emergency and had directed the 2nd Scottish Rifles to cross at Kaffir's Drift, above Potgieter's, and advance up the southern slope of the mountain. Yet, as the distance to be covered was great, it was not till late in the afternoon that they reached the scene of action. Further to the left Generals Hart and Hildyard made as though they, too, intended to assault the positions opposed to them, and had they been permitted so to do, it is certain that much of the pressure would have been taken off the forlorn hope on Spion Kop. However, a sharp fire was exchanged with the Boers, and then these two brigades fell to watching and waiting, unable to aid their comrades who were fighting for dear life on that grim summit. They could see the human anthill on the sky-line in confusion; tiny figures running to and fro; other figures with the gesture of command rallying the rout and restoring order. Instinctively they realised the tremendous gravity of the struggle.

As the morning wore on, the fight on the summit grew fiercer and fiercer. Fresh troops were continually arriving, for in the daylight the climb was not so excessively difficult, till the small space was packed with men. Just before the first reinforcements came up there was a moment when



[From a photograph.]
 GENERAL SIR CHARLES WARREN GIVING INSTRUCTIONS DURING THE SPION KOP FIGHT.
 General Warren was having a slight wound bound up when the photograph was taken.



R. Caton Woodville.]

REINFORCEMENTS FOR SPION KOP.

It was not until the night of the 24th that an attempt was made to get guns to the top of the hill. It was then too late; the hill had been abandoned, and the shattered remnants of the British force were already descending

disaster was narrowly avoided. The British force in one of the outlying trenches was demoralised by its losses and by the fire. About twenty men threw up their hands and shouted that they would surrender to the Boers not a hundred yards away. On this, says Mr. Winston Churchill, Colonel Thorneycroft dashed to the spot. "The Boers advancing to take the prisoners—as at Nicholson's Nek—were scarcely thirty yards away. Thorneycroft shouted

A frightful struggle.

Churchill, Colonel Thorneycroft dashed to the spot. "The Boers advancing to take the prisoners—as at Nicholson's Nek—were scarcely thirty yards away. Thorneycroft shouted



MAJOR-GENERAL COKE.

[Photo by Wyrall & Son, Alderhot.]

John Talbot Coke was educated at Harrow; entered the Army as 2nd Lieutenant in the 21st Foot in 1859, and was transferred to the 25th Foot (afterwards named the King's Own Scottish Borderers) in 1866; Captain, 1866; Major, 1879; Lieutenant-Colonel, 1885; Colonel, 1889; was put on half-pay, 1895. He served with the Suakin Field Force in 1888 during the investment of Suakin; was present in the engagement of Gemaizah; served in the operations on the Sudan frontier in 1889; was appointed senior officer at Mauritius in 1898, with local rank of Major-General, and left there to command the 10th Brigade of the South African Field Force, 1899.

to the Boer leader: 'You may go to —! I command on this hill and allow no surrender. Go on with your firing.' Which latter they did with terrible effect, killing many. The survivors, with the rest of the firing line, fled 200 yards," but then were rallied and regained the lost ground. It was owned by the Boers themselves after the battle that the British soldiers had "fought with desperate bravery and died like men." Despite the disadvantage of the ground, despite the tremendous bombardment, they could not and would not be forced back. The heaps of dead grew higher; an

awful breastwork of corpses was built to shelter the living; the trickle of wounded to the rear became a stream; but the fight flickered to and fro and the summit was still held.

From the shoulder of the hill by the mimosas, where the maimed men crowded in a heart-rending throng round the dressing station, the reinforcements emerged upon that bare plateau of death.

Lack of artillery support.

There were now the best part of 5,000 men, crowded into an area of little over three acres. But no guns came, though all looked long and eagerly for them. A couple of "Pom-Poms," a pair of 15-pounders, would have restored confidence by their roar. But there were no "Pom-Poms" with the army, and the artillery officers could not undertake to move their guns up to the height by the precipitous track. It only remained to suffer and die. In that



F. J. Waugh.]

THE BRITISH TROOPS MEETING A BOER RUSH ON SPION KOP.

atmosphere, thick with the fumes of cordite, of melinite, and of the powder in bursting shells, suffocating with smoke and dust and heat, the burning thirst of the battlefield laid its parching grip upon the throats of the combatants, and men cried and screamed for water. Yet water there was none, or, if there had been, there was no time to seek it, and no chance of carrying it alive into the firing line. Units were now commingled, companies confounded with companies, battalions with battalions; so many officers were down that there were few to lead and inspire the men in the fighting line. About 2 p.m. a white flag was raised over part of the British trenches, and 150 of the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers under Captain Freeth surrendered. In this battalion the losses of officers had been terrible, and the consequent demoralisation great. Among those who fell was the ill-fated son of Hicks Pasha, Captain Hicks. Blown to pieces by a shell, while bravely leading his men, no trace of him could be found, and his fate was for months uncertain.

The rifle fire of the British troops was so shaken by the hail of shells, that the Boers were able repeatedly to close, and were only driven back time after time by desperate bayonet charges. They



LYDDITE SHELL FROM A BRITISH NAVAL GUN.
Fired at Spion Kop and not exploded. Presented by the finder to President Kruger.

had set their hearts upon repeating Majuba, and capturing or driving back in utter rout the British troops. Again and again their leaders called upon our men to surrender, and were received each time with derisive shouts, though some small parties raised the white flag. They asserted, indeed, that our officers slashed the men with swords to make them fight—a story which is disproved by the fact that, like the men, the officers carried rifles; and they further accused us of firing upon those who had been made prisoners. There may have been such incidents, but not through any set purpose or with the fixed deliberation which attended their own too frequent breaches of the laws of war.

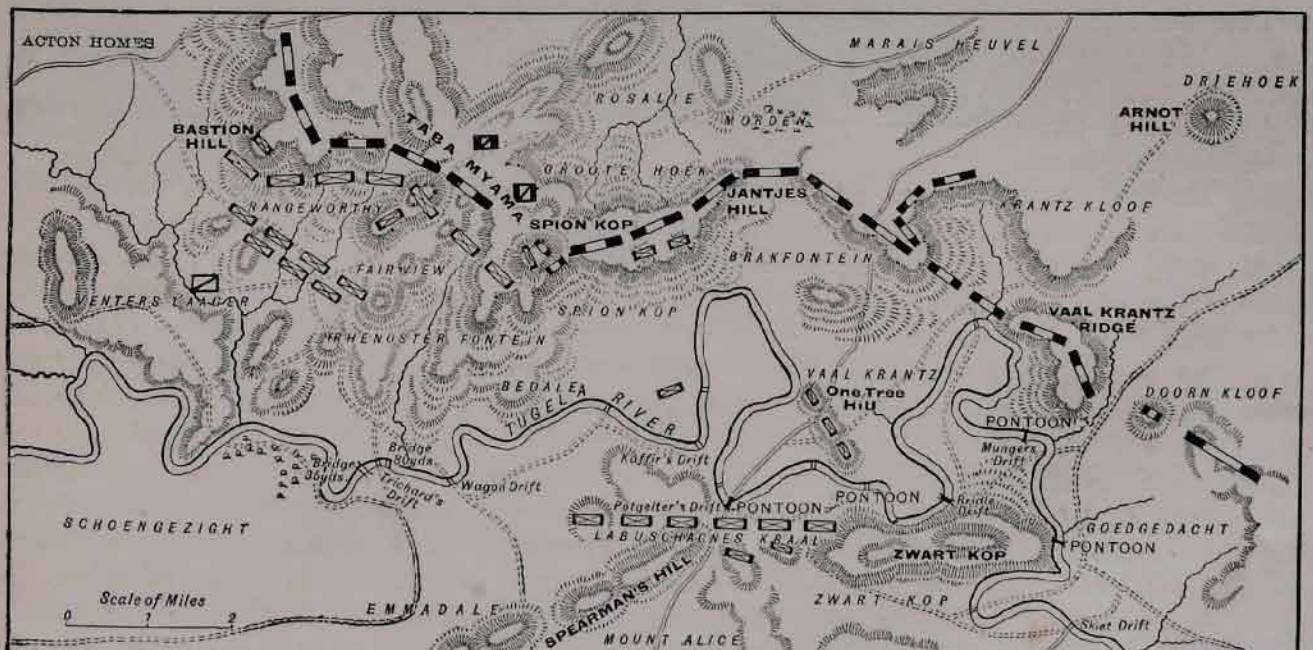
The personal story of a wounded officer of the 2nd Middlesex is worthy of repetition, as it gives a clear account of the afternoon's battle. "I crawled," he says, "a little way with half my company, and then brought up others in the same manner. The men of the different regiments already on the hill were mixed up, and ours met the same fate. It was impossible, under the circumstances, to keep regimental control. One unit merged into another; one officer gave directions to this or that unit, or to another battalion. I saw some tents on the far side of the hill to our front, and knowing the enemy must be there, opened with volleys at 1,800 yards, when we saw a puff of smoke, indicating that one of the Boer guns had just fired. We lay prone,



CAPTAIN HICKS.

Killed at Spion Kop. Was the son of Hicks Pasha, the unfortunate General who, with all his forces, was massacred in the Soudan, Nov. 1883.

and could only venture a volley now and again, firing independently at times when the shower of bullets seemed to fall away, and the shells did not appear likely to land specially amongst us. Everywhere, however, it was practically the same deadly smash of shells, mangling and killing all about us. The only troops actually close to me then were a party of the Lancashire Fusiliers inside a schanze, F Company of the Middlesex, and a mixed company of other troops



□ British positions on the morning of January 24. ○ Boer positions on the morning of January 24.

MAP OF THE BATTLE OF SPION KOP.

Partly based, by permission, on the map in Mr. Winston Churchill's "London to Ladysmith via Pretoria"

on the left front. A good many shells from the big guns burst near us, and a lance-corporal of the Fusiliers was killed. The only point I could see rifle fire proceeding from was a trench, the third, I believe, occupied by our troops on the right, and looking towards Spearman's.

"Presently I heard a great deal of shouting from this trench, in which were about fifty men. They were calling for reinforcements, and shouting, 'The Boers are coming up.' Two or three minutes afterwards, I saw a party of about forty Boers walking towards the trench. They came up quite coolly; most of them had their rifles slung, and all, so far as I could observe, had their hands up. Our men in the trench—they were Fusiliers—were then standing up also, with their hands up, and shouting, 'The Boers are giving in, the Boers are giving in.' I did not know what to think, but ordered a company of my regiment to fix bayonets. We waited to see what would happen. Just then, when the Boers were close to the trench, someone—whether an enemy or one of our men—fired a shot. In an instant there was a general stampede, or rather a *mêlée*, my men rushing from their position and charging, while the Boers fired at the men in the trench, knocking several back into it dead. Previous to this, a Boer came towards me saying, 'I won't hurt you.' He looked frightened, and threw down his rifle. Immediately afterwards a Boer fired, and there was a frightful muddle. I fired at one Boer, and then another passed. We were fighting hand to hand. I shot the Boer and he dropped, clinging, however, to his rifle as he fell, and covering me most carefully. He fired, and I fell like a rabbit, the bullet going in just over and grazing the left lung. I lay where I fell until midnight. Subsequent to my being hit, parties of Boers passed twice over me, trying on the same trick, holding up their hands, as if they were asking for quarter. But our men refused to be taken in again, and fired, killing or driving them back." Thus it would seem that the Boers were guilty of acts even more questionable than those with which they charged our men.

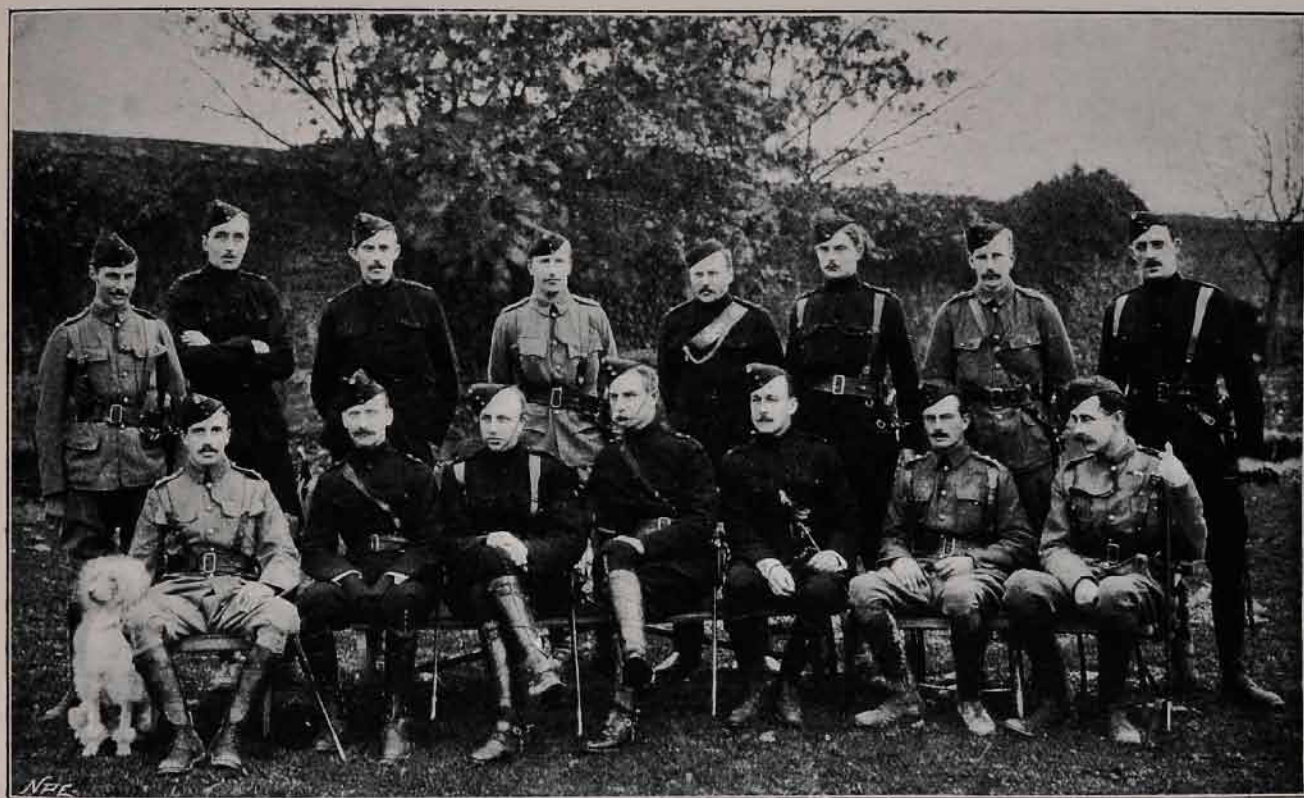


BOER DOCTORS AND AMBULANCE.

Early in the afternoon the Scottish Rifles arrived, and were at once thrown into the firing line. They served to defeat the last determined Boer attempt to rush the position, replacing the shattered fragments of the Lancashire Regiments. At the same time mules came up with a supply of ammunition, which had been running low, and with a certain amount of water, which was served out to the wounded. The most critical moment had passed, though the murderous shell fire still continued. So determined were the Boer rushes that at times the enemy came within thirty yards. Yet, as the day went on, and the sun began to sink, ground was distinctly gained.

A second move of General Lyttelton's unquestionably contributed to the repulse of the Boers. Again, of his own initiative, he sent his finest battalion, the 3rd King's Royal Rifles, to assail the eastern face of Spion Kop. They marched by way of Kaffir's Drift, direct upon two precipitous kopjes which rose from the ridge a mile or so from the main summit, the left half battalion upon the western, and the right half battalion upon the eastern kopje. The resolute skill with which they went forward is described as the most splendid feat of the day. The Boer trenches succeeded one another, line after line, along the slope of the ridge; line after line they were carried with swift rushes. Repeated charges with the bayonet were made, but the enemy always fell back before coming to hand-grips. The attention of the Boers being mainly concentrated upon Spion Kop, the Rifles were not opposed with the fierceness that might have been expected; yet their advance was by no means bloodless. They left on the field some seventy or eighty men, but about 5 p.m. they effected a lodgment on the crest, and stormed the two kopjes. At this point, unhappily, they began to suffer from the fire of the British artillery on Three Tree Hill, which, unaware of their success, burst several shrapnel over them. Their position was isolated—between them and Spion Kop intervened a deep valley—and it was difficult to support them fully. They were, therefore, recalled from the heights they had won as evening drew

**The King's Royal Rifles
storm a ridge.**



OFFICERS OF THE THIRD KING'S ROYAL RIFLES, WHO SERVED IN LYTTTELTON'S BRIGADE AT SPION KOP.

Col. Buchanan Riddell, commanding, sits in the centre of the group, with the Adjutant, C. W. Wilson, on his right. Colonel Buchanan Riddell was killed on January 24.

on. They fell sullenly back, indignant at being called off just when it seemed to them that success was within their grasp: yet, in the light of after events, it was fortunate that they were not left at their post of peril. "We were wild at getting the order to retire after getting right up to the top," writes one of the King's Royal Rifles. "We had to come down again in the dark, nearly breaking our necks, falling over rocks and down into deep holes. I did not get back to our camp till 6 o'clock the next morning. I had been sitting all night with a chap that had got wounded, but I had to leave him in the morning, or I should have got captured by the Boers."

Throughout the afternoon few messages and few signals had come from the summit of Spion Kop. The heliographs were shattered by the Boer fire; the flag signallers were struck down by the hail of bullets. Heliograms from Sir Charles Warren asking what the situation was remained



THE HELIOGRAPH.

The photograph represent the heliographs signallers in the besieged town of Ladysmith communicating with Buller's relief column.

unanswered. It was even doubtful whether General Coke or Colonel Thorneycroft was in command. Some time in the afternoon a report came in from General Coke couched in the most ominous terms. It stated that unless the British artillery could silence the Boer guns, it would be impossible for the force to endure another day on the summit, and described the situation as most critical. The report was fully borne out by the personal information of the war correspondent, Mr. Winston Churchill, who had made his way to the top, passing on his climb some hundreds of wounded or dying men. "Streams of wounded," he wrote, "met us and obstructed our path. Men were staggering along alone, or supported by comrades, or crawling on hands and knees, or carried on stretchers. Corpses lay here and there. . . There was, moreover, a small but steady leakage of unwounded men of all corps. Some of these cursed and swore. Others were utterly exhausted, and fell on the hill-side in stupor. Others, again, seemed drunk, though they had had no liquor. Scores were sleeping heavily. . . We were so profoundly impressed by the spectacle and situation that we resolved to go and tell Sir Charles Warren what we had seen. . . One thing was quite clear—unless good and efficient cover could be made during the night, and unless guns could be dragged to the summit of the hill to match the Boer artillery, the infantry could not, perhaps would not, endure another day. The human machine will not stand certain strains for long."

News so disquieting proved the need for the most determined effort—even for the presence of General Warren in person upon the mountain, when all doubts as to who was in command would have been set at rest, and the dispirited troops reassured by the presence of their real leader. Instead of going, General Warren signalled to General Coke to withdraw all but two battalions from the summit, placing the men thus withdrawn under what shelter the southern slope afforded, and directed General Coke to come in person and confer with him. General Coke, unaware that Colonel Thorneycroft had been appointed to command, handed over his charge to Colonel Hill of the 2nd Middlesex, as Colonel Crofton, the next officer in point of seniority, had already been wounded. Thus was confusion worse confounded,

Confusion of commands.



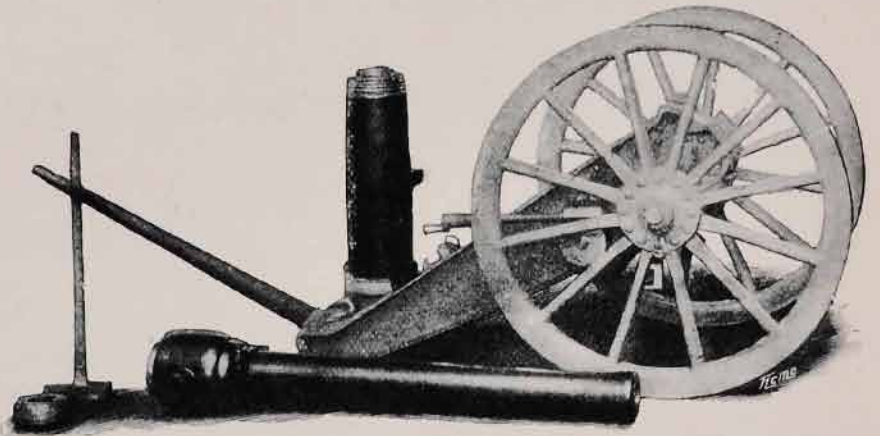
Frank Craig |

SPION KOP DURING COLONEL THORNEYCROFT'S DEFENCE.

and the uncertainty as to who was really in command further increased. There was no one in authority; no officer of high rank was there to reorganise the defence and cheer the men; no general to think of the future as well as of the moment. Colonel Thorneycroft, who was actually directing the fighting line, where his conduct was superb, could spare not a moment from the vehemence of the conflict. Worst of all, he did not know that at last guns and sandbags were coming up, with a large number of engineers to complete the entrenchments.

It is said by Mr. Churchill that the artillery officers when questioned as to the practicability of moving guns up to the summit, replied that it was impos-

sible, and that even if the guns could be got there they would be shot to pieces. Lieutenant James, of the Royal Navy, however, the officer in charge of the naval guns, replied that he could go anywhere, or at least make the attempt. Accordingly, two of his 12-pounders and the Mountain Battery were ordered to leave for the top. It is Mr. Churchill's opinion that the path was impracticable for field guns, and, as we have often seen, the British mountain guns were of such a pattern and so short-ranged that they could have done nothing against the Boer Krupps, Creusots, and "Pom-Poms." So that, after all, little was lost by failing to send up guns earlier. The movement of the guns did not begin till darkness was closing down. The crackle of rifles still proceeded from the summit of Spion Kop, but the heavy, incessant bombardment had now abated. Truth to tell, the Boers were in the most grievous discouragement. If we had suffered, they had suffered too. All their artillery fire had failed visibly to shake our soldiers' grip on the hill; from the rear of their firing line, as from



[Photo by Sir W. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co.]

7-POUNDER MOUNTAIN GUN.

Showing how the gun itself takes to pieces. The wheels can also be quickly taken off the carriage for transportation as shown in the illustration on page 249.



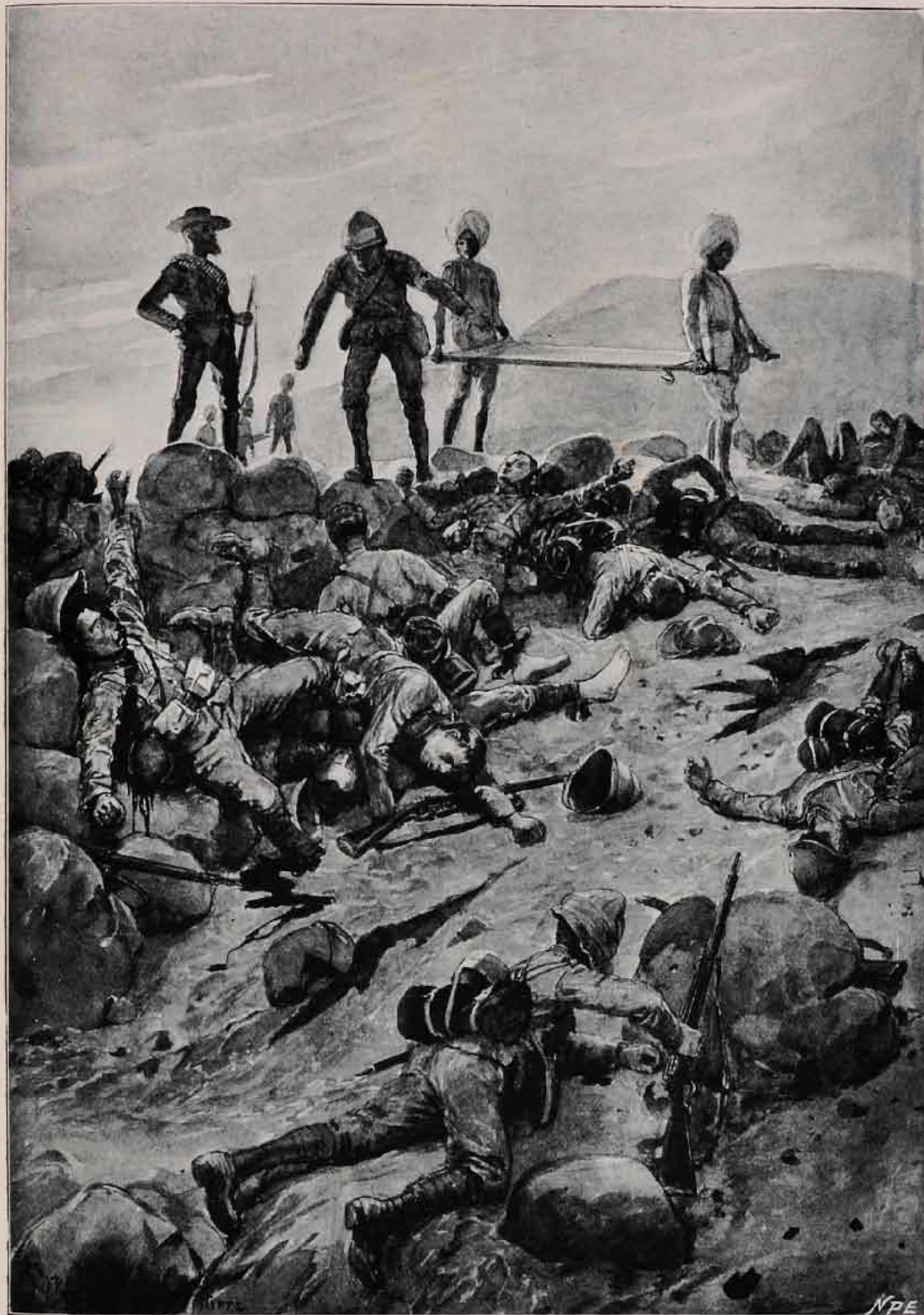
SOME OF THE WOUNDED FROM SPION KOP AND COLENZO.
Photographed on their return to England.

[Photo by Miel & Ridley, Bournemouth.]

ours, there was a procession of unwounded but faint-hearted men. Their numbers were less than ours, and their men were worn out with incessant fighting. As night fell, the signs of an imminent

retreat were clearly manifest to observers in the Boer rear, at Ladysmith. The garrison made no effort to harry the enemy or precipitate the decision; weakened by hunger, it could only watch from a distance the terrific contest on which its fate hinged—watch and pray. As hour followed hour, it saw shell and shrapnel burst; saw the scurry of tiny figures on the summit of Spion Kop; saw,

too, the victorious advance of the Rifles; saw the flight of large parties of Boers, north-westwards and northwards. And then darkness descended upon the doubtful field. But the Boers were in a mind for flight—so much was certain. Some hundreds of their men, as their surgeons afterwards owned, had been killed or wounded, and these hundreds could never be replaced. In fact, that moment had arrived which comes in all stubbornly contested conflicts, when the men on each side feel themselves beaten, and when all depends upon the general. The Boers had Louis Botha—young, brave, active, a born leader of men—who had held a small band steady through the evening, and had even succeeded in bringing up reinforcements. The British troops had no one but Colonel Thorneycroft, and



A. Forestier.]

[After a sketch by Fried. Villiers.

DAWN ON SPION KOP: SORTING THE LIVING FROM THE DEAD.

he, weary with twenty-four hours of terrible conflict, appalled by the manner in which the force on the summit had melted and suffered in the struggle, unconscious that the enemy was equally hard hit, and with no knowledge that help was at hand, was in no condition to reach a cool and balanced judgment.

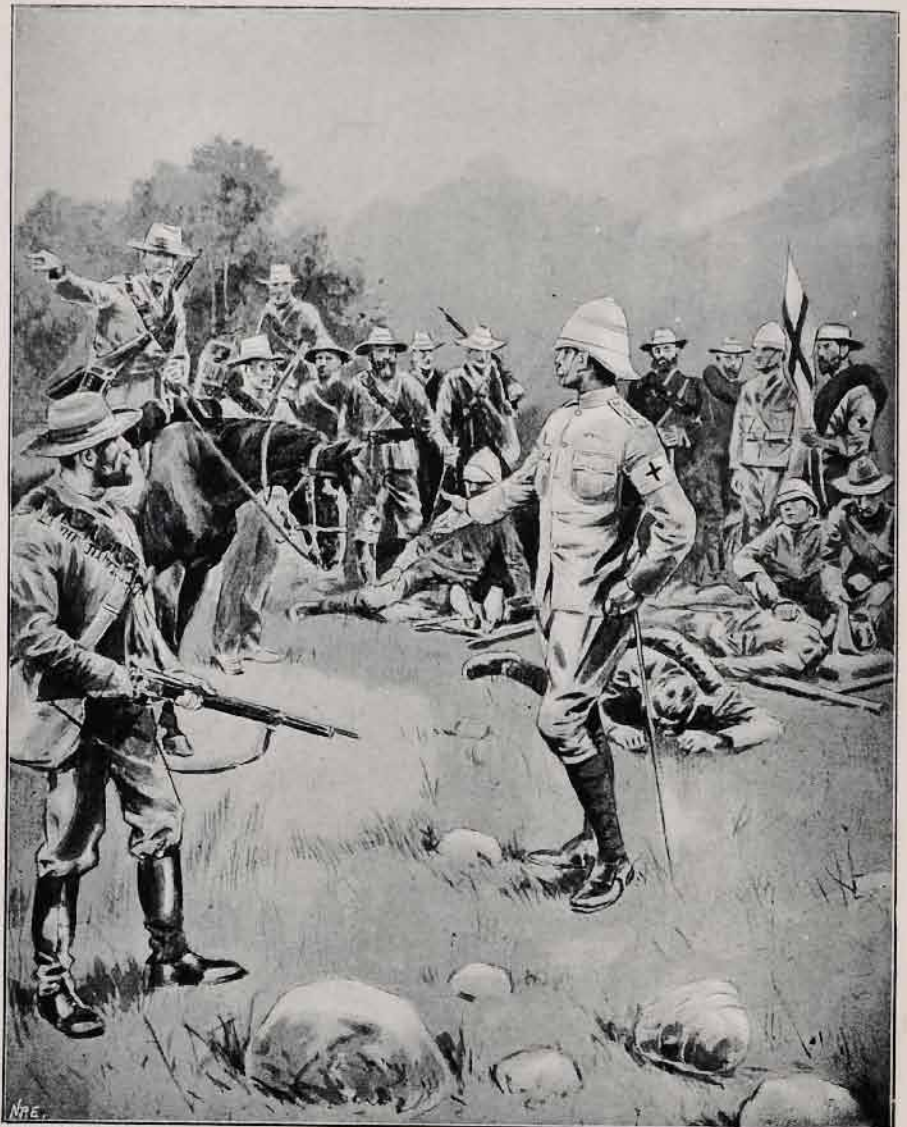
In the darkness the firing continued, but intermittently. Straggling and skulking had increased; the trickle to the rear had swelled to a stream; there were even stories of panic and flight, which were eagerly caught up by the Boers from demoralised prisoners. But Mr. Churchill, who a second time visited the position in the darkness, tells us that the mass of the infantry were determined to hold on to the last. Already, however, the fatal decision had been reached. On his own authority, and in despite of the vigorous protests of Colonel Hill, Colonel Thorneycroft had determined to withdraw, though his orders were to hold the position to

Thorneycroft determines to withdraw.

the last. He could not communicate with Generals Buller and Warren or receive the instructions which, had they only been present in person, they would undoubtedly have given. There was no oil for the signal lamps, a sad instance of the fatal result of the want of that attention to detail which has always marked the great commanders. It added irony to the event that the British Staff down below, in utter ignorance of what was proceeding above—and since the morning no Staff officer had appeared on the summit—was making arrangements for a general assault all along the line, as the retreat began. Many of the wounded had to be abandoned when the shattered companies and battalions, covered by a strong rearguard, withdrew through the darkness, and stole down the precipitous path. One of the bloodiest, certainly the most terrible, of the battles of the war had reached its end.

