

THE MAFEKING MAIL

Special Siege Slip.

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No. 146

Monday, May 21st, 1900.

THE Mafeking Mail.

MONDAY, 21ST MAY, 1900.

Our Relief.

Colonel Mahon's march to our relief, of 240 miles in twelve days, through country in the hands of the enemy; the skirmish north of Kraaipan, on the 13th; the junction with Colonel Plumer; and the fight outside Mafeking on Wednesday last, will, when recounted by the able scribes who accompanied the force, form one of the most notable chapters in the history of this war. The relieved garrison has scarcely yet been able to voice its appreciation of the gallant achievement of our devoted countrymen, fellow colonists and those who came from the other ends of the world to our assistance, and tramped the weary miles to complete the work we had commenced: i.e. the Saving of the Western Border; but the heart of Mafeking is not a cold one, and though long duration of anxiety may have somewhat numbed its throbbing, it is full of fraternal yearning to those noble volunteers who came to our rescue so grandly; and whose undertaking has been crowned with such signal success. Mafeking's feelings towards them, words fail to convey. We are also indebted to Kimberley, where a special force, the Kimberley Mounted Corps, was formed to relieve us, and with "M" battery of R.H.A., four twelve pounders and two Vicker's Maxims, "Poms-poms," and the Cape Police's three galloping Maxims, set out on the 2nd inst. under Brigadier-Gen. Mahon. The K.M.C. was composed of a squadron of C.P., D. II & D.I., detachments from the Diamond Fields Horse and the Kimberley Light Horse; all of whom, having had some Boer investment; at Kimberley, volunteered "en masse" for the relief of Kimberley's youngster: Mafeking. At Halfway House, on the road to Barkly,

they met detachments of the Imperial Light Horse, who came round from Natal, under Col. Edwards, and the United Fusiliers. There the force was formed and left on the 4th inst. The next day artillery firing was heard and shells were seen to burst on the top of some hills on their right, and the scouts reported that a number of men were seen retiring in the same direction with their advance. During the whole of Sunday, the 6th inst., heavy and continuous firing was heard from the direction of Fourteen Streams. Some cattle were captured upon this day and four rebels made prisoners, and again on Tuesday, the 8th, more prisoners were taken; and treated much better than their deserts. A squadron of Cape Police, under Major Berrangé, was sent into Taungs on the 9th and found the place deserted. At the post office the last message recorded on the tape read: "Thick clouds of dust coming over the hill, I am going to clear; you had better do so too." By noon the same day, Wednesday, the force was met by a party of ladies who drove out from Vryburg in vehicles, decorated with flags and red, white and blue ribbon. They gave a warm welcome to the men and presented those of the Cape Police with some bread, which was welcome. No Boers were to be seen in the place, and the Union Jack was once more hoisted there. At the station, which itself showed no signs of damage [It will be remembered that the truthful "S. & D. News" said the station was destroyed] two engines were found wrecked by dynamite, and all the station furniture had been stolen. Here the horses were rested for twenty hours. From Vryburg all along the route rebels were arrested and arms, with large quantities of ammunition, taken.

Fraser's store at Setlagoli was reached on Sunday, 13th, and there Lady Sarah Wilson's maid was found. Later in the day Colonel Mahon learned that a commando had taken up a strong position at Koodoosrand, so another road to the left was followed. The Boers observed this from the higher ground they occupied and made way through the bush and

waited for our force. They opened fire and some of the Light Horse were knocked over. Our men speedily got into action and drove the Boers back, inflicting upon them considerable loss. Our casualties were 5 killed and 28 wounded, who were sent back to Brodie's, under the charge of Dr. Beard. On this day very great suffering was endured through thirst, water was scarce and a drink of it fetched anything between eighteen pence and half-a-crown. The night of the 14th was bitterly cold and the men had not got their blankets with them. A most terrible experience we may easily imagine. The ground now was sandy and loose, so the progress over this portion of the trek was very slow. Word had been sent to Col. Plumer arranging where to meet, and by doing TWENTY-SEVEN MILES IN ONE MARCH the Southern column arrived at Jan Masibi's stadt within an hour of the Northern. The Boers had been before them, looted the place, and taken prisoner all the males.

