

WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Interesting Particulars of the Struggle Between Great Britain and the Boers.

METHUEN'S MARCH.

A RESUME OF THE EVENTS FROM MODDER RIVER TO MARGERSFONTEIN.

When war was declared on the 11th of October and the Boers of the Orange Free State threw in their lot with those of the Transvaal, weeks passed before any advance was made from Cape Town up the Cape Government railway along the Free State western borders towards Kimberley. On the 23rd of November, General Lord Methuen met the Boer force at Belmont and drove them back from a strong position in the kopjes back of the railway station. The next stand taken by the enemy was at Gras Pan, eleven miles further up the line of railway. Here again the Boers were driven from strong entrenchments near the railway station. The third stand made was at Modder River, where the enemy was again driven across the river to the Margersfontein kopjes, four or five miles from the scene of battle. Before retiring, however, the enemy destroyed two spans of the high railway bridge over the river, and a long delay took place while the Royal Engineers constructed a wooden bridge to enable the British force to proceed with its transport by rail. When the new bridge was completed

THE BRITISH FORCE MOVED into Modder River station, and the troops encamped upon the open veldt about the station. This distance from the Modder River to Modder river station is about a mile and a half or two miles, the country from the River north-east past the station is an open veldt. The distance from Modder River station to the position occupied by the British forces is about three and a half miles. For half the distance the veldt is level with slight undulations; then there is a gradual rise which ends in a low ridge at a small stone section house on the line of railway. On the other side of this ridge there is a gradual undulating slope towards the Margersfontein kopjes, which lie about five thousand yards from the top of the ridge at the section house, and extend from the Modder River on the right for miles across the country on the left. The railway line runs north-east from the section house through a pass between the kopjes. On the right of the railway line are two or three small conical shaped kopjes connected by a low ridge of rough ground. Beyond these small kopjes to the left is a large kopje fully five hundred feet high, and shaped like a huge oval. From the left extremity of this large kopje almost to the banks of the Modder River there extends a low stony ridge. On the left of the railway line there is a short stony ridge extending to the left about half a mile where it rises into a huge kopje about three hundred feet high, and shaped like a boar's back. Further to the left the line of kopjes extends as far as the eye can reach to the north-west. Early Sunday morning

THE ARTILLERY MOVED OUT of camp at Modder River station and the big guns escorted by regiments of infantry moved up the sloping ground to the ridge at the section house. All morning was spent in getting the guns in position on the incline looking towards the kopjes, where it was entrenched. Immediately to the right of the railway track, about four thousand yards from the foot of the kopje, the big naval gun was placed. A short distance to the right, and about two thousand yards from the kopjes were the Maxim guns brigaded. Further to the right were the Royal Horse Artillery, and beyond them the howitzer lyddite guns, and on the right flank were the field batteries. It was about four o'clock on Sunday afternoon when the big guns were all in position, and the bombardment began. The enemy did not reply, and until darkness set in the British artillery kept up

A CONTINUOUS CANNONADE, landing shell after shell on the top of the kopje where the Boers' force was supposed to be. A number of the stone sconces on the top and face of the kopje were shelled and badly damaged. With the night came many storm clouds, which about midnight developed a heavy rain and wind storm. In the meantime, the entire available force of some fifteen thousand infantry, mounted infantry and cavalry, had moved out from the camp at Modder River Station and marched to

the top of the ridge extending to the right and left of the section-house. On the extreme right of the British position were the Yorkshire Light Infantry, the Ninth and Twelfth Lancers, and a regiment of mounted infantry. On the left of this force was the Highland Brigade, composed of the Second Battalion of the Gordons, the First Battalion of the Argyle and Sutherlands, the Second Battalion of the Black Watch and the Second Battalion of the Seaforth's. On the British position were a couple of regiments of the Guards and the Northumberland Fusiliers, with the Scots Guards, and reserves behind the Highland Brigade and two regiments of the Guards as reserves behind the firing line on the left. The firing line extended from near the banks of the Modder River on the right, about five miles to the east parallel with the kopjes in front. It was shortly after one o'clock when the advance was begun in a pouring rain storm, the night as black as pitch. The mounted troops on the extreme right advanced to within five hundred yards of the enemy's position, well on their left flank, and took possession of a ford across the Modder river, which was held by a force of Boers, entrenched on the further bank.