Dawn broke upon the summit, and parties of Boers stole forward to renew the weary assault. But the place was tenanted only by the dead and dying—a vast charnel-house

testifying gloriously to the devoted heroism of the resistance. Two hundred British corpses, many torn by shells and dismembered beyond recognition, lay upon the mountain top, and beside them lay many burghers in their last long sleep. "In some of the trenches and parts of the kopje where the fire was hottest," writes a Boer correspondent, "bodies were actually entangled, as if the dying men had clutched each other in the death struggle, the spirit of battle in their souls as they sped from earth. On all sides were mute evidences of the desperate nature of the battle. Dozens of stones were spattered with blood, and empty Lee-Metford shells lay about everywhere by the bucketful, testifying that the English had spent an enormous amount of ammunition. Many



R. B. M. Paxton.]

[After a sketch by Ernest Fraters

MAJOR WRIGHT DEMANDING POSSESSION OF THE WOUNDED.

The Boers at first refused to allow the British Volunteer Ambulance men to carry off the wounded. Major Wright, who had been wounded at Elandsplaagte and was now serving under the Red Cross, persisted in his demand, claiming his right under the Geneva Convention, and finally carried his point in a personal interview with Commandant Botha.

cartridge belts were found entirely empty." In one trench, raked steadily by the Boer fire, sixty bodies lay within a hundred feet. And all about was the strange pathetic litter of the battlefield; letters and papers, testaments, battered helmets, broken firearms. Here and there the long grass had caught fire, burning mules and men.

Even the Boers themselves were strangely moved by the evidence of the heroism with which their as heroic attacks had been encountered. Yet, in their usual fashion, they were not content with the victory which they had achieved, but must needs fall to magnifying it by misrepresenting alike the British losses and their own. They professed to have buried 620 dead on Spion Kop and placed our total loss in killed at 1,000. Mr. Webster Davis, an American official, who had been mysteriously converted to Krugerism at Pretoria, went over the battlefield and pretended to have counted 400 British dead, even after the 620 had been buried. Which, it may be said, only served to show that American politicians do not always tell the truth. Their own killed the Boer official version placed at 51, their wounded at 123, and this, they said, was the "heaviest loss yet sustained by our forces in any engagement." The pretty effort of fiction deceived no one. Though they were elated—and justly elated—at their great success, it is well



[Photo by Cribb.]

FLAG SIGNALLING.

The impossibility of using this mode of communication was one of the minor causes of the loss of Spion Kop. (See page 297.)

known that the feeling of satisfaction passed when the losses were counted. One man, Louis Botha, had won the day; had the British army possessed its Botha, what might it not have achieved, asked even the plain burghers. And the time was coming when the British army should



ON SPION KOP THE DAY AFTER THE BATTLE.

One of many sad processions which merged into one long train at the foot of the hill.

find a Botha—and a greater than Botha—a general who had skill to plan, faith to inspire, and capacity unflinchingly to execute.

The Boers placed the strength of the force which assaulted Spion Kop at half that of the total number of British left dead upon the field. That is to say, they pretended that 100 or 150 men dislodged between 4,000 and 5,000 British infantry, who, by even the Boer accounts, displayed remarkable bravery. It is needless to comment upon the story. Were it true, every officer and man who returned

from Spion Kop deserved to be condemned as a coward. The evidence is strong that the Boers were numbered, not by the fifty or the hundred, but by thousands. They made their supreme effort in this quarter, and it succeeded. A word of reproach is due for the ghoulish and horrible photographs of the field of battle which the Boer generals allowed to be taken, and which the Boer Government permitted to be paraded in the shops of Pretoria and Johannesburg.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly what were the losses on this terrible day. The official return lumped together the casualties for the week of battles, which amounted to 27 officers and 245 men killed, 53 officers and 1,050 men wounded, and 7 officers and 351 men missing. The vast proportion of the missing were prisoners, but a few were among the killed. Of the men lost, about 200 were killed and about 500 wounded on Spion Kop. By far the heaviest sufferers were the companies of Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, which fought with such blind devotion



1. Lieut. Otto (wounded).	5. ———	9. ———	13. Capt. Bettington (wounded).	17. Capt. Hendry.
2. The Hon. J. L. H. Peire (killed).	6. Lieut. Pretjohin.	10. Quartermaster Clipman.	14. Col. Thorneycroft.	18. Lieut. Flower-Ellis (missing).
3. Capt. Knappe (wounded).	7. Dr. Bensusan.	11. Lieut. Brown (wounded).	15. Capt. Morris.	19. Lieut. Jenkins (killed).
4. Lieut. Bosomworth.	8. Lieut. Steer.	12. Lieut. Martins (wounded).	16. Lieut. Sargent.	20. Lieut. Baldwin (wounded).

OFFICERS OF THORNEYCROFT'S MOUNTED INFANTRY. (Numbered from left to right, and commencing with the back row.)

on that blood-stained summit. They went up 194 strong; they returned with only 72 and wounded men. The 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers out of a total of 800 had to mourn a loss of 250, but of these many were prisoners. The Imperial Light Infantry, whose first battle this was, out of 850 men lost 31 killed and 91 wounded or missing. It is typical of the complete disorganisation which the fight produced that the one battalion, the Scottish Rifles, which preserved the best order, could muster only 270 out of 800 men at the foot of the mountain. The reason was, not that its losses were especially heavy, but that in the darkness and confusion no formation could be maintained.

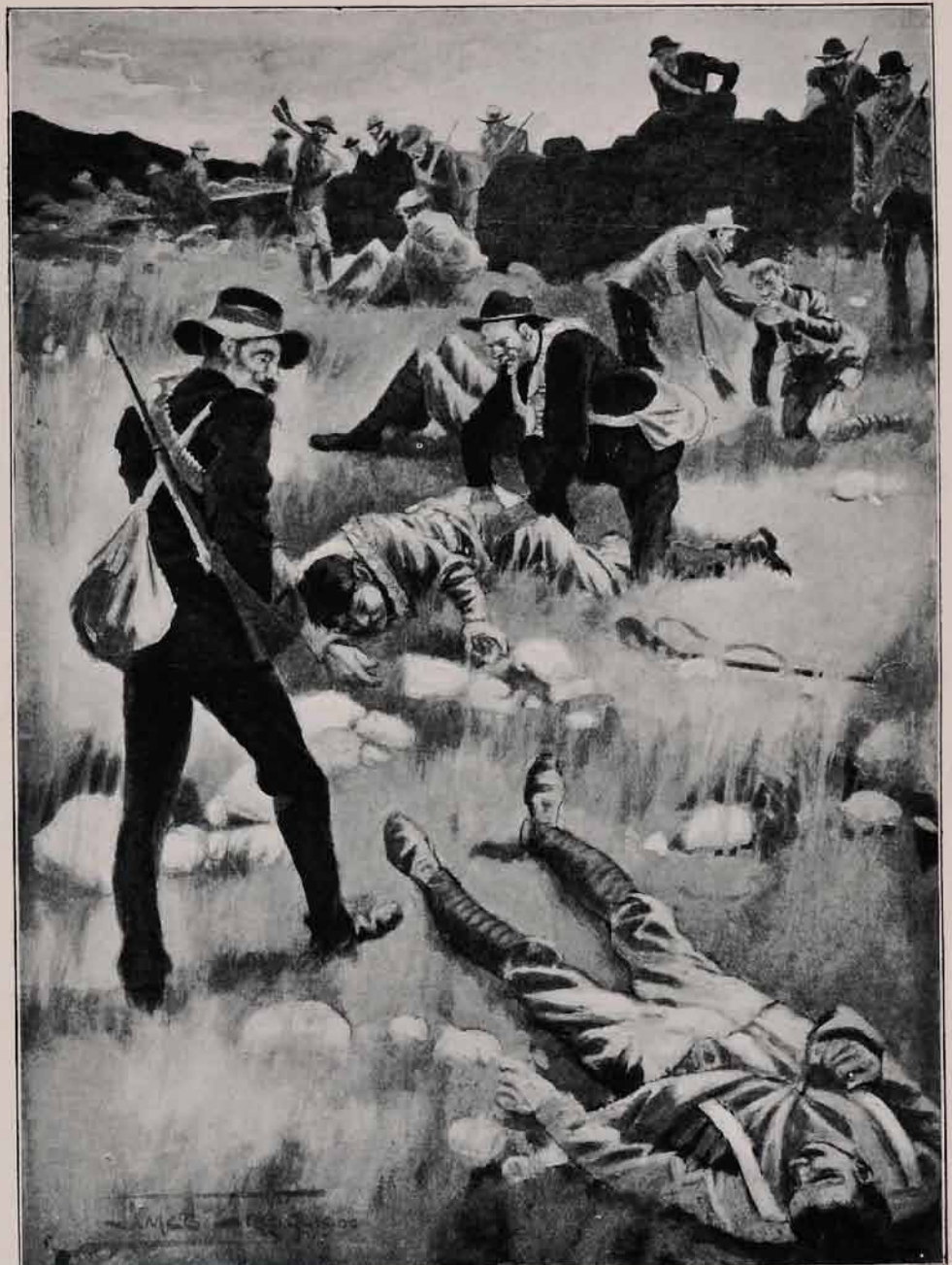
The patience, the valour of the common soldier throughout the week, fully merited General Buller's epithet of "splendid." "The men," writes Mr. Treves, the distinguished surgeon with the army, "were

much exhausted by the hardships they had undergone. In many instances they had not had their clothes off for a week or ten days. They had slept in the open without great-coats, and had been reduced to the minimum in the matter of rations. The nights were cold, and there was on nearly every night a heavy dew. Fortunately, there was little or no rain. The want of sleep and the long waiting upon the hill had told upon them severely. There is no doubt also that the incessant shell fire must have proved a terrible strain. Some of the men, although severely wounded, were found asleep upon their stretchers when brought in. Many were absolutely exhausted and worn out independently of their wounds.

In spite of all their hardships, the wounded men behaved as splendidly as they always have done. They never complained. They were quite touching in their unselfishness and in their anxiety 'not to give trouble.' One poor fellow had been shot in the face by a piece of shell, which had carried away his left eye, the left upper jaw with the corresponding part of the cheek, and had left a hideous cavity at the bottom of which his tongue was exposed. He had been lying hours on the hill. He was unable to speak, and as soon as he was landed at the hospital he made signs that he wanted to write. Pencil and paper were given him, and it was supposed he wished to ask for something, but he merely wrote, 'Did we win?' No one had the heart to tell him the truth."

There were many striking instances of gallantry. Captain Murray, of the Scottish Rifles, though wounded in four places, essayed to lead a charge on the Boer trenches, and so doing was shot dead. Captain the Hon.

J. H. Petre, of Thorneycroft's, displayed throughout the most determined valour; twice wounded, he remained in his place and was killed. Sergeant Mason, of Thorneycroft's, a crack shot, engaged in a terrible contest with three Boers. One he knocked over at his first shot, the second he mortally wounded, the third saw him and took cover before he could fire again. Five bullets passed through his helmet; others tore his clothes; one at last struck his right shoulder. He changed his rifle to his



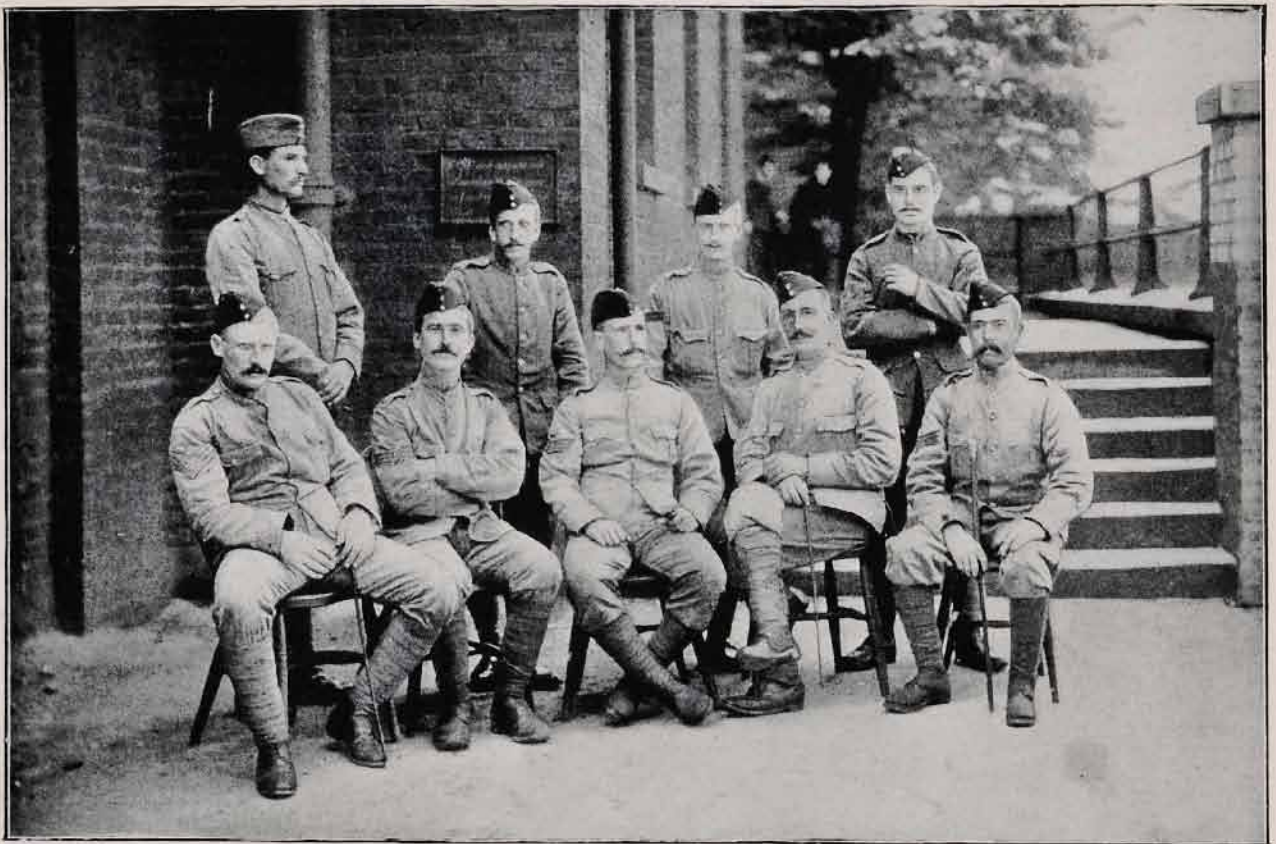
J. Craig.

AFTER THE BATTLE OF SPION KOP.

Whilst the Boers treated our wounded with tenderness they did not hesitate to turn out the pockets of the dead and dying.

left shoulder and finally hit his adversary. The Boer fell forward with his head over a boulder, and Mason crawled away to have his wound dressed. In the dressing station on the brow of the hill the army doctors displayed their wonted bravery under fire. One man at least was killed in the surgeon's hands; others were wounded afresh while they were being bandaged.

Among the strange incidents of the day was this, which is vouched for by Mr. Burleigh. While the Boers were attacking the Lancashire Fusiliers, a man in khaki, who looked like an officer, suddenly appeared in one of the British trenches and ordered those holding it to move out of it, as they were of no use where they were. Several obeyed, when they found that he was leading them towards a strong force of Boers among the rocks. "They are friends," said the supposed officer, as the men hesitated. But, fortunately, a private, who had his suspicions aroused, challenged the man in khaki, and, when he could give no satisfactory explanation of his presence, bayoneted him. Nearly all the British party were thereupon shot down.



SURVIVORS OF THE 2ND MIDDLESEX WHO FOUGHT AT SPION KOP.
Non-commissioned officers transferred to the new 3rd Battalion Middlesex Regiment at Wodwich.

[Photo by Colour-Sergeant Morris.]

When morning came, Generals Buller and Warren learnt to their surprise and consternation that the position had been abandoned. General Buller's first intimation of the true situation was when a

The retreat. naval officer on Mount Alice gazed through the naval telescope and saw that there were only Boers and ambulance men upon the summit. The general seemed to have grown suddenly older; he looked wearied and depressed. Forthwith he rode out to Trichardt's Drift and at last assumed command. A general retreat was ordered upon the spot; all the troops were to withdraw to the south of the Tugela as soon as the baggage could be moved across.

Fresh from a reverse more disastrous than that of Colenso, the army was yet able to retire unmolested; the bridges themselves were taken to pieces for future use, General Buller being the last man across. On the morning of the 27th the enemy dropped a few shells into the river without effect, and the turning movement was a thing of the past.

In his telegraphic report, General Buller especially praised the conduct of the Scottish Rifles, King's Royal Rifles, Lancashire Fusiliers, and 2nd Middlesex. He pointed, too, with a satisfaction

which caused deep uneasiness at home, because it seemed to show that the British Army was in very truth a beaten force and had been on the very edge of disaster, to the ease with which the 20,000 British soldiers had been withdrawn to the south of the river.

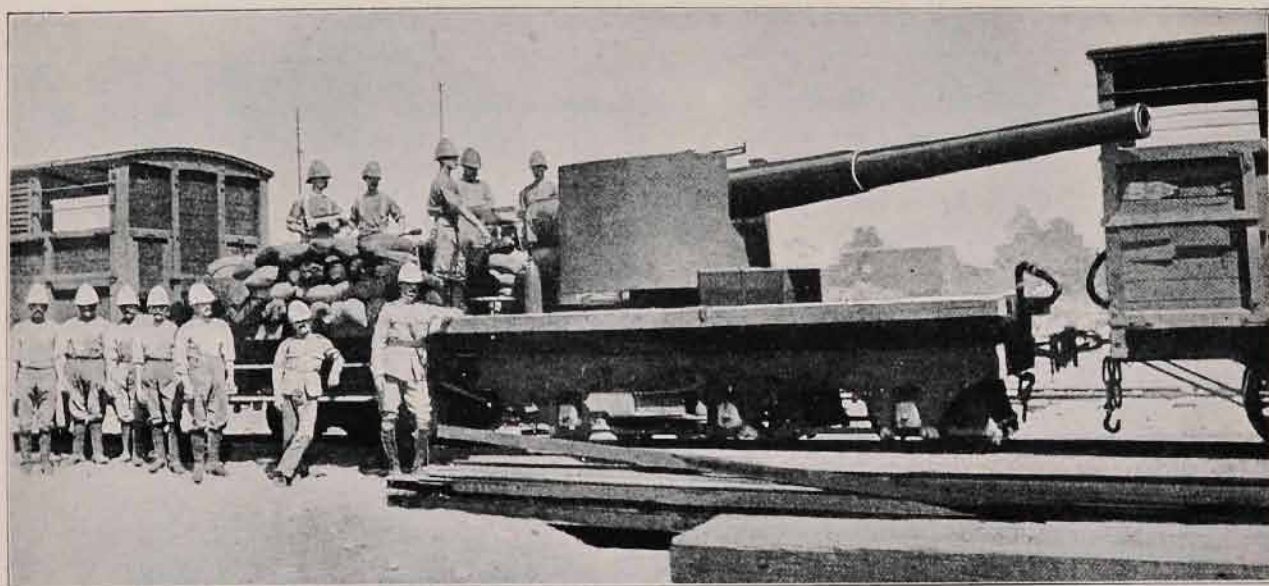
The causes of the defeat were many. In the first place must be set a faulty military system. The Boers, observes Mr. Churchill, would have placed 300 men on Spion Kop, who, by taking cover and shooting carefully among the rocks, would have suffered but little from the artillery fire. The British generals massed first 2,000, and then 3,000 men upon the height—a target for every shell. The failure to construct serviceable entrenchments has already been noticed, and in some degree explained, but it is possible that if the British infantry had been regularly trained to the use of the spade, the difficulties would have been overcome. The fog was an element by no means favourable to our success; it prevented the troops from seeing where to advance, and gave the enemy time to rally and collect. The breakdown of all organisation and organising power at the close of a day of desperate and prolonged conflict is not altogether to be wondered at.

“If at sundown the defence of the summit had been taken regularly in hand, entrenchments laid out, gun emplacements prepared, the dead removed, the wounded collected, and, in fact, the whole place brought under regular military command, and careful arrangements made for the supply of water and food to the scattered fighting line, the hill would have been held, I am sure,” wrote General Buller. “As this was not done I think Colonel Thorneycroft exercised a wise discretion.”

In his despatch, covering and commenting upon the various reports, Lord Roberts gave the final and well-balanced judgment of a great soldier. He held that General Buller's original plan for a turning movement had been well conceived and had every probability of success if only it had been executed. He blamed, for the failure upon Spion Kop, General Buller, because of his “disinclination to assert his authority and see that what he thought best was done”; Sir C. Warren, because of his “errors of judgment” and “want of administrative capacity,” and because he had not himself visited the summit in the hours of crisis; and Colonel Thorneycroft, because of his “unwarrantable and needless assumption of responsibility.” But the nation will not forget that while the gravest mistakes were made, they were made by generals who were brave, patriotic Englishmen, under the stress and anxiety of conflict. It is painful to have to record the fact that the man who was probably least to blame was the one singled out for punishment. Colonel Crofton was retired from his command, because of the brief message he had signalled to headquarters announcing the dangerous position on Spion Kop. Some months later, after the publication of the despatches, Sir C. Warren was recalled from Natal and given an administrative post in Griqualand West.



AN AMBULANCE WAGGON STUCK FAST ON A BROKEN BRIDGE NEAR POTGIETER'S DRIFT.



NAVAL 6-INCH GUN ON ITS SPECIALLY-DESIGNED TRUCK.

CHAPTER XIV.

VAAL KRANTZ.

Substantial reinforcements—Guns taken to summit of Zwart Kop—Plan of attack on Vaal Krantz—Lie of the land—Another crossing of the Tugela—Demonstration towards Brakfontein—Bombardment of Vaal Krantz—Infantry storm the height—Difficulty of holding the position—Disappearing guns—Renewed attacks—Council of war—Evacuation of the ridge—Losses—Disappointment in Britain.



WICE beaten back, twice discomfited, neither the general nor his army lost heart.

No sooner had the army withdrawn across the Tugela than, in a review, General Buller told his men that he held the key to Ladysmith, and hoped yet to be in that town in a week. It is possible that this speech was made in accordance with suggestions from

Substantial reinforcements.

Capetown, so that the enemy's attention might be diverted from the great campaign, now about to begin in the west. Meantime he was strongly reinforced. Three

thousand drafts from home reached him, more than replacing the losses of Colenso and Spion Kop. Not less important was the addition now made to his artillery. Two siege 5-inch guns supplemented his 47 weapons of position, and a great 6-inch naval gun on a special mounting was also sent up from Durban. Besides these, another Field Battery and A Horse Artillery Battery joined him, and thus, as the guns lost at Colenso were now replaced, he found himself with seventy-eight serviceable guns—an immense change from the days of Colenso and of the first operations in Natal. He received, too, the best part of another cavalry regiment—the 14th Hussars. General Woodgate, mortally wounded on Spion Kop and now lying betwixt life and death, was replaced in command of his brigade by Colonel Wynne. Thus all was ready for a fresh attempt.

The army remained in its camp at Spearman's Farm, close to Potgieter's Ford, until February 4. The wait was utilised to move six naval 12-pounders, two field guns, and the mountain battery, to the summit of Zwart Kop. The slopes of the mountain were so steep and precipitous

Guns taken to summit of Zwart Kop.

that the work was one of no little difficulty and danger. Steel hawsers were employed, attached to trees on the summit, to warp up the heavier weapons; the little

mountain 7-pounders were carried up on mule-back, but even the mules found it hard to keep their footing, and one in the battery fell and was killed. The first of the naval 12-pounders, too, had overturned on its way up and caused no little trouble. On January 30, the cavalry pushed out far to the west in a reconnaissance, the object of which was to distract the attention of the Boers, but

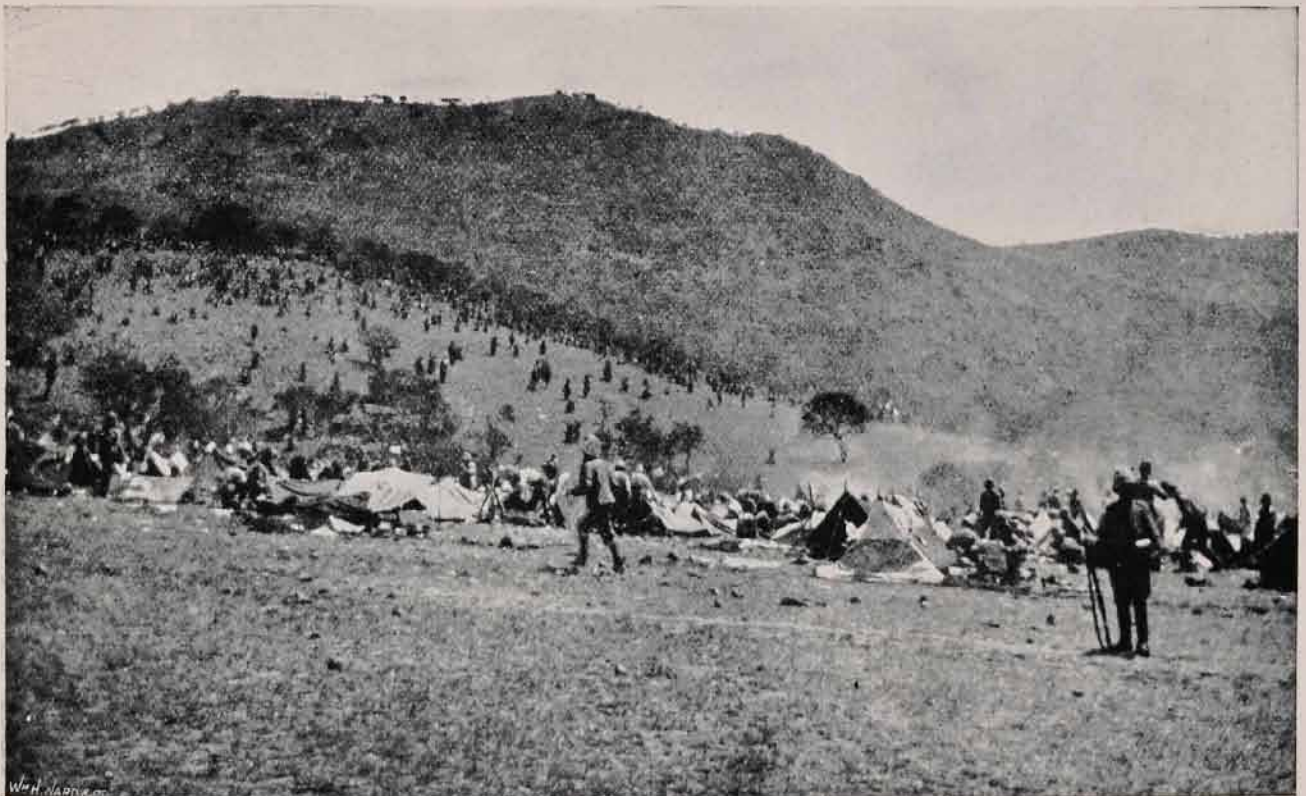
they saw little of the enemy. The troops at Chieveley, to keep up the mystification, demonstrated at their end of the line and shelled the Boer works at Colenso.

The serious attack, however, was to be made from near Potgieter's Drift. Between Spion Kop, to the west of the drift, and Doorn Kloof, a yet higher summit which rose from the Tugela to the east, ran a comparatively low ridge, fronting Spearman's Hill and Zwart Kop. The left and western end of the ridge, known as Brakfontein, commanded the broad tongue of land which ran up from Potgieter's Drift in the direction of Ladysmith. It was strongly defended by four lines of Boer trenches, so constructed as to give complete cover against the British fire. Though demonstrations had been made against it during the week of battles, it had been found too strong for serious attack. But the right and eastern end of the ridge,

Plan of attack on Vaal Krantz.

Lie of the Land.

known as Vaal Krantz, and rising just above the curve of the easternmost of the two inverted U's which the Tugela hereabouts describes, was not so strong. It was a bare, rocky, razor-backed ridge with comparatively flat ground to the east, over which ran a road to Ladysmith. Still further to the east rose Doorn Kloof, as it was somewhat incorrectly called, Doorn Kop being the real name, the highest mountain on the Tugela line and also the most irregular in outline—a picturesque tangle of peaks and watercourses and wooded valleys, affording the best of shelter to the Boers. Against Vaal Krantz General Buller determined to make his real effort; while once more demonstrating in the direction of Brakfontein. On February 4, instructions were issued to the leading officers. The Brigade to which General Wynne had just been appointed was to make the demonstration against Brakfontein, supported by General Coke's Brigade, by thirty-six field guns, the howitzers, and the position guns. The artillery was gradually to withdraw during the demonstration, and to come into action against Vaal Krantz. General Clery's Division, composed of the Second Brigade under General Hildyard and the Fifth Brigade under General Hart, with the Fourth Brigade under General Lyttelton temporarily attached, was to take position halfway up the eastern inverted U, as if it intended to join in the attack on Brakfontein, but instead of doing so was at the appointed moment to build a new bridge over the Tugela and advance against Vaal Krantz. General Lyttelton was to storm this position after a thorough artillery preparation, when the guns



BIVOUAC ON THE TUGELA AFTER SPION KOP.
The camp of the 3rd King's Royal Rifles on the evening of February 4.

were to follow him and take post on Vaal Krantz ridge, while the First Cavalry Brigade under General Burn Murdoch, composed of the 1st Dragoons, 13th and 14th Hussars, and A Battery of Horse Artillery, was to press up the road which ran under the Vaal Krantz ridge towards Ladysmith, breaking in upon the Boer rear. Lord Dundonald with the rest of the mounted men was to guard the British right from any counter-attack. Such was the plan, and it



IN CAMP: GETTING DINNER READY.

offered good promise of success. Now for the execution.

On the 4th the troops began to move. Generals Hart and Hildyard

Another crossing of the Tugela.

crossed from the British left to the right; General Lyttelton withdrew from One Tree Hill and was replaced by Wynne; in all directions great clouds of dust rose from the rough tracks, indicating to the eyes of the expectant Boers the march of thousands of men. With dawn of the 5th the cavalry struck



OFFICERS' MESS PREPARATIONS FOR BREAKFAST.

its camp on the left and also moved off—the squadrons at a walk. Pontoon bridges already spanned the Tugela to the east of Potgieter's Drift, allowing men readily to cross from the neighbourhood of One Tree Hill to the tongue of land enclosed by the river which runs up to Vaal Krantz. Yet another bridge was to be built at Munger's Drift, on the further side of the tongue, to allow the passage of troops from this tongue to the northern bank of the Tugela. The engineers with the pontoon train were ready, waiting to get to their work as soon as the demonstration against Brakfontein fully occupied the attention of the Boers.

