

THE MAFEKING MAIL

Special Siege Slip.

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No. 142

Monday, May 14th, 1900.

214th Day of Siege

THE Mafeking Mail.

MONDAY, 14TH MAY, 1900.

WE END THE SEVENTH MONTH.

To-day we start on the eighth month of the siege. The time, now we look back upon it through the glasses everyone wears to-day, does not seem to have passed so badly, although the awful monotony was sometimes irksome in the extreme. Not only was it wearisome so from the tedious wait, wait, waiting for relief, but often irritatingly monotonous from the continual grumbling and "grousing at the slow progress of that column which seemed to get further away as the record of weeks grew into months, but now, we think, the most confirmed fault-finder will keep silence for a space. Those who were uncomplainingly watching and working, probably suffered just as acutely as those whose feelings took words, but at last scheming and patience have their reward, and, its abundance may be triumphantly pointed to. At one time it seemed that the end of the siege would come without any of the various possible traps securing game, but when news reached us of the intention of one our friends the enemy, to show "how it should be done," it was plain that in some form or other there would be sport.

No one will deny the consummate bravery of Mr. Sarel Eloff, the officer who undertook a task it would be impossible to find another official amongst the Transvaal

Dutch to tackle. Whatever we have said of him, and probably may have again to say; when his position is not one that demands considerateness, we never suggested any lack of courage, the possession of which he has signally demonstrated, by doing what detestable Snyman would never dare attempt. Eloff, with his staff, brought his men in, took possession of a fort inside our line of defences and gave us a warm time.

"Dinna pit y'r hond oot further than ye can easily draw it back again," said the Baillie." That Eloff, only when in, found getting there easier than getting out, was due to a fault, which nothing, but added years to his age, will cure: but had he regularly read his "Mafeking Mail" he would never have brought himself to think that the rank and file of the Boers would have supported him in an enterprise of the kind. We, in Mafeking, knew our Boer better than he. But let us get to the

Events of the Day.

On Saturday morning the Boer Maxim and Mausering, in volleys as heavy as, or heavier than, any we have yet heard, woke up the town at four o'clock. The firing was confined to the East, but knowing the Boers aversion to advancing over flat country in face of fire, and the strength of our eastern front, no advance was expected from that side. Attention was accordingly directed to the other points of the compass. The bugle cheerily sounded the alarm, and the big bell dolefully followed its example. The transformation in the appearance of the town was magical.

Mounted men galloped, unmounted ones ran, and before the warning sounds were stopped every man in the place was on his way to his respective post. The Town Guard, fruitful object of "Tommies'" banter, were all, except two, reported present (We refer to those, who by permission, sleep at their homes), by 15 minutes after the alarm sounded. By aid of our telephone system Headquarters were soon aware of proceedings on the Southwest.

A large body of Boers had crept along the river till nearly up to Fort Molopo. The picquet, some distance from the river, fired into the crowd, as they came up the banks, a little nearer to the fort than where they were placed. This alarmed the garrison. The enemy, then leaving the river, crossed the mealie field and passed through Hidden Hollow, our force there, about a dozen only, falling back, and reinforced by Lord C. Bentinck with part of his squadron, closed up to prevent the enemy's supports following up. This reserve party of the Boers we estimate at four hundred and fifty. The vanguard, about three hundred then rushed towards the Baralong Stadt, and a portion of them, through some special form of lunacy, began setting fire to more than forty huts.

This, we understand, was an agreed signal for other parties from East, North and South also to advance, but there were no French, Germans or Hollanders amongst the Boers upon those sides and no Eloff, De Bremont, or Weiss to lead them, consequently there was no advance.

Now, whether it was supposed that setting fire to a native's hut, would be a likely way to induce him to keep quiet and refrain from resisting the advance of the incendiaries, we cannot tell, but the effect was precisely the reverse, while the illumination was useful to distinguish friend from foe.

The Baralongs rose to the Occasion.

Although thus suddenly awakened, and thrown into the streets, to watch their homes burn, and witness the Boers shooting down unarmed boys who were trying to run away, Le Koko and Silas Molema did not lose their heads, but, rapidly gathering their men, commenced firing and assisted Lord Bentinck's men to cut off the stream of invaders. This was effected just as the leader of the vanguard, having finished superintending the setting fire to huts and killing five Baralongs, strangely jumped at a most erroneous conclusion, for, turning to his followers, he shouted, in Dutch, of course, "Hurrah! To-day we have taken Mafeking."

