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Dated the 10th day of January, A. D., 1900. ELIZA JANE DRYSDALE, Administratrix.

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#### THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH WHICH LASTED 117 DAYS.

On November 27th the bombardment increased in severity, the Boers mounting sev eral new guns. Several skirmishes took place between British cavalry and Boers near Frere, but the loss on both sides was slight. The next day an attempt was made by the enemy to blow up the long bridge over the Tugela river, but without avail.

The commencement of December was signalized by a still heavier bombardment, several of the British gnns in Ladysmith being shattered by the enemy's fire. Heliographic communication was at this time opened between the relieving force and the beleaguered garrison. The casualities occurring in the garrison from November 1st to December 7th were given as 179.

On December 8th a gallant sortie was made by the garrison, which resulted in the destruction of two of the Boer guns commanding the town, and the capture of a Maxim. At the same time a detachment of the 13th Hussars made a circuit of the hills, cutting lines and burning kraals. The loss to the garrison in this sortie was only one killed and one wounded.

It was ummediately after this that the first severe reverse was experienced by the relieving forces, under Gatacre, on December 10th. He sent a force consisting of the Shropshires, Royal Dublins, Second Northumberlands, 800 mounted infantry, and two batteries to attack a position at Stormberg. They were suddenly exposed to terrific fire, and had to retire, the casualities being 24 killed, 86 wounded, and 500 captured. Two guns were also lost. The same day another brilliant sortie was made by the Ladysmith garrison. Five hundred of the second Rifle Brigade stormed a Boer position, destroyed a howitzer, and forced their way back with the bayonet, with a loss of 12 killed, 44 wounded, and 6 captured.

The hopes of Britain were meanwhile pinned on General Baller, whose movement had been shadowed in obscurity. A report that he had entered Ladysmith roused the hopes of the nation to the utmost only to be dashed to the ground by receipt of the news of his disastrous repulse on December 15th, at Tugela river. He made an attempt to cross the Tugela river in the face of the Boer position of extraordinary strength, but through the troops fought with the upmost gallantry the attack failed, and eleven guns had to be abandoned, Colonel Long, the officer commanding, having approached too close to the river, where the Boers lay concealed. General Buller's losses in this battle were:-Killed, 82; wounded 667; missing,

After his serious check, General Buller retired to Chieveley camp, and awaited reinforcements. Great consternation was caused in Britain by the news of the defeat and almost immediately the announcement was made that General Lord Roberts had been appointed to the supreme command, with Lord Kitchener as second in command.

The beleaguered garrison at Ladysmith meanwhile had to undergo all the privations of a siege, and fever began to fasten its grip tighter on the inhabitants. On December 27th a shell struck the mess tent of the Devonshires, killing a captain and wounding seven lieutenants. And the bombardment was continued almost unceasingly Desultory firing between the British and Boers at Tegula river was indulged in, but without any telling results on either side. The delay in the advance was taken advantage of by the enemy to strengthen and extend their defences, so as to present a barrier almost invincible by a frontal attack.

On the hills around Ladysmith the beleaguering forces began to grow impatient, and, acting on instructions from Kruger, it was determined to make the attempt to carry the town by assault. At three o'clock on the morning of the 6th of January the enemy made a most vigorous attack, several positions being taken and retaken more than once. There was fierce hand to hand fighting, but eventually the British were left victors of the day, at a very serious loss, however, the killed numbering 13 officers and 135 rank and file, and the wounded 27 officers

and 242 rank and file. The Boer losses were considerably heavier. On January 11th General Buller commenced a forward movement, occupying the south bank of the Tugela and the bridge at Potgeiter's drift, two positions of considerable importance.

The seige of Ladysmith practically began on October 30th, when General White, in command of the troops there, made an attack on the Boer positions and met with the first of the series of reverses which checked the British arms. Previous to this had been fought the battle of Elandslaagte and Glencoe in both of which the British troops were victorious, but the position at Dundee was too precarious, in the face of heavy odds, and General Yule was forced to retreat to Ladysmith. This was commenced on October 22nd, and General White, with the object of covering this retreat, made an attack on Riet-

effected a junction with General White, and it was three days later that the latter experienced the reverse mentioned. Two British regiments and No. 10 battery, Mountain Artillery, had to surrender to the Boers. The loss in this battle was about two thousand men. On October 31st the Naval Brigade arrived, and their guns were a welcome addi tion to the garrison. On November 3rd the wires connecting Ladysmith with Durban were cut, and the town thus isolated, though it was several days before the War Office made the official announcement. Meanwhile the Boers had been mounting guns around the town, and commenced a bombardment, with comparatively slight results at first, On November 4th it was discontinued, but resumed again, with greater severity, three days later. Two successful sorties were made by the garrison, in which some loss was inflicted on the enemy, with only slight casualities on the British side.

On November 5th an armoured train sortie was made from Estcourt to Colenso, when it was found that the enemy was evacuating the place. On November 9th the Boers made a sharp attack, but were repulsed, with a considerable loss, the King's Royal Rifles particularly distinguishing themselves. Next day, by arrangement with General Joubert, in command of the Boer forces, the wounded and civilians were sent four miles south of Ladysmith, to escape the bombardment.

On November 11th the Boers played one of the dastardly tricks which have stained their record as fighters. A darty of refugees were sent in by the enemy, and after they had been delivered to the party which was sent out to receive them, the Boers opened fire on them before they had reached the British pickets. Three days later the garrison scored a slight success, when a party of the Imperial Light Horse and Natal Carbineers met 300 Boers and, in a skirmish, killed several, with the loss of only one

On November 16th, another disaster occurred. An armoured train was derailed and shelled by the enemy near Chieveley, and seventy men were taken prisoners. It was in this action that Winston Churchill, a war correspondent, was taken prisoner, with arms in his hands, and taken to Pretoria, whence he later made a sensational escape.

On November 18th the Boers made an attack on Estcourt, but were driven back. On the same day Gen. Clery assumed command of the troops south of Ladysmith.

On November 23rd proceedings were diversified by a smart attack made by a force force of 5,000 British, under General Hildyard, at a place called Willow Grange. The position was taken at the point of the bayonet, and the cavalry did considerable execution among the fleeing Boers. Unfortunately, owing to a lack of sufficient artillery, it became necessary to abandon the position so brilliantly won.

During this time the bombardment of Ladysmith was steadily continued, with more or less casualties. On November 24th the enemy turned their guns on the town and hospital. One shell caused eleven casualties among men of the Liverpool and Gloucestershire regiments.

Following upon this success General Buller made an attack on Spion kop, which was held to be the key to the Boer position, and the hill was gallantly carried. It was, however, found impossible to hold it, and the British was forced to abandon the position on the following night. The losses in this move ment, which lasted from January 21 to January 23, to Lyttleton's, Warren's, and Hart's brigades, were: -- Killed, 271; wounded, 935;

On Monday, February 5, General Buller made a third attempt to cross the Tugela. General Hilyard seized a position at Vaalkrantz, but later retired after making a stubborn resistance. The losses were:-Killed, 24; wounded, 322; missing 6.

"I ask you," said Bennet Burleeigh, mysteriously, in a despatch, "to suspend judgement and rely on Gen. Buller." . It was not till Gen. Roberts' brilliantly executed movement which relieved Kimberly, that the public realized that Buller's determined pounding of the Boers was merely a feint to keep the main body of their army concentrated in front of Ladysmith.

On February 12 General Buller commenced a series of well-planned movements by way of Colenso, the scene of the first reverse, which have resulted in the relief of the beleaguered garrison of Ladysmith.

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