The morning was hot and misty, and not till after 7 a.m. could the battle begin. Then the six batteries of field artillery de-

Demonstration towards Brakfontein.

ployed in front of One Tree Hill and opened a vigorous fire upon a quite invisible enemy. There was nothing



SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN CAMP ON THE TUGELA.

to aim at except the Boer trenches, which appeared, as usual, untenanted. The enemy were grimly watching, with orders not to return a shot till the British infantry approached within 500 yards. Next, two battalions, the York and Lancasters and the South Lancashires, extended and moved forward towards Brakfontein in a long thin line of brown dots, followed by the batteries in succession. "Round the guns the long thin lines split and joined together again in front and went on," writes Mr. Atkins. "Here and there the lines were thick where the men had not yet had room to extend. Officers blew their whistles and threw their arms apart, and the knotted part of the line moved crabwise until the proper intervals were observed." Gradually the advance developed till the Boers began to feel real alarm for Brakfontein. The infernal thunder of the field guns and 4.7's, which had now joined in the game, echoed up through the valleys and reverberated among the mountain heights. And then at last the enemy's guns began to reply. These were barely a dozen in number, but they



F. W. Barton.]

RETIRING THE BALLOON.

During the action at Vaal Krantz, the balloon came under heavy fire, and had to be retired out of range by means of the rope which holds it captive.

were well-placed: on Doorn Kloof was a huge 6-inch Creusot, which did not as yet disclose its presence; on the eastern slope of Spion Kop were two Krupp field guns, and at other points along the line were the much dreaded "Pom-Poms." Towards ten o'clock all the smaller Boer weapons began to fire; columns of dust spurted suddenly up beside the British batteries, telling that the enemy shot true; Maxim shells and shrapnel bullets lashed the surface of the veldt around them. But the gunners fired stolidly and steadily, and, as on many other occasions, the Boer projectiles caused trivial loss. The British howitzers now opened, hurling into the clouds from their squat throats the 50-lb. lyddite shells, which, when they fell, burst with a fearful concussion, tearing men in pieces. A correspondent with the Boers notes that in one case the upper and lower parts of one body were found no less than 100 feet apart. For some hours the shells fell on Brakfontein at the rate of ten a minute, but, wonderful to relate, the Boer casualties were by no means large. To direct the British fire the war balloon was sent up and information as to the enemy's whereabouts was transmitted from the

observer in the car by telephone. This, by the way, was the second balloon to be employed by General Buller's army; the first had been damaged by Boer shrapnel, and eventually torn against rocks and rendered useless during the Spion Kop week.

And now it seemed to the Boers that once more victory was falling to them. The British attack was distinctly relaxing; battery after battery could be seen retiring in perfect order, crossing the Tugela by the pontoon bridge and moving off to the right. The enemy did not at once seize the fact that all this sound and fury veiled a mere demonstration, and that a withdrawal had been ordered from the first. The Boer guns redoubled their fire, and elicited a vigorous return from the heavy naval weapons on Zwart Kop, which were unmasked suddenly by felling trees in front of them.

The engineers at Munger's Drift had got to work upon their bridge as the booming of the bombardment began. The Boers were not long in seeing them, and opened upon them a rifle and cannon fire which wounded eight men. In thirty minutes the task was accomplished with all the coolness and method which the Royal Engineers invariably displayed under fire. All

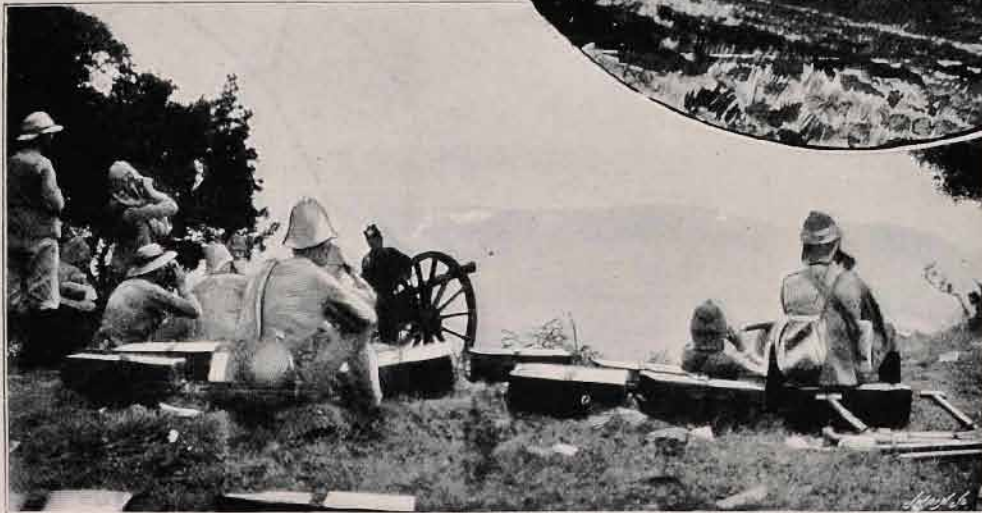


(From photos by a British officer.)

VIEW OF VAAL KRANTZ
FROM BELOW ZWART
KOP.

BRITISH ARTILLERY ON
ZWART KOP
FIRING AT VAAL KRANTZ.

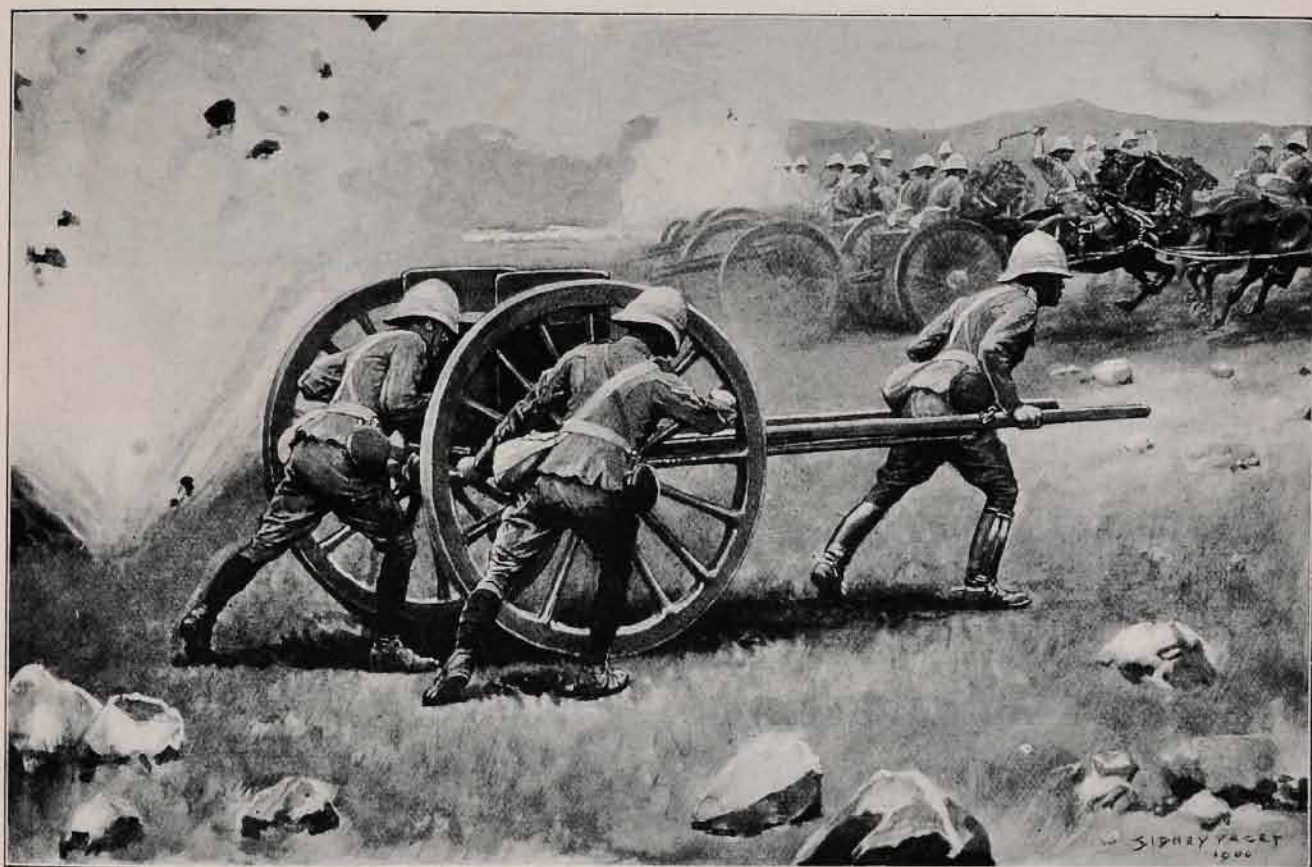
Officers and correspondents watching the effects of the fire. The smoke from bursting shells is seen on the distant hill.



was ready for the real attack upon Vaal Krantz, and at once General Lyttelton's Brigade crossed the river and extended, while battery by battery the guns stole off from in front of Brakfontein and deployed to support the infantry on the right. The withdrawal was effected in superb style; at intervals of ten minutes the six field batteries and the howitzers retreated, and, as they went, the shrapnel from the Boer guns rained round them. "Forward trotted the teams with the limbers for one battery, the unflinching gunners meanwhile loading and firing to the last minute," writes Mr. Burleigh. "When all was in readiness, the guns moved off in perfect alignment, the six upon one axle, as if on show parade. And yet it was deadly war, for the Boer shells were falling and tearing up the ground upon all sides . . . The last three to be withdrawn were ammunition waggons. All the wounded and left material were placed very deliberately upon the two which had teams. For five minutes they waited,

putting things to rights and rearranging harness, under a rainstorm of shells. Then they walked off the field, followed by shells, step by step." "Was there ever anything finer than British gunnery or so extravagantly dangerous?" was the reflection of another correspondent at this wonderful spectacle. Even the third ammunition waggon, the horses of which had been killed or wounded, was not abandoned. The gunners ran it back by hand and so saved it from capture. The ground was open and there was no cover of any kind, yet the casualties in the batteries were only about fifteen.

It now remained to bring back General Wynne's two battalions from their yet closer contact with the enemy. They had reached a point only 1,200 yards from the nearest Boer works at Brakfontein, and as the officers' whistles blew and the line of khaki-clad men leapt up from the ground, the enemy at last opened a fierce, spluttering rifle fire. Yet again the casualties were not



S. Paget.]

"WAS THERE EVER ANYTHING FINER, OR SO EXTRAVAGANTLY DANGEROUS?"
Gunnery of the 75th Battery recovering a limber under a heavy fire.

heavy, though the running of the gauntlet of that storm of fire from invisible marksmen for about 1,000 yards must have been a grim experience. The total loss in the two battalions was about fifty killed and wounded. The retirement of our men gave scope for the usual Boer legends. Some professed that our infantry had fled in panic, while the field glasses of an American correspondent with the Boers were so powerful that they revealed to him desperate efforts on the part of our officers to check the flight and to persuade the men to advance. Whence he argued that Thomas Atkins "was beginning to funk it." Had he only been able to see into General Buller's mind he would have known otherwise. In fact, this demonstration was brilliantly managed with insignificant loss of life—no small achievement against such an enemy as the Boers.

Soon after noon the batteries began the bombardment of Vaal Krantz, and all the heavy guns joined in the infernal concert. Never in this war had there been such an artillery display before. The naval guns and 5-inch siege pieces divided their attention between Vaal Krantz and the dongas under Doorn Kloof, where the Boer guns, from their higher altitude, had the distinct advantage; the 12-pounders and mountain guns fired wholly at the tangle of water-courses under Doorn Kloof; the



ONE OF THE NAVAL GUNS ON ZWART KOP BOMBARDING VAAL KRANTZ.

The puff of smoke on the distant hill shows where a Boer magazine was exploded—it is believed, by a British shell.

[Photo by Middlebrook.]

field batteries and howitzers concentrated their efforts against Vaal Krantz. The slopes and ridge of that eminence were torn with projectiles of all kinds; the usual method being first to fire a couple of lyddite shells and then a half-dozen of shrapnel in a terrific volley. Not a living being should have been left on the hill if the theories of artillerists were correct. But in actual fact the execution was by no means what was expected. A good many Boers were killed and wounded, but a number of determined men still held their ground and did not flinch. A Boer correspondent tells us:—"Scattered about, crouching low among the boulders, and in the innumerable tiny ravines, the Boers, with the phlegm of their race, patiently endured the storm and waited for Tommy Atkins to come within rifle range. The boulders which covered them were shattered and splintered by the iron hail, but the Boers did not budge. It is really marvellous how the burghers manage to fight effectively while keeping so perfectly concealed. A wounded English officer, who was brought into the laager after the fight, told me that the men who carried him off the field were the first Boers he had seen. During the fight he had not caught

a glimpse of a single man." Some idea of the nature of the artillery fire concentrated upon this point may be gathered from the fact that this correspondent picked up a double handful of shrapnel bullets in a space only 50 feet square.

From Zwart Kop the Vaal Krantz ridge was seen to be veiled in the dust and smoke thrown up by the bursting shells, and it was thought—and with good

reason, as afterwards appeared, notwithstanding the Boer correspondent's tale of unflinching burghers—that the greater part of the enemy's force had retired from the hill. The artillery preparations had been completed as never before; the time had come for the infantry to storm the position. The 1st Durham Light Infantry on the left,



A LULL IN THE BATTLE.

[Photo by Capt. Foot.]

This photograph was taken under fire during the battle of Vaal Krantz, and shows the Brakfontein position in the distance. The men in the foreground are awaiting the order to advance.

and the 3rd King's Royal Rifles on the right accordingly extended and pushed forward under a sharp, enfilading rifle fire from the dongas below Doorn Kloof, and under a hail of bullets from the Boer guns' shrapnel. Unshaken, they pressed steadily on, availing themselves of every inch of cover—now vanishing from view as they sank down behind the ant heaps, now rising and rushing forward in a wavy line. They reached the foot of the smoking ridge, breasted it, and with a cheer gained the Boer trenches, from which the enemy fled precipitately, leaving only half-a-dozen armed Kaffirs to fight to the last. The Kaffirs were shot down, though not until one of them, who was wounded and who had been spared, had put a bullet through a British officer's wrist. Their presence showed that the Boers were ready without scruple to arm and employ black men against whites.

As the storming of Vaal Krantz began there was an exciting episode, a Boer "Pom-Pom" galloping from Vaal Krantz towards the Doorn Kloof dongas across open ground. The British artillery aimed at it shell after shell, but, so hard is a fast-moving object to hit at uncertain ranges, that the gun and its team escaped injury and went to earth in a donga, amidst a cloud of smoke from bursting shells.

About 4 p.m. the eastern end of Vaal Krantz was in British possession. But the Boers still held trenches along the western end, while from their positions on and under Doorn Kloof they could direct an enfilading fire upon General Lyttelton's Brigade. It had been intended to move the British artillery on to the ridge, but this was now found to be impossible. In the first place, the ridge itself was razor-edged, steep, and rocky, so that guns could not be handled upon it; in the second place, beyond it, but within easy rifle range, was a second ridge of even greater strength, still in the hands of the Boers. Thus the gunners would be too close to the enemy for the safe working of their guns, and the episode of Colonel

**Difficulty of holding
the position.**



THE 1ST DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY ADVANCING ON VAAL KRANTZ.

[Photo by Lieut. Salmon.]

This photograph shows the Durhams in the act of passing one of the field guns. It was taken under fire, and is a quite typical view of a modern battlefield—the infantry advancing in open order, the gunners taking what shelter their gun affords. Even the insignificant size of the figures, especially of those near the trees in the middle distance, lost as they are in the expanse of landscape, is quite characteristic. Except for the noise, and the occasional dropping of a wounded man, a spectator would hardly know that anything serious was going on.

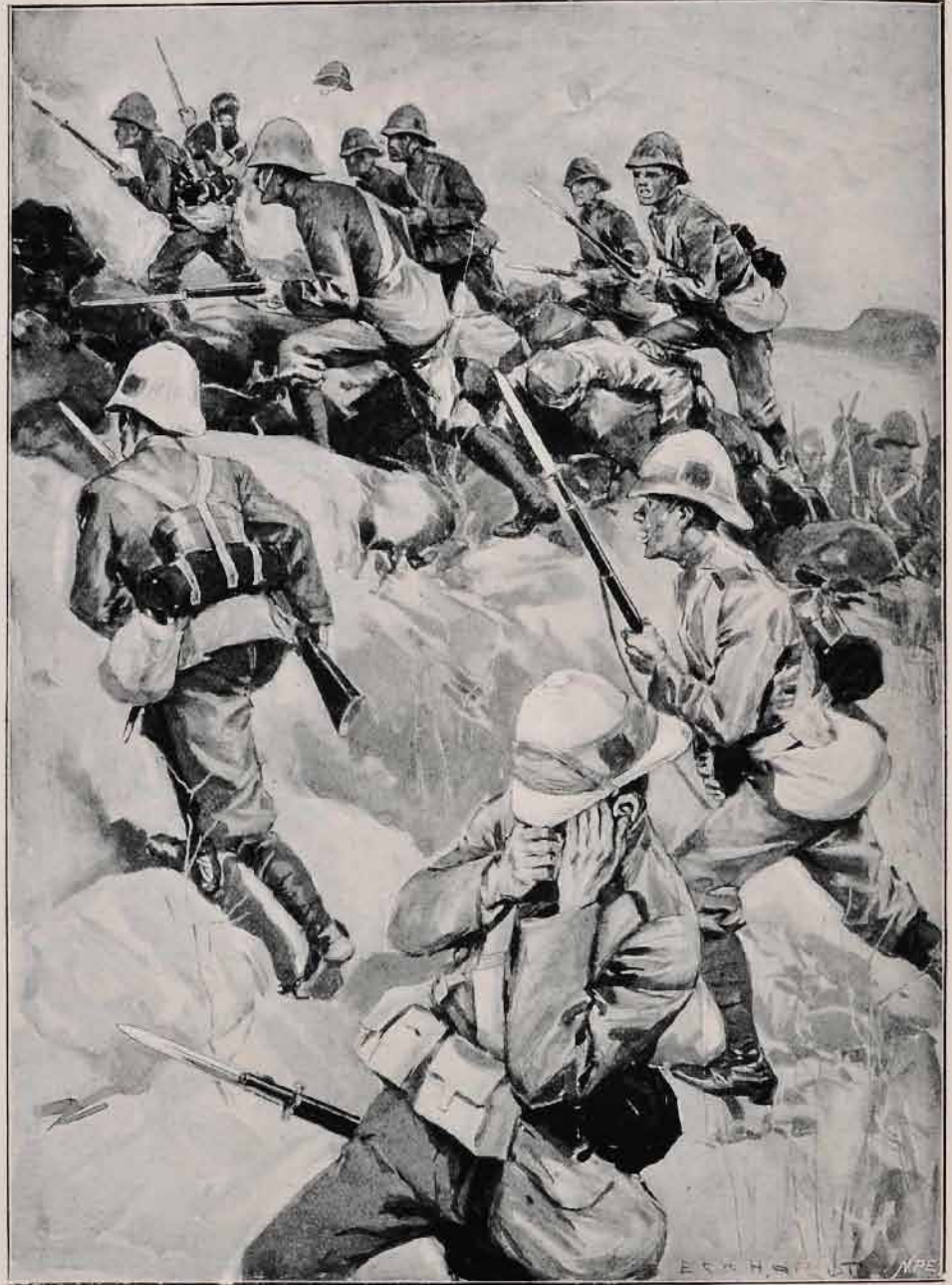
Long's artillery at Colenso had shown that it was not good to be too close to the Boer marksmen. The long grass, too, on the sides of the ridge had been set on fire, and the dense volumes of smoke which this caused would have been a further obstacle to the gunners. The A Horse Artillery Battery was, however, sent forward, and it shelled the ridges held by the enemy. Towards evening the Boers delivered a vigorous counter attack, endeavouring to dislodge the British force from Vaal Krantz, but General Lyttelton's battalions, reinforced by the 2nd Devons from General Hildyard's Brigade, beat off the attempt with little difficulty, though it was found impossible to hold the eastern end of the ridge.

The night of the 5th was spent by the British troops in entrenching the position they had won, and providing cover against the enemy's shell fire. The Boers, on their part, were busy concentrating men from the east and the west to meet further attacks, and were mounting their 6-inch Creusots on the summit of Doorn Kloof. General Joubert's whole army was rapidly gathering to drive back the bold assailants, who had effected a lodgment in the centre. During the night skirmishing proceeded between the outposts, and with dawn the Boers opened a heavy fire upon Vaal Krantz and the British camps to the south of the Tugela. Several of the shells from the 6-inch guns on Doorn Kloof actually burst within a few yards of the British headquarters. Efforts were made to silence these inconveniently long-range weapons, but without success; and though, in the expressive words of a correspondent, the whole ground round these guns smoked with exploding shells like a lime kiln, the weapons were

never hit or disabled. They were mounted on the disappearing principle, and their ugly muzzles only showed for a few seconds on the sky-line, vanishing when their messages of destruction were sped.

To support General Lyttelton's men on Vaal Krantz, General

Hildyard had already advanced to the foot of the hill, and held his Brigade in readiness to move at a moment's notice. Here, as before Spion Kop, and in precisely the same manner, the British advance had come to a standstill. Before, it was Spion Kop that flanked and enfiladed our line of attack; now, it was Doorn Kloof, and, unless this frowning mountain could be stormed, there was little prospect of any success. So councils of war deliberated, while a protracted, aimless battle raged along the front. On the afternoon of February 6, the Boers suddenly attacked Vaal Krantz and gained some ground; for whole minutes, indeed, it appeared as though the hill might be lost. But General Lyttelton speedily rallied his men, and with the Durhams and King's Royal Rifles regained the ground that had been lost by a brilliant bayonet charge. During the day a fresh pontoon bridge was built just under Vaal Krantz,



O. Eckhardt]

[After a sketch by E. Prater,

THE DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY CAPTURING VAAL KRANTZ.



MAJOR-GENERAL LYTTELTON.

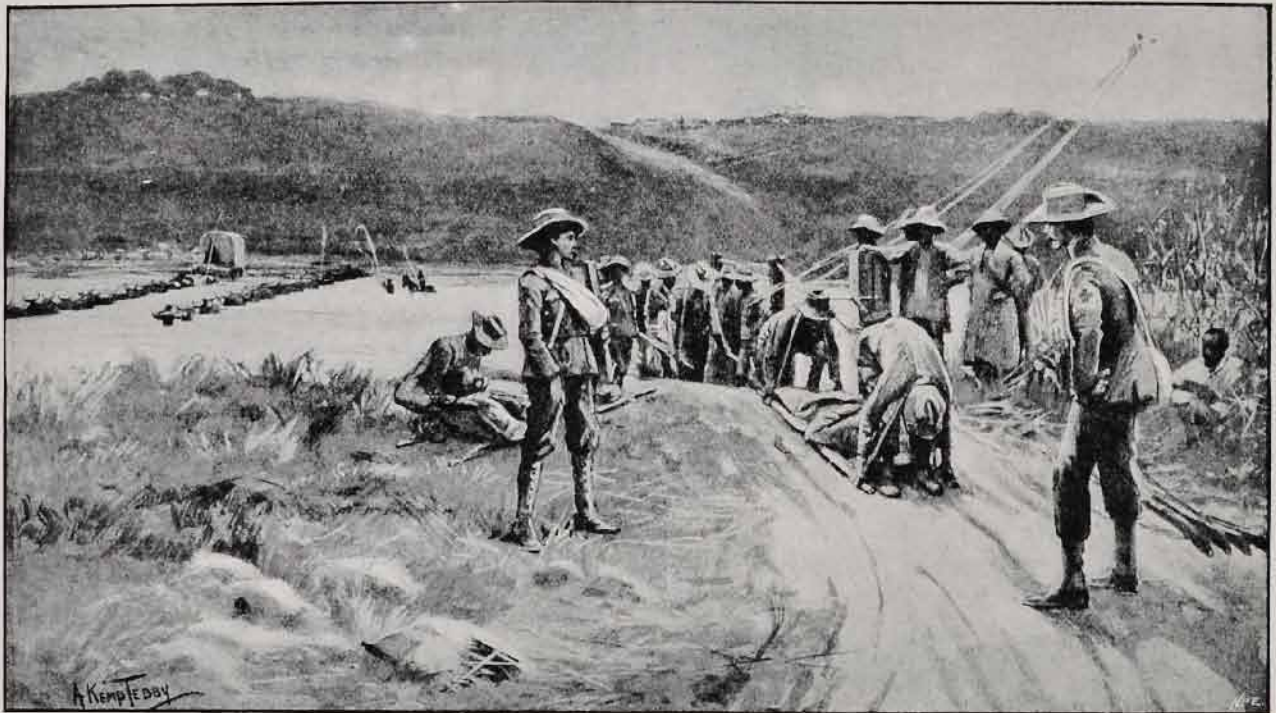
[Photo by C. Knight, Aldershot.]

A short sketch of Major-General Lyttelton's military career is given on page 84. He took a distinguished part in the actions during the "week of battles" before Spion Kop, and commanded the attacking force at Vaal Krantz.

so as to give easier access to that fiercely disputed point. At nightfall General Hildyard's men replaced General Lyttelton's weary battalions, and yet more trenches were constructed. In the darkness the Boers made a third attack upon the hill, but as before were repulsed with some trouble.

Unless a resolute advance was made, Vaal Krantz was an utterly useless possession. It was exposed to fire from three sides; it was not a good artillery position; it had little natural strength; and it was now ascertained to be very far from being the "key to Ladysmith." The original intention, to follow up its seizure by a flank attack upon Brakfontein, had to be abandoned, because troops massing for such an attack would have been exposed to a devastating artillery fire from Doorn Kloof. The same consideration compelled the withholding of the cavalry who were to have menaced the Boer rear. Nothing remained, if the advance was to be pressed, but to storm the ridge which rose behind Vaal Krantz, and to assault and capture at the same time the lofty eminence of Doorn Kloof.

A council of war was held to determine the course which should be taken. **Council of War.** General Hart alone—"No-Bobs" as his soldiers called him, from the fact that he never bent his head before the storm of bullets—was for such an assault, which, it was allowed,



VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE-MEN BRINGING THE WOUNDED ACROSS THE RIVER BY MEANS OF THE PONT OR RAFT.

must cost the lives or limbs of thousands of men. He was for going forward at all risks, and for storming Doorn Kloof. But the other officers were against so bold, so desperate, a course. They were for withdrawing and trying yet another line of approach to Ladysmith. To this General Buller was himself inclined, in view of the frightful difficulties of the country before him. Accordingly, a general retreat was once more ordered; General Hildyard's Brigade was to evacuate Vaal Krantz that night—the night of the 7th—and, with the rest of the army, to fall back to Springfield and Chieveley.

The retreat was accomplished with perfect order and success. General Hildyard's troops fell back with all their wounded; once more the Tugela was recrossed, and the bridges taken to pieces.

Evacuation of the ridge.

The enemy offered no other molestation than a few shells, but watched with exultation the long lines of troops and waggons moving slowly eastwards all the 8th.

There were some among the Boers who supposed that the relief of Ladysmith had been finally abandoned, and in the British force there was at least talk of such a dreadful possibility. The soldiers were gloomy and dispirited, yet they still had confidence in themselves and in their commanders, notwithstanding the errors of the past month. Only two brigades out of the five

composing General Buller's army had been seriously engaged, and all longed for a real trial of strength. The British losses in the fighting at Vaal Krantz were by no means heavy. The killed were 25, wounded 344, and missing 5. The Boers on their part owned to 21 killed and 31 wounded, but their



[Photo by Knight, Aldershot.

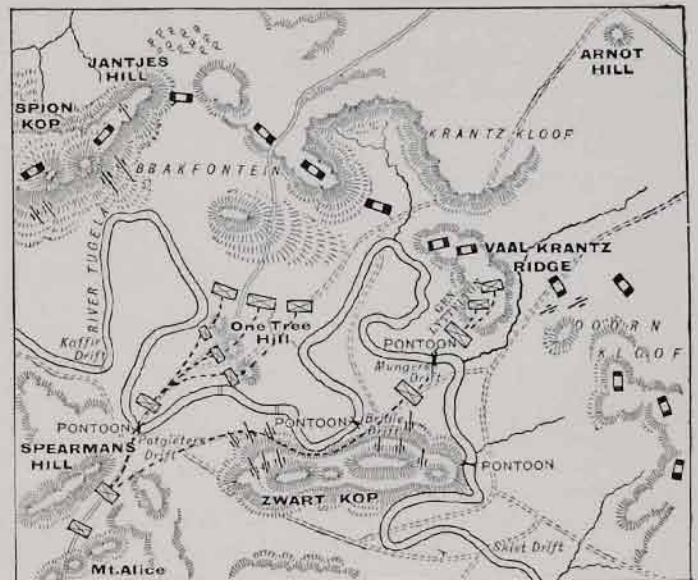
MAJOR-GENERAL WYNNE,

Commanding the Eleventh Brigade of the South African Field Force, was born in Ireland in 1846, joined the 51st Light Infantry in 1861; Adjutant, 1861-71; Superintendent of Signalling in the Jowaki Expedition, 1877; and served in the Afghan War of 1878-9; employed on special service in South Africa in 1881; commanded the 4th Battalion Egyptian Army, 1883-5; and has since held appointments as Deputy or Assistant-Adjutant-General at the Curragh, at Malta, and at Aldershot.

Losses.

owing to the effect of the tremendous shell-fire directed upon Brakfontein and Vaal Krantz. According to Boer accounts, no fewer than 5,000 projectiles were thrown against these two positions by the British guns. Seldom have more shots been fired with less effect.

