Colonel Sir John Gilmour, Bart.

THE FIFES

IN

SOUTH AFRICA

BEING A HISTORY OF THE FIFE AND FORFAR YEOMANRY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, 1900-1901

BY

9176 I. Y.

CUPAR-FIFE: A. WESTWOOD & SON

1903

Dedicated to the Memory

OF

CAPTAIN W. B. CHAPPEL HODGE,

LIEUTENANT A. C. CAMPBELL,

TROOPERS GRANT, MATTHEW, MUDGE, OGILVIE,

PRENTICE, RENNY, WACHER, WALKER,

WILSON, YEOMANS,

And of his Faithful Friend TROOPER E. A. M'GRADY,

BY

9176 I. Y.

"Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory."

Rotcher 9 Nov. 1942

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN I consented to write an Introduction to the History of the 20th Company, I did so with the feeling that little would be required to introduce or explain the following pages.

Briefly, then, this book sets before its readers a history of the work and wanderings of the first active service contingent of the Imperial Yeomanry.

The outbreak of the Boer war, and the subsequent development in the military situation in South Africa, necessitated the despatch of a large force of mounted troops in the early part of the year 1900, and all over the country the Yeomanry force formed the nucleus of this general movement. The organisation, equipment, and drilling of the various companies were materially assisted by having existing headquarters and permanent staffs who could deal with the many intricate questions which arose. The country at large, and the officers and men who went out to South Africa, owe to them a debt of gratitude which is difficult to estimate or fittingly to acknowledge.

In the district occupied by the Fife and Forfar Light Horse—at that time the last existing body of Mounted Volunteers, and which has now become Yeomanry—the response to the call for men to serve their country was

most satisfactory. Probably no company went out more serviceably equipped, owing very largely to the kindness and foresight of many friends in Fife and Forfar and the surrounding districts. Such an interest was manifested in the welfare of the Company, and so closely were its various movements followed, that it appeared as if a history in a modest form might meet with acceptance, and herein is an apology for intrusion if such is required.

Looking back on the events of 1900 and 1901, I venture to think that the history of the Empire will be far from complete without a history of the movement which resulted in the formation of the Yeomanry. The spirit which prompted it was the same spirit which was the making of all those enterprises in the days of Drake and Nelson—a love of the mother country, a feeling of intense patriotism, a joy of fighting. Fostered and kept alive as it was through many years of peace by a small and patriotic body of civilian soldiers, it broke out with no uncertain flame at a time of necessity.

Modern warfare, with modern arms of precision, had greatly altered the conditions of opposing forces. Add to this a country of immense size, and endowed with strong natural defences, held by an enemy with the hardihood of all pioneers, with a language which was understood only by a small proportion of our forces, and assisted by a native population who, from long acquaintance with the Boer, feared him and served him until they saw him beaten, small wonder is it that the South African war dragged on, or that the penalty we paid

was a heavy one. Individualism in officers and men was required, adaptability to circumstances was absolutely essential, and the more rapidly this was achieved the sooner the end would come. In military organisations, as in all others, the duties of one arm differs widely from the other, and where in one branch of the service absolute precision is essential, in another it is the want of it which assures success.

The impressions which I carried away from this campaign are many and varied; but, if I may be allowed to say so, nothing was more prominent than the determination—the dogged determination—of all the troops, whether regular or auxiliary. Cheerful under the most trying circumstances, humane to their enemies, and chivalrous to the women and children, the British soldier could still fight and march and starve and die if need be. Happy is the fatherland which, like ours, has sons to rally round it from all quarters of the globe—Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, Indians, Afrikanders, Colonists from every quarter—good men and true, who, by their actions, impressed on the world the fact that our Empire was one in fact and not in name alone.

In conclusion, let us not forget the memory of our comrades who shared with us those days of patriotism, and who in the fulfilment of their vows gave their lives for their country and their Sovereign. In this and in our wanderings there is a tie which binds us over never to forget the honour of our Company and our land.

To many reading these pages memories will arise of deeds and words unrecorded which will none the less

live with us, and if the history serves but to remind us of them, it will have done much. I, at least, am glad to have assisted the Author even in a small way in the production of this volume. And having shared with the Company their fortunes and misfortunes, I would fain take this opportunity to express my appreciation of their services, and to wish them God-speed.

JOHN GILMOUR,
Major, Fife and Forfar Imperial Yeomanry.

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Taken from Blue Book.

SO early in the war as the second week of October, 1899, Colonel Lucas had an interview with the Inspector-General of Auxiliary Forces, and proposed that a composite regiment of Yeomanry should be mobilised at once for active service, but the answer was that there was no intention of utilising the services of the Yeomanry in South Africa.

Again, in November, this idea of a composite regiment drawn from the different corps of Volunteer Yeomanry in England was urged upon the War Office, and it was proposed that men should provide their own horses and equipment.

The reply received on 28th November, 1899, was "that there was no intention of employing the Yeomanry at present in South Africa."

As a matter of fact, Lord Lonsdale had already, early in November, got together a fully-equipped force of 500 men, and was arranging for mounting them and obtaining the necessary saddlery and transport to enable them to take the field. He then saw Sir Evelyn Wood, and asked him if the service of such a force would be accepted, but was assured that there was no possibility of this being done.

On December 8th Lord Lonsdale and Lord Chesham called together on the Under-Secretary for War and Sir

Evelyn Wood. It was then arranged to raise a force of 3000 men, and to make arrangements at once to obtain the necessary mounts. This force was almost immediately raised to 8000 men, and finally 10,500 men were called for, and the following public advertisement was the first intimation which the country had of the fact that at last the authorities realised the urgent need for mounted troops in South Africa.

