

The War.

Among the latest reports from the War are the following:

HEADQUARTERS BRITISH CAMP, SPRINGFIELD BRIDGE, Feb. 9, 1.05.—Finding that the kopjes at Vaal Krantz were subject to a cross fire from the Boers' 100 pounder and creosot gun, and that the nature of the ground prevented the construction of entrenchments, the British troops will withdraw, and the advance in this direction will not be pressed.

The British have not been repulsed, but have held their ground at all points.

LONDON, Feb. 10, 4 a. m.—Gen. Buller's third attempt to reach Ladysmith has failed, and the British have again retired south of the Tugela river. A despatch from the Boer head laager at Ladysmith, dated Feb. 8, reached London last evening announcing that the retirement occurred Thursday morning. The accuracy of previous reports from the same source concerning crucial operations afford sufficient reasons for accepting this announcement as true, and the public uneasiness is not allayed by a suggestion that the Boers were confused by the withdrawal of the troops employed in Monday's fight. Inquiries at the war office and in the house of commons in the course of the evening only drew out the assurance that the government had received no news, and at midnight the war office officially intimated that it had received nothing confirming or contracting the report of Gen. Buller's withdrawal. Just before the house of commons adjourned Mr. Balfour stated that Gen. Buller was not pressing his advance from the position he occupied Wednesday, and a little later the Sun's special despatch from the British headquarters at Springfield bridge reached London conveying the first definite announcement from the British side that the troops had been withdrawn. Springfield Bridge is south of the Little Tugela river and eight miles in a bee line from Moldeu Drift where the main British attack crossed on Feb. 5.

Thus, the British people are called upon for the third time to face a serious check to the British arms in Natal, and the relief of Ladysmith is again indefinitely postponed. Such a statement as that in the despatches that the British troops were not repulsed, will in some measure temper the disappointment, but three days' fighting, with the attendant heavy casualties, ending in failure so far as the main object is concerned, is a severe price to pay for such negative comfort.

What was known yesterday of the British position at Vaal Krantz prepared the military experts to find that the position was untenable. Vaal Krantz ridge is a spur a mile long, running at right angles to the Brakfontein Ridge, and is dominated by Spion Kop on the west and Dornkop on the east, both the latter heights rising considerably above Vaal Krantz. On Spion Kop the Boers had long range guns and on Dornkop field artillery and Maxims. For hours Monday they poured shell and shrapnel on Vaal Krantz, on which was also focussed a severe rifle fire from both east and west. It also seems that the British position was impracticable for guns, without which an advance as was organized Tuesday was impossible.

The war in Natal now seems to be at a dead-lock. It is difficult to see what Gen. Buller can do beyond remaining in camp until he is reinforced, or until the operations at other points possibly turn the tide in favor of the British and induce the Boers to reduce their forces in Natal to strengthen the defence to their own territory. Meanwhile the situation on the Modder River, so far as it is understood here, is not altogether encouraging. It was at first hoped that Gen. Mac Donald's move to Koodoesberg was likely to result in an effectual flanking of the Boer right in view of the success of his initial operations, but it has since been reported that Gen. Methuen has ordered the retirement of the whole force, which is proceeding. Gen. Lord Roberts in a despatch dated Feb. 8, the same date as the foregoing report, does not mention the retirement, which is not confirmed by other telegrams sent the same day, and it is doubted here, but as the reports of Gen. Babington's share in the operations are also conflicting, the information is too incomplete to reliably judge the position.

LONDON, Feb. 9.—The Times, in an editorial dealing with General Buller's task, says: "The problem before him is unquestionably most difficult. We cannot be surprised or disheartened should he be unable to solve it with success. His task is not merely to force a way through the Boer lines to Ladysmith; that operation would be formidable enough. But it would be easy compared with the one he must perform if the large strategic points are to follow his efforts. He must inflict a crushing defeat upon the Boer army. Unless he can drive into the Drakensberg or otherwise destroy that army the relief of Ladysmith can hardly be accomplished with safety. We await the issue of the operation with anxiety." Elsewhere the Times comments on the fact that General Buller is "playing his part in the general scheme, which is being co-ordinated by Lord Roberts." It says on this point: "The British public is still kept in ignorance of the whereabouts of some 25,000 troops, and great developments may be expected. It is difficult to believe that the Boers are effectually ignorant of the disposition of the British forces. The great game of war will have shortly begun and we may confidently hope that the period of reverses is drawing to an end."

COLONIAL TROOPS CUNNING AS BOERS.

Machine-Made British Soldier at a Disadvantage.

LONDON, Friday Feb. 5.—Winston Churchill the correspondent of the Morning Post at Spearman's camp, in a recent despatch sends an interesting survey of the situation there. He says that for many miles the heights beyond the Tugela river are fortified. Boer pickets hold the hilltops, and signal the movements of the British to the main army, which is on the plains behind, and which moves more quickly than the British can to whatever point is threatened. Therefore, whenever the British attack, they are confronted by the bulk of the Boer force, and every turning movement becomes a frontal attack.

The correspondent says he learned while he was in Pretoria that the Boer strength in Natal was 18,000, of which 7,000 comprised the regular covering army, 7,000 were at Ladysmith, and 4,000 co-operated with either force, according to circumstances.