The repulse at Vaal Krantz—for defeat

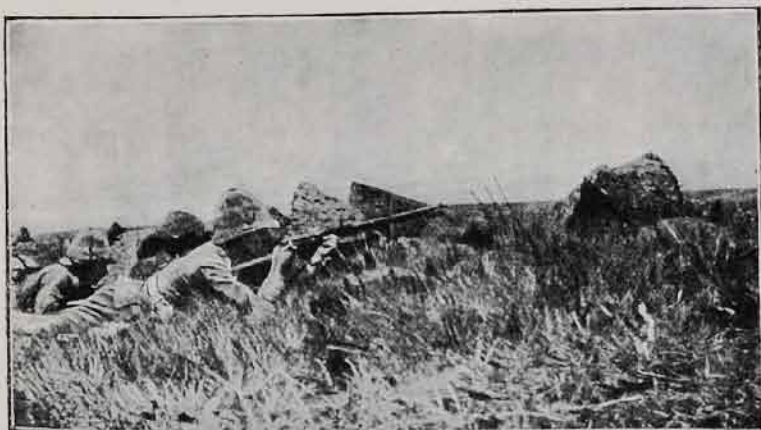


MAP OF THE ACTION AT VAAL KRANTZ.

it could scarcely be termed—marked the nadir

Disappointment in Britain.

of British fortunes in South Africa. It was the third occasion on which a British army had attempted to fight its way to Ladysmith and had failed. It was the climax of a long series of reverses—Stormberg, Magersfontein, Colenso, Spion Kop, and now Vaal Krantz—the darkest hour before the dawn. Yet already the preparations for the new campaign, which was to change disaster into triumph, were completed. By a dramatic coincidence, as General Buller's troops tramped sadly back to Chieveley, Lord Roberts and Lord



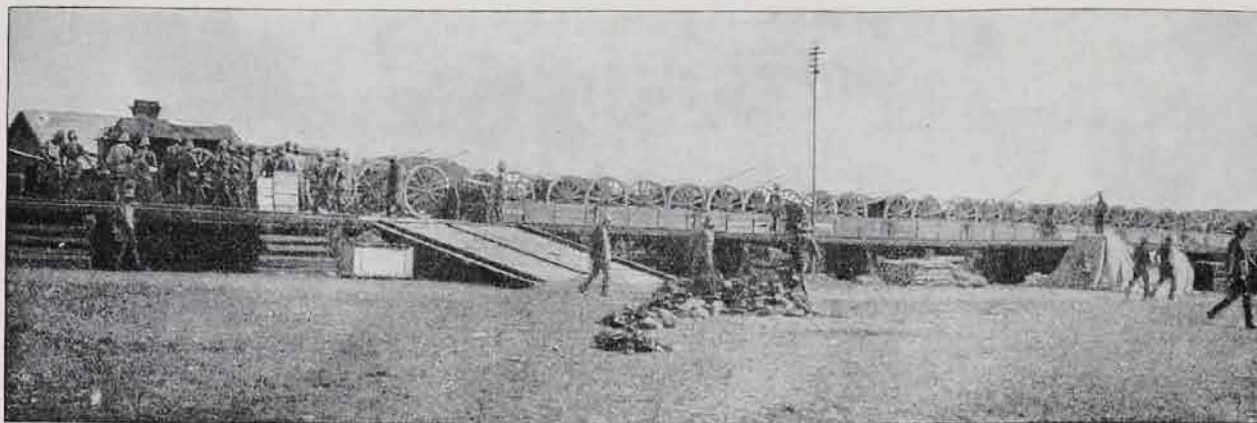
THE WEST YORKSHIRE REGIMENT HOLDING VAAL KRANTZ.

Kitchener were speeding on their way to Modder River Camp to inaugurate the invasion of the Free State and to effect the rescue of Kimberley. Orders were forthwith sent by the Field-Marshal to General Buller, to relieve Ladysmith at all costs. The load of responsibility was lifted from his shoulders, and he proved in the weeks to come that he had laid to heart the lessons of his costly experience. In England, the news of Vaal Krantz only accentuated the gloom which Spion Kop and the earlier defeats had caused. It was feared that General Buller's

task was an impossible one, and that Ladysmith, exhausted by hunger and ravaged by disease, must, notwithstanding its superb defence, succumb to the grimly-resolute foe. Yet England still persevered—

"Baffled and beaten back, she works on still:
Weary and sick of soul, she works the more,
Sustained by her indomitable will,"

though face to face with "the sense that every struggle brought defeat."

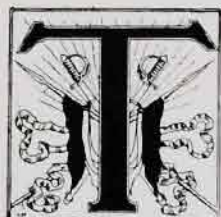


A FEW GUNS FOR GENERAL FRENCH LEAVING RENSBURG STATION.

CHAPTER XV.

COLESBERG AND THE WEST.

General French's position—Engagements near Arundel and Rensburg—The Boers fall back on Colesberg—British camp moved to Rensburg—Fighting round Coles Kop—French's mobility—Loss of a commissariat train—Both sides reinforced—General Schœmann repulsed—Death of Major Harvey—Boers driven back—Disaster to the Suffolks—Occupation of Slingersfontein—Guns and supplies hauled up Coles Kop—Small actions near Colesberg—Boer attack near Slingersfontein—Guarding the railway junctions—Gradual withdrawal of British forces—A ride for life—Accuracy of Australian shooting—Coles Kop and Slingersfontein evacuated—British retire to Arundel—Seizure of German steamers.—Lord Roberts conciliates the Colonials—Reorganisation of transport—Roberts and Kitchener leave Capetown—Lord Methuen keeps the enemy busy—Demonstrations towards Koodoesberg Drift—Roberts in camp—Preparations for the great blow—Composition of the Grand Army.



THROUGHOUT December skirmishing continued in the Colesberg district of Cape Colony between General French's small army and the Boer commandos which had marched into the Colony in November by way of Norvals Pont, with the object of menacing or breaking Lord Methuen's communications with the sea. In Chapter VII. we left

General French's position.

General French with just under 3,000 men, including the garrisons at Naauwpoort and Hanover Road; his headquarters on December 8 at Tweedale, twenty-six miles south of Colesberg Junction; and his outposts eighteen miles further north, near Rensburg. He had available for action against the Boers a wing of the Berkshires, the 6th Dragoon Guards, O and R Horse Artillery Batteries, a troop of New South Wales Lancers, the New Zealand Mounted Infantry, some companies of regular mounted infantry, and a few colonial scouts. The strength of the Boers was ascertained by reconnaissance to be about 2,000, and to deal with such a force more men were required. On December 8 and 9, the 10th Hussars and 6th Dragoons were sent forward to him from Capetown, and these were followed a day or two later by a squadron of the 2nd Dragoons, who were, however, shortly afterwards withdrawn and despatched north. General French, whose tactics were ceaselessly to harass the enemy, but not to allow himself to be drawn into a serious action before his strength was adequate, lost no time in making use of his reinforcements. On the 11th a reconnaissance



NEW SOUTH WALES LANCERS WITH GENERAL FRENCH.

was directed to Vaal Kop, a high ridge close to Rensburg, which was held by the enemy. For the first time the Horse Artillery came into action in South Africa, a section of R Battery shelling Vaal Kop and inflicting some loss upon the Boers. They abandoned the hill, which was at once seized and held by the British.

Upon December 13 the Boers made an attempt to dislodge General French. Early in the morning some 1,800 of them were seen to be advancing towards Arundel in

Engagements near Arundel and Rensburg.

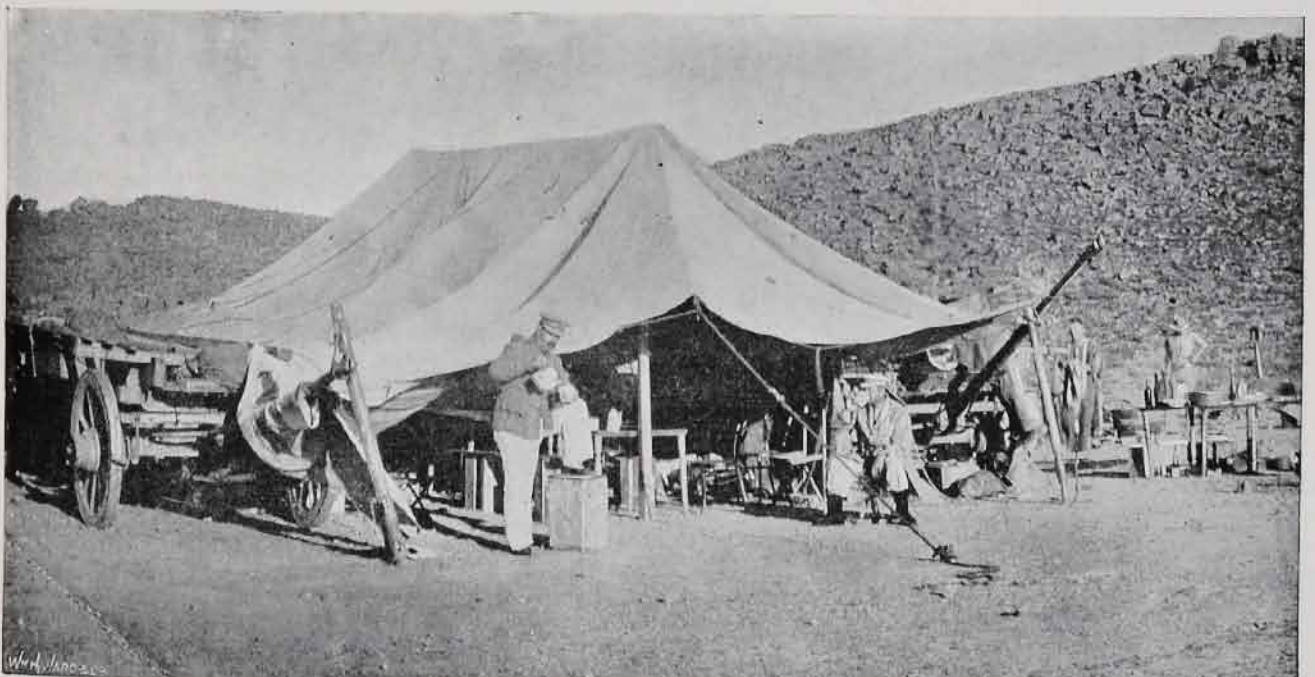
three parties. They drove in the British pickets, but, as soon as their intentions were perceived, Colonel Porter marched out with 1,000 cavalry and four guns of the Horse Artillery. The enemy brought up two guns, which, however, could do nothing against our Horse Artillery. They were shelled and driven back. Later in the day the British horsemen found the Boers in some force at Kullfontein Farm, a little to the west of Rensburg, and ejected them by the summary process of artillery fire. The enemy lost no less than forty killed and wounded on this day; the British losses, including some casualties in a patrol skirmish on the day before, were only nine wounded and missing. All through the 13th, Vaal Kop was resolutely held by a tiny British garrison of 100 men and two guns. The fighting was remarkable for the enormous extent of country covered by the forces engaged. The Boers fought on a front of fully fourteen miles; the British, with a yet smaller strength of men, extended over an even longer line. The mobility of the cavalry and Horse Artillery proved to be such that the Boers were filled with uneasiness. They summoned reinforcements, which were at once despatched from the Free State.



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LUXURIES FROM HOME.

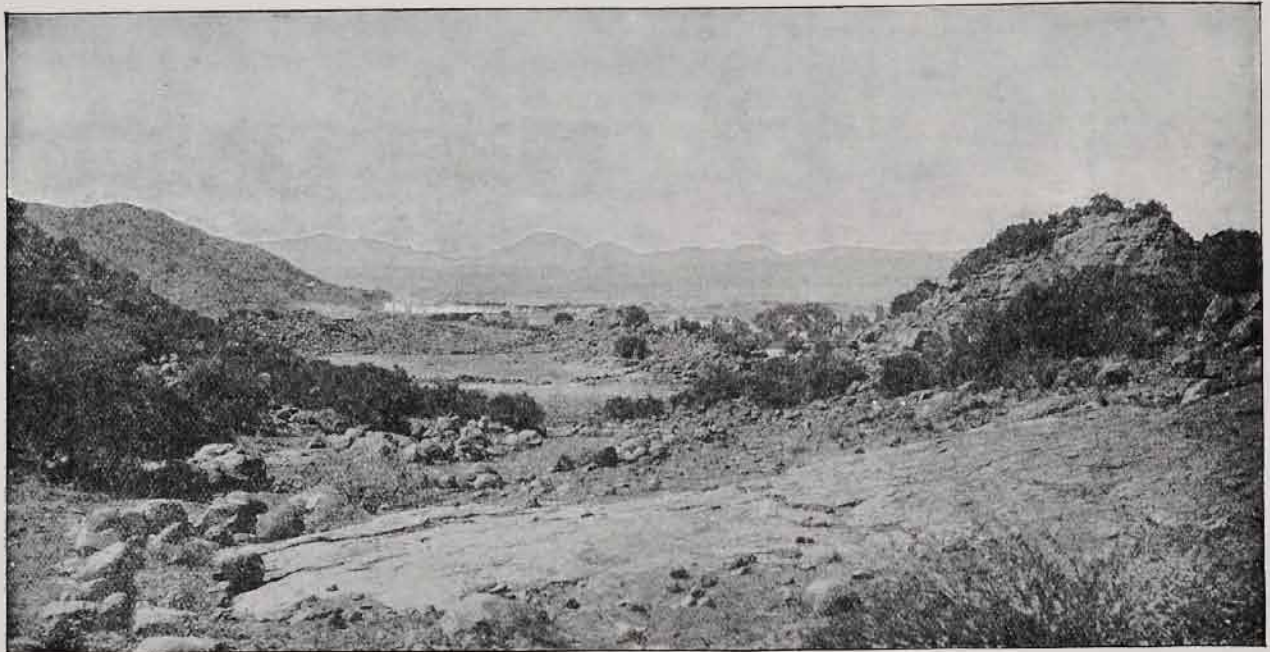
Arrival in camp of a consignment of tobacco, cigarettes, and other luxuries.



COLONEL PORTER TAKING HIS EARLY MORNING COFFEE.

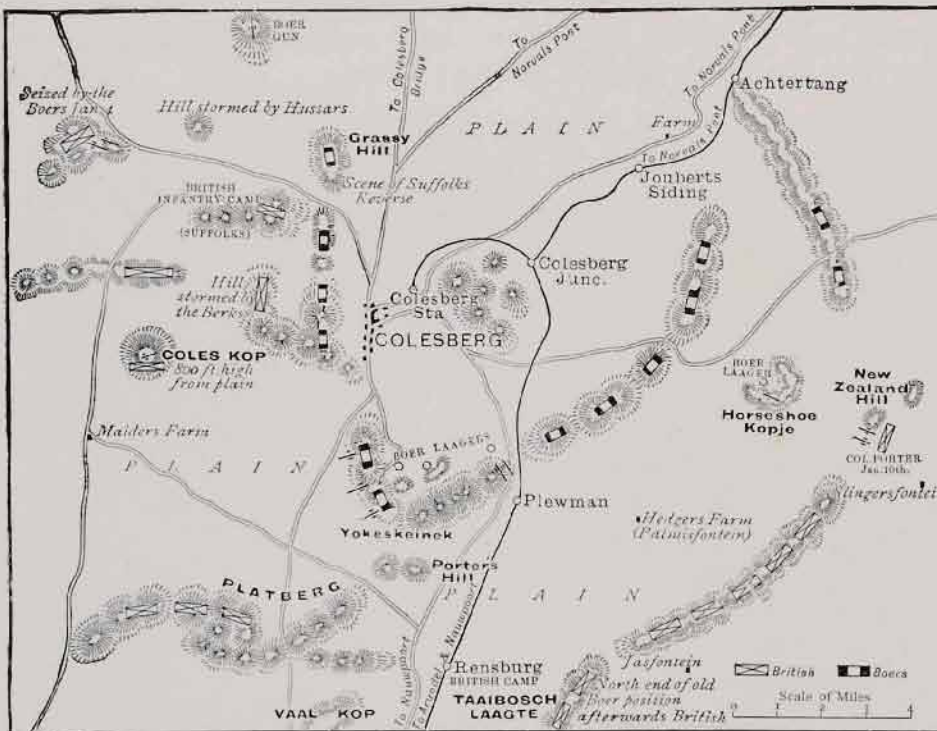
[Photo by R. C. E. Nixon.]

On the days which followed, the Boers concentrated so serious a fire upon Vaal Kop that the detachment holding the hill had to abandon it on the 16th. Two days later General French made a reconnaissance with the O Battery and the New Zealanders to the east of Rensburg, and came under an unexpected fire, but, fortunately, without suffering much, though the New Zealanders lost



ARUNDEL CAMP FROM THE HILLS TO THE NORTH.

two men. The Boers were found to have mounted a heavy position gun at Taaiboschlaagte, a ridge a little to the east of Rensburg, whence they harassed the British force with shells at a range of 7,000 yards. For ten days no further progress was reported on the part of the British arms, though the Boers were steadily annoyed by "sniping" and fire



MAP OF THE ACTIONS AROUND COLESBERG.

The Boers fall back on Colesberg.

from the Horse Artillery guns. But on December 27, General French noted signs that the enemy meditated retirement. Waggon were seen proceeding towards Colesberg, and, reinforcements having joined him in the shape of the 1st Yorkshires and half a battalion of the 1st Suffolks, he was able to press their flanks more vigorously. Finally, on the 29th, the Boers evacuated their positions at Rensburg, and fell back to Colesberg. Their position at that point protected the railway, which runs by Norvals Pont to the Free State, and the road

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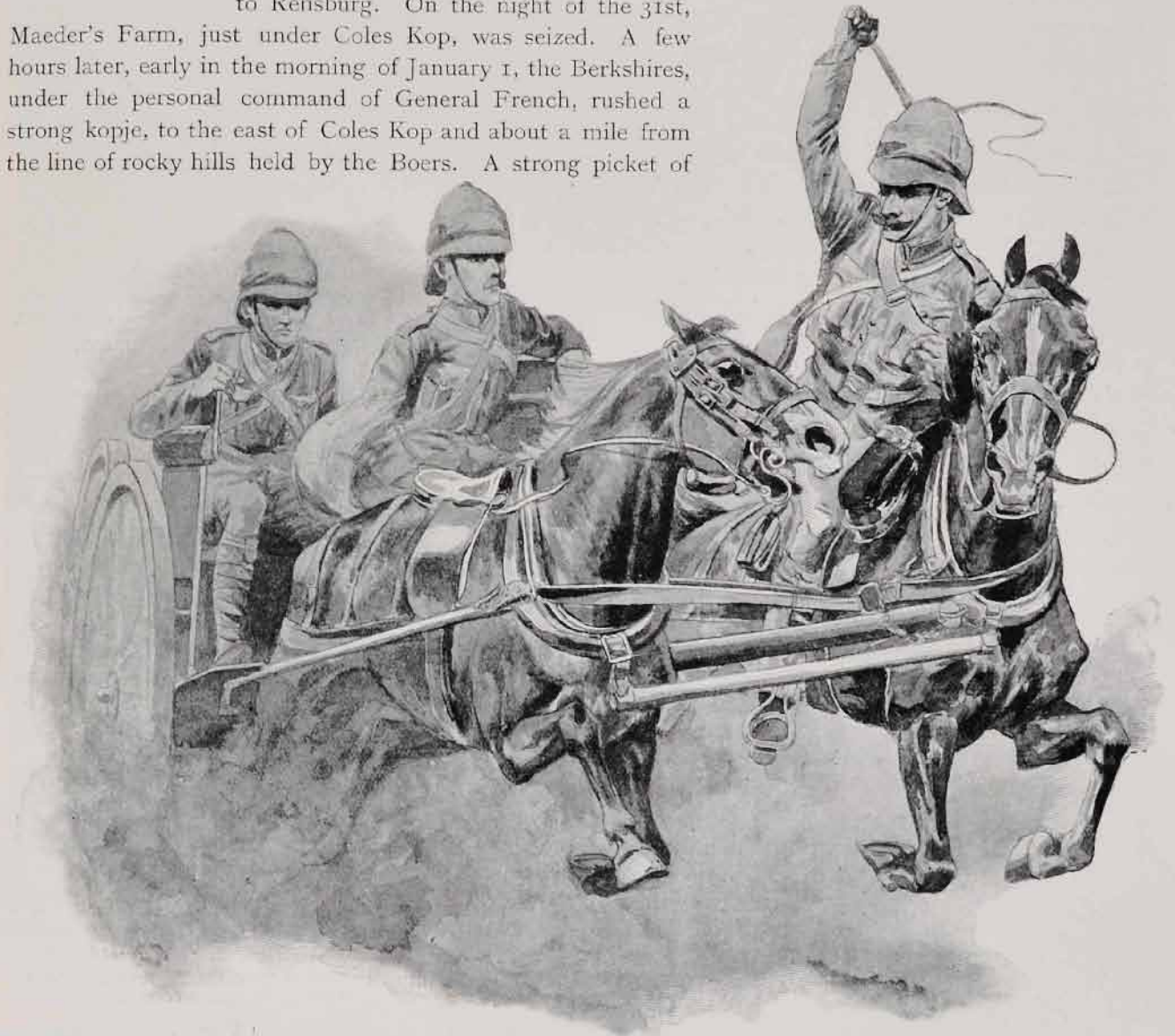
bridge, which spans the Orange River at Botha's Drift. There was good water, whereas the country near Rensburg was almost waterless, a fact which seriously hampered General French in his operations.

On December 30, the General pushed forward, reconnoitred the Boer positions, and seized a kopje known as Porter's Hill, 2,000 yards from the curve of the U-shaped line of kopjes which nearly surrounds Colesberg, and a little north of Rensburg. Here several of the Horse

British camp moved to Rensburg. Fighting round Coles Kop.

Artillery 12-pounders were placed in position; at the same time the British camp was moved forward from Arundel, where it had been established on December 18, to Rensburg. On the night of the 31st,

Maeder's Farm, just under Coles Kop, was seized. A few hours later, early in the morning of January 1, the Berkshires, under the personal command of General French, rushed a strong kopje, to the east of Coles Kop and about a mile from the line of rocky hills held by the Boers. A strong picket of



MAXIM WITH GALLOPING CARRIAGE COMING INTO ACTION.

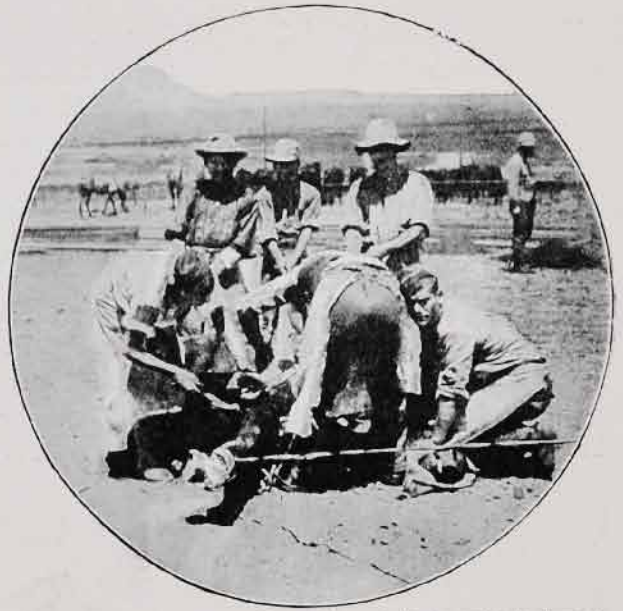
the enemy was surprised and driven back in great confusion. When daylight came, under a heavy fire, the British cavalry, with the object of turning the Boer flank, pushed up to the topmost extremity of the Boer U, and the artillery opened a vigorous fire on the western arm of the U. The Boers replied at once with 15-pounders and "Pom-Poms." While a sharp cannonade was proceeding in this quarter, Colonel Porter, from Porter's Hill, attempted to gain a lodgment on the curve of the U; the New Zealanders, who made the attempt, displayed the utmost gallantry, but were too few to achieve any result. Owing to some slackness on the part of the cavalry on the British left, who, in spite of repeated orders from General French, failed to push forward and occupy a detached kopje commanding the roads both to Botha's Bridge and to Norvals Pont, the day's fighting yielded no solid result.

Had General French's instructions been carried out, the Boer retreat would have been threatened and Colesberg rendered untenable. The ineffectual moves of the cavalry only served to draw the enemy's attention to the importance of the position. Late in the day the enemy delivered a counter stroke against the British right, but this was skilfully defeated by the 6th Dragoon Guards. In this action both armies—neither of which exceeded 3,000 men—fought and manœuvred over a front of twenty miles. Under

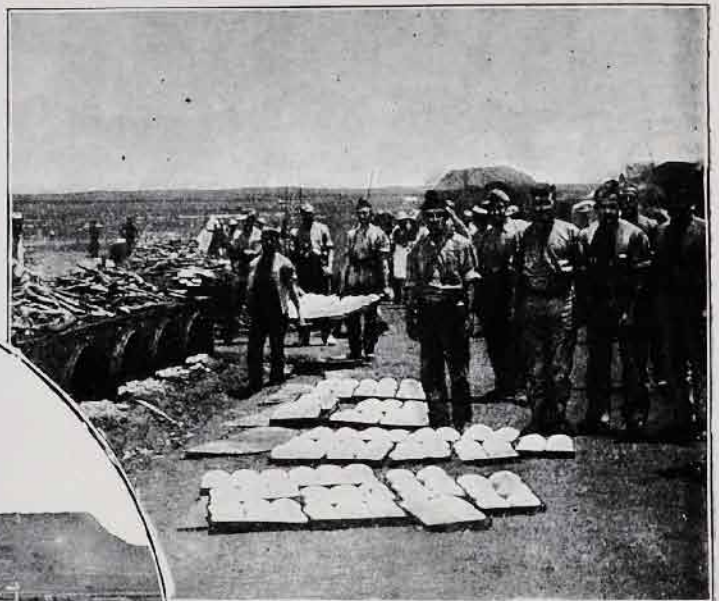
French's mobility. these novel conditions General French again showed remarkable skill in adapting his tactics to those of the enemy. Indeed, his procedure puzzled and alarmed the Boers, who had never met this kind of British general before or felt the mobility of cavalry. The British losses were three killed and a few wounded.

Three days were spent in securing the ground which had been won. Opposite the kopje that the cavalry had failed to seize, at the northern extremity of the Boer position,

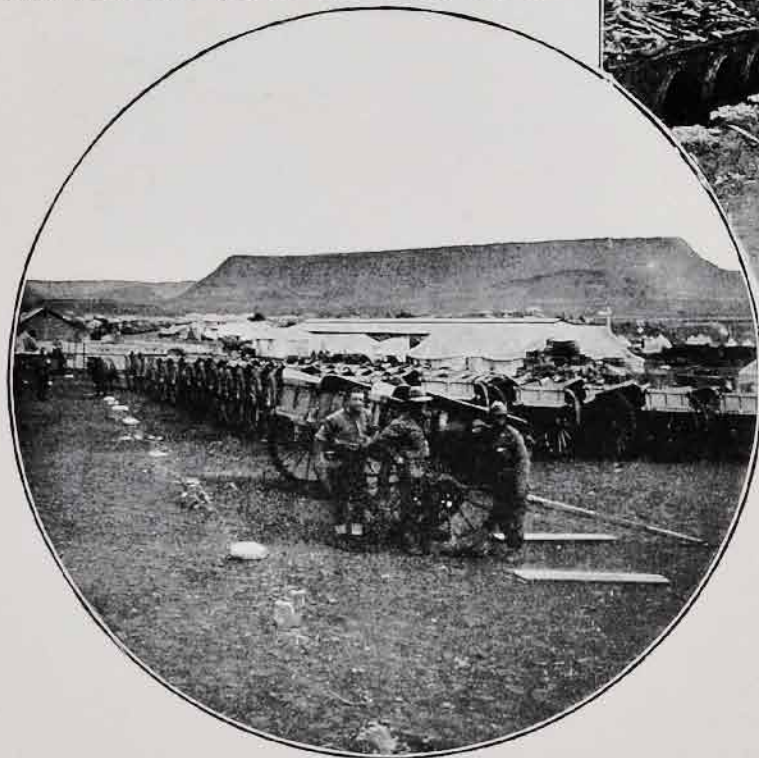
Loss of a commissariat train. 400 of the Suffolks were forthwith entrenched. An unfortunate accident, however, marred our success. A commissariat train standing in the station at Rensburg broke loose, ran down the incline towards Colesberg Junction, and, when half way to that point, left the



[Copyright 1900 by Underwood & Underwood.]
SHOEING AN ARGENTINE HORSE AT THE REMOUNT DEPÔT, NAAUWPOORT.



[Copyright 1900 by Underwood & Underwood.]
BAKING BREAD IN THE FIELD OVENS OF THE R.A.S.C. AT NAAUWPOORT.

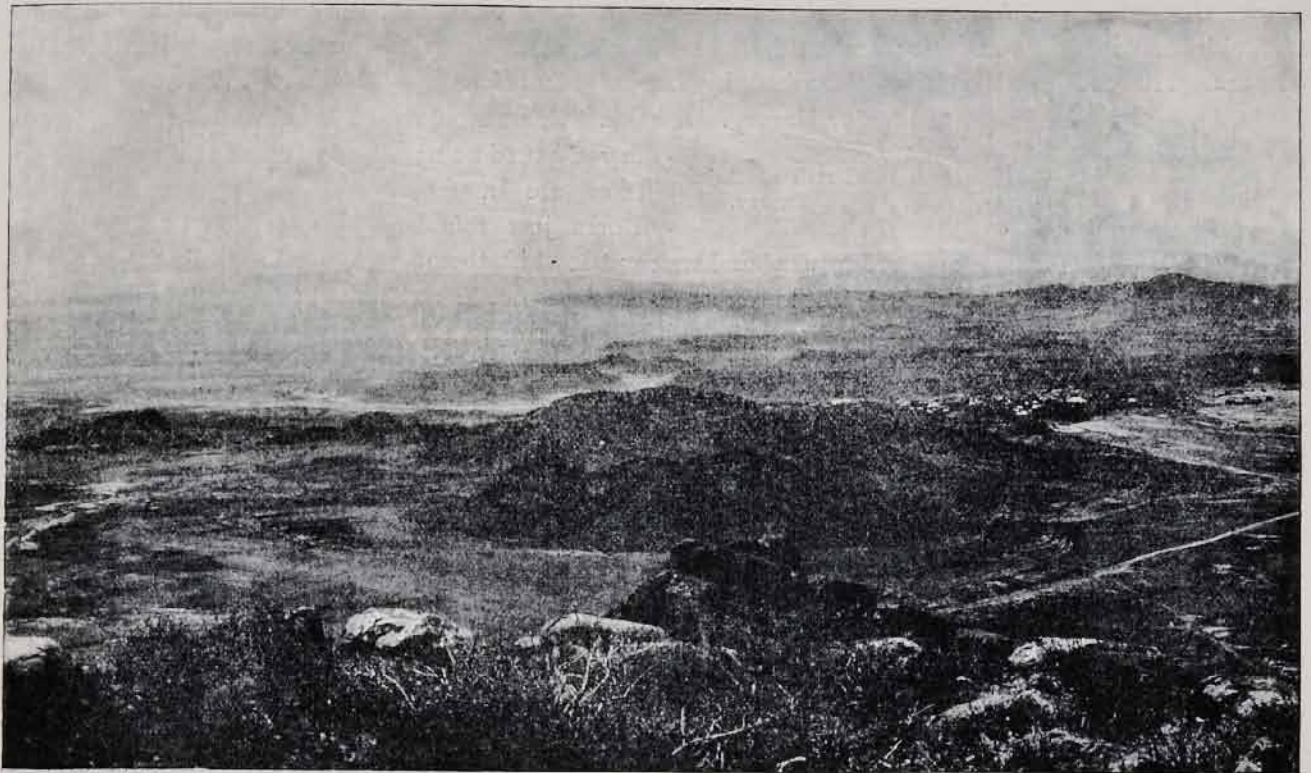


[Copyright 1900 by Underwood & Underwood.]

TRANSPORT WAGGONS FOR THE FRONT, NAAUWPOORT.

rails. 22,000 rations thus fell into the enemy's hands. An attempt was made by a company of Suffolks to recover the supplies, but the Boers opened so hot an artillery fire that the British had to withdraw. As General French reported that with slight reinforcements he could drive

Both sides reinforced. the enemy from Colesberg, yet more troops were sent him—the Household Cavalry Regiment, the other half of the 1st Suffolks, the 1st Essex, and the 20th Field



[View by R. C. E. Nisson.]