First announcement in public press *re* the raising of the Imperial Yeomanry, December, 1899:—

1. Her Majesty's Government have decided to raise for service in South Africa a Mounted Infantry force, to be named "The Imperial Yeomanry."

2. The force will be recruited from the Yeomanry, but Volunteers and civilians who may possess the requisite qualifications (as given below) will be specially enrolled in the Yeomanry for this purpose.

3. The force will be organised in companies of 115 rank and file, five officers being allotted to each company —viz., one captain and four subalterns, preference being given to Yeomanry officers.

4. The terms of enlistment for officers and men will be for one year, or for not less than the period of the war.

5. The officers and men will bring their own horses, clothing, saddlery, and accoutrements. Arms and ammunition, camp equipment, and regimental transport will be provided by Government.

6. The men will be dressed in Norfolk jackets of woollen material of neutral colour, breeches and gaiters, lace boots, and felt hats. Strict uniformity of pattern will not be insisted on.

7. The pay will be at cavalry rates, with a capitation grant for horses, clothing, saddles, and accoutrements. All ranks will receive rations from date of joining.

Gratuities and allowances will be those laid down in Special Army Order of 10th May, 1899.

8. Applications for enrolment should be addressed to Colonels commanding Yeomanry regiments, or to General Officers commanding districts, to whom instructions will be immediately issued.

Had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike,
I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country
Than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.

—CORIOLANUS.

CHAPTER I.

SIX WEEKS IN CUPAR.

THESE were stirring times in the County Town. Cupar had not been so busy for many a day: the shops and streets had never been so crowded and so bustling as they were in the beginning of the year 1900. The Fife folk were determined to show themselves worthy citizens in this hour of crisis in the country's history. Patriotism beamed on every face and found a place in every heart.

Groups of young men in the railway station, the rattle of spurs on the pavements, the noisy clamour of the various hotel parlours throughout the town, all told the same tale. The capital of the Kingdom of Fife had not forgotten that it had a duty to perform to the Empire in the day of its necessity. From all corners of the County, and from the remotest shires of the Highlands, every train brought its quota of stalwart youths, eager to shoulder a rifle in the service of their Queen.

An advertisement in the newspapers had announced that a corps was to be formed for service in South Africa, and immediately every young man who could ride and shoot (or who thought he could) was on his way to Cupar to offer his service. The pen was thrown down, the student's books were laid aside, the farm was left to take care of itself, and every one was speculating on his chance of success at the ranges or in the riding school. In many cases anxious parents, alarmed at the war fever that had broken out, tried to exert their

authority to keep their sons at home. There is an old saying, however, "He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar," and it was never more true than in this case.

Having passed the doctor's examination, surmounted the hurdle, and made a sufficient score at the shooting range at Priestfield, 120 men, between twenty and thirty-five years of age, were enrolled for service against the Boer. Hundreds of others who failed to pass in one or other of the tests were rejected, and turned away from the butts or the riding school with a heavy heart because they were to be left behind by their more successful comrades.

The popular and energetic Colonel of the Fife Light Horse, Sir John Gilmour, Bart. of Lundin and Montrave, was the man of the hour. Making Cupar his headquarters, he spared neither time nor trouble in his efforts on behalf of the new corps. Here, there, and everywhere he was the guiding spirit of the movement, superintending every detail. Whether it was arranging with tailors or bootmakers for equipment, wiring to headquarters, testing men in the riding school, or choosing horses and saddlery, Sir John was always taking an active share in the work of the moment.

All these matters having been satisfactorily arranged, the work of training the company began in earnest. The horses were quartered in the stables of the Royal, Tontine, Station, and Albert Hotels, and the men were billeted in these houses and in sundry other taverns and hostels in the town.

At seven o'clock in these dark winter mornings the sleeping town was roused by the bugles sounding reveille, and soon hurrying troopers were sallying forth from every doorway to groom their horses and clean the stables before the breakfast hour. It was no unusual sight at daybreak to see some professional man or ex-

volunteer officer trundling a barrow to the dunghill, with sleeves rolled up and a look as if he was to the manner born. The corps included all sorts and conditions of men—farmers, doctors, lawyers, cab-drivers, and blacksmiths were all members of the happy family. The bond which brought them together knew no respect of persons, and if veneration was given to any one it was to the men who sported the Egyptian or Matabele ribbon in token of campaigns and hardships already undergone. Three officers and thirty-five members and ex-members of the Fife and Forfar Light Horse volunteered. The majority of the latter were granted non-commissioned rank on the strength of their superior knowledge of military matters, and without doubt their skill did much to ensure the smartness and efficiency of the company.

In the forenoon of these busy days of training the riding school was the scene of action. It was a scene of infinite embarrassment and discomfort to some whose horsemanship was not up to army standard. The sergeant-major, with his large whip, was apt to be regarded with somewhat mixed feelings by those who did not know what was good for them. Certainly he had no small job in hand when he started, and it was greatly to his credit that the company had never any reason to be ashamed of its horsemanship in the field. The training in the riding school took the form of ordinary cavalry school drill, mounting and dismounting without stirrups off side and near side, trotting round on stripped saddles rifle in hand, and other tests of the same sort, which ensured that every man could ride.

In the afternoon, foot drill and bayonet exercises on the Fluthers—an open space at one end of the town —was substituted for mounted work. In the evening, after the work of the day was over, skating and curling

were indulged in, and in various other ways the embryo warriors enjoyed themselves before the last post sounded to warn them to their quarters. The hospitality and kindness of the townspeople was unbounded, and farewell banquets, farewell smoking concerts, and other tokens of goodwill were lavished upon the company. On other nights each hotel held its little party of merry-makers, and songs and choruses echoed down the streets. There is ample precedent for soldiers on the eve of war spending the night in revelry, and certainly the Fife yeomen enjoyed themselves without stint during those last few weeks in Cupar.