Unfortunately for his enjoyment of this harmless illusion, a voice from further up the Stadt cried out almost at the same moment: "Run, run, here are some 'Rooineks' shooting at us." The crackling of their own rifles, the spluttering of burning thatch, and the hoarse cries of "Come out, you b——s," as they dragged forth, and flung about like bales, the aged and helpless native women and children, had prevented the "Brave Boers" noticing the music of a set of musketry which had begun to play upon them from Lord Bentinck's men re-inforced by a detachment of "C" men who came, at the double, from Col. Hore's fort.

"Bolt" the First.

Now, a Boer is happy enough when, from behind a big stone, he can shoot, with an Englishman for a target, but he gets disagreeable and wants to leave off playing, as

soon as the chances of the game makes it his turn to be target. Consequently, when, on Saturday morning, they realised that they were being shot at, the recollection "of an important appointment a mile or two away," enabled them again to demonstrate the extreme "mobility of the Boer." In vain did the "Hurrah" leader cry out: "Come back, come back, 'Almachtig,' we are surrounded." Like startled buck half of his forces disappeared, and the bullets from Baralongs screamed past on one side while bullets from the Protectorate men whistled on the other. His "soldiers" were already running away, seeking shelter, some to the right hand, some to the left, so after them he bolted, with a celerity scarcely to have been expected from sixteen or seventeen stone. The half of the stadt-burners were thus subdivided into two parties one of which tried to make a stand behind the large boulders, from which Mafeking took its name. But natives are as well up to that kind of warfare as are the Boers, so Le Koko & Molema's boys promptly followed and drove them, from what would have proved an easy place to hold, to a koppie where Silas Molema rounded them up and kept them there till the afternoon; unable to show a nose above the stones, for fear of losing its tip. The remainder of the Boers succeeded in gaining the stone cattle kraal where they were well looked after by some more Protectorate men.

Eloff takes the Fort.

While the stadt-firers were being interrupted at their work another party, probably about a hundred and fifty made up principally of a different class of fighters, consisting of Germans, French, Hollanders, Italians and others had skirted the stadt, and, led by Sarel Eloff, De Freymont (French), and Weiss (German), passed along the road by Mr. Minchin's house just after the "C" detachment entered the stadt. Believing they were

supported by the large reserve already referred to, they gained Col. Hore's Fort, or, as we know it better, the B.S.A.P. Fort, and were promptly cut off by Cpt. Fitzclarance and "D" Sqdn. The garrison there consisting of but Col. Hore, Capt. Singleton, Cpt. Williams (on the sick list), Vet. Lieut. Dunlop-Smith, Reg. Sergt.-Major Malley, Sergt.-Major Murray, and fourteen men, those of the "C" detachment, as already mentioned, having been sent to reinforce Lord Bentinck in the stadt.

Captain Singleton, who had been to reconnoitre, reported that the Boers were advancing from the top of the stadt, and the garrison prepared to defend itself. Almost immediately figures could be seen approaching, but in the dim half light it was impossible to decide whether they were Boers or "C" squadron retiring on their fort. This latter appeared most probable, so orders were given not to fire. Sufficient time thus elapsed to enable a great number of the attackers to get close to the fort, which they promptly stormed in a manner worthy of praise. Of course, their numbers enabled them to get in, but not before Field-cornet Eckstein was killed and four others wounded. Colonel Hore and Captain Singleton were speedily disarmed, as were already the remainder of the garrison, about fifteen men, except Tpr. Mattushek, who, with another leaped the wall and was shot through the head, falling stone dead outside the wall of the fort.

