

THE MAFEKING MAIL

SPECIAL SIEGE SLIP.

ISSUED DAILY, SHELLS PERMITTING.

TERMS: ONE SHILLING PER WEEK, PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.

No. 99

Saturday, March 24th, 1900.

163rd Day of Siege

The Mafeking Mail.

SATURDAY, 23RD MARCH, 1900.

OUR HEALTH BILL.

When we read the letter from Kimberley, published in these columns last Tuesday, relating the excessive mortality in that town during four months of the siege, which was three times higher than the normal rate, and also the despatch from Ladismith, telling of eight thousand of a garrison of 11,000 having been under Hospital treatment during a similar period, we ought to congratulate ourselves upon our great good fortune regarding hygienic conditions. If we take the Victoria Hospital returns of the number of patients treated since October 12th, the day we were cut off, i.e. 382 Europeans, although acknowledging in justice to the Hospital staff, that this number of cases has been a severe strain upon its powers, the proportion to the garrison, a little over 15 p.c., is most remarkably low, while the daily average of 48 patients, or barely 2½ per cent of the Europeans, is also a subject for congratulation. In this daily average we have not included the convalescents, but their number is scarcely worth while including, as it would not make the average of those unavailable for duty exceed the low per centage just mentioned. There has been, in addition to the patients included, in the Victoria Hospital returns, an average of five or six in the Women's Lager Hospital, which has been established some three months, and there are also various Dressing Stations, at the Bridge, the Brickfields, Maj. Godley's &c., which we have not included as their ministrations men confined almost entirely to natives. With reference to these remarks *re* the Hospital, we do not wish it to be imagined that we are tacitly approving the work done, or its methods, which is a subject we reserve our right to call public attention to directly circumstances render it possible, we simply quote these figures, which include our wounded, to show how hygienically fortunate we have been, compared with Ladismith and Kimberley. With regard to Native statistics they show an equally low proportion of sickness and mortality. Any one, who has given but a little attention to this subject, knows that the Natives, particularly our local races, succumb sooner to disease than whites, and moreover their mode of living makes

mortality amongst them more easily affected by any fluctuation of the food supply. Given a few plentiful years and their numbers increase enormously, while on the contrary, one seasons drought sends their death rate up to extraordinary height. There have been several years drought and the consequent distress was considerably increased by the loss of cattle through rinderpest. Without doubt, had there been no war, the fine rains would have rendered this year a much better one for them than they have had for nearly a decade, but the war stopped cultivation of the land, and the result is that this season proved no better for them, in the matter of food supply, than past years and it might have been expected that sickness and mortality would have been abnormally high amongst them. Such, however, has not been the case. That there have been instances of weakly ones, succumbing to the privations which all have to share, whether white or black, no one would dispute, but to suppose that these cases were sufficient, or sufficiently important, to form an excuse for the most Quixotic negrophile to rampage over, is utterly absurd. Even supposing it were true, which it certainly is not, that any had died for need of food which had been uselessly locked up from them; in plain language: had they been starved to death, anyone who has witnessed the daily starvation of whites, and the sacrifice of those lives in the principal towns of Great Britain, would feel but a very slight pang on hearing of a few losses amongst a syphilitic and leprous-stricken black race. But no such preventible mortality has occurred, and what we desire particularly to point out is: that even were the Natives included in our calculation of those subjected to medical treatment during the siege. The health of Mafeking would still compare favourably with that of other besieged towns. A fact which we have reason to be most thankful for.

Extract from Official Telegrams copied from the London Times, of January 5th:—

DORDRECHT.