Each Sunday for several weeks eloquent farewell sermons were preached, and the lusty singing of "Onward, Christian Soldiers," was indulged in by the company. Still, there was no word of marching orders, and general impatience was manifested by officers and men at the delay. Want of transport was the reason alleged, and there was nothing for it but to await patiently the order to embark. It was not known from what port the company would sail, but Southampton was regarded as the likely place of embarkation.

During February the weather was exceedingly cold, and an iron frost bound the earth and made work out of doors almost impossible. When drill in the open country was engaged in, the squadron performed cavalry movements in close formation, and for various reasons, such as want of space, no work of the nature of scouting or extended movements was practised.

Captain Hodge, who took command of the company, had served as an officer in the 12th Lancers, and soon made a very favourable impression on his men by his keenness for work and his open, kindly manner in his dealings with them. He had such a seat in the saddle as a man only acquires in the hunting field, and in this

respect he was well supported by his lieutenants, who all knew how to handle a horse. With the instinct of the "clanny Scot," the men would undoubtedly have been pleased and proud to have had a Fife man at their head; but when it became apparent that no local leader was to be forthcoming, it was generally felt that no better man than their gallant captain could have been found to take command. There was a very general feeling that if the success of the company depended on the energy and ability of the officers and non-coms., its success was assured.

It was a picturesque sight to see the yeomen in big slouch hats and long cavalry overcoats riding through the snow-covered streets on these bright winter mornings. Probably some hundreds of years had elapsed since the Bonnygate of Cupar had worn such a martial aspect. The clatter of hoofs and the jingling of spurs must have awakened recollections of days long gone in the impassive minds of the old buildings that flanked the way to the new riding school.

At last the glad news arrived that the Fife company would sail from Liverpool in a few days. Everything was in readiness, and after a few final parades, and a few last nights of joyous carousal, the great night of the company's departure arrived. What a night it was! When will it be forgotten by those who witnessed it?

The company mustered at eight o'clock in the yard of the Royal Hotel, and, after a hurried roll call, marched through the town, headed by a brass band and a party of torch-bearers, to the railway station. The route was lined by K Company 6th V.B. Royal Highlanders, and the streets were crowded with an enthusiastic mass of sightseers, who cheered lustily as the procession marched off. The rain beat down in torrents; but it beat down in vain: it could not cool

the ardour of the patriotic men and women of Fife. Every window along the line of route was gaily illuminated, and fireworks were discharged from the housetops. Many of the men of the company were carried shoulder high by their friends, and at the gates of the station a fierce struggle between the police and the populace almost prevented the departing company from gaining the inside of the yard. It was a memorable night, and as the train steamed away to Liverpool every heart beat high, and a feeling of great satisfaction was expressed at the idea that at last the enterprise to which all were looking forward was begun.

It is perhaps well that men cannot see into the future, for there were many there that night whose gaiety would have been turned to gloom if they could have seen the return of a little band of twenty some eighteen months later, the representatives of the strong squadron that set out with such a flourish of trumpets to beat the Boer.

(EXTRACT FROM "DUNDEE ADVERTISER" OF 28TH FEBRUARY, 1900.)

THE FIFE AND FORFAR YEOMANRY.

DEPARTURE FOR THE FRONT.

ENTHUSIASTIC SEND-OFF.

Last night the Fife and Forfar unit of the Imperial Yeomanry got what may be termed a Royal send-off from the county town of Fifeshire on the eve of their departure for South Africa. The streets were densely crowded, they were brilliantly illuminated, and the march of the Yeomanry from the Royal Hotel to the Railway Station was a memorable military procession. During the day the town was *en fête*, and the deplorable weather failed to damp the enthusiasm that prevailed. St Catherine Street presented a magnificent appearance. It was crossed by streamers and flaglets at different points, and from the County Buildings and many other edifices floated fine displays of flags, while many of them were brilliantly illuminated. The British Linen Company's Bank premises, which have been the head-quarters of the staff, were embellished with flags and banners. A large illuminated crown occupied the centre, having a large V on the one side and an R on the other. The Bonnygate, although off the main route, was also decorated at different parts. In the Crossgate, shopkeepers and householders vied with each other in their demonstrations of loyalty and patriotism,

and in their desire to wish the Yeomanry God-speed. Shop windows were lit up, and almost without exception flags and bannerettes were displayed at every window. At the entrance gate to the Railway Station there was a floral arch grandly illuminated, and in addition there was a large horse shoe, "Good Luck," and I.Y. shone in a blaze of light. The muster of the departing troops took place in the courtyard of the Royal Hotel at 7.45 p.m. The town's brass band, surrounded by torch-bearers, Provost Watson, Quartermaster Osborne, the Magistrates, the Council, and leading citizens were present.

Provost Watson said that the time had now come when the Fife and Forfar unit of the Imperial Yeomanry were to leave home and country and proceed to the seat of war in South Africa. The glorious news received on that Majuba Day of the surrender of Cronje and his army would fire them with intensified enthusiasm. (Cheers.) While they had much to look forward to, their thoughts must often dwell on their associations at home — the most important being the invaluable services rendered to them by Colonel Sir John Gilmour, Bart., who had done so much on their behalf, and whose name would stand out in distinguished prominence in the historical record of that movement. (Cheers.) However bright and happy they were that night, parting, which always suggested some feelings of regret, on that occasion seemed to be overshadowed by sentiments of genuine pride and congratulation. (Cheers.) The inhabitants of Cupar were exceedingly proud of the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, and would cherish in happy thoughts the memorable occasion of their visit. The voice of the nation swelled with praise at their splendid devotion to Queen and country. (Cheers.) In whatever position they might be placed, led by their brave and

accomplished officers they would prove to the world that they, representing the flower of their youth, were equal to any duty that they might be called upon to perform, never forgetting that

> Honour and fame from no condition rise;
> Act well your part, there all the honour lies.