It may be wondered that it were possible for the enemy to approach in such numbers, without meeting some check from the fort, but we must remember that the "C" detachment had only been sent away a short while before, and doubtless if approaching foot tramps were heard, they were taken for those of our own men returning. At any rate, account for it as we may, the fact remained, the enemy was in possession of our fort, be-

fore half of its garrison had fired a shot. So expeditiously was the whole affair carried out that men outside knew nothing of it. Some of our men joined in vigorous cheering when they heard the "hurrahing" in the stadt, thinking it was our relief column arrived. Mr. Forbes, of Julius Weil's, running into the fort was considerably surprised to find it crowded with unfamiliar figures who gave him cheerful welcome. Sergeant Stuart, C.P., who was at the Court House, seeing flames and being told the Boers were in the stadt, thought he would give a hand at getting them out. So donning bandolier and shouldering rifle, accompanied by young Van Eyssen, he made what haste he could till he reached the intervening ground between the jail and the B.S.A.P. orderly room. As the pair approached it, bullets whizzed unpleasantly near, so they started, at the double, for the dug-out by the Barracks. Still the bullets whistled past; Van Eyssen kept on but Stewart, probably remembering it would not be consonant with the dignity of his office to arrive out of breath, slackened up a little. Van Eyssen, reaching the haven first, had an eye-opener in the form of an abrupt "drop your gun." Seeing the place full of Boers, he—dropped it.

To exemplify the quality of the enemy's shooting aim, it is amusing to learn that on speaking to some of the men, he found there had been four or five potting at him and excitedly vieing with each other in the endeavour to knock him over; and were considerably astonished when they found he had not a scratch. With the quarry running towards the shots, and the distance a gradually decreasing one from four hundred yards, this is grand testimony either to the value of the Mauser, or the skill of the holders.

Sergeant Stuart meanwhile having seen the strange faces and the reception of his companion, turned to run,

when several Mausers were levelled at him. The distance was nothing, his death looked certain, so Van Eyssen shouted out "Come back, Peter, we're done," and "Come back, Peter," was jocularly repeated by the holders of half a-dozen rifles "spotting" him. "Peter" didn't think he would serve his country by immolation, so he also was raked in. Mr. Hamilton, the *London Times* Special Correspondent, always to the front when any fighting is going on, rode up, camera in hand, on sensational "copy" and photos bent. His horse was shot twice, just before he gained the fort. "Throw up your hands" was the gruff command emphasised with a pointed rifle. He held up one hand. "Both hands" was the next command. How can I when I am holding my horse with one? What is that? pointing to the camera. Is it an infernal machine? "No! it's a Maxim." The colloquy may be better imagined than described when the rapid temper and the peculiarity of speech (when under excitement) of the plucky young correspondent is borne in mind. He joined the other captives, but equal to the occasion, secured some photos of the fort and the Boers in it. Poor Hazelrigg rode up with a note, he was shot in the stomach. Mr. Dunlop Smith, with the assistance of Mr. Forbes, conveyed him under a heavy fire from our own men, who had already commenced a smart fusilade on the fort, from the east and south sides, the bullets cracking through the windows the whole time he was dressing him.

Some Protectorate men under Lieutenant Bridges went to the magazine to bring away ammunition. It was a hazardous undertaking. The Boers were not 400 yards distant, and Trooper Dubberley was shot dead while doing it.

"Wat maak jy daar?"

Let us now get back into town. In the telephone dug-out, telegraphist Campbell, from "Erin" bedad, was

oscillating amongst fifteen instruments. "It is Colonel Hore?" "Yes." "Fort in hands of the enemy." "Quite right, Sur." "Colonel Hore again?" "Yes." "That's a strange voice entirely. Who are yez, any how?" "Me." "An' who the devil's me?" "Yee's one of the Boers ye say, then 'wat maak jy daar?'" "Disconnect," ordered the Colonel, and to effectually prevent the Boers hearing through the instrument at the "B.S.A.P." any instructions passing over the wires to Major Godley or any other post, the lines were promptly "snipped." Then a busy time set in, orderlies galloping round to the various forts with instructions for drafts from each, to strengthen the new front line and the men "doubling" by scores to do it. In an incredibly short space of time the Cape Police from the east got over to the west and with "Protectorates," B.S.A.P., Rifles and Town Guard, oh, yes, the Town Guard were in the fighting line that day and showed that they could shoot too, a line was manned from the north end of the Railway Camp where Capt. More, with the Railway Division, reinforced by detachments from the Hospital Redan, under Mr. Tighe, and some C.P. under Corporal Warren, lined right down to the end of the iron fence the other side of the new workshops. Some Town Guard, under Mr. Aldred, occupied Major Hepworth's House, the Bechuanaland Rifles lining the bank right down to the river, and with Town Guard from Early's Corner, occupying the Schut Kraal. Inspector Marsh, C.P. D. II, with his men covered from the Railway Bridge to Mr. Minchin's house. Sub-Inspector Murray, with C.P., D. II, reached, by a circuitous route, the north face of the stadt, which he held, reinforced by Lieut. Feltham and some of "C" squadron. When the Cape Police, D. II, under Murray, reached the northern front of the stadt, directing their attention to the