THE BOER FORCE RETREATED as the cavalry charged them, made a detour, and crossing the river behind the British force got in between them and the base of operations. From this position they were quickly driven across the river again and retired towards Jacobsdal. The Highland Brigade advanced towards the low stony ridge on the left of the enemy's position in quarter column. They had advanced to within a hundred yards of the foot of the ridge when a sheet of flame burst forth from trenches extending along the foot of the low ridge and around the foot of the large kopje to a point where the foot of the kopje was projected by a small conical kopje which stood directly in front of the large one. The first burst of the enemy's fire from the hidden trenches at the foot of the low ridge and around the left end of the large kopje completely staggered the Highland Brigade. The intense darkness and rain increased the confusion. While trying to rally his brigade

GENERAL WAUCHOPE WAS KILLED. Under the awful and deadly fire from the trenches a portion of the advance column wavered. Two companies of the Black Watch clambered over the wall surrounding a Boer corral at the extreme left of the line of trenches on the low ridge and backing

CROSS QUESTIONED.

M. B. Connick Relates His Experience with Bright's Disease and Dodd's Kidney Pills.

Suffered with that Dread Malady for Fifteen Years—Treated by Five Different Doctors—Literally Rescued from Death by Dodd's Kidney Pills.

MIDDLETON, P. E. I., Jan. 22.—Mr. M. B. Connick, the well-known blacksmith of this place, known all over the Island as the man Dodd's Kidney Pills saved from death as by a miracle, has often been interviewed regarding his case and is ever ready to supply the facts.

"I had been a victim to kidney trouble for fifteen years before I took Dodd's Kidney Pills," said Mr. Connick in a recent conversation. "Did you know it was Bright's Disease, Mr. Connick?" "Not at first I didn't but when I found it out I was startled, I can tell you. In those days, you know, Bright's Disease was incurable. I went to five different doctors. They could do me no good. Finally my wife and I went together to one who told us right out there was no use taking my money. I could not be cured. I felt that it was all over."

"How did you come to take Dodd's Kidney Pills?" "Well one day a customer and I were talking of the death of a neighbor, and my customer said he was quite sure if he had taken Dodd's Kidney Pills he would have been cured. That set me thinking. For the last six years I had been forced to hire a man to do my work. Well, I began to take Dodd's Kidney Pills, and before I had finished the third box I was at work again. I can shoe a horse as well today as ever I could in my life."

"Do you mean to say that three boxes of Dodd's Kidney Pills cured you of Bright's Disease of fifteen years' standing?" "Yes, sir, that's exactly what I mean. I was so stiff and sore I could not stoop to pick up anything—couldn't put on my shoes. If my wife was here she would tell more about Dodd's Kidney Pills than I can. Mr. Connick is now fifty-eight years old and the picture of health and strength."

down the wire netting on the top of the wall forced an entrance. The fire was too hot, however, and they were forced to retire with the whole brigade in the utmost confusion. It was in this corral or outpost that the Scandinavian contingent of the Boers were practically annihilated or taken prisoners. As the column retired the Boers mounted the walls of their trenches and inflated the retiring troops with a fire from the longitudinal trenches at the foot of the low ridge and those around the end of the large kopje. Their fire in the darkness was much too high and did very little damage. It was four o'clock in the morning before the

HIGHLAND BRIGADE AGAIN ADVANCED.

this time in extended order. On the double they reached a point about five hundred yards from the trenches which all the time poured forth a deadly hail of bullets. Here they found cover and remained all day until darkness set in and the stretcher bearers were able to advance from the reserve lines to pick up the wounded, and the firing line was ordered to fall back on the guns. It was a small remnant of the gallant Highlanders which fell back from the awful position they had held all day. Out of a total of some ten hundred and sixty casualties, which occurred during the day, eight hundred were in the Highland Brigade. Fifty-six officers out of about one hundred bit the dust. Though the list of casualties was large the number of those killed was comparatively small, numbering in all about one hundred and fifty. This is accounted for largely by the fact that over nine-tenths of the Highlanders wounded were hit while lying under cover so long at such close proximity to the enemy's position when they could be seen by the Boer sharpshooters in the stone sconces on the top of the low ridge and high kopje.