Colonel Plumer's force of about 850 comprised detachments from the B.S.A.P. and Rhodesian Regiments, mounted, with Canadians, Queenslanders and Rhodesian Volunteers, on foot. They had done the 28 MILES from Plumer's camp at Sefeteli, through sandy soil, in FIFTEEN HOURS to save Mafeking. In addition to that let us note what our brothers from Canada and from Australia did for us. Arriving at Beira, directly they left the ship they entrained for Salisbury, from there they hurried over the 300 miles to Bulawayo. Never pausing they took train again for Ootsi, and started thence the heavy distance to Sefeteli, arriving about seven o'clock on the morning of Tuesday last. Now, would they not take a long rest? No. They heard the cry of Mafeking's danger, and though barely seven hours in camp they started at 2 o'clock on the afternoon of Tuesday and walked with Plumer's men those twenty-eight sandy miles, completing *seventy miles in three nights* and fought the enemy for us. Great Britain, are you not proud of your sons?

On Wednesday morning, 16th, the combined forces left Jan Masibi's and proceeded East by the Molopo Valley. Natives in advance of the scouts reported seeing some Boers a little South of Sanie's village and learned that Boers had been enquiring the whereabouts of both North

and South columns. They were told that Plumer's was at Kanya, but that it was not known where Mahon's was. Before our main-body arrived at Sanie's, our scouts observed about five hundred of the enemy with three guns, placed on the South side of the Molopo, on the higher ground, North-east from Sanie's village. This commando had kept up with Mahon's force from Koodoo's Rand, and now were preparing to offer resistance to his march to Mafeking. After an hour or two there were signs of movement amongst the enemy and our advance was resumed. It was soon seen that the Boers were rounding off upon our right front to take offensive positions, upon the South sides of the valley through which our road lay. To counteract this movement two squadrons of the B.S.A.P. crossed the river and occupied a position on the South bank. While "B" and "C" Squadrons of the Rhodesia Regiment, supported by "D"; with "E" and the Canadians and four 12-pounders under Major Hudon; and a 12½-pounder, with three 2-5 mountain guns, under Captain Llewellyn, were placed on a ridge running North and South, upon this, the North side, of the Molopo, and formed our centre, the horses being left in the valley. The remainder of Colonel Plumer's force occupied the right, while to the left on still higher ground, were the R.H.A. guns. A party of the enemy had been noticed riding across our front, evidently with the intention of gaining the top of the ridge on our extreme left, but Colonel Edwards, with two squadrons of I.L.H. galloped up the kloof and reached the top before the Boers. Lying down in the grass, they fired at them and drove them back. The enemy had two "pom-poms," one 5-pounder "Krupp," and four 12½-pounders. They opened the ball by shelling our transport, so the wagons were sent off the road up the valley in a North-easterly direction. When part of the convoy reached the sky line the Boer artillery quickly got its range and took full advantage of it, although with the exception of a few slight casualties there was no damage done. "B" and "C" Squadron Rhodesians, were ordered to advance along the left bank of the river to the position above mentioned, and "C" Squadron, K.M.C., galloped to the crest of the ridge and, with Colonel Edward's men, engaged the enemy on our left front. The R.H.A. promptly finding the range of two twelve pounders and a pom-pom, on the enemy's right front; and a twelve pdr. on his extreme right, while our other artillery divided their attention between the Boer's centre and left. This soon forced them to retire their guns some three hundred yards, and practically put them out of action, but the Boers spread themselves about and with their Mausers, aided by a "pom-pom" enfiladed Plumer's right for a little while. After a short time the Boers, driven out by the United