(Cheers.) In the name of the Magistrates, Town Council, and inhabitants of Cupar, and with the best and warmest feelings of their hearts, he bade them a kind farewell, and hoped they would have a safe and pleasant voyage. He expressed the sincere and devout wish that the protecting care of Heaven would guard and guide them in the performance of their noble and patriotic duties. (Cheers.)

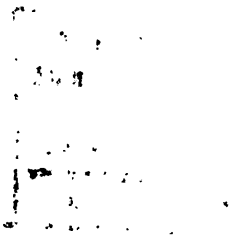
Three hearty cheers were given on the call of the Provost for the troopers.

Colonel Sir John Gilmour thanked the Provost for the kind words he had spoken, and ventured to say, on behalf of the Fife and Forfar Contingent of the Imperial Yeomanry that now left the county town, that these words would be remembered in another land, and enable them to carry out what all of them wished, liberty and freedom to all those who would be under the Empire's flag before long. (Cheers.) The words would go forth to the counties north of the Forth and of Fife, and, in speaking in the name of the contingent, he had to express their deep feelings for the great kindness which they had received during the weeks they had passed amongst the inhabitants of Cupar. (Cheers.) He had to thank the members of the Town Council and the inhabitants of the county town for all they had done to make their sojourn as pleasant as possible. They were now leaving, as it were, their own door mat, and he was sure the citizens wished them every comfort,

not only on their journey to South Africa, but in all the duties they hoped and trusted them to perform there. (Cheers.) They fully realised that night that they were leaving home, and that they were to take part in a great work; but they would always have at home hearts beating for them, kindly thoughts, and proud sentiments. They had heard with great pleasure that day of the surrender of Cronje, and no doubt that General had heard that the Fife and Forfar Contingent were at last to start to the front. (Laughter and cheers.) Again, in name of the Fife and Forfar Contingent, he thanked the people of Cupar and those in the counties north of the Forth for the great kindness they had shown to the contingent. (Cheers.)

The officers going to the front are Captain Hodge, Lieutenant John Gilmour, Lieutenant James Simpson, Lieutenant Burton-Stewart, and Lieutenant R. W. Purvis. Sir John Gilmour accompanied them to Liverpool, where they will embark to-day for South Africa.

The band having played "God Save the Queen," the Yeomanry, preceded by the band, surrounded by torch-bearers, marched through St Catherine Street, the Crossgate, and the Station Road to the railway station, where there was a large concourse of people. The Volunteers lined the courtyard as a guard of honour. The enthusiasm and crowding at the station were something extraordinary. A large contingent of the county police, under Captain James F. Bremner, the Chief Constable, had difficulty in restraining the people from bursting through the iron gates. The train with the contingent steamed away from the platform at 8.40 p.m., amid cheers, again and again renewed, and the firing of fog signals.



Group of Company taken at Cupar before sailing

CHAPTER II.

CUPAR TO CAPE TOWN.

IN the cold grey dawn of a wintry morning the train, which had been rattling along all night, drew up beside an enormous empty warehouse on the quay of one of the Liverpool docks. In front of the yeomen, as they alighted on the quay and gathered their belongings together, was the mighty hulk of a White Star liner, the *Cymric*, which was waiting for its complement of "khaki ordered south." No sooner had one train drawn up and been shunted to a siding than another arrived and discharged its human cargo. Thick and fast they came, until at last it became evident that in the silence of the frosty night train-loads of eager yeomen had been speeding to Liverpool from many county towns in England. In a few hours 1200 men were gathered in the shed, all in khaki, but each squadron bearing some distinctive hat-badge or other token by which their men were easily identified. The East and West Kents, the First and Second Wilts, two Middlesex companies, a Welsh company, and many others were amongst the travelling companions that were to accompany the Fifes across the sea.

Soon they were all paraded and marched on board—after receiving, however, mugs of coffee and hot pies—and each man began to make his first acquaintance with life on board a troopship. This way of travelling has never been recommended by those who have tried it, and consequently every one had been warned that

probably it would prove the most unpleasant part of the whole business. All were accordingly prepared for a few weeks of discomfort, and although life on board the *Cymric* was not all beer and skittles, it was not so very unpleasant; indeed, in the light of some after experiences, it might have been very much worse.

The whole complement of khaki having been taken on board, along with some 600 horses that were stowed away between decks, the yeomen were addressed by the Right Hon. Walter Long, Minister for Agriculture, whose brother was on board as an officer; and the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, wearing the chain of his office, also said a few words of farewell to "the flower of England's manhood," as he called them. Unfortunately, this did not include the men of Fife; but as they hailed from a kingdom which is second to none, not even to England, they overlooked the omission and gave a parting cheer. The gigantic vessel swung slowly out of dock, and dropped anchor in the river Mersey, where she lay all night, apparently awaiting final orders from the War Office. Next morning, in a driving storm of sleet and snow, the anchor was weighed, and the throbbing of the powerful engines awakened the mighty monster into life. The *Cymric* was soon speeding before the cold east wind out into the Irish Channel, away from Merrie England to a land where its human cargo, hardy and hopeful as it was at starting, was to meet with many vicissitudes and many trials ere it returned to its native land. Some alas, there were amongst them who were doomed never to return. But what of that? As the vessel sped towards the equator, there was little time for lugubrious reflection, even if it had been in the mind of any; and, as a matter of fact, every soul on board, when he was not quarrelling with his messmates, was building castles in the air and imagining the adventures that were in

store for him on the veldt—adventures from which he was always to emerge triumphant, generally at the expense of his enemy the Boer. King Richard and his gallant Crusaders were never more enthusiastic over their enterprise to the Holy Land than were the Imperial Yeomanry on their way to South Africa.