Lieutenant Montmorency, 21st Lancers, reinforced by 100 Cape Mounted Rifles and 4 guns, went to relieve a Dordrecht detachment of 28, fell in with the enemy at Labuschagne's Nek, seven miles from Dordrecht, drove Boers from their position and relieved the missing party, except four Cape Mounted

Rifles and three Cape Police; our casualty was one severely wounded. By latest reports enemy's loss thirty. At 3.40 Captain Goldsworthy with 50 Cape Mounted Police arrived on the scene in support of the party; our men retired in a south-westerly direction towards the camp. The detachment were cut off by the enemy the previous night, owing to their refusal to leave a wounded officer, Lieut. Warren, Brabant's Horse. These (40) men, under Lieutenants Milton and Turner defended themselves most gallantly against the repeated attacks of some 800 Boers. The enemy resorted to sniping during the night, renewing a heavy fire at daylight, when they were again repulsed with loss. Lieutenant Montmorency and the scouts, loaded with quantities of ammunition, mounted the cliffs on the South side in the nick of time, as Lieut Milford's ammunition was running short. The Boers fled hastily, contenting themselves with firing from the hills at long ranges. That our loss was so slight is to be explained only by the bad shooting and poor courage shown by the enemy. The enemy tried the white flag trick with Lieut Milford, but without effect, while our reply to the usual volley accompanying their white flag, killed two of them. The enemy crept down and shot Milford's horses, for which there was no room in the position he had taken up. They dared not, however, come to close fighting with his men.

On or about December 30th the rebels attacked Dordrecht in considerable force, but were repulsed with a loss of 8 men and 13 horses killed, our casualties were four wounded. From a conversation I had with a lieutenant I learn that 33 Boer horses were found dead round the position. The 13 being only those counted in one spot. Lieut Milford describes the white flag incident as follows:—"A large party of Boers came trotting quietly forward, having Kaffirs in front dressed like black police, and naturally were mistaken, as it was intended, for friends coming to the relief of our men; when the Boers drew close, two moved to the right and hoisted a white flag, upon which the remainder galloped swiftly to a near position under cover. The trick was discovered too late to check the Boers, but the two men with the flag were shot. The Boers had express cartridges with a copper tube in the nose of the bullet. I have also seen Mauser cartridges with soft nose bullets picked up near Dordrecht." Swanelef, the Commandant at Stormberg, has died of his wounds. On January 2nd Gatacre reported seven Mounted Police still missing.

The rebels in the Barkly district were reported to be demoralised by the occupation of Dordrecht, and immediately armed the Natives of Barkly East. It was, however, considered that the latter would remain loyal.

LORD ROBERTS AT BLOEM-FONTEIN.

The Union Jack flying over the Presidency.

Mr. Rhodes ill.

(Reuter) Capetown, March 14th.

Bloemfontein was occupied by the British without opposition. The officials met Roberts two miles outside the town, and handed over the keys. The Union Jack is now flying over the Presidency.

It is believed that the wagon bridge at Colesberg has been further damaged.

The transport "Manila" with Boer prisoners on board has sailed for St. Helena.

The Boers have evacuated Van Wijk's Vlei, and have occupied Vosburg.

Rhodes is suffering from influenza.

It has been discovered that the Dutch held communication with the Boer prisoners at Simonstown by placing letters in watermelons.

The culmination of of Roberts' strategy and splendid generalship was reached today, when the British entered Bloemfontein, practically unopposed.

General French, having cut the railway and telegraph lines, experienced a slight skirmish with the enemy, who were holding some kopjes to the south-east of the town. Early in the morning the first cavalry brigade moved forward, and occupied several kopjes east of the town, and which commanded it. The enemy still remained in the kopjes to the south of town, but a few shells drove them off, and the town surrendered. Lord Roberts was escorted to the town by the Acting State Secretary, and was enthusiastically cheered by a large number of residents. When the Commander-in-Chief entered the Presidency, the crowd outside sang "God save the Queen," which was repeated after the Union Jack was hoisted, amid deafening cheers.

The military correspondent of the Press Association, writing *re* General Gatacre, says, *inter alia*: "That officer has already shown himself to be one of the most capable generals in the field. In previous campaigns he has carried out operations of which many military commanders of a similar rank are not unnaturally envious. In the present instance the difficulties of the task before him are augmented by having under his command a force which is totally unsuited to the work which it is expected to perform. Until General Gatacre's column is reinforced with more artillery

and cavalry, it is difficult to see how it can keep pace with the other columns.