Fusiliers from some houses they were holding, took up a strong position in the river bed, from which it was difficult to dislodge them. But Major Pilson, Dublin Fusiliers, asked for a gun to be taken out so as to enfilade the enemy. This was done, and the Boers retired down the banks of the river, endeavouring to cut off our rear guard, but two squadrons of the K.M.C., with a Maxim, under Lieut.-Colonel Peakman, held them in check, almost till dusk. To his assistance a 7-pounder was sent out in a Scotch-cart. As it neared its destination a shell from the Boers burst underneath, overturned it, and pitched the gun out, almost where required for action, fortunately there was nobody hurt. From then forward the Boers were driven from point to point, and what began as a retirement ended as a stampede, although very heavy "Mausering" was kept up till after dark. The scooting Boers separated, one party going South-east. The serenity of the latter's disposition was evidently disturbed, judging from the haste they made, as seen from this town, on Wednesday, the "extreme mobility of the Boers" when (Britishers are after them) being again demonstrated. Just as the lot going South were trekking across the drift with their wagons, the United Fusiliers caught sight of them. They fired on the wagons, killed the mules and captured a wagon load of "pom-pom" ammunition. Early in the fight Major Bird, commanding "B" Squadron (Rhodesia), was severely wounded, and Lieutenant Harland, "C" Squadron, Captain McLaren's old Squadron, who was on Bird's left, went to his assistance. Just as he reached the object of his errand of mercy, he was killed by a bullet through the head, and at about the same time Lieutenant Alec Forbes, of "E" Squadron, was wounded severely in both legs. Our total casualties were about 30, but we have not been able to obtain details.

We are deeply indebted to Mr. Mackenzie, of Bulawayo, and Mr. Salamons, of Kimberley, for the assistance they kindly gave with reference to the above, and regret that our very limited power of production prevents us doing fuller justice to their notes.—[Ed.]

ERRATUM.

It was Bishop Gaul, Mashonaland, who was reported to have been captured by the Boers, not Archdeacon Upcher, who was announced in another column of the same slip (Saturday 19th), to preach here yesterday. Those printers again.

His Honour the Mayor has received a communication from Col. Baden-Powell to the effect that he had again written to His Excellency, urging the importance of the question of compensation being assured, also, if possible, to obtain free passes for Capetown for all inhabitants of Mafeking who desire to have them.

Repairing the line North is being pushed on rapidly. Under Permanent Way Inspector Vickery, a gang started to work on Thursday. A great deal of trouble was involved in attending to that portion of the line between a mile and three miles from the town. The place where the trolley of dynamite—which the Boers humanely tried to send into town—exploded, had previously been mended, but level with Game Tree, there was a spot where a large amount of explosive had evidently been used. Here the metals were torn up on both sides, those on the western side were curled up and stood in enormous "C's." Beyond there about seven sections had been removed bodily but were left near by on the veldt. The culvert (4½ miles) had also been lifted out of place but the rails were close at hand. Beyond the spot where the seven sections are removed the line appears intact, and last night the "10 mile" cottage was nearly approached. It is hoped that this party will be in touch with the repairing party approaching from the North to-morrow, when the train can come through.

E. Platnauer, Auctioneer, etc.,

Will sell at the Residence of Mr.
F. G. MONTAGU,

On Wednesday, 22nd,
AT 10-30 A.M.

The following items of

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE.

Double Bedsteads and Bedding, Single Bedsteads and Bedding, Tables, Chairs, Chests of Drawers, Cupboards, Crockery and Glassware, Stove complete, Kitchen Utensils, Baths, Child's Cot and Perambulator, Vases, Ornaments, Blinds, etc., Linoleum and Matting, Enamelware, etc., etc.

Transvaal Refugees.

A Meeting will be held to-night at the Court House, at 8-30 to discuss the future position of the late Republics, &c.

STAMPS.

COMPLETE set of Siege Stamps for Sale. What offers? Apply H.T., Mail Office.

FOR SALE,

FIVE GOOD DONKEYS.—
Apply Inspector B. Myers.

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