By the kind offices of Mr John Rankin, of Liverpool, at the instigation of Sir John Gilmour, the news of the relief of Ladysmith was sent by helio from Holyhead to the *Cymric* as she passed, and evoked a hearty cheer from those on board.

From cold winds and leaden skies the vessel sped onwards into the sunnier, warmer regions of the south: after four days at sea greatcoats were dispensed with, and when the Grand Canaries were reached it was a pleasure to lie on deck and bask in the sun. At Las Palmas, which was reached at sunrise one morning, the vessel swung into the bay and dropped anchor for a few hours, while the men bought fruit from the natlves who had come out in their little bumboats in hundreds whenever the rising sun disclosed our arrival. And it was a rising sun that morning in Las Palmas. Like a great orange on the mighty waste of waters it rolled up above the cloudless sky-line—up, up—every moment brighter, every moment warmer, until at last the blue waves seemed on fire with the brilliance of its glory. No sloping, slanting path did it take, but climbed straight to the masthead and beat upon the decks of the floating city as she rode at anchor in the peaceful waters of the bay. Before midday the fleet of small boats were cast off, and the *Cymric* was once more speeding to the Cape. A sad tragedy occurred at this stage to mar the pleasure of the voyage, and to depress the men of the 20th Company. Private Wedderburn Ogilvy, one of the best men in the squadron, took suddenly ill, and

died in a few hours. This sad news was conveyed to the members of the company whenever the boat left Las Palmas, and the burial at sea—a sad and impressive function—took place an hour or two later.

Dr Cotterill (now in the R. A. M. C.), a trooper in the East Kent Company, and a splendid player on the bagpipes, headed the funeral procession, playing a lament as the body of the deceased was borne to the poop-deck, where the company was paraded to hear the burial service read. All the other companies were drawn up in their places on the different decks, and while the vessel was stopped for a few minutes, Trooper Wedderburn Ogilvy was consigned to the care of the boundless deep, far from home and kindred, but mourned by all on board who knew him. This was the first break in the ranks, but not by any means the last, for the gap was to grow wider in the land to which the company was bound.

For the next fortnight life on board the troopship was uneventful, and time was spent in performing the routine duties that became more irksome as the tropical heat increased. At five g.m.—as the company farrier expressed it—the bugles of the various companies united in a grand reveille, which was blown down the hatches with sufficient energy to wake the heaviest sleeper. Some there were, however, who were either deaf or stupefied by the heavy atmosphere of the troop deck, and as they delayed to "show a leg" or descend from their hammocks, it became the unpleasant (?) duty of their comrades to cut them down and let them fall to the deck with a crash. To hear their language when thus rudely awakened was to grasp at once the full meaning of the phrase, "to swear like a trooper." It was absolutely necessary to deal summarily with the sluggards, however, because breakfast had to be taken

in an hour's time on the tables above which the hammocks were slung. Each row of hammocks had a table underneath, which seated the dozen men who swung above it at night, and to see the 100 tables or messes at feeding time was a spectacle never to be forgotten. What a noise there was on the troop deck on these occasions: what a clattering of dishes, what a babel of tongues, what a hurrying to and fro of orderlies as they sped to the galleys for the supplies for their different messes. The attempts to wash the greasy dishes after dinner in pails of salt water will never be forgotten by those to whom this delightful duty fell. After meals, horses had to be attended to (warm work in equatorial regions), decks had to be swabbed by barefooted yeomen new to the job, various other duties had to be performed, and all day long the bugles clamoured for pioneers, fatigue men, and others to hoist stores from the hold, to supply the canteen with beer, and otherwise to make themselves generally useful. Every forenoon the whole vessel had to be trim and tidy for inspection by the captain of the ship, and troops paraded and stood to attention until this officer, accompanied by the officer commanding the troops and staff, finished his tour through the various decks.

As regards amusements, these were not awanting. Thomas Atkins dearly loves a gamble, and the men of the I. Y. were no exception to this rule; so a daily sweepstake on the registered run of the ship for twenty-four hours was entered into, and proved a cause of no little excitement and expectation to the men who drew likely numbers. The beer canteen, where beer at sixpence a bottle was in great demand, was only open at certain hours, and long lines of men waiting their turn to purchase accounted for a sale of about 3000 bottles a day. So great was the demand in the tropics that

the supply collapsed a few days before the vessel reached her destination, and the look of gloom which every man wore on hearing this tragic announcement showed that a heavy blow had fallen on the whole ship's company. In the evening a circle round some lamp on deck squatted in the cool night air and sang such stirring choruses as "The Young British Soldier," and other Kipling ballads.

During the last few days of the voyage a great tug-of-war contest was engaged in between teams representing the different counties on board, and the Fifes had the honour of reaching the final tie, having without difficulty pulled all the Sassenachs round the ship. In the final tie with the men of Kent the Fifes had to give way; but it is a significant fact that on getting ashore the winners of the contest had another pull against the Kingdom and were easily defeated.

At last the voyage was drawing to an end, and no one was sorry at the prospect of getting on land again to stretch his legs. Hope ran high as daylight revealed the massive form of Table Mountain in the distance; kits were made ready, and every man prepared for speedy disembarking. As the *Cymric* sped along the coast by Sea Point and Green Point, the seaside suburbs of Cape Town, the decks and booms and rigging were crowded with troopers, all in their go-ashores, booted and spurred, and ready for the fray. It was an inspiring moment. After all their training, all their waiting, and a voyage of six thousand miles, the moment had arrived to which all had been looking forward, when they were to set foot on a foreign shore to fight for their Queen and country.