B.S.A.P. Fort, they were fired at from the huts by some of the stadt-burning Boers, who had hidden themselves therein. The distance being but a few yards, it is a wonder that everyone of the men was not killed. As it is, Nixon was badly wounded in the thigh. The C P. quickly turned the Boers out from the huts and drove them down the stadt where Maj. Godley surrounded them, with draughts from A. B. and D. squadrons, who also took possession of the ground further along, thus completing a horse shoe shaped enclosure round the B.S.A.P. fort, within which Eloff's party was imprisoned, they, again, holding Colonel Hore and about two dozen of our men prisoners. By when breakfast time came we were "getting on very nicely all round" and the position might be regarded as an exceedingly interesting one. Not being in the least bit military we may not be able properly to understand the niceties of the situation, but to the irreverent civilian mind, there comes a faint suspicion of an inclination to laugh, although we know there could be nothing comical about it.

About 1 o'clock Maj. Godley, with men of B squadron, under Captain Marsh, and of D squadron, under Capt. Fitz-Clarence, and some Baralongs attacked the kraal. A seven pounder, under Lieut. Daniel, was taken to a position close up, and the Boers were offered a chance to surrender. This they refused to avail themselves of and the gun was trained on them. Unfortunately the lanyard broke or we should not have had so many prisoners to find "Sowens" for, and a smart interchange of firing took place without casualty to us but one killed and three wounded in the kraal. In the meantime Major Godley's men had entirely surrounded the place, and, with bayonets fixed, advanced gradually from cover to cover, closing in till they reached the stone walls, which they simultaneously scaled. The sight of that compact

circle of shining blades, and the realisation that they faced the terrible British bayonets, of which, previously, they had only heard, but heard enough, utterly cowed the occupants of the kraal; and paralysed their fire. They huddled together like sheep, crouching down in a shrinking, shivering heap. Some burst into tears, probably at the death of the man we shot, there was hurried whispering; with quick, loud, "yahs," and scarcely was the order "charge" uttered than, in their midst, a shaking hand hoisted a white flag, and they surrendered. This lot were all, or nearly all, the lower class of Boers, and with their rifles they had made a game stand, but scarcely half a minute was required to settle matters, when it came to close quarters. Then came another danger to them. Over the walls from every side came the Baralongs. Their mortal enemy, the Boer, was there, beaten, and they wanted to kill. These Baralongs are Barutshes and must not be confounded with the other tribes of Baralongs, such as those fighting with the Boers against us. They are Bamangwetses, hating, and hated by, Montsioa's tribe, who have old scores standing against the Boers. They wanted this day to wipe off their debt of burned homes, stolen cattle, tortured and mutilated relatives, and, like magic, in their hands appeared, no one knows whence, assegais, hatchets, knives, old swords, weapons of every kind imaginable, and unimaginable. With a bound and a yell they were over the walls, they had "red in their eyes" and meant to kill. Like a flash, almost was their butchery commenced, when Captain F. C. Marsh, at fearful personal risk, jumped in amongst them and interposed himself between the cowering Boers and their would-be murderers. Had he not done so none would have been spared alive. Some managed to escape, the wounded were sent to the Hospital for attention, and twenty-five were marched into town and safely lodged in gaol. As they,

The First Party of Prisoners brought in to Mafeking.

came past Head-quarters, Col. Baden-Powell promptly stopped any demonstration from the bystanders, and with no remarks, except some kafirs' jeers, they tramped round past Riesle's to the front of the jail where they were halted and had pannikins of water handed to them, of which they seemed to be in great need. A peculiar characteristic of "Tommy" and his late foe were here amusingly displayed. As one of the escort, a Protectorate man, helped himself to a drink, he preceded his draught with a cheerful "Here's luck to you, mates" to the section he was in line with, while another guard was surreptitiously enjoying a piece of white bread, unobtrusively passed to him by one of the prisoners.