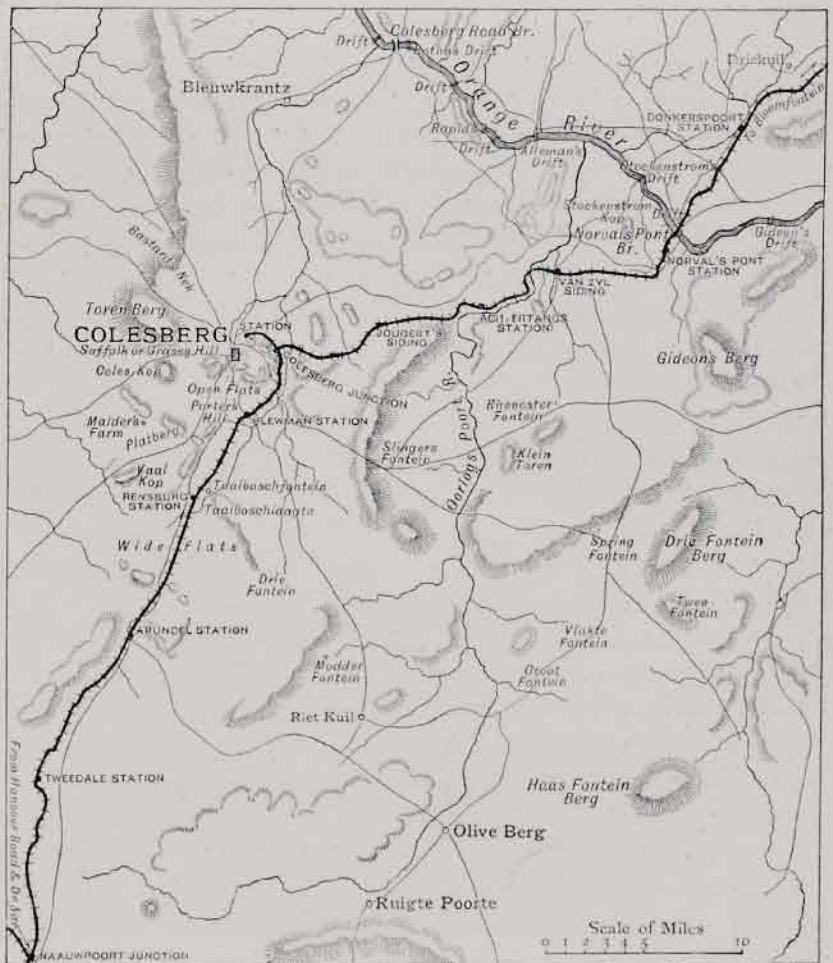
COLESBERG FROM COLES KOP.

Battery. But, as the Boers were simultaneously reinforced, these troops could not turn the scale.

Early on January 4, the Boers under General Schœman made a sudden attempt to get round the British left. They pushed out in the darkness, unperceived by our cavalry, and seized a group of kopjes to the rear of the Suffolks. But when once there they found themselves in a trap. The ground around the kopjes was level and coverless; the 10th Hussars with two guns of O Battery opened on their rear, while a squadron of the 6th Dragoons with the other four guns of the Battery attacked them in front. So hot was the fire that about 500 of the Boers decided that it was time for them to quit. They dashed off across the plain towards Colesberg, shelled by the Horse Artillery, and hotly pursued by the Hussars and Dragoons. A small party, however, took up a position upon a low, boulder-covered hill,

General Schœman repulsed.

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MAP OF THE COUNTRY BETWEEN ARUNDEL AND NORVAL'S PONT.

The district in which General French kept the Boers occupied whilst Lord Roberts developed his plans for the relief of Kimberley and the capture of Cronje.

whence they opened a fire, which checked the Hussars. Colonel Fisher dismounted his men at once, and boldly carried the hill by rushes on foot, in which operation Major Harvey fell, gallantly leading his men. His sad death is thus described by one of his privates:—"I shall never forget our old



(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)
LIEUT.-COL. WATSON
Killed while leading the 1st Suffolks at Rensburg.

Major Harvey. He said: 'Come along, my squadron; there are a few Boers just round the corner,' and we went to shift them. We could only go about a dozen at a time, and the old Major led us. He got shot in the mouth, but was able to say: 'Never mind me, men; let them have it!' But he got two more shots in the head, and dropped dead. Just then we had to lie down, hundreds of bullets dropping around us." The 6th Dragoons got home with their lances.* There still remained 200 of the enemy on the hill, who could not be made to move, although



(Photo by Knight, Aldershot.)
MAJOR HARVEY.
Of the 10th Hussars, killed at Rensburg.

a heavy shell fire was directed upon them. On this, the mounted infantry were sent in to clear them out. The infantry pushed in so as to threaten the Boer retreat, when another hundred of the enemy bolted. As the soldiers neared the foot of the kopjes the remnant also hurriedly retired, but could not all get away; twenty-one were captured, and the enemy's total casualties in killed and wounded were placed by General French at ninety. The British loss was only six killed and fifteen wounded.

Boers driven back.

On the 5th, the Boer lines were shelled and a careful examination was made of the grassy kopje at the north-western extremity, known as Grassy or Suffolk Hill. It was this kopje which the cavalry had failed to seize on January 1. Colonel Watson, of the Suffolks, was anxious to make a night attack upon this eminence, and on the evening of the 5th was informed by General French that he might attempt it, only he was to give the

Disaster to the Suffolks.

General notice, so that the artillery and cavalry could co-operate. Orders were issued to the gunners to be ready to fire upon Grassy Hill. Nothing more was received from Colonel Watson at the British headquarters, but about 2 a.m. of the 6th, heavy firing was heard in the direction of the kopje, and presently the news arrived that the attack, delivered by four companies of Suffolks, had been ignominiously repulsed.

What actually happened was thus portrayed by survivors. "We were



TIRED OF THE WAR.
A group of Boer prisoners taken near Nautwepoort who seemed glad to be captured.

* The front rank of Dragoons carry lances.

awakened about midnight and ordered to prepare to march," was the story of Private Alexander, one of the wounded prisoners. "Instead of boots we were to wear our slippers, so as to make as little noise as possible. There were eight companies of us, commanded by Colonel Watson. Well, we marched for five miles over broken country, stumbling most of the way, and stopped when we reached the foot of a certain kopje. It was then about two in the morning; there was no moon, and consequently it was quite dark. We advanced a little way up the kopje, when the Boers opened a deadly fire. They could not have seen us, but it was quite evident that they had heard us. It was too warm for anyone to live long, and we heard Colonel Watson call for a trumpeter, who was to be asked, we thought, to sound the order to retire. At that time our men were scattered around the kopje in extended order, and the sound of a man's voice would not have reached them all. There was no bugler to be found. 'A' and 'H' Company were then ordered to advance, and when near the firing line we were told to fix bayonets and prepare to charge. But the charge was interrupted by a deep



SIGNALLING ON THE TOP OF COLES KOP.

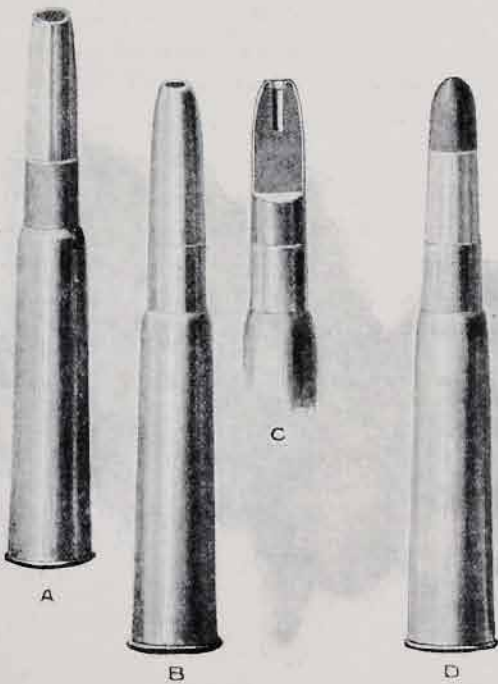
ditch between us and the Boer position, and we were obliged to fling ourselves to the ground. Both companies returned the Boers' fire, but it was impossible to stand against the shower of bullets which assailed us. 'A' and 'H' mustered about 200 men, and everyone was either killed or wounded or was compelled to surrender. The other companies managed to retire. Captain Brett, of 'A' Company, was wounded in the left shoulder, and he is now a prisoner at Pretoria. Captain Brown, of 'H,' was struck in the chest, and I hear has since died. Lieutenant Carey, of 'A,' was shot, and never moved afterwards."

Even more graphic is the story of another man who escaped. "We were paraded about 1.30 a.m. on the 6th, under Lieutenant-Colonel Watson and ten other officers. We had orders not to fire a single shot, and if we were fired on to take no notice, but keep straight on and make no noise. We then started on the advance on Red Hill, which was about a mile and a half away from our camp. When we were about half way there, we were halted and ordered to fix bayonets and carry the hill at the point of the bayonet. Soon after starting again we heard a kind of call from a bird (but I believe it was

a signal call), and we saw two lights on our right, yet no notice was taken of them. We kept on until about twenty paces from the top of the hill. All this time we were in close column. Colonel Watson

called the officers round him, and they were in front of the column when a signal shot was fired by one of the Boer sentries and we lay down flat. About two or three minutes after the first shot was fired, we heard

running of feet, and thought it was our own men, but all at once the top of the hill seemed in flames, and the bullets were flying all round us. Still we lay there waiting for the order to charge, but it never came. After lying under fire for about ten minutes, the Colonel gave the order to retire, and the men on the left retired. Major Graham, on the right, gave his men the order to charge—which they did, at a very serious cost. Major Graham himself was shot through the left arm, and the bullet penetrated his side and came out under his right lung. The Colonel was killed, his head being almost blown off by the explosive bullets the Boers were using. The adjutant was also killed by the Colonel's side." It does not appear to be the fact that any officer gave the order to retire, and General French's dry comment may be near



EXPANDING BULLETS.

These have often been spoken of as "explosive bullets," and sometimes as "man-stopping," or "soft-nosed bullets." When they penetrate the body they spread out or "mushroom," assuming some such form as that indicated in the illustration in the corner, inflicting terrible wounds, and leaving a gaping hole at the point of exit. A shows the origin of the Dum-dum bullet, which is so called because it was first made at the Arsenal of Dum-dum in India. The nickel coating of the bullet is filed away at the top to allow the lead to expand. B is the British regulation Dum-dum, now prohibited, and C is a section of the same. D is the soft-nosed expanding bullet, of which hundreds were found in the Boer trenches at Paardeberg and elsewhere.



the truth—that success would have been obtained, though not without loss, "had the majority of the men not been seized with panic and retired." The losses in this disastrous little affair were heavy; 28 were killed, 24 wounded, and 113 "missing," 34 of whom were wounded prisoners in the enemy's hands. The Boers acknowledged a loss of 8 killed and 12 wounded, and this was probably about the truth. General French had his whole force under arms, but would not permit any attempt to retrieve the reverse, judging wisely that it would only result in a further loss of lives, which at this juncture was specially to be avoided.

On January 7, General French with a squadron of Household Cavalry pushed

Occupation of Slingersfontein.

out a reconnaissance to the east and examined a position near Slingersfontein. The enemy opened a long range fire, and succeeded in cutting off and capturing Captain Ricardo with four troopers. Two days later, Slingersfontein was occupied by Colonel Porter with a force of 600 men and four guns, after a brush with the enemy in which the New Zealanders distinguished themselves. To cover the movement the rest of the artillery shelled the enemy's lines. From his new position, Colonel Porter could see all that was going on in the Boer rear, and noted the arrival

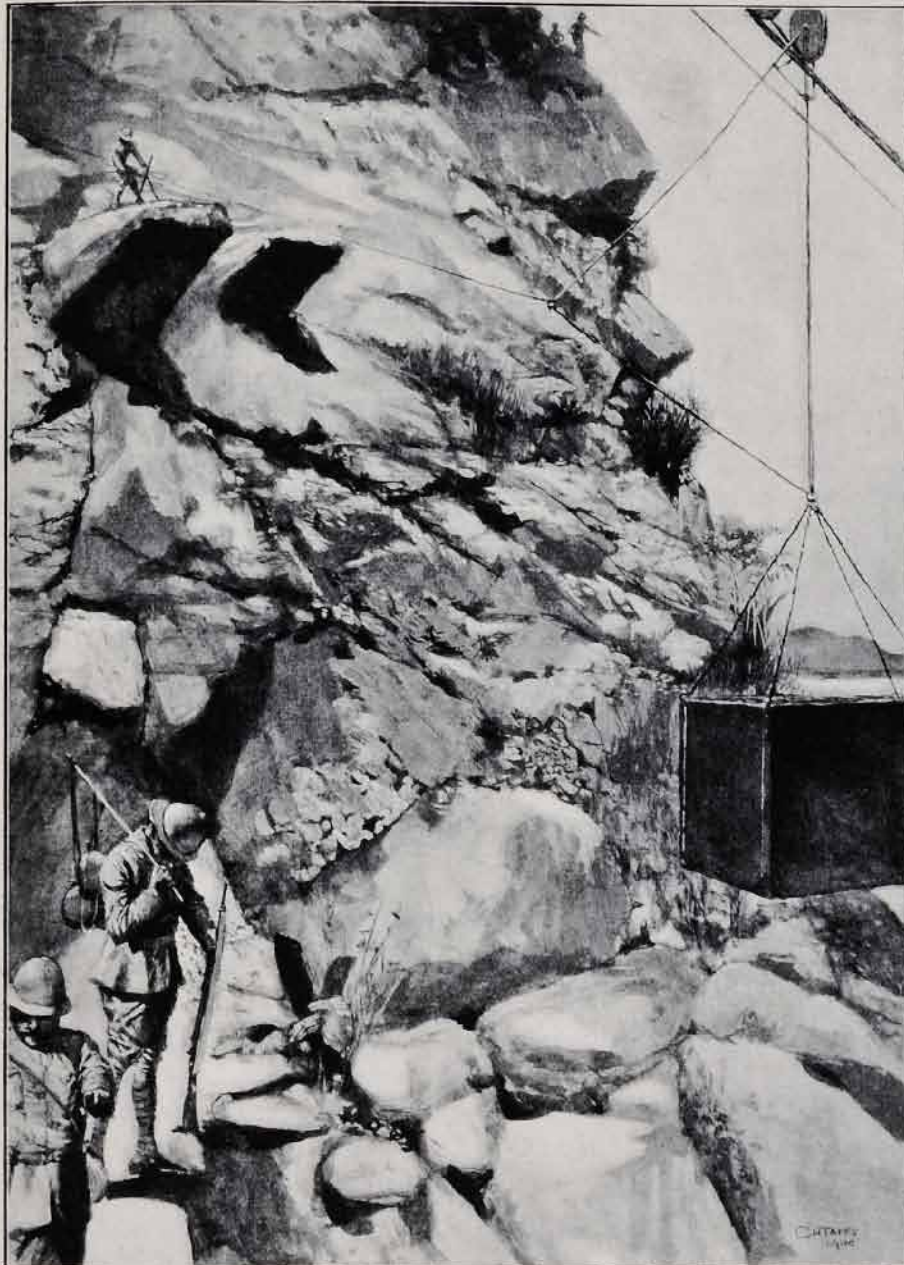


BEGINNING THE ASCENT OF COLES KOP.

Taking guns to the top of the hill, 800 feet high. This photograph gives some idea of the difficult character of the ground over which the men had to drag their guns by hand labour.

of large reinforcements from Magersfontein and Ladysmith. General French, in fact, was acting as a magnet and attracting the enemy's forces. The Boers opposed to him were now about 4,000 or 5,000 strong, and in the course of the next few days were yet further strengthened to 6,000 or 7,000. On his part, General French was reinforced by half the 1st Welsh Regiment and the 4th Field Battery, and was promised a part of the Sixth Division, now beginning to reach South Africa.

On January 11th, by great efforts, Major Butcher, commanding the 4th Field Battery, succeeded in hauling two 15-pounders to the top of Coles Kop. Five hawsers were used, and in four hours the



C. H. Taggs.

(After a sketch by F. Villiers.)

THE WIRE HOIST USED FOR DRAGGING AMMUNITION AND SUPPLIES UP COLES KOP.

work was accomplished and

**Guns and supplies
hailed up Coles Kop.**

the weapons were ready to open fire. Some days later, as the conveyance of food, water, and ammunition to the summit was found extremely laborious in consequence of the precipitous nature of the hill, the engineers rigged up a wire hoist, which proved invaluable. Bridging wire, which bears a strain of 2,000 lbs., was employed for this purpose. On the same day, General French with Colonel Porter's cavalry made a vigorous attempt to reach the enemy's rear from Slingersfontein. Major Hunter Weston with a section of mounted engineers and a troop of cavalry was directed to pass round their flank and destroy the Norvals Pont railway. As, however, strong Boer reinforcements rode up from Norvals Pont, it was impossible to accomplish this, and the Boers were able to extend their left flank so as to threaten General French in his turn. Not caring to risk a decisive action, he fell back to Slingersfontein. On the 12th, the guns on Coles Kop suddenly opened on the Boer

laagers, causing the enemy the utmost annoyance and some loss. All their camps had to be moved, but it was not possible to shell the town of Colesberg itself, as there were many British sympathisers and prisoners in it, a fact of which the Boers were not slow to avail themselves.

On the 14th 400 men with two guns were pushed out from the British left towards Colesberg Road bridge, which was shelled at long range, but not destroyed. The enemy endeavoured to intercept the retreat, without, however, any success. On the following day the Boers made a determined attack upon the extreme British right near Slingersfontein, where was a high steep kopje held by one

company each of the 1st Yorkshires and New Zealanders. During the night the enemy worked round unobserved to both the east and west sides of the hill; a particularly strong party established itself among the rocks at the foot of the western slope, which was very steep. With daylight the attack from the east was openly developed, and from all quarters the Boers poured in a heavy fire on the men holding the hill. While the attention of our outpost was thus occupied, the Boers to the west crept up and actually got among the Yorkshires before their presence was detected. Captain Orr, commanding the outpost, was wounded, the sergeant-major was killed, and the Yorkshires were left without leaders or guidance. At this most critical moment, Captain Madocks, of the Royal Artillery, who was doing duty with the New Zealanders, saved the day. Calling upon his gallant Colonials to follow him, he dashed to the western face of the hill, ordered the Yorkshires to fix bayonets, and charged at their head, followed by four New Zealanders, of whom the two on either side of him were instantly shot dead by the enemy. Madocks himself grappled a huge Boer, clad in a frock coat, who was urging on his men, and

**Boer attack near
Slingersfontein.**



CAPTAIN ORR (in centre) AND OFFICERS OF THE NEW ZEALANDERS
ON NEW ZEALAND HILL, COLESBERG.



(Copyright 1900 by Underwood & Underwood.)

NEW ZEALAND AMBULANCE AT WORK AFTER THE
ACTION AT NEW ZEALAND HILL.

killed him. Several more of the Boers were shot or bayoneted; the rest fled in complete confusion, leaving no less than twenty-one dead behind them. As usual the Boers pretended that they had "one man wounded," though the corpses were seen and counted by our soldiers. The British loss was eight killed, five wounded, and two missing; among the killed was the gallant son of Mr. Gourlay, a member of the Legislative Council of New Zealand. The Boers were estimated to have had at least fifty men wounded.

On January 16 there was another skirmish with the Boers near Slingersfontein. A patrol of twenty-five Australian Mounted Infantry and New South Wales Lancers under Lieutenant Dowling left that position to reconnoitre northwards to Norvals Pont. On its return the patrol was ambushed at a watering place six miles north of Colonel Porter's camp, and the men killed, wounded, or captured, with the exception of three, who got away and returned with the sad news to camp. The Australians made a desperate stand before surrendering, and inflicted some loss upon the Boers. But the affair showed the complete knowledge of every British movement obtained by the enemy, no doubt through the many Boer sympathisers within the British lines. On the 18th, strong reinforcements from the Sixth Division reached General French. The 1st Royal Irish and 2nd Worcestershire, speedily followed by the 2nd Wiltshire, all of which battalions were included in Major-General Clements' Brigade, arrived,



W. Small.]

NEW ZEALANDERS TO THE RESCUE: SAVING A PICKET OF THE YORKSHIRE REGIMENT NEAR SLINGERSFONTEIN.

[From a sketch by G. D. Giles

On January 15 a picket of the Yorkshire Regiment, about forty strong, with thirty New Zealand Mounted Rifles were holding the spur of a hill, since called New Zealand Hill, near Slingersfontein, when some Boers suddenly attacked the Yorkshires at the extremity of the steep spur. Their officer and sergeant were struck down, and the men would have been lost had not Captain Madocks with some New Zealanders made a sudden onslaught, rallied the Yorkshires, and routed the Boers.

and with them two 5-inch howitzers. Thus strengthened, General French was able yet further to prolong his line. Strong outposts were established at Kleinfontein, some miles to the north-east of Slingersfontein, and at Rhenosterfontein, not far from Norvals Pont station. The enemy, alarmed for their communications, called up yet more reinforcements, and it was estimated that at this date their force was about 9,000 strong, while General French had now under his command near Colesberg almost as many combatants. His perpetual worrying of the Boers was thus serving two purposes—preventing them from doing any mischief in Cape Colony, and compelling them to weaken their forces elsewhere. The front held by the Boers at this date was thirty miles, and that of the British thirty-eight miles: but by means of field telephones and telegraphs in our lines reinforcements could promptly be called up to any threatened point.

On January 19 and 20 the howitzers shelled the Boer camps and Grassy Hill, but, so far as could be seen, without much effect. On the 19th, Lieutenant De Crespigny with two troopers of the



NEW ZEALAND OFFICERS WATCHING AN ENGAGEMENT NEAR COLESBERG.

The gallant Captain Madocks in the centre.



CAPTAIN MADOCKS (left) AND LIEUTENANT HUGHES (right).
Survivors of the Boer attack at Slingersfontein.

Household Cavalry came under heavy fire, and had to ride for their lives. One of the men had his horse shot under him, when De Crespigny gallantly rode back to his rescue and brought him off. On the 25th,

General French directed a vigorous reconnaissance against the Boer right, which had not of late been much disturbed. With 3,000 infantry and cavalry, and a battery each of Horse and Field Artillery, he moved up to Rietfontein Plessis, on the Colesberg bridge road, while the rest of his troops demonstrated all along the enemy's line. He succeeded in reaching a point from which, with sharp fighting, he had every chance of getting on the enemy's lines of communication, but, as the Boers were in force and Lord Roberts's orders to avoid anything like a general action were peremptory, the movement was not pressed. On the other flank, General Clements shelled the Boers, who replied with their 40-pounder, killing the General's orderly at the first shot.

Two days after this affair four Englishmen, who had been "commandeered" by the Free State authorities, deserted from the enemy. They brought information that the Boers were about 5,000 strong in Colesberg, with another force at Norvals Pont, and stated that the enemy had eight guns, in addition to two of the captured British 15-pounders, which the Boer gunners did not understand, and could not use effectively.

General French had not only to watch Colesberg; he had also to think of the railway junctions to his left and right rear at De Aar and Rosmead, and to endeavour to reach a hand to General

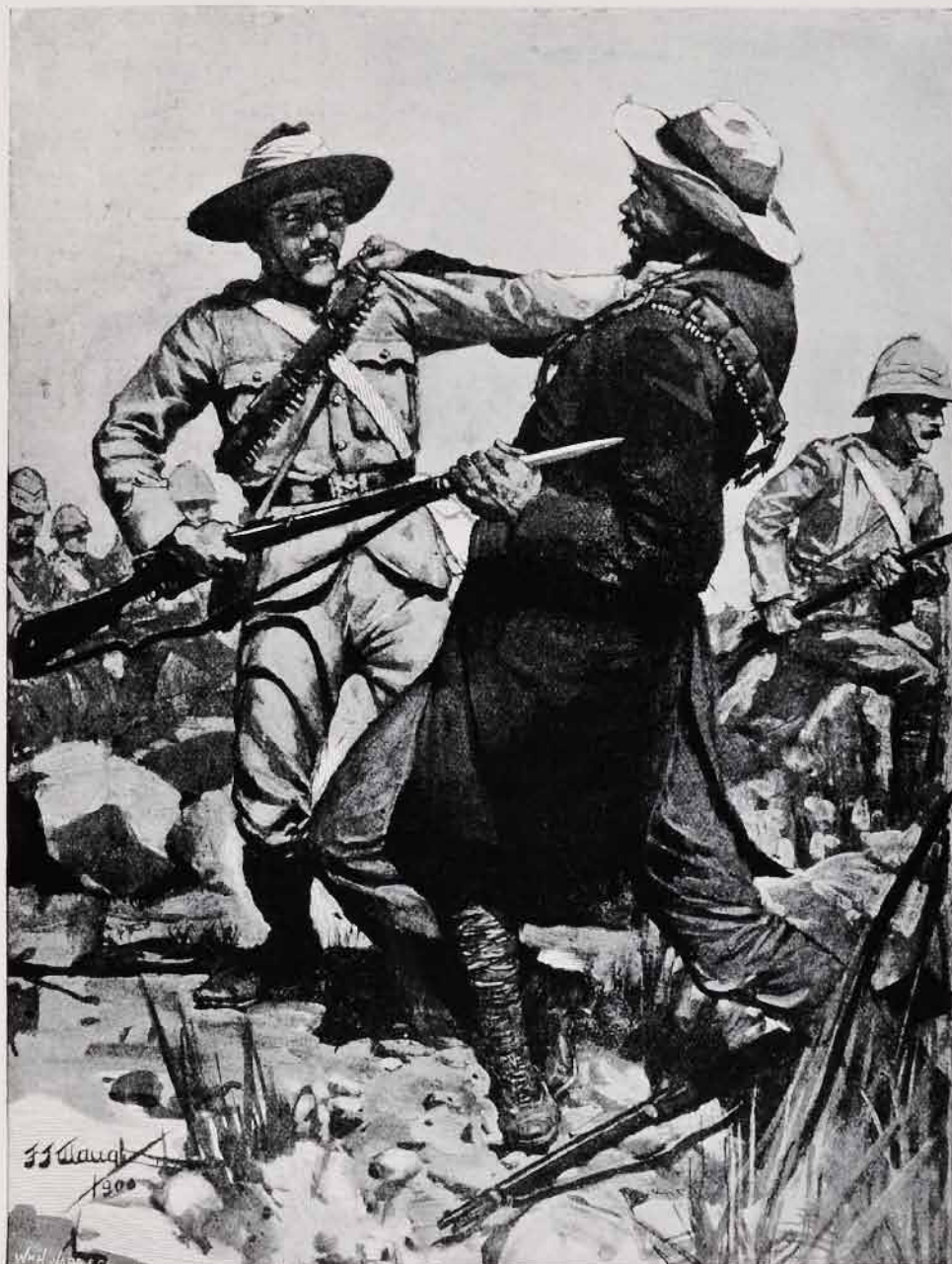
Gatacre. The arrival of more and more British troops relieved him of much of his anxiety for his extreme right. The Thirteenth Brigade of the Sixth Division was now at hand, and, under General Kelly-Kenny, pushed along the railway from Rosmead Junction towards Stormberg, halting at Thebus on the 26th, and opening up communication with General Gatacre, by way of the mountain roads. After these operations a comparative calm followed during the last days of January and the first week of February. Quietly the British forces at Colesberg and Thebus were reduced, the greater part of the cavalry,

Guarding the railway junctions.

much of the infantry,

Gradual withdrawal of British forces.

and all the Horse Artillery being moved north to Modder River, in readiness for the great advance into the Free State. The Boers at Colesberg, now under the command of General De Wet, a Free Stater, who had graduated at Cambridge, do not appear to have promptly seized the situation, or ascertained that they were only confronted by a skeleton force under General Clements. But on February 8, receiving information from a traitorous farmer, they began to show more activity. On this day there was a sharp interchange of artillery fire. A "Pom-Pom" on Horseshoe Kopje, which had caused great annoyance, was shelled by the howitzers; one of the lyddite projectiles burst just by the gun, and flung one of the Boer gunners no less than 100 yards through the air.



F. J. Wray— CAPTAIN MADOCKS GRAPPLING WITH THE BOER LEADER.

On the 9th, a reconnoitring party of Australians, fifty strong, moved out on the right, and was engaged by a party of 400 Boers, who lay hidden in some kopjes. With the Australians were two correspondents, Mr. Hales and Mr. Lambie, who had a thrilling experience, thus described by Mr. Hales:—

"We had drifted a few hundred yards behind the advance party," he writes, "but were a good distance in front of the rear guard, when a number of horsemen made a dash from the kopjes, which we were skirting, and the rifles began to speak. There was no time for poetry, it was a case of 'sit tight and ride hard,' or surrender and be made prisoners. Lambie shouted to me: 'Let's

make a dash, Hales,' and we made it. The Boers were very close to us before we knew anything concerning their presence. Some of them were behind us, and some extended along the edge of the

A ride for life.

kopjes by which we had to pass to get to the British line in front; all of them were galloping in on us, shooting as they rode, and shouting to us to surrender, and had we been wise men, we should have thrown up our hands, for it was almost hopeless to try and ride through the rain of lead that whistled around us. It was no wonder that we were hit,

the wonder to me is that we were not filled with lead, for some of the bullets came so close to me that I think I should know them again if I met them in a shop window. We were racing by this time; Lambie's big chestnut mare had gained a length on my little veldt pony, and we were not more than 100 yards away from the Mauser rifles that had closed in on us from the kopjes. A voice called in good English: 'Throw up your hands, you d—fools.' But the galloping fever was on us both, and we only crouched lower on our horses' backs, and rode all the harder, for even a barn-yard fowl loves liberty.

"All at once I saw my comrade throw up his hands with a spasmodic gesture. He rose in his stirrups, and fairly bounded high out of his saddle, and as he spun round in the air I saw the red blood on the white face, and I knew that death had come to him sudden and sharp. Again the rifles spoke, and the lead was closer to me than ever a friend sticks



GENERAL CLEMENTS.

(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)

Ralph Arthur Penrhyn Clements, D.S.O., A.D.C., commanding the 12th Brigade, South Africa Field Force, is the son of the late Rev. J. Clements, sub-dean of Lincoln Cathedral. He was educated at Rossall; Lieut. 24th Foot (afterwards called South Wales Borderers), 1874; Captain, 1880; Major, 1886; Lieut. Colonel, 1887; Colonel, 1896; Aide-de-Camp to the Queen, 1896; served in Kafir and Zulu wars, 1879, and in Burmah, where he gained the D.S.O., 1885-89.

in time of trouble, and I knew in my heart that the next few strides would settle things. The black pony was galloping gamely under my weight. Would he carry me safely out of that line of fire or would he fail me? Suddenly something touched me on the right temple; it was not like a blow, it was not a shock; for half a second I was conscious. I knew I was hit; knew that the reins had fallen from my nerveless hands; knew that I was lying down upon my horse's back, with my head hanging below his throat. Then all the world went out in one mad whirl. Earth and heaven seemed to meet as if by magic. My horse seemed to rise with me, not to fall, and then—chaos."