And what a sight was Table Bay in the bright sunshine of early morning! What an object lesson on the greatness of Empire! If ever a Scotsman was made to realise the truth of "Rule Britannia" it was this morn-

ing, when the mighty *Cymric* swung to her anchorage in front of Cape Town, surrounded on all sides by the most imposing array of transports and liners, crowded fore and aft with eager troops waiting to disembark. As the White Star boat passed one after another of these fine vessels—some of her sister ships among the number—the bay echoed with the lusty cheering of soldiers welcoming their comrades-in-arms. Scarcely an hour passed when another vessel swung into the bay and dropped anchor in the serried ranks of the fleet. Drawn up like a regiment of lancers opposite the quays of Cape Town, their forest of masts forming a wall against the rising sun, they must have filled the hearts of the British in Cape Town with a feeling of calm assurance.

The evidences of war were everywhere present. On one side a vessel, heavily guarded, was full of Boer prisoners; while on the other, a hospital ship, the *Maine*, was embarking sick and wounded for home. For two long days—interminable they seemed to those on board—the *Cymric* lay waiting her turn to get alongside the quay; but at last, after several others had discharged, the anchor was weighed, and soon the vessel lay alongside the wharf.

CHAPTER III.

THREE WEEKS IN CAPE COLONY.

THE first duty of the Fife yeomen when they set foot in South Africa was to lay siege to a tea and fruit stall on the quay, part of the propaganda of the Tommies' Welcome Association, instituted by the public-spirited matrons of Cape Town to provide refreshments for the troops as they landed. Never was kindness more appreciated than this, and never were men more eager to show their gratitude than the English and Scottish yeomen who debarked from the great White Star liner.

At the same wharf several other vessels were unshipping cargoes of khaki, the living freight that had gathered from all corners of the world to uphold the pillars of the Empire. Lumsden's Horse, from Calcutta, were stepping ashore with their horses at one end, while the Scottish contingent was busy at the other. The work of unloading the stores of saddlery, of placing waggons on their wheels, and hoisting the various bulky cases which are a necessary accompaniment of a squadron of horse, was begun forthwith. The men worked willingly, and no gang of wharfingers ever handled a cargo more expeditiously. In twelve hours the huge hulk of the vessel was towering above the quay in all the majesty of floating emptiness. The poor horses, after standing on their legs for weeks in a tropical atmosphere, were a sorry spectacle as they staggered down the gangways. Some of them displayed a strange

reluctance to leave the scene of their imprisonment, and had to be hustled ashore in a somewhat unceremonious fashion. Meantime the mysteries of Cape Town were unexplored, and when work was over for the evening, and it was announced that the night would be spent on board, many and varied schemes for evading the sentries at the dock gates were suggested and discussed. The men of Fife were hardly reconciled to the idea yet that they had sold their liberty, and that as Thomas Atkins they were no longer to stroll and wander at their own sweet will. Some, by hiding themselves in empty hansoms and in other ways, managed to escape, and spent the night in town.

Next morning, in a sand-storm of the sort for which Cape Town is famous, the company started on its way to Maitland camp, distant some three miles from the city, along a dusty track called Sir Lowry Road. The camp reached, and the baggage having been brought along by steam transport (otherwise traction engine), life in camp was entered upon, in the case of many for the first time. To begin with, the tents (which, of course, were limited in number) were somewhat crowded, from fourteen to sixteen men being stowed away in each, so that there was a congestion of feet around the tent-pole at night. Maitland camp was situated not far from Groote Shuur (the Great Barn), where at that time Cecil Rhodes had his home. The ground was sandy, and when the wind blew, as it did almost daily, the shifting sand got into the tents and amongst the food and clothing, making things rather unpleasant for the newcomers until accustomed to this sort of life. Fortunately, there was at some distance from the camp a large swimming bath and club-room, which was a daily resort, where the luxury of a bathe could be indulged in. The nights at this period of the year were cold, but during the after-

noons the heat, although by no means immoderate, struck down several of those who had so recently left the cold and frosty northern land. A week end of drenching rain and cold wind, accompanied by the duty of night guards to watch the horses, brought home to many for the first time the fact that a soldier's life is not a life of ease. Sad specimens some of the men looked already, with the green dye running down from the lining of their helmets on their cheeks, and their puttees and boots oozing with water at every step. Sentry-go under these weather conditions was regarded with no feeling of delight; but it was hardly realised that this was a mere foretaste of pleasures in store. When the sun shone, however, it was delightfully warm, and in a few days every man had the back of his neck blistered, and had earned the name of rooinek, by which our countrymen are known to the Boers. Busy preparations of saddlery and equipment for a move to the front, which was expected daily, occupied the time, and when work was over the fruit stalls and canteens in the vicinity of the camp were busily engaged. One of the great compensations of life in this thirsty climate was the beautiful fruit, melons and grapes of the most luscious varieties were to be had in exchange for a ticky or threepenny bit. From Maitland, after a week's stay, the company was suddenly ordered to proceed to Stellenbosch, a remount depôt some thirty miles inland, where horses were to be provided. Those already mounted marched by road to Durban Road Bridge, joining the first picquet detailed for duty from the company to protect the railway bridge, and reached Stellenbosch next day. Having stacked the bulky kit bags which had been brought out from home in the loft of a large farm steading, the bulk of the company, who were as yet unmounted, set off on foot to the

