

# THE MAFEKING MAIL

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Mafeking, November 23rd, 1899.

### The Mafeking Mail.

MAFEKING, 23RD NOVEMBER, 1899.

By the courtesy of the Staff we are enabled to lay before our readers the following:

#### FURTHER DETAILS OF THE LADYSMITH FIGHTS.

##### The White Flags Trick.

##### Following the Enemy.

##### Boer Advance Column Hemmed In.

Bulawayo, via Beira.

Native eye-witnesses of the big battles at Ladysmith have arrived at Maritzburg and give the following account of the British successes:—

The *Times*, in a long interview with the natives, says it appears that after some fighting had been going on, on Thursday afternoon, north of Ladysmith, the Boers got right upon the open ground and were in for a beating, then they attempted the white flag trick and several white flags were raised; the firing at once ceased on our side, our men advancing without firing, presumably in order to receive the enemy as prisoners; whereupon our men closing up, the Boers fired volley upon volley on our men at comparatively close range. No sooner had our men realised the treacherous misuse of the white flag, when, without waiting a second for orders—so it is said—three regiments of Cavalry, Lancers, Hussars and Dragoons, followed by Infantry, with fixed bayonets, charged into the Boers, mowing them down like grass, as the Kafirs say, "It went through and through them like water, wiping them all off." In the Kafirs' description the slaughter and wounding must have been terrific; the Boers howled—says the Kafirs—for mercy. Never was there such killing and cutting. While the Cavalry was cutting, slashing and lancing, the Infantry was at work like furies with cold steel between their horses. The field was covered with bodies. The "men with petticoats," as the Kafirs described the gallant Gordons, suffered very severely, judging by those that witness saw lying upon the field. A lot of prisoners and loot were captured and taken into Ladysmith, when quite a market or court sale went on,

Boer blankets at 2s apiece and so on Ladysmith is full of Boer prisoners and wounded. On Friday morning it appears that three Cavalry regiments—and, we understand, some Volunteers, though it is not clear—left Ladysmith to catch up some of the Boers proceeding south towards Colenso. These were evidently surrounding the column sent out after the first lot; the arrival of which latter at Colenso we know of. The British overtook this column and then were able to get in with their steel, and again slaughter was terrific. The commando was completely broken up and the survivors fled in all directions. If their accounts should prove to be true then the advance of the Boers at Colenso are entrapped, if our people at Ladysmith only learn of it in time to take advantage of it.

Lyddite, by some accounts, appears to have been used, at least on Thursday, when a few shots were fired at the enemy with terrific effect while they were removing their big guns.

#### THE "GORDONS" LOSE HEAVILY.

It is not to be supposed that in hand to hand conflicts upon two days and the charge by the Gordons upon a laager (which we just referred to, because we could not quite clearly understand the Native's description of what actually took place), our men did not suffer severely; on the contrary we fear our losses—especially in what appears to have been a splendid assault upon and capture of the laager by the Gordons—must have been only too considerable. Nevertheless, all the advices received tends to show that upon Thursday and Friday last the Boers have received the two worst beatings they have ever had.

#### QUIETENING DOWN ALREADY.

MARITZBURG, 9th.—The situation is viewed calmly and confidently here. Any feeling of alarm, which might have existed a week ago, having now entirely disappeared. A number of families had decided to leave for England, and a slight exodus had already set in towards Durban. These signs of unrest are no longer evident. The city presents a very usual appearance, there being little or no indications of the serious state of affairs a hundred miles away.

News from the front is conspicuous by its absence.

The Dutch in the Umvoti country are quite, but it is reported that a

party of Boers have been seen near little Tugela River; in consequence the farmers in the neighbourhood are sending their stock down country.

### **JOUBERT ISN'T SANGUINE ABOUT TAKING DURBAN.**

A gentleman who lives under the berg, near Little Bushmans River, has arrived here and states that the Boers informed him that the intention of the enemy is to avoid Estcourt and come into west by Ulundi. Questioned as to Ladysmith the Boer stated that Joubert's forces there had suffered heavily and he was not so sanguine that they would be able to take Maritzburg and Durban.