Mr Selous, interviewed by a home paper, said in reference to the remark, "Apparently after getting into the Free State, our troops will have a flat country to traverse; no more kopjes?" "It is a mistake," he replied "to suppose that any large area of that country is quite flat; instead of kopjes there are ridges which, although they may not lend themselves to gun mounting, make excellent cover for marksmen." "Then you think we have a tough job?" "A very tough one indeed, I am afraid." "Do you imagine that the Boers can be pacified later on by any conciliatory measures?" "I am afraid not. Now that it has gone so far, we shall have to carry it right through. Half measures will probably result in more and worse trouble later on."

LOCAL.

By the considerate courtesy of Lieut. the Hon. A. Hanbury Tracy, a number of newspapers received by the Intelligence Department will be placed in the "Mail" office to-morrow, Sunday, for the convenience of any who would like to peruse them.

The Boers have retired beyond rifle range on the East.

To-morrow's attractions are the Exhibition, the Newspapers at this office, and last but not least, Aldred & Ross' Sale.

Aldred & Ross' Usual Sunday SIEGE SALE.

The above, duly instructed, will sell:

Effects of the late Capt. Hon. D. H. Marsham,

" " " E. G. Parslow,

" " " Trooper Webb, C.P.

Also 18-carat Gold Watch; 2 Double-barrelled Shot Guns; Bicycles; Second-hand Clothing; Double Set Mule Harness; Underclothing; Boots; Shoes, etc., etc.

No Reserve. 9-30 A.M.

NOTICE.

New Arrangements for the Transmission of Telegrams and Dealing with Letters.

THE Bombproof at the end of Minchin's yard, at Headquarters, will be open daily to receive Letters and Telegrams for North and South, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. (Sundays excepted). The following are the rates for Telegrams: *Via* the North, 9d. per word, plus a fee of 1/- for a receipt, duly stamped; Telegrams for Cape Colony and Natal will be accepted by this route.

Telegrams *via* the South for Cape Colony and Natal will also be accepted, the rate being 1/- for 12 words, plus a fee of 1/- for a duly stamped receipt.

Cablegrams 4/9 per word, *via* the North " 4/- " " " the South plus 1/- receipt fee.

The sale of stamps for letters for local delivery will be restricted.

Letters for Northern and Southern routes must be handed to the Postal Official on duty, and stamps cannot on any account be sold.

RATES OF POSTAGE.—LETTERS.

Local delivery (within town limits), 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Delivery at Outposts and Forts, 3d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Letters for United Kingdom, Cape Colony and Natal *via* the South, 6d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Letters for United Kingdom, Cape Colony, Natal and Rhodesia, *via* the North 1/- per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Newspapers for local delivery 1d. per paper. Book Post 1d. per once.

PILLAR AND WALL LETTER BOXES.—Pillar or Wall Letter receivers are erected at the following places in Mafeking and are cleared at the times mentioned:—

Latest time for posting letters, &c., for each collection.

Pillar & Wall Boxes.	Morning.	Afternoon.
Dixon's Hotel	9-55 a.m.	3-55 p.m.
De Kock's Corner	9-40 "	3-40 "
Victoria Hospital	9-30 "	3-30 "
Post Office	9-35 "	3-35 "
Railway Division	9-30 "	3-30 "
Whiteley, Walker & Co	9-45 "	3-45 "

The following table shows the hours at which the Letter Box is closed for the different Suburban Offices, and the hours at which mails are due to arrive at this Office:—

Letter Boxes close at Mafeking at	For	Letters due at Mafeking at
5-0 p.m.	Brickfields	9-0 a.m.
"	Baralong Stadt	"
"	B.S.A.P. Fort	"
"	Cannon Kopje	"
"	Native Location	"
"	Western Outposts	"

J. V. HOWAT, Postmaster,

Mafeking, 22nd March, 1900.

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