railway station, carrying blankets, overcoats, rifles, and ammunition, and finding it a very unpleasant journey in the heat of the afternoon. Arrived at the railway, to find that a train would not be ready for their transport till next day, a bivouac amongst the bush was the only way to spend the night; and accordingly, in a sort of sandy hollow amongst the mimosas, a camp fire of generous dimensions was lit, and a sing-song engaged in with great gusto. A surprising amount of singing talent in the company was disclosed, and the choruses were rendered with wonderful spirit. It was a picturesque scene on that beautiful starry night to see, in the glow of the great fire, the reflection of these hundred men, all squatting on the sandy slopes that were formed like a natural amphitheatre, for the very purpose, apparently, of an *al fresco* smoking concert. The only songs that were not encouraged, needless to say, were soldiers' songs of the death and glory variety. These are far more popular items in a British music hall than they are with the men in the field. Next day the necessary train was forthcoming, and Stellenbosch was reached—by no means an ideal spot for a camp, as it had been occupied by troops for months before, and the place was particularly unsavoury. This was soon made evident by the fact that dysentery seized more than half the members of the company, and Lieutenant Simpson, one of the most popular of officers, was despatched to an hospital in the town, three miles distant, and did not rejoin his commando for several weeks. At Stellenbosch the whole Scottish battalion camped together—the Fife, Ayr, Lanark, and Lothians companies. A number of strange little friends, who were altogether new to the men and very unwelcome, made their appearance at this stage; and it became a matter of daily importance to retire to the outskirts of the camp and hold a general

inspection of clothing. The camp at Stellenbosch was situated on a sloping hillside, overlooking a valley surrounded by heath-clad hills. The event of importance during the stay of the company here was the issue of horses—Argentines and Walers, and other varieties of untamed, half-bred cobs. The saddlery with which the men were supplied having been made for horses, would not fit these wiry little ponies without a good deal of adjustment; but at last the squadron paraded, and the order "prepare to mount" was given. At the first attempt to put a foot in the stirrup the ranks were plunged in confusion. The men were as yet ignorant of the fact that an Argentine will not stand still to be mounted unless seized by the cheek-strap of the bridle. Men and mounts, however, soon became reconciled to each other's ways, with the exception of one cream-coloured brute that refused to be bridled until it had been hobbled and cast upon the ground. Some of these extraordinary animals were magnificent boxers, standing on their hind legs and letting out in very scientific fashion with their fore feet. Many of them were innocent of iron shoes, and indeed had come straight from their native "estancias" to act the part of war-horse at a moment's notice. Trooper Francis proved an invaluable horse-breaker and roughrider at this stage in the company's history.

Field days and training were now indulged in, and for the first time the rat-tat-tat of a pom-pom was made acquaintance with. It was fired at nothing more dangerous than a barren hillside; but it was wonderful to see how quickly a big rock or a sandy hole could be located by these dangerous little bursting shells, that threw up clouds of dust and smoke where they fell.

The daily routine at Stellenbosch was the same as that in any other base camp, the chief variety being

Camp of *S*cottish Yeomanry at *S*tellenbosch

Showing Table Mountain in the distance

given to the day's proceedings by the ride across the valley to water the horses. This was a ride of a couple of miles, and as it was performed bareback and leading two little Argentines by their head-ropes, it was very excellent practice in horsemanship. The following, taken from a diary of one of the troopers, will show how the men of the Scottish battalion spent their day :—

5.30 a.m.	Reveille.
5.45 a.m.	Water horses.
6.30 a.m.	Grooming and cleaning up.
7 a.m.	Breakfast (tea and dry bread).
8 a.m.	Boot and saddle.
8.30 a.m.	Battalion mounted parade.
11.30 a.m.	Water horses again.
12 noon.	Stables.
1 p.m.	Dinner.
2 p.m.	Foot parade and target practice.
4 p.m.	Rifle inspection.
5 p.m.	Stables, water and feed.
6 p.m.	Tea.
6.30 p.m.	Night guard mounted.

These duties were varied by fatigues to bring forage and food from the railway, and other camp duties. A little excitement was occasioned now and then when a stray ostrich got into camp and wandered amongst the horses. The nights at this time were damp and misty, and the tents in the morning were very wet. Night guard, which only came round once a week, became less popular than ever, as the men had to sleep in the open when off duty.

CHAPTER IV.

TO KIMBERLEY.

LEAVING Stellenbosch, the Scottish battalion made a two days' march through the Dutch district of the Paarl to the old-fashioned town of Wellington, where they camped on a fresh, clean bit of ground near the railway station. On this memorable march each trooper presented a very formidable appearance, quite sufficient to intimidate the most rebellious Dutchman. Loaded up in front with spare boots, overcoat, and forage nets, and supported behind by a rear-pack containing blankets, picketing pegs, and ground ropes, each man looked like an old dragoon of the time of Cromwell. In fact, the Argentine pony on which he was mounted was scarcely visible beneath the load which it carried, and it was wonderful how they managed to do their twenty miles a day. The weather on this march was damp and dull, and the air was therefore free from dust, a great consideration, as dust is one of the worst enemies of the soldier when a big column of troops is on the march.

In Wellington a week was spent awaiting orders to proceed to the front. Day and night trains were passing up the single railway line from Cape Town with troops of various kinds from every part of the Empire, with horses, mules, guns, and saddlery, and provisions of all sorts for the army in the field. As Lovat's Scouts passed up the line they received a hearty cheer from their brother Scots who were less fortunate in being left behind. Occasionally, to the unconcealed satisfaction

of the Dutch, a Red Cross train with sick and wounded came down the line.

From Wellington the battalion proceeded to Worcester, another charming Dutch town at the base of the mighty mountain range which marks the beginning of the great karoo. Worcester is a regular old sleepy hollow—broad streets, shaded with fragrant eucalyptus trees, are bordered by widely-scattered houses and shops, each with a stoep or verandah opening on to the footpath. Streams of crystal water run down the channels at the sides of the streets, and impart a sense of coolness even in the heat of a mid-winter day. It was almost mid-winter when the Fife men were in Worcester, and yet the heat of the day time exceeded the warmth of a July day at home. Between the town and the neighbouring mountain there was ample training ground for exercising the troops, and it was here that the Fife squadron practised the bayonet charge on horseback, which was afterwards so useful in the field when a litter of young pigs had to be sacrificed to replenish the larder. After a week in Worcester the glad announcement that at last the battalion was to proceed to the front was received with cheers. The entraining was a business which required a good deal of management, the boxing of the horses and mules being an affair of no little difficulty. Many of them had to travel in temporary trucks made from converted coal waggons by the addition of a few spars. Each of the four squadrons of the battalion required a whole train to itself.