Thus, General Buller, in order to relieve Ladysmith, must force by frontal attack a tremendous position held by from 10,000 to 12,000 of the best riflemen in the world, supported by superior artillery, and entrenched with great skill. Their guns are splendid, and are cleverly handled, often finding the range of moving targets at 7,000 yards at the first shot, though how this is done the British gunners cannot explain.

According to European principles, the attack ought to outnumber the defence threefold, therefore Gen. Buller ought to have 36,000 men.

The correspondent deals lengthily with the weaknesses of the British military system, which, like the European system, reduces the initiative of individuals, with the result that the trained soldier is outmatched by the independent Boer skirmisher.

The British mounted troops, the correspondent says, could, if given freedom, compete with the enemy on equal terms, especially the colonial troops, who are as cunning as the Boers, and who are more daring.

As an instance of this, he cites the firing on Spion kop, where, he declares, 300 Boers would have been able to exist, despite the shell fire, by availing themselves of the shelter of the rocks, yet it was necessary to crowd 3,000 British on the hill, and later 5,000 on the summit, where there was no cover for large numbers. So many battalions were drawn into the fight that a general attack elsewhere was prevented. As the infantry arrived they were thrown into the firing line. By evening most of them were completely disorganized and mixed up.

Though they were in no wise demoralized, the machinery of control was shattered, but the next morning the British battalions were perfectly collected and solid.

Here the advantage of discipline was seen. Had the Boers suffered a similar loss a general trek would have followed, but the morale of the British regulars enables them to sustain reverses. In this lies the expectation of ultimate success.

The Boers express little jubilation over their successes, admitting to the doctors and clergymen that the end was inevitable if Great Britain did not grow weary of fighting. They hoped that she would grow weary, but, nevertheless, they would fight to the end.

Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, the Morning Post's military critic, discussing the despatch, says:—"This despatch deserves to be closely read. It is an appeal to the public at home, and as it has been passed by the censor, may be taken to represent the feeling of General Buller's army. Mr. Churchill represents the different difficulties of Gen. Buller's task in concise terms.

"The enemy will act with common sense, they will place outposts on the hills, and keep back their main body until they see the decision of General Buller's movement. Then they will quickly bring up the main body, and extemporize what defensive works they can in addition to such as they have profusely prepared in anticipation of various possible advances. That is what everyone would expect them to do; and that their main body can ride faster than General Buller's main body can walk was also pretty generally understood. The consequence is that the Boer army cannot be turned. Wherever it is attacked, it can present an entrenchment.

"This opinion coincides with the view we have all along expressed—that the centre of gravity of the war lies in Natal, and that a British victory there would be decisive, while a complete British defeat in Natal would have disastrous consequence, not easy to be estimated.

"It seems difficult, in view of the strategy accepted at the War Office, as well as Cape Town, to believe that Gen. Buller is to be allowed once more to attack a position with less than the numerical superiority of 3 to 1 which tacticians commonly think necessary for such a task. It is hardly intelligible that he should attack again without being reinforced.

"Apparently, however, a third attempt will be made without loss of time. Indeed, it seems probable that the movement is now in progress.

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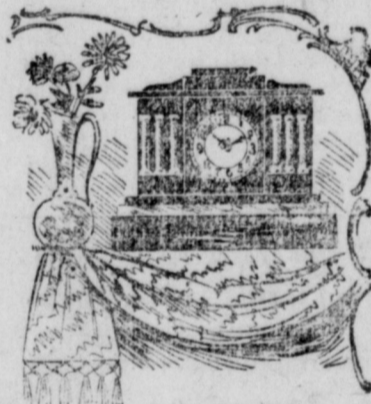
In the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception St. John, on Sunday morning, in presence of a vast assemblage and with the imposing ceremonial befitting an occasion of so great importance to the church, two prelates were added to the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Canada. The Rev. T. Casey and the Very Rev. T. F. Barry, V. G., are now their lordship, the bishops of Udena and Thugga, respectively, and coadjutor-bishops of St. John and Chatham, endowed with the right of succession.

The consecration ceremony began at nine and ended a few minutes after one o'clock. Before it began the Cathedral was filled to the door, and when prelates, clergy and altar boys entered the sanctuary a perfect sea of faces was turned toward them. An event of such striking interest had not only brought together a great congregation of Roman Catholics, but had also attracted many Protestants who were courteously received and given an even chance for seats, as long as there were seats to give. But many hundreds of people were forced to stand throughout the whole ceremony.

The scene within the sanctuary was singularly imposing and impressive. No attempt had been made to decorate the Cathedral, and its severe simplicity heightened the effect of the scene before the altars. A very large number of clergymen were within the rails. The lighted altars, the sacred emblems the rich robes and jewels of archbishops and bishops, and the simpler vestments of priest and acolyte combined to make a striking picture. It was a continually changing picture, as the principals and their assistants performed the various impressive services essential to the rite of consecration. The music was of that high order which befits an event of so great solemnity and gives expression to the lofty aspirations such an event stirs in the souls of the faithful.—The Sun.

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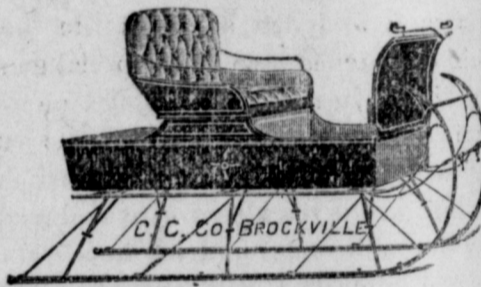
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