Though necessarily meagre and incomplete this is the account of the battle of Margersfontein, as given to me by more than a dozen of those who were either in the firing line of the Highlanders, or behind with the big guns covering their advance. The generally believed theory as to the mistake which was made in advancing the brigade so close to the enemy's trenches in quarter column formation, is that it was thought that the enemy was fortified on the large kopje. The existence of the trenches at the foot of the low kopje on the left of the Boer position was not known, and it was intended that the Highland Brigade should move forward over the low ridge and thus outflank the Boers on the main kopje. Whether this is the case or not, two things are evident, first, that the strength of the enemy's position was not fully known, and second, that the only excuse for advancing the Highland Brigade in the close formation of quarter column was that it was intended to use the force to outflank the enemy's position in the main kopje.

The Times has just published a pertinent letter from Mr. Ernest Glanville on the subject of cavalry scouts in South Africa. He says: "In the Zulu campaign—the country much resembling that about Ladysmith—I had the opportunity of going on patrol with the five types of cavalry scouts—(1) The Edendale Basutos officered by Natalians; (2) Boers; (3) Colonialists officered by Cape frontiersmen, resembling Brabant's Horse with General Gatacre, only employed recently at Dordrecht; (4) Regular cavalry; and (5) Mounted infantry. The Basutos were undoubtedly the finest scouts. Their eyesight is keener, their hearing more acute than that of the white men, and generations of training have developed faculties of observation which enable them, as if by instinct, to nose out an enemy or to take the best position. In the present war the most difficult scouting has been done by Kaffirs. The Boer's craft as a scout approaches that of the Kaffir, but he is superior at planning and has none of the native's excitability." "Next in efficiency as scouts come the colonial troops. Some of them are superior to the Boers, but as a whole, their bushcraft is not so complete. If the pick of them could be gathered together under an experienced frontier fighter—and it must be remembered that Cape colonists have been through

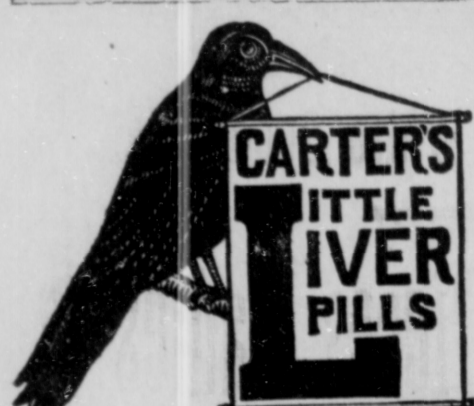
several campaigns—they would furnish ideal scouts, as they are wary, cool, and skilled marksmen. The regular cavalry were never at home on the veldt, and their big horses grew gaunt under "brackish" water, hard grass, and meales. The troops advanced on patrol with scouts drawn dangerously in. When they halted they posted videttes near at hand on conspicuous heights; they did not free bits or loosen girths, and they could not select the best ground for advance. It is asking too much to call on cavalry so handicapped to scout in a country cut up by dongas and rock-strewn ravines, and at the mercy of a handful of skilled game-hunters moving freely on the ridges. As well might we ask a town-reared lessee of a deer forest to pit himself as a stalker against the trained gillie.

A letter from a trained nurse who went from Ladysmith to Durban with the wounded brings out vividly the truth that war is not stage play. Here are some extracts:—"During Monday the enemy kept shelling the town, and a shell fell right at nurse M—'s and my feet. On Wednesday the twenty-four hours' truce was over, which was granted by General White to the enemy to bury their dead and attend to the wounded. We were all up and ready for the Boers to shell the town, and no one who was not there can ever imagine

what we felt like when Long Tom began to fire, and our big guns were not in position then. . . . We were operating, amputating, all Tuesday night, and soldiers were dying all around us, I alone washed twenty men. Some were put under X-rays for the bullets. I with many other nurses, including the Netley sisters, had many narrow escapes."

The British in Ladysmith have started a newspaper, the prospectus of which announced: "What you want in a besieged town is news that you can absolutely rely on as false." A small corner of the paper was reserved for True News, if any should unavoidably creep in. Some of the correspondents must have been reading the Ladysmith Lyre.

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