### **RAISING A NEW CORPS IN CAPETOWN.**

A South African Light Horse Corps is now being raised in Capetown by Lieut.-Colonel Court, of Sir Redvers Buller's staff, and Captain Hillier's, of the Royal Horse Guards.

### **THE "ALL BRITISH" CABLE.**

The cable ship, "Anglia," is now in Table Bay, and to-day commences the laying of the new cable which runs first to Robben Island, thence direct to St. Helena, thence to Ascension, Cape Verde, and subsequently across the Bay of Biscay to the English coast.

### **FREE STATERS, SOUTH, WAITING FOR TRANSVAAL REINFORCEMENTS.**

The "Best" Contingent going to Dutch Dordrecht.

BURGHERSDORP, 8th.—The main body of the Bethulie Boers are all stationary, waiting for strong Transvaal reinforcements, which were delayed by the want of horses. These have been partly supplied at Bloemfontein and the remainder are to be commandeered here. Boer patrols are extensively scouring the district north of the town. Unarmed individuals freely visit us and a constant stream of our farmers are visiting the Boer camp. Swanepoel, of Smithfield—a Stellenbosch educated man,—is in chief command. None of the best contingent are known to be in the district; the best are working towards Dordrecht. The town is quiet but provisions are practically exhausted in the stores.

Latest reports from Ladysmith are that all is well there and that our forces are harassing the Boers daily with little loss to British and considerable loss to the enemy.

Some difficulty has been found in mounting the Naval 64-pounder guns, they were put down on a sleeper foundation, but this was found to be insufficient and had to be replaced with concrete. It is reported also that one 12-pounder Naval gun was damaged by a Boer shell, but it was soon replaced.

LONDON, 6th.—Three more military batteries have been called out. Two companies of Royal Engineers at Gibraltar have been ordered to the Cape.

A Naval rating, including seamen and gunners, with a number of 12-pounders and quick-firing guns has been sent by the "Briton." Sir William McCormick was also a passenger.

### **THE "BOND" ACTING AS BOER INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT.**

CAPETOWN, 9th.—A message has been sent from the Burghersdorp Bond to the Free State commando advising them not to move further into the district as the Imperial authorities are trying to lead them into a trap. There is no confirmation of the report that a commando has arrived at Dordrecht.

ESTCOURT, 9th.—An armoured train left this afternoon with three armoured trucks, manned by a company of Dublin Fusiliers, under Captain Kensley. When two miles from Frere a mounted scout rode up and informed them that there were signs of the enemy in Colenso, but the big guns were still posted on Grobelaar's Kloof Hill at 172 mile post. Captain Kensley, with a small party, went out in skirmishing order to reconnoitre round the village. After they had advanced to the brow of the rise overlooking Colenso the train moved slowly on to the level crossing where the main road to Estcourt crosses. There the rails were found torn up and more fencing destroyed and telegraph cut. The poles were bent and insulators shot off. Just as the telegraph men were restoring communication with Estcourt, shots of Mausers were heard. Six or eight shots were fired, evidently from Fort Wylie. Our skirmishers gradually retired in the direction of the train without being fired on again. As they came up to the train they poured three volleys into Fort Wylie without any response in fort. However, the enemy could be seen moving about and the heliograph could be distinctly seen at work within the walls.

Communication was being made in the direction of the Free State, and another heliograph could also be seen working from the hill to eastward. No attempt was made either to stop or to follow us, but the fact was clearly established that the enemy have now taken possession of Fort Wylie and command the railway line.

### **MISCELLANEOUS.**

Tugela bridge is still intact, and beyond loots and the burning of a few stores in the village, no great damage has been done.

A column went out to-day for a few miles beyond the town, but no trace of the enemy was seen. Nothing more has been heard of the firing in the Ladysmith direction.

While a private of the Dublin Fusiliers was examining a rifle to-day, which he thought was unloaded, it went off and wounded him in the left wrist.

The Clan Liner and Lyton Rly boat from South coming in.

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