The Australians showed great steadiness and courage. A small party under Captain Cameron dismounted and covered the retreat of the others with a rapid and accurate fire. "They shot like lightning, not volley after volley straight in front of them, as do regular soldiers," said a Boer afterwards, "but every man picked his man and shot to kill. We dared not face them." The Boers endeavoured to work round them and cut them off, but at the right moment the colonials made a dash, mounted their horses, and rode off under a hail of bullets, with only one man slightly wounded. There can be no doubt that their skill in taking cover saved them from heavy loss, if not from annihilation. About a dozen Boers are said to have been killed. Mr. Hales was taken prisoner, but was afterwards released by the enemy. He had been only stunned by a fall from his horse. Another reconnoitring party of twenty Australians under Captain Moor had a precisely similar experience on this same day near Slingersfontein. They were

Accuracy of Australian shooting.



Ivester Lloyd.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

Two newspaper correspondents risk their lives in an attempt to escape capture.

surrounded on a kopje, and the Boers called to them to surrender. They replied by shouts of defiance, telling the enemy that "Australia is here to stay," and by their steady fire kept the burghers at bay. Meantime, Sergeant Edwards and two troopers ran the gauntlet of the enemy's rifles, and brought news to the nearest camp that the Australians would hold out till dusk. The 6th Dragoons were sent out to support them, and succeeded in getting them away with one killed and three wounded. On this same day the Boers began to drive in the British left, seizing Bastard's Nek, placing a 40-pounder in position there, and menacing the position at Coles Kop. On the 10th several British patrols were cut up, and Boer parties appeared on the road between Rensburg and Slingersfontein. The position was becoming untenable, and General Clements was hard put to it to hold his own. On the 12th the Boers vigorously attacked all along the line, and our troops were compelled hastily to abandon Coles Kop, sending down the two guns from the top. The half battalions of the Berkshires and Wiltshires

Coles Kop and Slingersfontein evacuated.

were compelled to fall back upon Maeder's Farm, suffering considerable losses, the Wiltshires alone losing thirteen men. The 6th Dragoons and Australians covered the retirement in this quarter, and prevented the Boers, who came on in great numbers, from doing much damage. On the British right a determined attack was delivered by the enemy upon Slingersfontein, supported by the "Pom-Pom" and some field guns. They assaulted the kopjes on this flank, which were held by



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MAKING GAS FOR WAR BALLOONS AT SLINGERSFONTEIN.

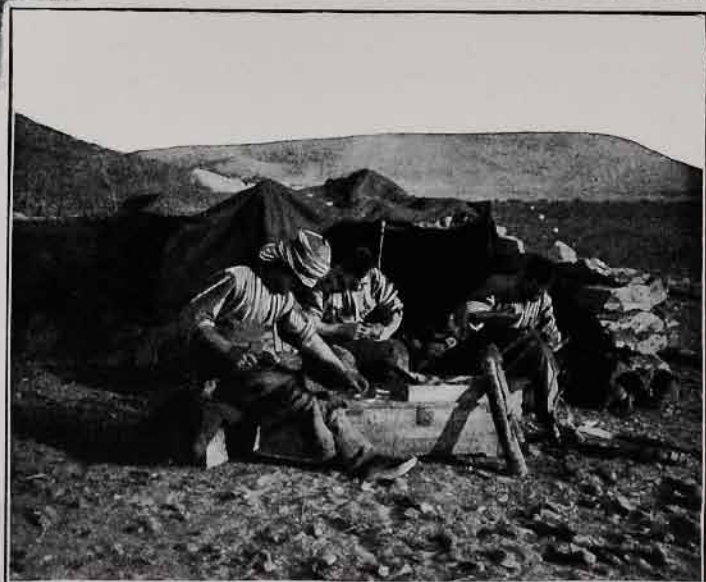
three companies of Worcesters under Captain Hovell, and, though their onset was repulsed, the Worcesters lost heavily, no less than fifteen men being killed and twenty-nine wounded. Severe punishment was, however, inflicted upon the Boers. The Bedfordshires and Royal Irish were also engaged, and were driven back on Slingersfontein. The Boers were seen to be moving their 40-pounder into a position whence it could shell the British camp, whereupon a further retirement was at once ordered. Under cover of darkness the troops evacuated Slingersfontein and concentrated at Rensburg. Even this point could not be long held, and on the 14th General Clements had once more

to retreat to Arundel, after severe fighting. An "unfortunate occurrence" marked the retirement. Two

**British retire to
Arundel.**

to retreat to Arundel,
after severe fighting.

An "unfortunate occurrence" marked the retirement. Two



[Copyright 1900 by Underwood & Underwood.]

SHOEMAKERS OF THE 1ST ROYAL IRISH REGIMENT IN THE CAMP AT SLINGERSFONTEIN.

had suffered terribly from thirst before they surrendered. The Boers claimed that their own losses were only the now invariable "two killed and four wounded."

Thus General Clements with about 3,000 men had been dislodged in a few days, defeated, and driven back to the point from which, two months before, General French had started. Yet he had none the less rendered good service by keeping a large force of Boers occupied in operations which brought them no substantial success, at the very time when they should have been hurrying north to save Cronje. After the 15th the Boers seem to have discovered that they were confronted only by a skeleton



Photo by R. C. E. Nisson.]

FIELD ARTILLERY ON COLES KOP.

A 15-pounder of the 4th Field Battery under Lieutenant Maine firing from the top of the hill.

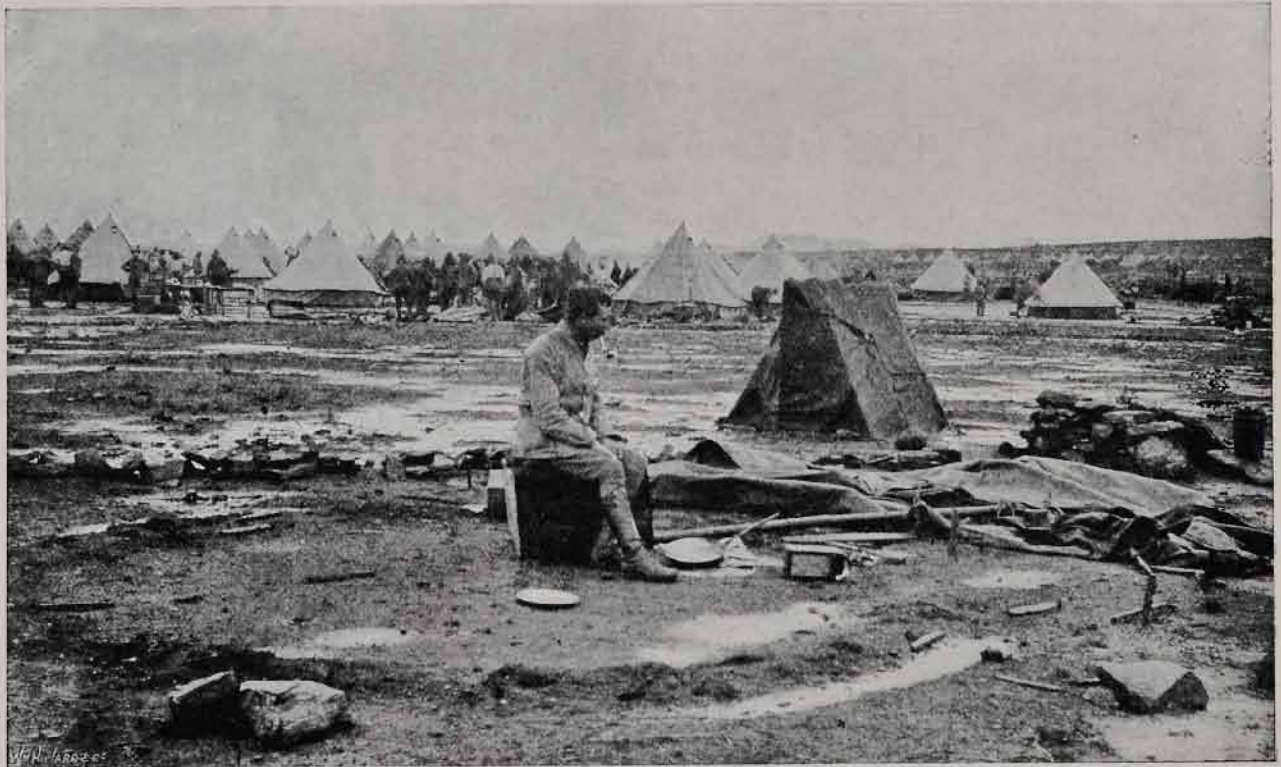
force and to have at last realised their mistake. But it was already too late; the 150 miles from Arundel to Paardeberg could not be covered in time to effect a junction with General Cronje, and that gallant burgher had to be left to his doom. Meantime General Clements was reinforced, and in view of the weakening of the Boers in his front, was no longer in serious danger.

While these things were happening in Colesberg and at the front, grave political difficulties had arisen at home over the seizure of the German steamers *Herzog*, *Bundesrath*, and *General*, on the charge of carrying contraband to Delagoa Bay. The *Bundesrath* was brought into Durban as prize to the British cruiser *Magicienne* on December 30. On being chased she had changed the position of her cargo, an act which was certainly calculated to give rise to grave suspicions. A search of nine days' duration at Durban, however, failed to disclose any contraband in her hold, and the German Government in the most peremptory manner demanded her immediate release. It insisted that Delagoa Bay being a neutral port, German ships could carry what they liked to that place, though it also gave an assurance from the steamers' owners that there was no contraband on board. Before a definite answer had been returned to its demand, the *General* was stopped and searched at Aden, on January 4, and the *Herzog*, on January 6, was brought into Durban as prize of the cruiser *Thetis*. At this news German public opinion, which had all through the war been bitterly hostile to England, was thoroughly aroused, and the German Government took action which savoured of open unfriendliness, demanding the immediate release of all three vessels and the payment of compensation. Yet it was notorious that the three ships were crowded with foreigners, enlisted in Europe by the Transvaal secret agents, and proceeding to the front to take part in the war. The German Government had made use of British troubles at an earlier period to obtain Samoa, and now employed its dispute with England as an argument for a greater German Navy—to be used, it was hinted, in the not remote future against England.

On January 10 Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener had reached Capetown. Their first step was to do all that was possible to stimulate the enrolment of Colonial troops. Almost immediately after landing Lord Roberts visited Rosebank Camp, where the South African Light Horse had their quarters. One regiment had already been raised and sent to the front in Natal, and now two more were

added, known as Roberts' and Kitchener's Horse respectively. Furthermore, Lord Roberts appointed a distinguished Colonial officer, Colonel Brabant, who had great experience in South African war, a Major-General, and proposed that he should command a division composed entirely of Cape Colonials. This action roused general enthusiasm. Hitherto the British officers of the army had looked askance at the Colonial and pronounced his methods irregular. Indeed, so much friction had arisen between the Colonial levies and the British staff that many of the Colonials were anxious to leave the ranks, in which their only rewards were constant snubbings from the military authorities. Lord Roberts by his exquisite tact put a stop to all this. He chose for his own bodyguard these very Colonials as a sign that he appreciated their services. He soothed the ruffled susceptibilities of all, and sent everyone back to his place with the feeling that the new Commander-in-Chief was a man of exceptional detachment from his environment—free from all prejudices and from all traces of red-tape, absolutely just and impartial. And what was more, he charmed as well as soothed. It was said of the great Chatham that no one left his presence without feeling himself a nobler and a stronger man. The same was true of Lord Roberts.

Lord Roberts conciliates the Colonials.



(Photo by R. C. E. Nysson.)

THE WRECK OF A HAPPY HOME.

A disconsolate war correspondent amidst the ruins of his tent after a thunderstorm. The photograph illustrates how readily the dry and parched veldt is transformed into a swamp.

In all, the troops placed in the field from first to last by Cape Colony amounted to about 18,000 men, distributed in the following regiments:—

Duke of Edinburgh's Rifles	-	-	-	1,189	Roberts' Horse	-	-	-	-	600
Cape Garrison Artillery	-	-	-	566	Kitchener's Horse	-	-	-	-	600
Capetown Highlanders	-	-	-	464	Railway Pioneers	-	-	-	-	1,200
Port Elizabeth Guards	-	-	-	518	Bayly's Mounted Rifles	-	-	-	-	450
East London Rifles	-	-	-	673	Nesbitt's Horse	-	-	-	-	400
Grahamstown Rifles	-	-	-	560	Open's Horse	-	-	-	-	300
Kimberley Regiment	-	-	-	800	Kimberley Light Horse and other Irregulars at Kimberley	-	-	-	-	3,200
Capetown United Rifles and Cape Police	-	-	-	1,000	Griqualand Mounted Rifles	-	-	-	-	1,200
South African Light Horse	-	-	-	600	Cape Mounted Rifles	-	-	-	-	492
Brabant's Horse: 1st Regiment	-	-	-	600	Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles	-	-	-	-	540
" " 2nd Regiment	-	-	-	600	Queenstown Mounted Rifles	-	-	-	-	200
" " 3rd Regiment	-	-	-	about 400	Frontier Mounted Rifles	-	-	-	-	145

Even this list is not complete and exhaustive, though it is fuller than many which have appeared. Of these troops some were employed in guarding Capetown itself, where a supposed plot on the part of Boer sympathisers to seize the town on the first day of the new year, had caused great uneasiness; others were placed on the lines of communication; and about 3,000 were slowly concentrated in the east of Cape Colony, where, under General Brabant—a man almost as loved and trusted as Lord Roberts himself, and proved by after events to be a bold and skilful General, never beaten in the field—they were to take part in the new campaign as soon as Lord Roberts gave the signal for the great forward move. Had the Colonials only been listened to at the outset, many defeats and much dishonour would have been avoided. For, from the first, they had preached the necessity of fighting the Boers with mounted men. They now, under the wise Lord Roberts, were given a full share of hard work and glory, and became a source of real terror to the Boers, who never were comfortable when they were about.



DR. BURNS ATTENDING A WOUNDED NEW ZEALANDER.

While Lord Roberts was organising troops and re-arranging the distribution of the forces in South Africa, while day by day battalions, and batteries, and squadrons poured in from England, the rough material with which to build the edifice of the new campaign, Lord Kitchener on his part was busy with the transport and discipline of the army. Rumour has it that he impounded some score of gay young officers whom he found at Capetown with leave from the front, and set them to drive quills in his quartermaster's department. This did not make

Reorganisation of transports.

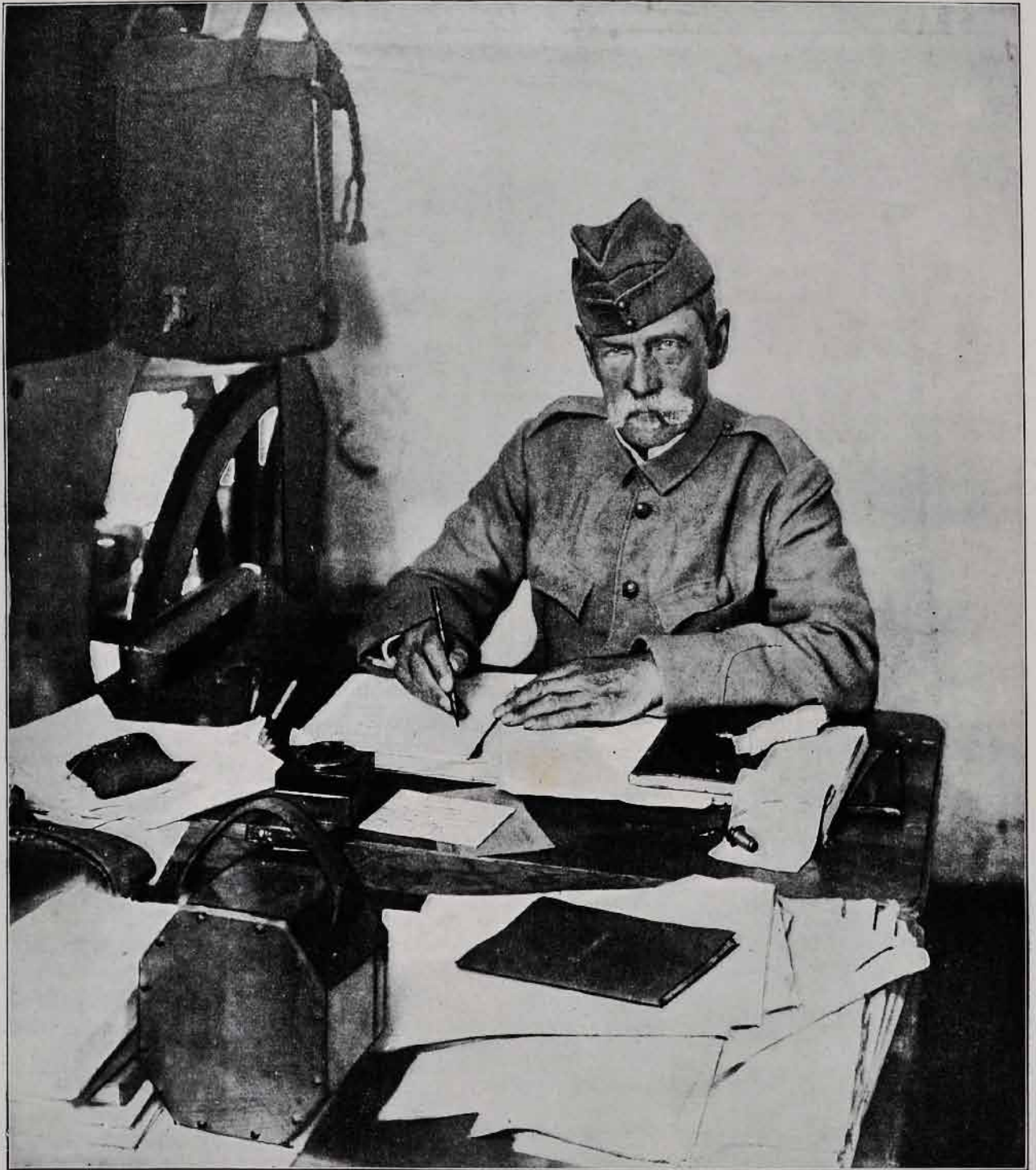
him beloved, but it proved he was determined that all should do their duty. He ruthlessly cut down the allowance of transport, took away from the regiments their regimental waggons, and organised a separate and distinct transport service. He found that the train of waggons had been much scattered, and one of his first acts was to recall about 400 teams and vehicles from Queenstown in the east of the Colony. The work of organisation and preparation to which he devoted his time was neither glorious nor particularly interesting, but it was necessary if the army was to be able to move away



NEW ZEALANDERS BURYING THEIR DEAD COMRADES.

from the railways, and he accomplished it with success, even if after events did not prove all his innovations to have been judicious.

Till the time came for striking, and striking hard, Lord Roberts' instructions to his commanders in the western field of war were to abstain from anything calculated to bring about a decisive battle;



PREPARING FOR THE GREAT CAMPAIGN.

Lord Roberts in his travelling headquarters wagon. The photograph was taken while the Field-Marshal was in the midst of the work of reorganisation.

30,000 men were already at sea or arriving in Cape Colony—among them the Sixth and Seventh Divisions, the City Imperial Volunteers, several Militia battalions, the first detachments of Yeomanry, and a large number of Australian and Canadian Mounted Rifles. Of the troops already on the spot,

a considerable number were being converted into mounted infantry. Thus week after week passed in the most strenuous activity, till at last, on February 6, the Commander-in-Chief and his Chief-of-the-Staff stole off surreptitiously—for there were many thousands of Boer sympathisers in the Colony, and attempts to derail and wreck trains were of almost daily occurrence—to the far-away Modder River Camp, whence the great movement was to begin. To deceive would-be assassins, of whom, unfortunately, there were many in the Colony, a

**Roberts and Kitchener
leave Capetown.**



BRIGADIER-GENERAL BRABANT

(Photo by Lloyd, Pembroke square.)

Is about sixty years of age. He entered the 2nd Derby Militia as Ensign in 1855, but went abroad and joined the Cape Rifles a year later, rose to the rank of Captain, and retired in 1870. He was elected, in 1873, member of the Legislative Assembly for East London; Field-Commandant of Colonial (Cape) Forces, 1878; Col. of Cape Yeomanry, 1879; served in the Basuto War and was created C.M.G. in 1880; Brigadier-General, 1899.

special train with fifty armed men on board was ostentatiously despatched. Lord Roberts, however, did not travel in it; instead, he boarded the ordinary train outside Capetown, and in this manner began his journey to the north.

At Modder River there had been inactivity since the disastrous day of Magersfontein—inactivity broken only by reconnaissances and demonstrations. As far back as December 13, a reconnaissance had been directed from Orange River Station to Zoutpan's Drift, some miles to the east of the great

bridge by which the railway from De Aar to Modder River crosses the Orange River. Seventy men of the mounted infantry and of Rimington's Guides were sent out under Captain Bradshaw; at Ramah, a farm just upon the Free State frontier, they were surprised by the enemy in some force, and lost

four killed and eight wounded, including Captain Bradshaw, killed. The Boers, after inflicting this loss, fell back.

Meantime Lord Methuen at Modder River shelled the enemy

**Lord Methuen keeps
the enemy busy.**

almost daily with his 47 naval guns and howitzers. More than once the Boers at night, evidently in constant dread of attack, opened suddenly a terrific rifle and Maxim fire. On December 31 a small composite force under Colonel Pilcher was despatched from Belmont to attack a laager of rebels at Sunnyside, near the little village of Douglas, to the north-west of Belmont. The force was



DEPARTURE OF THE SECOND QUEENSLAND CONTINGENT FROM BRISBANE.

The first contingents supplied by the Colonies were sent off with wild enthusiasm by the great crowds which witnessed their departure. A more sober, but not less impressive, loyalty marked the departure of later contingents. War had, even to the man in the street, become a dread reality.

remarkable in that it was made up of Canadians, Australians, and Imperial troops, including as it did the Toronto company of Canadians, 100 strong, 200 Queenslanders, 40 mounted infantry of the Munster Fusiliers, and 200 of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, with two guns of the Horse Artillery. Great precautions were taken to prevent the enemy gaining any knowledge of the intended move. No one was allowed to leave the British camp for some time before the march began, and all natives were shut up and their names repeatedly called. Early in the morning of January 1, the force was close to the enemy's camp. The rebels were in complete ignorance of its approach; and

the camp was asleep when the British guns suddenly opened fire. The Queenslanders and Canadians at once worked in splendid style towards the astonished Boers, making every use of cover. The great bulk of the enemy bolted when the burghers found their flanks threatened; a



ON THE WATCH; AN OUTPOST AT MODDER RIVER, AFTER THE BATTLE OF MAGERSFONTEIN.

few, however, were cut off by the British advance and raised the white flag; forty-three prisoners and the rebel laager fell into our hands. From Sunnyside the column marched to Douglas and rehoisted the British flag there, but on January 3 had to retreat, taking with it all the loyal inhabitants, and to return

to Belmont. Against this small success had to be placed the loss of Kuruman, where 120 of the Cape Police and native half-breeds had for months defied the Boers, holding out in the school-house.

On January 8 an important reconnaissance was made into the Free State. From Modder River moved the 9th and 12th Lancers, a force of mounted infantry, and a section of G Horse Artillery Battery; from Enslin a squadron of the 2nd Dragoons, with detachments of mounted infantry, and from Belmont the Australians and Canadians. The Boers were seen to be in strength at Jacobsdal, but there were none of them to the south of the Riet. About the same time Zoutpan's Drift was occupied, and a British post permanently established in the enemy's territory.

On January 16 Lord Methuen made a demonstration against Magersfontein, where the Boer works had of late been considerably extended and strengthened. His object was to draw the enemy



A. C. Ball.]

THE RETREAT FROM DOUGLAS.

The Canadians carried the children of the loyalists and kept up the spirits of the whole party by singing.

away from Kimberley, and also to ascertain to what extent they had weakened their force by detachments sent to Colesberg and Ladysmith. A bombardment of the Boer works speedily brought the burghers up in force from Jacobsdal, and it was found that their lines were well held.

On January 26 General Macdonald arrived and took over the command of the Highlanders, from whom he had a tremendous reception. To deceive the Boers and draw off their attention

**Demonstrations towards
Koodoesberg Drift.**

from the British right, where Lord Roberts intended to deliver his serious blow, a demonstration to the left was ordered. Accordingly, on February 4, General Macdonald, with the Highland Brigade and the 62nd Field Battery, moved to Koodoesberg Drift, an important crossing of the Modder, sixteen miles to the west of Modder River Camp; at the same time General Broadwood with Roberts' Horse, the mounted infantry, and a battery of Horse Artillery, advanced to Sunnyside, the scene of Colonel Pilcher's victory. General Macdonald,

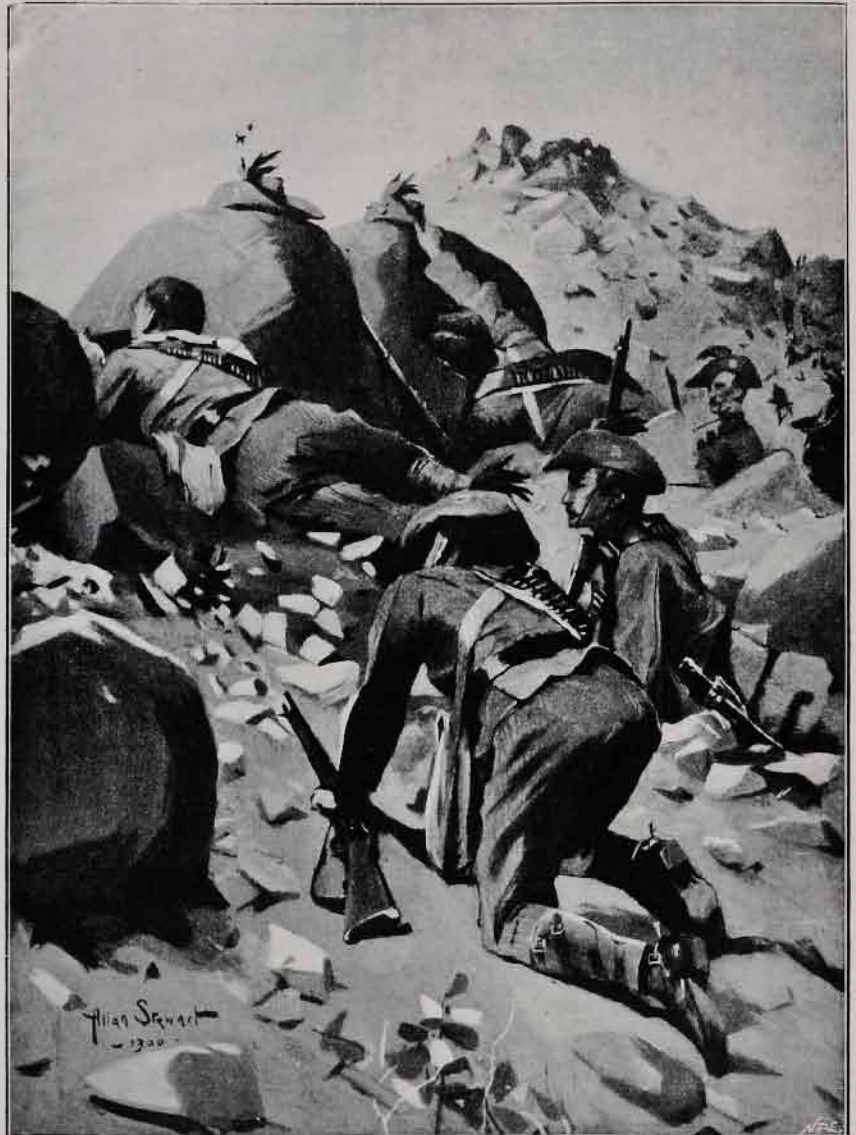
after a terrible march in scorching heat, found Koodoesberg Drift deserted, and entrenched himself there on both sides of the river, on the 5th. Next day, towards evening, a commando of Boers approached and skirmishing began. The enemy was reinforced, and, seeing a chance of cutting them off, General Macdonald sent for cavalry on the morning of the 7th. Skirmishing went on all day, and the British suffered some loss from the enemy's fire, amongst the killed being the famous golfer, Lieutenant Tait. Four regiments of cavalry with two horse batteries, under General Babington, arrived in the evening of the 7th; but the Boers were not to be caught, and made off at dark. As the object of the demonstration had been fully attained, the whole force was then ordered back to Modder River Camp. The British casualties were eight killed and thirty-nine wounded.

On February 9 Lord Roberts arrived at Modder River, and

was received with an enthusiasm that knew no bounds. His first act was to review the Highlanders just returned from Koodoesberg Drift, and congratulate them upon their steady behaviour. He told them that stiff work lay before them, and yet, striking the note of hopefulness, he added that success was certain. His speech had the best effect. Next day a redistribution of the troops took place, and a new Division, the Ninth, was formed of the battalions which had reinforced Lord Methuen from the time when he began his advance from Orange River; General Sir H. Colvile was appointed to command it, and General Pole Carew was transferred from the Ninth Brigade to the Guards' Brigade to take General Colvile's place. All was now ready for the great forward move.

General Kelly-Kenny with a brigade of the Sixth Division, General French with a large force of cavalry and infantry from Colesberg, and the whole Seventh Division recently landed from England had concentrated at Modder River Camp. As the plain grew white with the tents of 35,000 combatants, Cronje's advisers, watching, grew more and more uneasy. "They will turn your flank" was day by day the warning of Major Albrecht. But Cronje had a firm belief that no British force would ever be able to leave the railway, and a flanking movement on Lord Roberts' part was impossible unless this was done.

In striking from Modder River instead of Colesberg and Norvals Pont, Lord Roberts had two objects. He wished to begin his campaign with a tremendous blow—and such the destruction of Cronje would prove. He would also be saved the delay which must inevitably be caused by bridging



[From a sketch by Fred Villiers.]

COLONEL PILCHER'S COLONIALS DRAWING THE ENEMY'S FIRE BY PLACING THEIR HATS WITHIN VIEW.



(Photo by Robinson, Dublin.)

LIEUT.-COLONEL T. D. PILCHER
(Of the Bedfordshire Regiment), commanding Mounted
Infantry.

so wide a river as the Orange. If all went well he might be able to turn rapidly upon the Colesberg Boers after settling with Cronje. Whatever happened, he was certain of relieving Kimberley, which the Boers were now shelling with a great 6-inch gun.

Since the losses had not entirely been made good by drafts, the strength of Lord Roberts' army, as it stood ready to strike on February 10, may be estimated at 26,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry, 3,500 mounted infantry, and



LIEUT. TAIT.
Amateur golf champion. Killed at Koodoesberg.

about 120 guns, including the 6-inch howitzers of the siege train. It was by far the largest and the best organised wholly British force that had ever taken the field. Australians, Canadians, and Ceylon planters were among the mounted infantry; Afrikaners, among the Cape volunteers; but the great majority came from within the limits of the British Isles.

**Composition of the
Grand Army.**

Lord Roberts' army was composed of four infantry divisions and one of cavalry, as follows:—

FIRST DIVISION.

LIEUT.-GENERAL LORD METHUEN.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1ST (POLE-CAREW'S) BRIGADE. | 9TH (DOUGLAS'S) BRIGADE. |
| 3rd Grenadier Guards. | 1st Northumberland Fusiliers. |
| 1st Coldstream Guards. | 1st Loyal North Lancashire. |
| 2nd Coldstream Guards. | 2nd Northamptonshire. |
| 1st Scots Guards. | 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry. |
| 83rd, 84th, and 85th Field Batteries. | |

SEVENTH DIVISION.