We must return now to Commandant Eloff and his merry men to see how they fared and why they did not come nearer. Having secured the fort and arranged about leaving men to hold it and guard the prisoners, Eloff mustered his continental allies, preparatory to rushing the town; only waiting for the reinforcing party, which we already mentioned, he had left outside. He had sent two messengers to tell them to come on, but they did not; nor did the orderlies return. This is probably accounted for by the fact that our Maxim riddled both horses and wounded the men; one is since dead and the other is likely to be a long while delivering his message.

"Bolt" the Second.

Time was passing and Mr. Sarel Eloff stood ready to come into the Market Square. Count De Bremont, with drawn sword, was anxious to proceed with business. "We must wait for the supports," said the Commandant. They had to wait, for by then the supports, seeing the retreat of the greater portion of the stadt-burners, were galloping off as hard as they could, at the same time encouragingly yelling to those who could not

follow their example "Fight! Fight! but never surrender."

The Fort takes Bluff.

Then, it is probable, Mr. Eloff for the first time realised, as Joubert did years ago, the value of the cheering and cries of "we will," "we will" from a crowd of Boers, such as the one he asked to follow him and take Mafeking. We know, and he ought first to have known, what sort of men the brave band surrounding him had to lead.

Scarcely had time enough elapsed for any fresh action to be decided upon when Captain Gordon Wilson, A.D.C., rode up to tell them they were completely surrounded; and offered them the chance to surrender. In the first flush, this was stoutly refused, and our fire opened and continued through the day. Some who were in the fort say it was a "hell"; another, a European, said in broken English: "I have fought in more than one fight but never been in a place like that fort was. One could not put a finger above the wall or it would be cut off by bullets." Men could not get outside for requirements of any kind. They had no water, those in the buildings were forced to lie on the floor to avoid the bullets coming through the windows, and walls, and there they were penned, from daylight till dusk.

Clearing the "Koppie."

Having despatched into town the prisoners from the kraal, Major Godley next turned his attention to the Boers at the koppie. Lieut. Daniel took the antiquated 7-pounder there, and turned it on them. After half-a-dozen rounds Major Godley's men had a rabbit hunt through the rocks, and scattered the Boers into and amongst the huts in the Stadt, in and round the narrow twinings, a perfect maze, starting a Boer here, another there, chasing them down the Stadt till they got under fire of A Squadron, who, with Lord Charles Bentinck in command, were

waiting outside the Stadt for them. But by this time it began to grow dark. "B" Squadron, Captain Marsh's men, and "D" Squadron, Fitzclarence's men, were on the rear and right and left flanks of the scampering Boers, knocking them over whenever they could be discerned, and "A" Squadron were in the front of them. There was a great chance of our men hitting each other, so Major Godley sent word to Lord Chas. Bentinck to draw his men to one side while "B" and "D" drove them down, which was done, many of them being wounded and killed in the hunt. We suffered but slightly. A small detachment under Lieut. R. W. Waller was by the river waiting for the Boers, when down rushed a crowd of them. The order to let them pass not having reached this brave little band, they held them at bay, though there must have been ten to one, till the order did arrive. Poor Sergeant Phillips, who had been wounded at Game Tree, and only a few days resumed duty, was killed; and all the others had clothes or rifles hit.

Boer Treachery.

Cpl. R. Rowland, Bechuana-land Rifles—a son of Mr. Rowland, whose homestead was used as the Women's Laager—with a few men, also contested the exit of the Boers, who tried to creep along a gully or "sluit" near where he was placed. Young Rowland was wounded, but slightly I am glad to say. One of his "boys" was severely wounded in a manner characteristic of our enemy. "There is another," someone said as a figure was seen creeping up the side of a cutting. "Don't fire, I want to surrender," the sneaking cur called out. "Take his gun," said young Rowland.

The "boy" went to do so, the Boer holding it out as if intending to hand it over. When within six feet of him the dastard fired through the "boy's" chest, and bolted, happily not quite free, for at

least one bullet caught him, and he ran into the darkness with a limp.