LIEUT.-GENERAL TUCKER.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 14TH (CHERMSIDE'S) BRIGADE. | 15TH (WAVELL'S) BRIGADE. |
| 2nd Norfolk. | 2nd Cheshire. |
| 2nd Lincoln. | 1st East Lancashire. |
| 1st King's Own Scottish Borderers. | 2nd South Wales Borderers. |
| 2nd Hants. | 2nd North Stafford. |
| 18th, 62nd, and 75th Field Batteries. | |

CAVALRY DIVISION.

LIEUT.-GENERAL FRENCH.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1ST (PORTER'S) BRIGADE. | 2ND (BROADWOOD'S) BRIGADE. |
| 6th Dragoon Guards. | 10th Hussars. |
| 6th Dragoons. | 12th Lancers. |
| 2nd Dragoons. | Household Cavalry. |
| 3RD (GORDON'S) BRIGADE. | |
| 16th Lancers. | 6th Lancers. |
| Roberts' Horse. | |
| G, O, P, Q, R, T, and U Horse Artillery Batteries. | |

SIXTH DIVISION.

LIEUT.-GENERAL KELLY-KENNY.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 18TH (STEPHENSON'S) BRIGADE. | 13TH (KNOX'S) BRIGADE. |
| 1st Essex. | 2nd East Kent. |
| 1st Yorkshire. | 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry. |
| 1st Welsh. | 1st West Riding. |
| 2nd Royal Warwick. | 2nd Gloucester. |
| 76th, 81st, and 82nd Field Batteries. | |

NINTH DIVISION.

LIEUT.-GENERAL COLVILLE.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 3RD (MACDONALD'S) HIGHLAND BRIGADE. | 19TH (SMITH-DORRIEN'S) BRIGADE. |
| 1st Argyll and Sutherland. | 1st Gordon Highlanders. |
| 1st Highland Light Infantry. | 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. |
| 2nd Seaforth Highlanders. | 2nd Shropshire Light Infantry. |
| 2nd Royal Highlanders. | Canadian Regiment. |

MOUNTED INFANTRY.

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| HANNAY'S BRIGADE. | RIDLEY'S BRIGADE. |
|-------------------|-------------------|

CORPS TROOPS.

- City Imperial Volunteers (Mounted Infantry).
- Kitchener's Horse.
- Rimington's Scouts.
- 38th Field, 65th Howitzer Battery.
- Siege train (including four 6-inch howitzers).
- Four 4.7-inch naval guns; four 12-pounders.

That night of the 10th the search-light in the British camp answered the message of Kimberley with the glad words—"We are coming."



W. S. Small.

[From a sketch by G. D. Giles.

CLEARING THE ROAD TO KIMBERLEY: THE BRITISH CAVALRY CHARGING AT KLIP DRIFT.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GRAND ARMY RELIEVES KIMBERLEY.

Lord Roberts addresses the officers—Cavalry leaders—Advance to Ramdam—French at Waterval Drift—De Kiel's Drift secured—Sunset on the veldt—Cronje's optimism—The cavalry push forward—Heat and thirst—Veldt on fire—Rondeval and Klip Drifts seized—Advance of the infantry—Halt at the Modder—Cavalry opposed—Lancers clear a nek—In touch with Kimberley—Capture of Alexandersfontein—Entry into Kimberley—Bivouac in a Boer camp—C.I.V.s' baptism of fire—Seizure of Jacobsdal—Convoy attacked by De Wet—Waggons abandoned—Cronje's retreat—The Boers carry off their big guns—Orders to head Cronje.



AS the night of the 10th fell, there was an unwonted bustle in Modder River Camp. Train after train laden with troops went rattling southward through the darkness, carrying battalions and batteries to the points of concentration down the line. The whole cavalry division was under orders to start at 3 a.m. Lord Roberts, in his plain khaki uniform, with no sign of his countless orders and decorations, had, earlier in the evening, ridden round the various camps. He now convened the commanding officers of the cavalry division and made them one of his brief speeches. They were about, he said, to start upon an expedition which he knew they would welcome as an opportunity of maintaining the traditions of British cavalry. They formed the largest British cavalry division that had ever worked together as a whole. The object of their operations was the relief of Kimberley. Things were so desperate that a dash must be made, and he would follow as best he could with the rest of the army. Lord Kitchener had put the need for sacrifice even more strongly. The cavalry, he had said, were to reach Kimberley even if they left half their strength upon the road.

Lord Roberts addresses the officers.

Stirring words these to great cavalry leaders such as those now gathered at Modder River Camp. There was the short, quiet, restrained, unimposing figure of General French—the ablest officer that the war had hitherto revealed. There were the trim and alert Broadwood and Gordon, both with good service to their record and each commanding a brigade of three regiments of horsemen. The third brigade, until General Porter's arrival, was under Colonel Alexander. In the very note of Lord Roberts' orders to them was that touch of confidence and decision which sweeps men with it and tells them that they are being splendidly led.

Cavalry leaders.

All down the line men were in movement. From Orange River Camp, on the morning of the 10th a great convoy, hundreds of waggons strong, was advancing on Ramdam, an important road-junction, in charge of a strong force of mounted infantry under Colonel Hannay, whose task it was to clear of the enemy the country to the south of the Riet. All the 11th he was in contact with a party of 300 or 400 Boers, detached from Cronje's force, who hung upon his flanks and rear, skirmishing continually, but none the less he held steadily on his way to Ramdam.

Punctually at 3 a.m. of the 11th, the day of prayer and intercession for success in England, General French led out his cavalry regiments and his horse artillery in magnificent procession—the last seven batteries or 42 guns strong. The night had not yet given way to dawn, when he struck due south from Modder River Camp, leaving his tents standing to deceive the enemy. The spectacle was a very fine one. "Out of the moonlit dust," writes an officer, "one could discern a squadron of Lancers trotting up into position, the lances standing out against the sky-line, the heads and shoulders of the men being just visible, while the lower portion of their bodies and the horses faded into obscurity.



(Photo by Elliott & Fry.)

LIEUT.-COLONEL HANNAY
(Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders).



HOWITZERS OF THE 37TH BATTERY.

Photographed immediately after the fight at Sunnyside, in which they had taken an active part.

Then there would come with a heavy rumble a battery of artillery, similarly vignettted in the moonlit dust, or, perhaps, an ambulance section, with its red cross, or a battalion of mounted infantry, while hoarse, short words of command caught the ear on all sides." The troopers marched light with only their arms, the clothes they wore, and five days' rations. In the darkness the horses stumbled often over the holes of the ant-bears. Now and then a cavalryman would come heavily to earth; at times a half-dozen of men and horses would be floundering in one confused heap, and the cry was heard on every side—"Hole here!" "Hole to the right!" The horses were for the most part in bad

condition. They had not recovered from the long sea voyage before they were put to the hardest of work in an unfamiliar climate. The mounted infantry men, too, were not skilled in the art of sparing and saving their horses.



DE KIEL'S DRIFT.
Getting the water-carts, &c., across amidst clouds of dust.

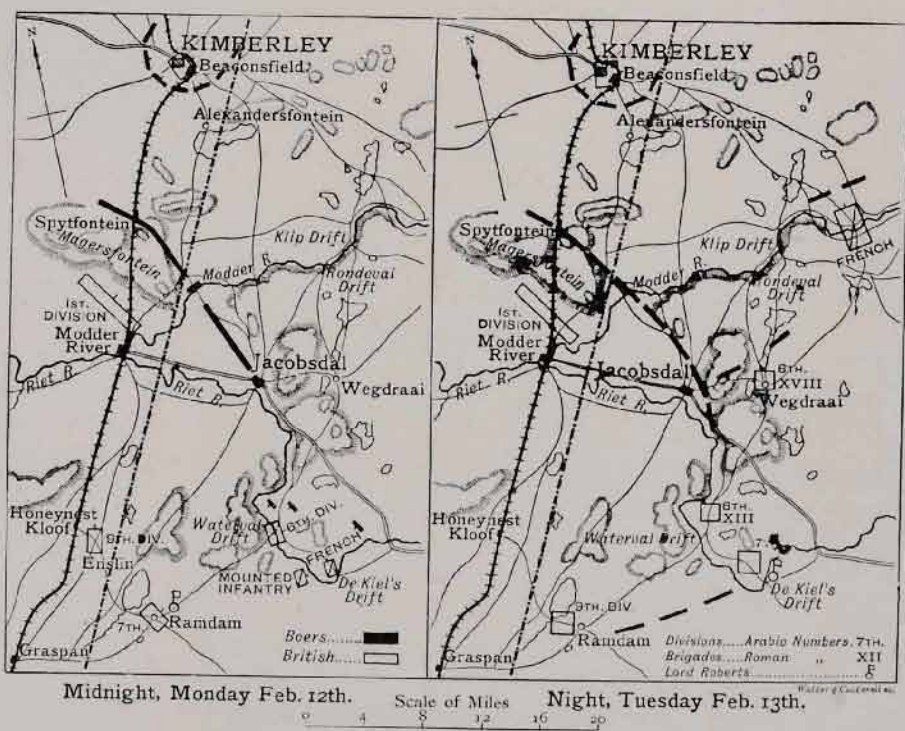
The move in the fierce heat to Koodoesrand Drift, at General Macdonald's demand, had put a great strain upon one of the cavalry brigades, from which it had not entirely recovered. And so, as in the twilight the dust-shrouded column swept down towards Ramdam, twenty miles away, some of the horses already began to show signs of weakness. The railway was followed as far as Graspan, so as to afford not the slightest indication of the division's object. Then turning east, Ramdam was struck about mid-day. The place which bulks so large upon the map was merely a farmhouse with one or two hovels near, a

well, and a "pan" or large pond of water, dry except during the rains. The thirsty men crowded round the well; the horses were taken down to the pan, for the day had been one of broiling heat. Here Colonel Hannay's men fell into the column, reporting a loss of 39 killed, wounded, or missing; here, too, drafts and details from the base joined up, swelling the gathering of cavalry; and here presently, as night came on, long columns of infantry of the Sixth Division began to arrive. Far off on every side to the west rose clouds of dust, marking the advance of a great army. Three divisions were upon the move, besides the cavalry. First came the Sixth, then the Seventh, and last the Ninth Division, each a day apart, heading steadily for Ramdam and the Riet.

So far General French himself had not been in touch with the enemy.

French at Waterval Drift.

But on the morning of the 12th, when his troops saddled up and started on a short seven miles ride to Waterval Drift upon the Riet, it was clear that the Boers were approaching. They were the same party that had been engaged by Colonel Hannay on the previous day, reinforced



by 400 men from Magersfontein. The start was made at 3 a.m., yet though Rimington's famous scouts, who knew every inch of the ground, were guiding, the darkness just before dawn was such that a halt became imperative, and the general's intention of seizing the drift before clear day broke was frustrated. As the red light of early dawn showed over the kopjes to the east, the march was resumed, and about 6 a.m. a few shots were fired upon the British left flank when the column neared the drift, and a gun galloped out into the open and began a rapid and well-directed fire upon the British troops. General French found that a kopje in his immediate front was strongly held. What was to be done?

For the moment the Horse Artillery were ordered to silence the Boer gun—a task which it achieved with the greatest expedition. Then the general boldly determined to try a new kind of strategy, which was nothing more nor less than to walk his men round the Boers, and leave them disconsolately holding their kopje against no one, and reflecting sadly upon the fact that at last the "rooineks" could move as fast as or faster than themselves. But not wishing as yet to disclose his real intentions, he directed General Gordon with one brigade to go through all the elaborate ritual of an attack, shelling the kopjes and holding the enemy's attention. While this display was in progress, General French with his two other brigades, turned, leaving Waterval Drift on his left, and rode rapidly east, cutting



Frank Craig.]

[From a sketch by G. D. Giles.

THE CROSSING OF THE RIET.

Showing the kopjes south of the river which the enemy tried, too late, to seize.

loose from all his communications, towards De Kiel's Drift, five miles higher up the Riet. Here signs of the enemy's presence were again unmistakably felt, but the river was reached and forded just in the very nick of time. In fact, the Boers rode up only five minutes after the passage had been secured. On the south side were two high kopjes, which appeared as if they had been simply designed for Boer warfare, and which in the hands of the enemy might have caused no small amount of trouble and loss. These General French seized and occupied with dismounted men without a moment's delay. As word was passed back along the

**De Kiel's Drift
secured.**

line that the river had been gained, the men pressed forward with inconceivable eagerness to the streak of green foliage which told at last there was water to drink, and that the object of the day's march had been won. The drift was a very difficult one, the road winding round between the kopjes and dropping sharply to the stream. Still higher up, Roberts' Horse crossed under fire, and in so doing lost four killed or wounded. The Boers, when they saw that De Kiel's Drift was lost and that the British cavalry were upon their line of communication, fled in the utmost confusion, yet managed to remove the two guns which they had with them. Could only the Horse Artillery have come rapidly into action after crossing the drift, they might have been severely punished. But the day had been suffocatingly hot, and the men and horses were so ungovernably eager to drink, that delay was inevitable. As the sun went down General French established his headquarters at a farm near the ford, whence he found that the inmates had fled in such haste that they had left behind them hot coffee, upon which the general and the staff rioted.

All through the day, through the heat and dust, the Sixth Division had been marching from Ramdam to the fords; it headed for Waterval Drift, and its advance began to arrive with the supply train just as the cavalry off-saddled. "That train crossing the dark veldt at sunset had a weird beauty of its own," writes Mr. Battersby, the *Morning Post* correspondent. "The evening was absolutely still and clear, and the grey, soft smoke of dust, which every footfall lifted, clung about the miles of waggons like a cocoon. Looking westward, where the



(Copyright 1900 by Underwood & Underwood.)

HANDLING FODDER AT ORANGE RIVER CAMP.

The necessity for bringing up fodder for the horses from the immense stores accumulated at Orange River Camp occasioned some delay in the advance on Kimberley.

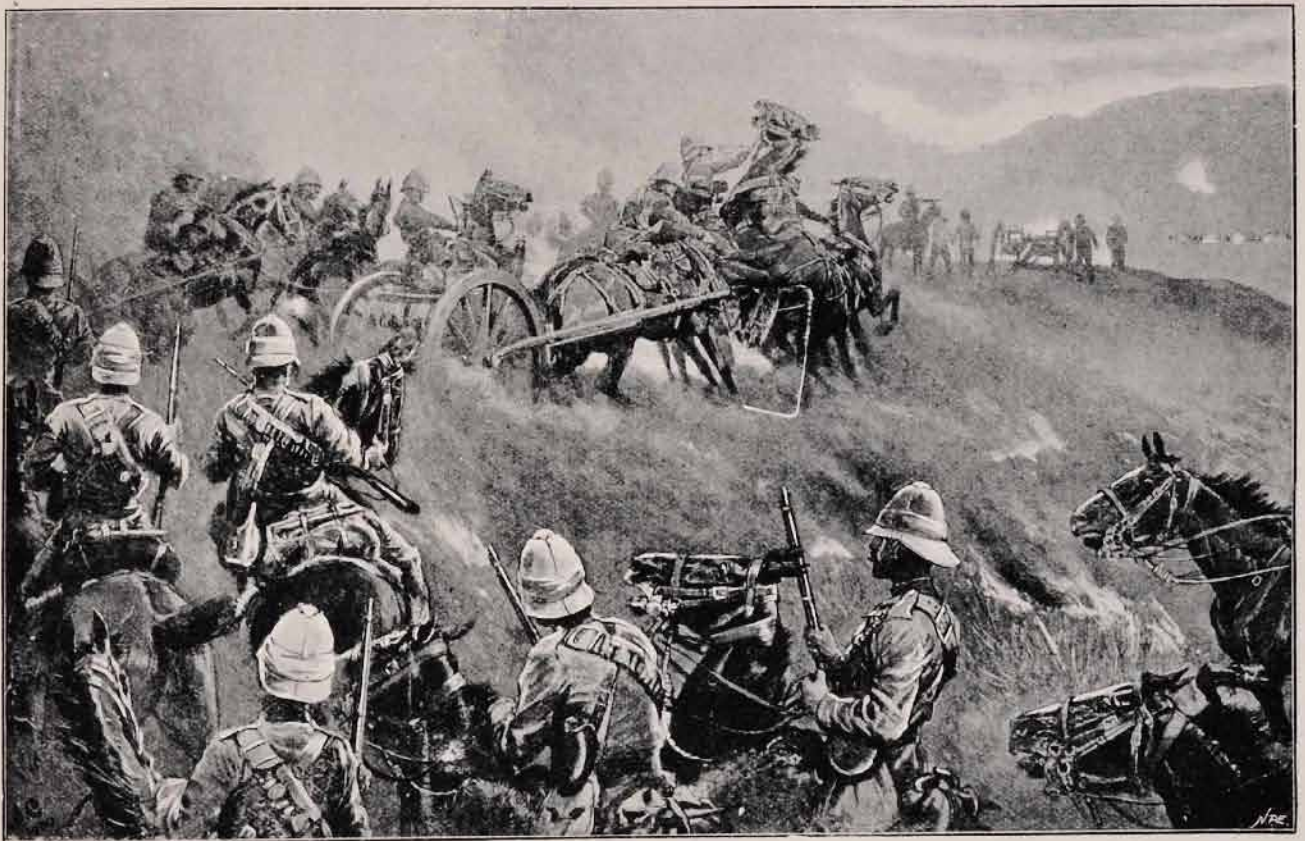
Sunset on the veldt. train rose over the roll of ground about the pan, the dust that drifted across the sunset became a wondrous smoke of gold, filled with strange creatures and monstrous shapes, black as a silhouette and spidery thin. The smoke faded to rose, and from rose to silver, as the track sank into the dark shadow of the down, and the beasts and carts which filled it took again their own shapes and size." And as the Sixth Division moved up to Waterval Drift, the Seventh with Lord Roberts entered Ramdam, and the Ninth, acting as rearguard, approached Enslin. Only the First Division now remained at Modder River Camp to watch Cronje and prevent him from breaking out to the west or striking at the camp. Even now that the British turning movement

Cronje's optimism. was making such progress, the Boer leader obstinately clung to his belief that all it portended was an attack upon Magersfontein by way of Jacobsdal, for which he was perfectly ready, or, at the worst, an attempt to cut the communications of the commandos operating at Colesberg; told Count Villebois de Mareuil, when that worthy strove to alarm him, that he had been a soldier from before Villebois was born, and knew what he was about; and he derided those who pointed out the ominous clouds of dust far away to the south.

The cavalry push forward. Early in the morning of the 13th Lord Roberts arrived to see the cavalry march off. Delay had been necessary to obtain supplies and to feed the horses, as their forage did not come in till it was broad daylight. The Field-Marshal warmly praised General French and his men for the skill and success of their movement. It was a most auspicious opening to a splendid campaign, and filled all with renewed confidence. The infantry, too, had indeed deserved well. The marching of the Sixth and Seventh Divisions through the heat had

been superb, for though the distance was not great, the tracks were sandy and exceedingly bad, and the dust suffocating. In the best of spirits, about 11.30 a.m., the Cavalry Division moved off, with orders to cover a distance of twenty-five miles and seize by nightfall the important fords over the Modder River known as Klip Drift and Rondeval Drift. The lateness of the start, though unavoidable, added greatly to the difficulty of the task. The sun was already high and the heat great as the horsemen went forward over the plain in magnificent array. Behind them the advance brigade of the Sixth Division was already marching out, to follow in their wake to Wegdraai, a farm with good water, half way between the Riet and Modder. Behind this brigade again, the rest of the Sixth Division and the whole of the Seventh Division were nearing Waterval Drift, and the Ninth Division was on its way to Ramdam.

Laying a field cable as it advanced, the Cavalry Division turned on its northward sweep, and soon after noon sundered the telegraph wires which connected Jacobsdal with Bloemfontein. Patrols were pushed out towards Jacobsdal and ascertained that this place was held in no great strength.



J. Charlton.]

BETWEEN TWO FIRES: THE ENEMY'S AND THE BURNING VELDT.

At Wegdraai was a splendid well full of cool water, but the orders were peremptory that it was to be left for the Sixth Division, and so, notwithstanding heat and thirst, the column had to move on, though this was the only well on the arid plain between the Riet and Modder.

Heat and thirst.

The horses now began to show signs of great suffering, as well the poor beasts might, for there was neither shade nor verdure to break the intensity of the heat and vary the monotony of the dull brown steppe. The veldt grass was parched and brown—as brown as the veldt itself—and presently, some troopers, dropping matches in it as they passed, set it ablaze. A great sheet of flame

Veldt on fire.

swept with the wind behind the cavalry, but as the men rode faster than the fire could travel, little heed was paid to the conflagration. By this fire the field telegraph was destroyed and communication with Lord Roberts lost, while the heat and smoke it caused were further sources of trial. It was only because the Boets offered no serious resistance that the results were not far worse. At one point the scouts were suddenly driven in, and almost without notice heavy firing broke out. The British line was taken between two fires, and choosing to perish by the shots

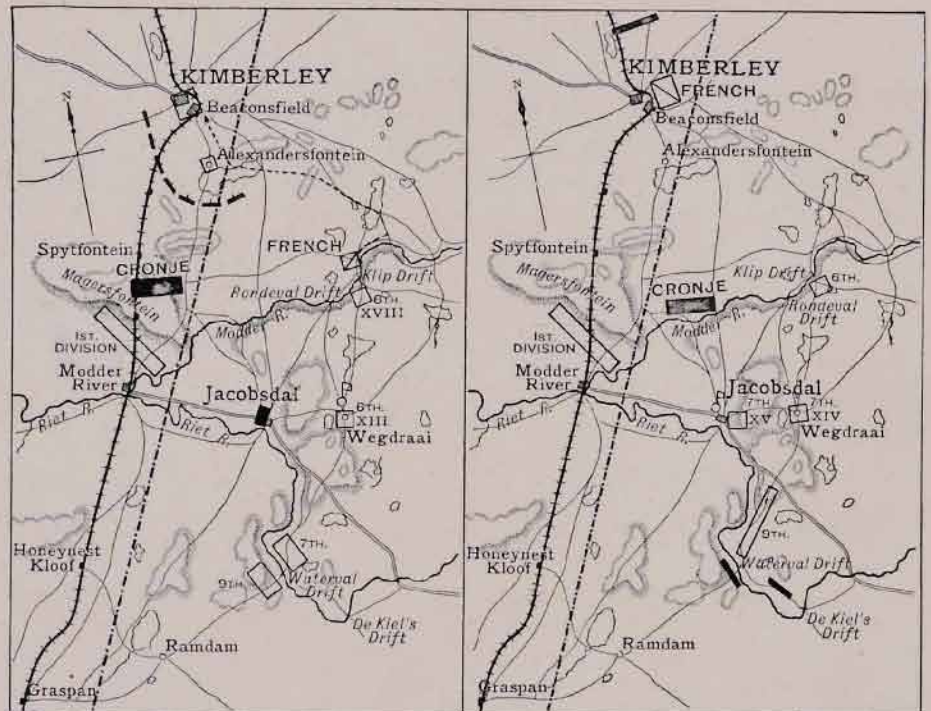
of the Boers rather than in the flames, dashed forward, when the enemy fled; but for some instants matters looked critical. The front covered by the cavalry as it went forward was one of enormous extent. "From flank to flank," wrote Captain Boyle, a Yeomanry officer with General French's headquarters, "the distance was so great that at times the General's gallopers could not move their horses out of a walk, though the message was important." Horses were dropping out right and left, the artillery in especial suffering.

And now, about 5.30 p.m., the goal of the day's march came into view. To the north could be seen a line of dreary green—the bushes which fringe all South African rivers. General French went forward to reconnoitre, halting his division and changing its formation. Gordon's Brigade was deployed on the left, Broadwood's on the right, and Alexander's ordered to follow as a rearguard. It had already dropped much behind and had lost no

less than sixty of its horses. A few minutes' examination and reflection convinced General French that the wisest course was to push on rapidly for the drift, even though there were clear traces of the enemy, and though a Boer laager could be seen by the stream. Gordon on the left was to seize Rondevaal Drift, Broadwood to take Klip Drift. Each Brigadier unlimbered his horse guns and shelled the enemy before crossing. But there was no real resistance; the Boers, aghast at the rapidity and resolution of General French's movements and staggered by the shrapnel from the Horse Artillery 12-pounders, fled in utter confusion, abandoning three laagers, 150 waggons, much ammunition, and a quantity of cattle and sheep. "Some of the larger cases in the Boer camp, marked 'biscuits,' of which there was a regular stack, were found to contain rifle ammunition," says a correspondent with the division. "The marks on the cases showed that they came from Europe *via* Delagoa Bay." The telegraph line from Magersfontein to Bloemfontein was broken, and Cronje left without other means of communication than those the heliograph afforded. Thus the Modder Drifts were won, and now the way to Kimberley was all but open. The seizure of the drifts was, in the judgment of a competent officer, the crisis of the whole elaborate series of movements which ended a fortnight later in the glorious success of Paardeberg. For if General French had waited or hesitated, the Boers would have called up reinforcements and a desperate fight would have been necessary before the river could have been crossed. And in the delay which must thus have been caused, Cronje might well have escaped. General French had risked much, since, so far as he knew, the Boers had 6,000 to 7,000 men along the Modder line and at Magersfontein, while no support could reach him until, at the earliest, the evening of the 14th. His total losses did not exceed half-a-dozen officers and men, and about 100 horses.

Behind him the infantry divisions continued to push steadily forward through the burning heat. At nightfall the 18th Brigade of the Sixth Division was at Wegdraai, half way between the Riet and Modder, the 13th Brigade at Waterval Drift, the Seventh

Rondeval and Klip Drifts seized.



Night, Wednesday Feb. 14th.

Scale of Miles

Night, Thursday Feb. 15th.

0 4 8 12 16 20

Walker & Cochrane, etc.

Advance of the infantry.

At nightfall the 18th Brigade of the Sixth Division was at Wegdraai, half way between the Riet and Modder, the 13th Brigade at Waterval Drift, the Seventh



John Charlton |

THE RUSH TO KIMBERLEY: THE 10TH HUSSARS CROSSING KLIP DRIFT.

[From a sketch by G. D. Gies.]

Division with Lord Roberts at De Kiel's Drift, and the Ninth Division at Ramdam. So trying was the march, that from De Kiel's Drift fifty-seven officers and men had to be sent back to the rear

in ox-waggons, prostrate with heat and exhaustion. On the evening of the 13th Cronje was still at Magersfontein, though the severance of his telegraph wires must have caused him great uneasiness.

As General French's cavalry bivouacked for the night

Halt at the Modder. on the banks of

the Modder, a tremendous dust storm swept over the country, hiding every feature from sight. Under cover of it the Boers must have moved down, for when night fell their pickets were in touch with ours on the north bank of the



BUTCHERS WITH GENERAL FRENCH'S FLYING COLUMN.

river. As it was vital to economise supplies, the cavalrymen were rationed from the cattle captured in the Boer laagers. It was decided to rest all the 14th for two reasons—because the horses were exhausted, and because it was considered necessary that the infantry should arrive and hold the drift before the cavalry left for Kimberley. Meantime the soldiers rioted on the hot bread, poultry, and fruit captured in the Boer camps, bathed in the river, and examined the strong position at the drift, which the Boers had so unaccountably abandoned. A good deal of skirmishing went on all day; the Boers brought up guns and shelled one of the British camps on the north of the stream, but were driven off by the Horse Artillery. It was clear that they were becoming uneasy as to their communications; but Cronje delayed and hesitated, and that day's indecision destroyed him.

Messages had been sent back by General French begging that the infantry might hurry forward, and very late in the night of the 14th-15th the advance



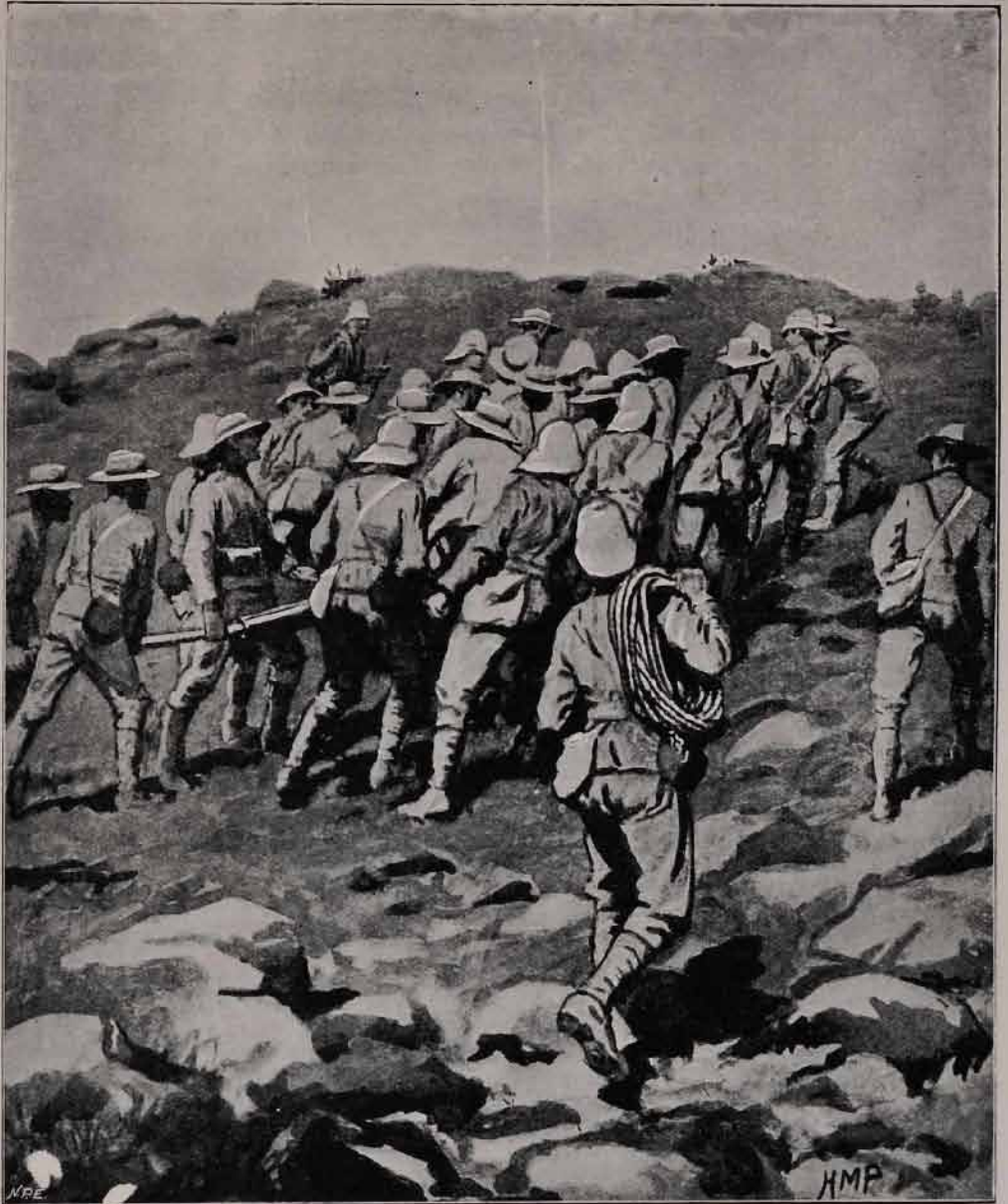
PART OF THE IRISH SQUADRON OF ROBERTS' HORSE.

brigade of the Sixth Division, with Lord Kitchener, General Kelly-Kenny, and three field batteries, marched in. They were guided in by Captain Laycock, who rode out alone to find Lord Kitchener, and who was sniped at everywhere in the darkness. With early morning the rest of the Sixth Division arrived, hot and weary. Of the other divisions, the 15th Brigade of the Seventh Division was moving on Jacobsdal, the 14th of the same division on Wegdraai, and the Ninth Division just beginning its northward march from De Kiel's Drift. The First Division still observed Magersfontein. All along the line of march small parties of Boers were in touch with the British troops, and great caution had to be observed. That afternoon people in Kimberley watched with curious interest what looked like great columns of smoke on the plains near Jacobsdal. It was the dust raised by the British army on its march to their relief.

On the morning of the 15th Lord Kitchener and General Kelly-Kenny rode round the cavalry camps. The field batteries and two naval guns replaced and set free the Horse Artillery. One of the naval 12-pounders was stationed upon a kopje overlooking the drift, after an incident which well illustrated the resourcefulness of our bluejackets. "On moving the gun," says a correspondent, "one of the wheels collapsed; but the sailors lifted the gun from its carriage, and hauled it a distance of two miles to the top of the kopje.

It was a great per-

formance, and well deserved the thanks which Lord Kitchener conveyed to them." The tired infantry went on outpost duty instead of the cavalymen, and after breakfast the three cavalry brigades and the seven horse batteries drew up and moved out with definite orders to reach Kimberley that night. The sight, as the endless line of cavalry rode off across the veldt, about 9 a.m., was a very fine one. On the left was Broadwood with his Hussars, Lancers, and heavy Household Cavalry; in the centre was General Porter, just arrived, with his Dragoons; on the left Gordon with the Lancers' gay pennons and the more sombre squadrons of Roberts' Horse. Scarcely had the line left the river—heading



H. M. Paget.

BRITISH BLUEJACKETS CARRYING THEIR GUN.

[From a sketch by G. D. Giles. Wheel of the carriage of a 12-pounder gun collapsed, whereupon the sailors lifted it from its carriage and hauled it to the top of a kopje, a distance of two miles.]

directly to the east with the object of deceiving the enemy, and leading them to suppose that the object of the ride was Bloemfontein rather than Kimberley—when a Boer gun opened fire on the

Cavalry opposed.

British left, sending several shells among the cavalry. At once two batteries of Horse Artillery went rattling to the front, deployed, and returned the fire. The three field batteries from Klip Drift also pushed out to support General French. The Horse Artillery suffered considerable loss, thirteen officers and men being killed or wounded. The cavalry extended to the right, when from kopjes on the left front as well as the left flank and left rear came a heavy fire from what was evidently a large force of Boers; on the right front upon a kopje the enemy also showed in some strength. It was now that General French had an opportunity to show his skill and generalship. Without any hesitation he gave General Gordon orders to charge with his men and clear a nek between the kopjes. The nek was about 2,500 yards wide, smooth, and level. At the same time the Horse Artillery was ordered to scourge the kopjes with shrapnel.

Gordon's men swept into line and thundered off, in dense clouds of dust, the dreaded 9th and 16th Lancers with

Lancers clear a nek.

their lances ready, and General French ordered his two other brigades to follow at a gallop. The cavalry avalanche broke



BRIG-GENERAL
J. R. P. GORDON.

(Joined the 15th (King's) Hussars as 2nd Lieutenant in 1879, when he was 18 years of age, and served in the Afghan War of 1880; Lieutenant and Adjutant in 1881; served in the Boer War of that year, the Bechuanaland Expedition of 1884-5, in Burma 1887, Lagos 1892, and Ashanti 1895-6; Captain 1888, Major 1895, Lieutenant-Colonel 1897; appointed to the command of the 3rd Brigade of the Cavalry Division in South Africa, with local rank of Brigadier-General, Feb. 1900.



RECEPTION OF THE 16TH LANCERS, CAPE TOWN.

The 16th Lancers, who did such excellent work on February 15, were dispatched from India to South Africa on the application of Lord Roberts. On their arrival at Cape Town a request was made that the regiment should march through the town. The request was granted, and the fine regiment, whose list of battle honours is surpassed by no other cavalry regiment, and equalled only by one, was received with the wildest enthusiasm.

upon the Boers with terrible vehemence; those who had not mounted their ponies and precipitately ridden off, were caught by the glistening steel of the

lances, and there were some grim scenes in the brief seconds of the hand-to-hand encounter. It was well known that the Boers on their part rarely gave quarter to Lancers, whom they especially dreaded, and shot down mercilessly when they could. The cause was some story told by a romancing Lancer private after Elandslaagte—that he had stuck prostrate Boers "like pigs." Some fifty Boers were killed or wounded in this charge, and the general effect upon the enemy was thoroughly to demoralise them. The Lancers pushed on five miles in their furious gallop, maintaining, however, the most perfect order, and then were halted to allow the Horse Artillery guns to come up. Broadwood's

Brigade pressed on yet further, and secured the débouché from the long nek upon the plains which surround Kimberley. The gate to Kimberley had been won.

The British losses in this dashing movement were ridiculously small. Less than a dozen men were killed or wounded. At a deserted farm an excellent well was discovered, and the men were able to quench their thirst; unhappily there was nothing for the horses, which were much exhausted. The night of the 14th-15th had been marked by one of those tropical downpours, so common in the rainy season, and the surface of the veldt was in consequence slushy and wet, trying the artillery and cavalry horses more than ever.

And now, about 3.30 p.m., as a ridge was breasted, far away over the plain the tall chimneys and mine gear of Kimberley came into sight. The column broke into a tumult of cheering. On the extreme left could be seen the kopjes of Magersfontein; over the veldt sounded the heavy booming of guns, and from time to time the puffs of smoke from bursting shells showed that an artillery fight was in progress. Broadwood moved off to the left with orders to demonstrate to the enemy that the British cavalry were behind them. General

**In touch with
Kimberley.**



F. J. Waugh.

A CHARGE OF LANCERS, FROM THE BOER POINT OF VIEW.

French, with the heliographers, climbed a small kopje on the right and set to work to open communication with the besieged garrison. For long his heliograph winked and flashed without attracting any notice, and all grew impatient. Then at last came an answering flash. But the garrison took General French's division for a force of Boers, and replied to his anxious signals with chaff, such as the signallers of the two opposed armies often exchanged. They lavished upon him a great deal of fictitious detail, until presently it dawned upon them that the British cavalry were in truth approaching. Then at last

**Capture of Alexanders-
fontein.**

they informed General French that they had captured Alexandersfontein, a point seven miles from Kimberley and only five miles from the cavalry, and that the direction by which he was advancing was the best. Already, far away, the note of cheering came over the veldt. The British troops holding Alexandersfontein were rejoicing at the coming of their comrades.

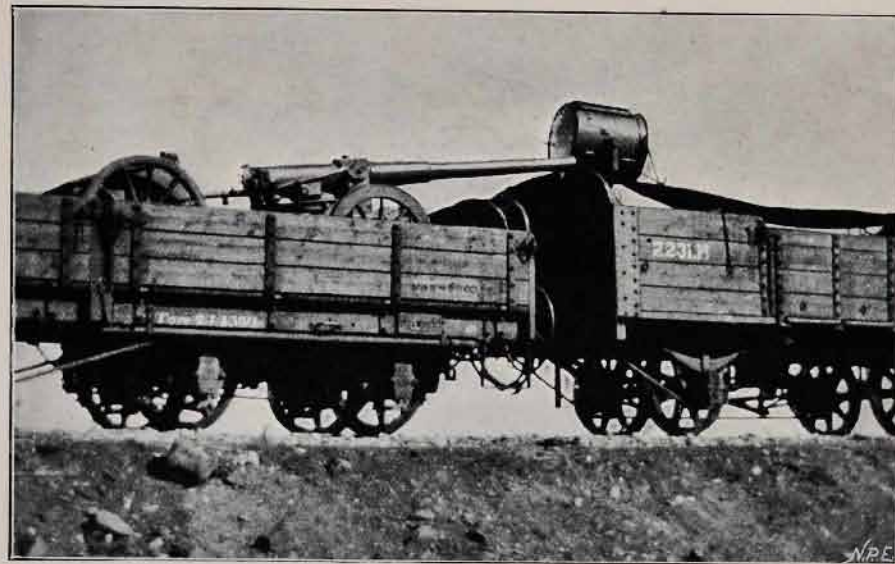
The onward movement was speedily resumed. Two squadrons were ordered to push on with all possible speed into Kimberley itself, and before them the enemy were seen to be galloping off to the east as fast as Boers could go. To cut off their retreat, if possible, General French swerved to the right, when suddenly a Boer gun to the east of Kimberley opened a sharp fire. General Porter at once brought up his horse guns and replied, but the enemy had no stomach for a fight. They hastily fell back, taking with them their gun, and unfortunately the British horses were too exhausted to pursue. Far away from the north at Kamfers Dam was heard the heavy note of the great Boer 6-in. Creusot, still showering its deadly bolts upon the town, in ignorance that its prey had already as good as escaped. Then, as night fell, and the array of

troopers and guns entered into the town, weary, thirsty, sweating, but conscious of a deed done that would ring through the world and fill with exultant joy the British race, the sullen boom of this weapon ceased also, and peace returned to Kimberley.



COLONEL RHODES HELIOGRAPHING TO HIS BROTHER, Mr. CECIL RHODES, BESIEGED IN KIMBERLEY.

Thousands were already pouring into the streets to greet the British cavalry and their gallant leader. Perhaps some were disappointed in the silent, small, undemonstrative man who trotted awkwardly in—for, like Napoleon, General French was not a showy horseman—seemingly unconscious that he had achieved something which would be for ever remembered in military history. Yet with this man rested the honour of the march. "It should never be forgotten," writes a soldier who rode with him, "that what decided the fate of the day was the General's masterly decision in the early morning to cut his



THE NAVAL SEARCHLIGHT WHICH TALKED WITH KIMBERLEY DURING THE SIEGE, AND ONE OF THE 12-POUNDER NAVAL GUNS.

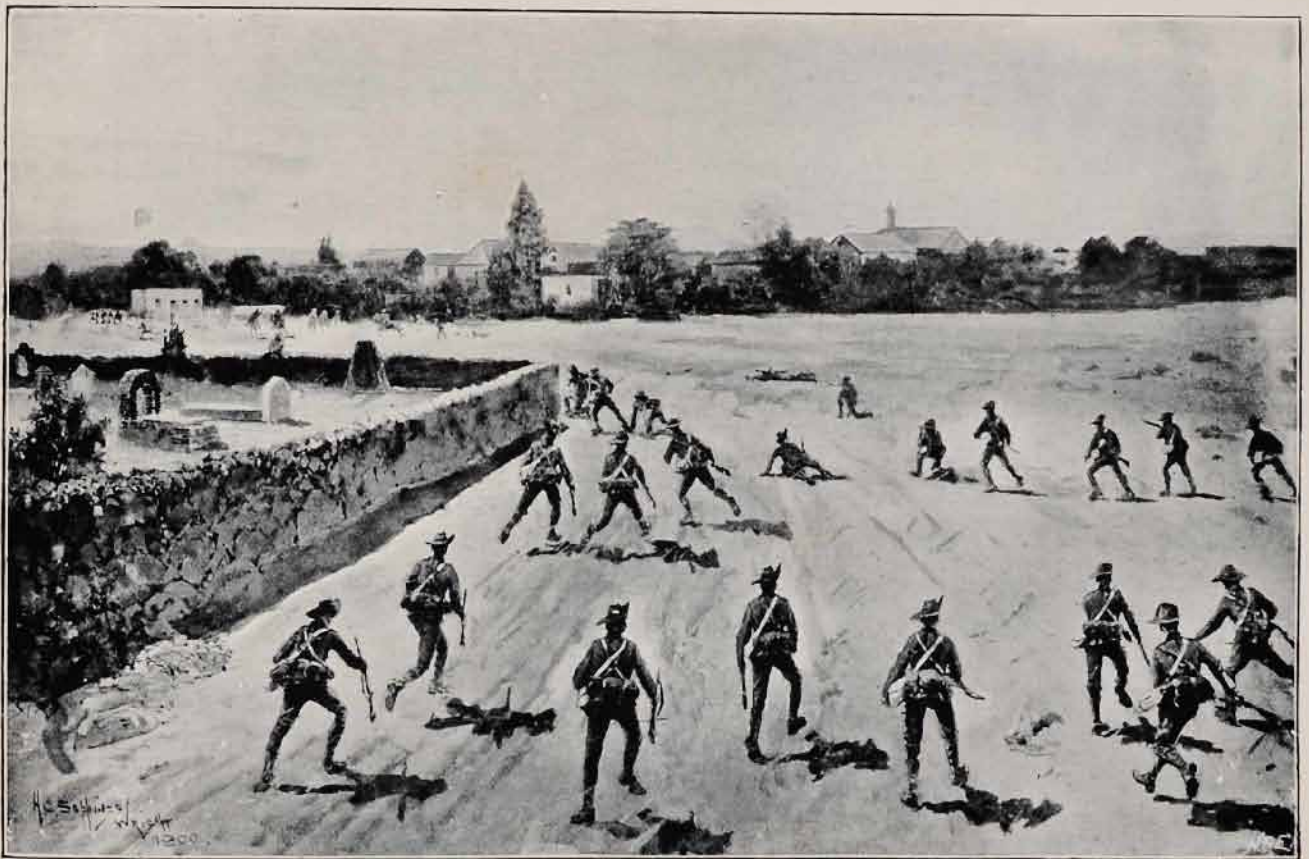
way through what then seemed to be an almost surrounding of us by the enemy, and, instead of losing time by waiting to fight them, to leave them and risk their being on our flank and rear for the rest of the day." An even greater result than the relief of Kimberley was the demonstration which this march afforded of the fact that the Boers were helpless against flank attack by a mobile cavalry. The Boer tactics suddenly collapsed now the day of frontal assaults was over, and in that hour the danger to the British Empire passed away.

In the final rush another Boer laager was captured, with a great quantity of stores and ammunition. The bulk of the British force bivouacked in or near this camp, where there was a good supply of water; only General French and some hundreds of his men entered the delivered city. It still remained to be seen whether Kimberley was really free, or whether,

Bivouac in a Boer camp.

as Boer sympathisers inside and outside the town pretended, General French had simply walked into a trap set by Cronje.

On the morning of the 15th the general advance of the Seventh and Ninth Divisions had been resumed. The 15th (Wavell's) Brigade of the Seventh Division was directed upon Jacobsdal; the other brigade and the Ninth Division began their march to join the Sixth Division at Klip Drift. Jacobsdal was not seized without a brush with the enemy. On the 14th it had been visited by our patrols and found unoccupied, but with the hospitals full of British and Boer wounded. On their way back the patrols were attacked by the Boers, and nineteen men wounded or captured. They had come into contact with a small detachment sent by Cronje to hold the village. Early in the afternoon of the 15th, the 15th Brigade approached the place. It was a small, peaceful-looking village of white houses, bowered in green trees, pleasant of aspect amid the arid brown expanse of the treeless



H. C. Seppings Wright.

THE CITY IMPERIAL VOLUNTEERS' BAPTISM OF FIRE.

(After a sketch by Fred Villiers.)

veldt. But it soon began to wear another and far less peaceful aspect. The British advance was covered by a cloud of scouts drawn from the City Imperial Mounted Infantry Volunteers. They

C.I.V.s' baptism of fire.

were within 800 yards of the village, when suddenly a terrific fire was opened from gardens on the outskirts. The sergeant-major in charge of the party and two privates were wounded. The men behaved with great steadiness and bravery upon this historic occasion—the first time that a Volunteer Force had been under fire. But the Boer resistance could not be maintained in the face of a British brigade 4,000 strong. The 75th Field Battery was brought up, the town was shelled, and the enemy hastily retired towards Magersfontein and Cronje's entrenchments. Lord Roberts arrived, and at the head of his troops made his entry.

Seizure of Jacobsdal.

There was no looting or plundering. The British Army, always famous for its rigid discipline in war, filed in in perfect order, and paid for everything which it took. Military police patrolled the streets; sentries stood in front of every store. The hungry and thirsty khaki-clad men bought up all the bread and milk that they could get, and the Boers began almost to bless a war which had brought them such customers. They had

expected merciless treatment, for the Boer Governments, to stiffen their people's resistance, had studiously spread the report that where the British came they ravished, plundered, and destroyed. The wives of the burghers, however, avenged the invasion of the Free State by the exorbitance of their prices, and thus turned the tables upon the conquerors. One of Lord Roberts' first acts was to visit the large German hospital which was established in the village. In it he found 37 British wounded; all the arrangements were admirable in the extreme. Indeed, if more than one British officer can be believed, in comfort and attention to the suffering it far outdistanced the British field hospitals.

In the rear of the grand army marched a convoy of over 200 waggons, laden with immense quantities of stores, forage and provisions for the army, and drawn by over 3,000 head of oxen—a month's supplies for a force of 40,000 men. They were in charge of a quite small escort, composed of a company of Gordons and eighty mounted infantry. The convoy had moved slowly behind the army, where, it was



F. J. Waugh.

THE LOSS OF THE CONVOY AT WATERVAL DRIFT.

thought, no danger was to be feared, from Ramdam to Waterval Drift. At Waterval Drift it began its crossing of the river under cover of the Ninth Division, some 10,000 men strong. But the drift was of such an execrable nature that its passage by the enormous train of waggons was a matter of many hours, and at this moment, when troops might be wanted, and badly wanted, on the banks of the Modder, time could ill be spared. The banks of the Riet at Waterval, as is common with South African streams, were steep; at the bottom lay the river bed, 100 yards wide, with only a trickle of water in the centre and everywhere else soft sand three feet deep, in which the waggons sank up to their axles, inflicting the most prodigious labour upon the teams of oxen and mules that dragged them. Three teams had regularly to be employed to drag each laden vehicle up the northern bank, which meant that two waggons had to stand still for each one that moved. And thus it came to pass that after hours of waiting, the Ninth Division marched off before the crossing was nearly completed. The convoy was left to its diminutive escort. "There are no Boers in the country," said everyone.



COMMANDANT CHRISTIAN DE WET.

Yet at this very moment De Wet with a party of about 1,000 men, summoned from Colesberg to Cronje's help, was riding up the Riet from the squalid hamlet of Koffyfontein. A great way off he saw the dust and heard the tumult of shouts and cracking whips that proceeded from the convoy, and, after reconnoitring and discovering that there was no British force near capable of resistance, opened a tremendous fire, just after 9 a.m.

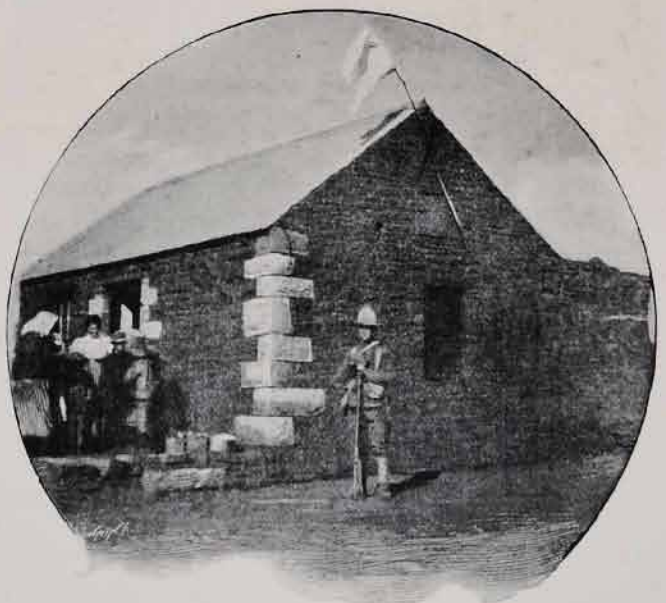
The Gordons at once extended and replied, while the officer in charge of the convoy telegraphed to Lord Roberts detailing his position and asking for reinforcements. Some squadrons of Kitchener's Horse, the 1st Scottish Borderers, and a battery of the Seventh Division were promised, and, though well on the way to Wegdraai, received orders to march back with all speed. But already the Boers had brought up guns, and were playing upon the convoy with deadly effect. The oxen were falling fast, though the men did not suffer so much, being under cover. But when at last the boom of the British field battery to the north told that relief had arrived, the Boers ceased their bombardment, and could be seen falling back. Kitchener's Horse now came up, and attempted, but without complete success, to turn the Boer flank. The convoy had been saved—for a time. All that were left of the oxen

were at once sent down to the river to be watered, a difficult process with so many beasts when the drivers could not be found. But as they came up again from the river a fresh mishap occurred. The Boers again opened fire, killed or drove away the men in charge, and the animals forthwith went grazing along the river banks, direct towards the enemy. Attempts were made unsuccessfully to head them off, but only a few could be saved. Of the 200 waggons, 176 were left helpless for want of cattle.

Lord Roberts learned these facts and made his decision. Should he save the convoy with its immense stores, and perhaps allow Cronje to escape, or should he sacrifice everything to the destruction of Cronje's army? Many generals would have wavered; the risk of continuing the advance, with what appeared to be a strong mobile Boer force well supplied with artillery

in his rear, was no pleasant prospect, and if anything went wrong might prove simply disastrous. But Lord Roberts had learned that nothing great can be achieved without risk. He issued orders to the small force with the waggons to abandon them under cover of darkness and steal away. No lights were to be shown and no noise made. At 2 a.m. of the 16th the escort began its retreat. To crown the list of misadventures, half-a-dozen men of the Gordons and some small parties of stragglers were not warned of the withdrawal. Next day they were captured by the Boers, who carried off or burnt the 176 abandoned waggons.

The loss of the convoy was a blow the effects of which were felt all through the march to Bloemfontein, as the forage, stores and provisions it contained could not be replaced without grave delay. Who was to blame for the utter inadequacy of this escort, it is impossible as yet to ascertain.



A BOER FARM-HOUSE FLYING A WHITE FLAG.
A British soldier on guard to prevent looting.

All through the 15th the Sixth Division had been engaged in skirmishing with the Boer force through which General French had cut his way. This force hung about the drift, and exchanged fire at long range, but though its "sniping" caused some annoyance, it was too weak to effect anything serious against a whole infantry division, with three batteries of artillery. At Magersfontein, Cronje had now at last arrived at the decision to retreat. Already burghers were riding off right and left, in a wild helter-skelter, heedless of commands and orders. What little discipline existed in the Boer camp had been greatly weakened by the presence of the enemy in the rear. About noon, at the instance of the Field Cornets, a council of war was summoned. High words were exchanged between Cronje and the European adventurers, who pointed out the peril of each instant's delay. But the final vote was for retirement, mainly through the insistence of the Free Staters, who were full of fear for their cattle and their farms. All outposts were withdrawn, and with the utmost precipitancy the burghers were called in from the trenches. The Boers abandoned everything except the essentials—food, ammunition, and the waggon train—and received orders to march with dawn along the Modder River, in the direction of Bloemfontein. What had led Cronje to this determination was the sight of General French's division scudding across the plain to Kimberley, and the columns of dust that rose in all directions on his left, betokening Lord Roberts' march. But his rooted

Army Form B. 2067.

DESCRIPTION CARD FOR ACTIVE SERVICE

No. and Name *32480. Headmore*

Rank and Regiment *Sgt T. Bly 9th A*

Source of Kit *Wolke*

Reading at *13. Highmore St*

Signature of Officer *London*
Commanding (Platoon, Battery or Company) *W*

H. W. V. *8-20*

Wolke R. H. A.
Buller R. H. A.

DESCRIPTION CARD.
Carried by every soldier sewn into the lining of his jacket. It is of white glazed calico.

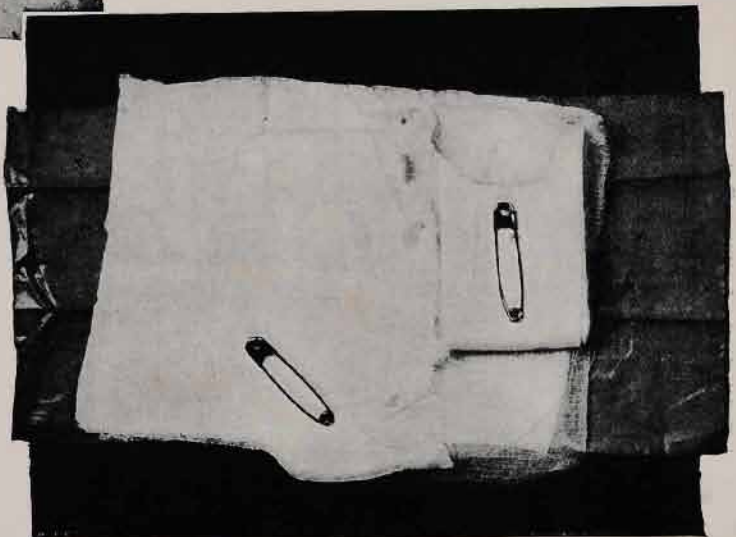


FIELD DRESSING

The dressing, which consists of a sheet of waterproof, gauze, cotton wool, bandaging, and two safety pins, packed first in an extra sheet of waterproof and then in a bag of lining material, is sewn into one of the bottom corners of the jacket of every man who goes on active service, the description card occupying the corresponding corner on the opposite side.

spread. Nor was his force anything like so strong as the British officers opposed to him had believed. Instead of eight or ten thousand it had melted in the last few hours till it probably did not exceed at this juncture 5,000 men. About these were fully 26,000 British infantry and over 7,000 mounted men. The odds were such as to render the struggle all but hopeless.

Just before dawn Cronje's army fell back from Magersfontein—the position which for now more than two months had held the army of Lord Methuen in complete check. So skilfully was the



operation effected that no sign of the Boer retreat was detected by Lord Methuen's Division, closely watching the enemy's trenches, till the bird had flown. But as the day wore on, the scouts and pickets noted that the place look deserted, and that there seemed to be no one about. They pushed carefully in, examined the works more closely, and, as no shots were fired at them, grew in audacity. Finally they entered the trenches, and brought Lord Methuen word that the position had been abandoned. He at once advanced to Magersfontein with his division, and thus, without striking a blow or firing a shot, opened the way from the south to Kimberley.

The state of the Boer trenches gave clear evidence of the haste with which the enemy had retreated. Mr. Ralph, who examined them, gives this interesting description:—"The Boers had gone away in such a hurry that they had no time to take their belongings with them. Evidently the order was 'every man for himself, and no time must be lost.' Consequently the position was littered with trunks, saddles, tin boxes, bags of mealies, of mealie flour, and of rice. Cartridges were



[Photo by Hancox, Kimberley.]

GENERAL FRENCH'S TROOPS BIVOUACKING IN THE BOER LAAGER OUTSIDE KIMBERLEY.

as thickly strewn about as if they were as cheap as dead leaves in autumn. Blankets and clothing were also much in evidence. In places the frightened Boers had made an effort to hide their leavings by piling them in the trenches, and then throwing skins or canvas over them, and dirt and tree branches on top of all. In their trunks we found usually only clothing and letters. Much that they had been using was of British make, largely taken from the British dead. Dozens and dozens of bullock hides were in use there, for shelters and for coverings. These had been taken fresh from the backs of the cattle, and the sun was making them fizzle and bubble, frying the fat and tissue on the underside of each, so that they exhaled a nauseating stench. But this formed the least part of the effluvia. A plague of flies helped to make the pest spot still more unendurable. From every shelter, and pole, and bush hung strips of biltong (jerked beef or venison), for they had not dared to stop even long enough to take away this main staff of their lives."

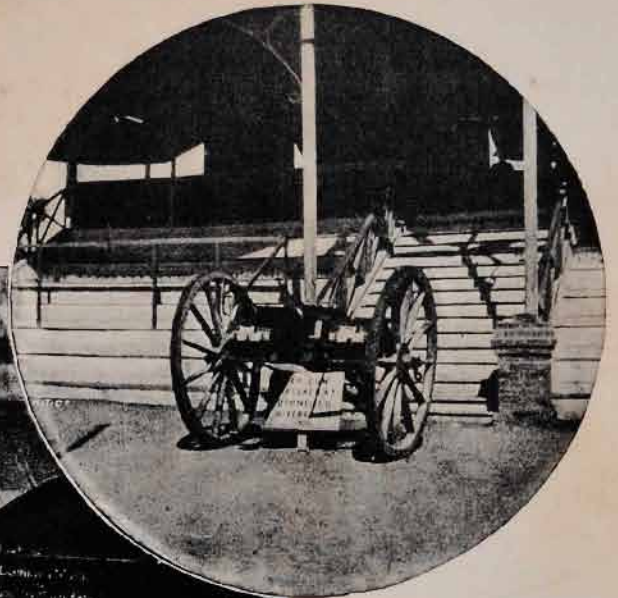
To the north of Kimberley a considerable force of Boers, with the great gun from Kamfers Dam, was in full retreat, though much troubled by the unwieldiness of this weapon. Anxious if possible to capture it, General French had started out at 3.30 a.m. of the 16th with all available men and guns. His horses were in such a state that rapid movement was out of the question. He rode due north, followed by the infantry in the town, who came on by rail, and got as far as Macfarlane's Siding, two stations north. Continual skirmishing with the Boer rearguard was the chief feature of the day, and the cavalry engaged suffered some casualties, about a dozen men being killed or wounded. The horses were too worn out to get near the big gun, and the Boers succeeded in carrying it off, but they had to abandon

The Boers carry off their big gun.

a laager at Dronfield, with one gun, several waggons, and a great quantity of stores. In the British division neither men nor horses had food or water from early in the morning till late at night, and the suffering of all was terrible. The horses in particular, already sorely tired by their 150 miles' ride from Modder River Camp to Kimberley, began to drop right and left in the most alarming manner. Those that still staggered on were mere bundles of skin and bone, in the most urgent need of a week's rest and food, which, however, was not to be theirs.

Already a messenger had come in from the south-east to say that Cronje's force was moving swiftly along the Modder, had destroyed the field telegraph, and was engaged with the British infantry at Klip Drift. But no confirmation of the intelligence and no order from the British headquarters as yet reached General French, nor did he hear the sound of guns. He concluded therefore that the report was

Orders to head
Cronje.



THE BOER GUN CAPTURED AT DRONFIELD.



RECEPTION IN CAPE TOWN OF THE NEWS OF THE RELIEF OF KIMBERLEY.

erroneous or at least premature; moreover, the state of his horses rendered another long ride back to Klip Drift all but impossible of immediate execution. He gave his staff leave to sleep late into the morning, after their four days of continuous hard work, and himself retired to sleep the sleep of the just.

when an order of the highest importance from Lord Kitchener arrived. It stated that Cronje was in full retreat from Magersfontein, with all his waggons, baggage, and four guns, along the line of the Modder to Bloemfontein, that Lord Kitchener had already engaged him, and if General French, with every available horse and man, could head him and prevent his crossing the river at the Paardeberg Drifts, the infantry from Klip Drift would follow with all speed, overtake him, and surround him. Such a message admitted of no excuses or delays—not that General French was the man for either—and orders were at once issued for the only brigade available and three batteries to start with the dawn. But it is now time to turn from General French and his doings to the tale which the people of Kimberley had to tell him.

END OF VOLUME I.

* * * For revised figures of losses, and some corrections, see Preface.