Now let us glance at the B.S.A.P. Fort, where our big haul was waiting to be landed. We told you that they got there and who led them, but we did not say who shewed them the way. It was said that rebel Baralongs did it. There might have been some Baralongs of the tribe above mentioned, with the Boers, as they seldom moved without, but we met with no authoritative evidence upon the point. If they did bring any, they must have been left outside the Stadt the first thing in the morning, and they certainly did not belong to Montsioa's tribe.

These Baralongs did Good Work for us.

Major Godley speaks very highly of the manner they assisted him and the gallantry with which they fought. Le Koko and his men engaged the enemy and helped drive them back, inflicting loss to the retiring Boers, and Silas Molema himself joined in charging the cattle kraal. The suggestion that any of their tribesmen aided the entry of the enemy, hurts them considerably, and in connection with this and to prove that the assertion is unfounded, we might mention that Colonel Baden-Powell has to-day complimented them upon their loyalty and bravery. The guide was undoubtedly the traitor Hay, the deserter from the Prot. Regt., who, to gratify his personal and antagonistic feelings against an officer, tried to betray the whole garrison and his own countrymen. That this Judas may receive his thirty pieces of silver and an end like that of his prototype, we most sincerely hope.

The condition of the cosmopolitan crowd in the B.S.A.P. fort and buildings towards evening may be imagined easier than described. Packed as closely as they could cram in, unable to leave shelter for twelve hours, no water available, all the drink they

could find had been eagerly gulped down early in the day. The officers' wines and spirits and a case of chartreuse had been disposed of during the first hour, together with all the edibles there. A stinking mass of foul humanity, they longed for night to come so that they might endeavour to bolt through the place towards the north, which appeared free from rifles. During the day some, who had obtained all they came for, *i.e.*, loot, did climb the wall and manage to get away, and as soon as darkness spread over the veld, the remainder, in gangs, made a rush. No sooner had they done so, than the awful fusillade, which had ceased as daylight faded, re-opened, with increased force, as it included the Martinis, which were not fired during the day for fear the smoke from them should betray their exact position. Those who saw it, from the Fort, declare it was a complete line of flashes, and some thought there were about two thousand guns firing. So many of those who got out were knocked over that Eloff saw the game was up, and, feeling the uselessness of throwing lives away, decided to surrender. There had previously been discussions between him and some of his men who wanted to surrender, (there were some Boers as well as the Continentals got into the fort, it must be remembered). He meant trying his utmost for those who were with him, though, no doubt, his ideas concerning the bulk of his army and the manner they "supported" him were expressed in phraseology scarcely fit for publication, but there was nothing else to be done, so going to Colonel Hore, he bluntly said: "I want to surrender to you." One of his men calling him a b——y traitor, fired at him, the bullet hitting the arm and chest of Reg. Sergt.-Major Malley. It is possible that Colonel Hore did not quite grasp the meaning of Eloff's words, for it is said he gasped "Wha, what?" and perhaps anyone else would have done the same.

At any rate, the situation soon unfolded itself, and a busy time ensued in receiving arms and ammunition.

The telephone having been disconnected, it was difficult to communicate the intelligence with the town. The firing was fearful, bullets were raining in upon three sides and both flanks on the fourth side. Captain Singleton, in a voice of thunder, shouted "Cease firing, they have surrendered," but at first nobody heard or heeded. It was too unsafe to venture outside, friend or foe were undistinguishable in the black darkness, anything silhouetted against the night was the object of a hundred shots, and the hottest part of the bullet spray was on the side which they wanted to reach, *i.e.*, the town side. Sub-Inspector Murray recognised the voice and advanced, not without a lurking suspicion of treachery and the thought that either the Captain's voice was being imitated or that he was made to say "They have surrendered" by some Boer trick. As soon as it was clearly demonstrated, united shouting conveyed the news, and as it spread from fort to fort the cheering and God-Save-the-Queening that came from out half-starved throats will be ever remembered by all who heard it, and when sixty-nine more prisoners, including Eloff, De Freymont and Weiss, were locked up for the night folks settled down to wonder what particular virtue Mafeking possessed to induce Providence to make it its special care.

Note Paper and Envelopes.

50 Sheets of Ancient Scottish Note Paper, lined, and Envelopes to match,
In Box, 3s.

50 Sheets of Old English Note Paper, lined, and Envelopes to match,
In Box, 3s.

AT THE "MAIL" OFFICE.

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