It was rumoured that the destination was Springfontein, in the Free State; but, as a matter of fact, the battalion was bound for Kimberley. Passing up country on the train, the men had a capital view of the battlefields of Belmont, Graspan, and Magersfontein, where

very shortly before such obstinate opposition had been offered by the Boers to Lord Methuen's advance to Kimberley. Few traces of the bloody conflict that had been waged on these battlefields were to be seen. Long lines of empty trenches here and there marked the position of Boer marksmen near the foot of some kopje. It was not the sort of broken, hilly country, however, which would be considered suitable for opposing the advance of an army. Open level plains for miles on all sides, with a very occasional kopje, characterised the country in which the Boers, to Lord Methuen's astonishment, offered a very stubborn resistance to the British advance. The difficulty of getting near an entrenched enemy on an open plain was well known to the Boer leaders evidently, and their success proved to our troops the helplessness of artillery even to dislodge them from such a position. The rifle was the weapon of the day, and the Boer, with his quick-loading Mauser and the range staked off, was very difficult to tackle. After three nights and two days of uneventful travelling, interrupted every few hours to feed and water horses, the squadron reached Kimberley, the famous diamond city, at twelve o'clock at night.

Even at that hour, however, the loyal women of the neighbourhood turned out and supplied the men with tea, which was gladly welcomed after a long and tedious journey. As it was too late to remove the horses, the train was shunted to a siding, and at daybreak next morning the company proceeded to camp in the outskirts of the town.

Kimberley! What a disappointing town it was: one or two stone buildings scattered here and there that would have been approved by a British bondholder, but beyond that mere congeries of tin sheds and corrugated iron villas. Just a few weeks before the siege of

the town had been raised by General French's cavalry, and the fortifications, along with sundry evidences of the Boer bombardment, remained to tell the tale. Even at this time the enemy was not far distant, as the sound of heavy artillery had been distinctly audible on the previous day. Sir Archibald Hunter's division of infantry, which the Scottish yeomen were to join, was lying at Fourteen Streams, about thirty miles north.

Already some of the Argentine remounts obtained at Stellenbosch had died of old age and general debility, and several new remounts were allotted to the squadron here. Several members of the company having obtained leave, visited the town and explored the shops and places of refreshment. A famous dining-room, where a hearty meal of four or five courses was to be had for the modest sum of one shilling, proved a great attraction in a land which, so far, had not been a land of plenty. The largest building, an imposing hotel called the "Queen's," which the stranger might mistake for the town-house or some great public building, was owned by a Forfarshire man, who was also the colonel of a local Volunteer corps that had done meritorious service during the siege.

Needless to say, a very martial spirit prevailed in Kimberley at this time, and the citizens had not required to be reminded of their duty when the need for home defence arose. From the oldest to the youngest, all did their share. The first sight which greeted the Fife yeomen when they alighted from the train in the morning was a little nipper, not more than twelve years of age, in a blue and scarlet uniform, armed with a carbine, who was doing sentry-go over some ammunition at the railway depôt. He assured the enquiring Scotsmen, with a strong colonial twang, that he belonged to the Kimberley Juvenile Town Guard, and that although they had not gone out to meet the enemy, they were

ready to do so if they were wanted. He looked as if he meant what he said too; and the Scotsmen could not but be impressed with the serious and manly air of the young colonial. They are much older for their age than the boys of the old country; and as they are trained in a rough school, they begin very early to assume a look of responsibility and to take their share in the work of the Empire. In this respect they resemble the young Boers, who did a great deal of picquet duty and night work for their fathers during the course of the war.

Time was pressing, however, and as Sir Archibald Hunter's column was under orders to push forward to the relief of Mafeking, the Scottish Yeomanry, after a very short stay, went on to join his force. He had sent on a flying column, consisting of the Imperial Light Horse and other mounted troops, and was ready to move on in support of them with his infantry division of 10,000 men. The only mounted troops to perform the cavalry work of this great force were the Scottish Yeomanry and a few Kimberley Mounted Rifles, and it was therefore with a certain feeling of the importance of the work in hand that the Fifes went out to meet the enemy.

CHAPTER V.

THE RELIEF OF MAFEKING.

THE heading of this chapter is not intended to convey the impression that the Fife Light Horse alone effected the celebrated relief of this beleaguered town in the wilderness; but there can be no doubt that the moral effect of their presence in the district had an important influence on the retreat of the enemy. Leaving Kimberley by coal truck for Fourteen Streams, a point on the Vaal river at which the last battle had taken place with the retreating Boers, the company travelled *al fresco* sitting on the baggage in the waggons; while the horses, upsaddled and ready, were standing ready to detrain and be mounted if occasion arose. The company was actually at the front now, and might at any moment find itself face to face with the enemy. Looking over the silent, sunburnt veldt, that stretched like a boundless sea on all sides, it seemed difficult to realise that this had recently been the scene of conflict between two opposing armies. As the train had borne the men of Fife past the battlefields of Belmont, and Graspan, and Magersfontein, things looked so peaceful and quiet that it was difficult to believe they had witnessed the horrors of war a few weeks before.

Arrived at Fourteen Streams, where Sir Archibald Hunter's division was encamped, the squadron camped alongside of battalions of the line from Natal, bronzed and hardened heroes from Ladysmith, who were to be their companions-in-arms for the next few weeks. After

spending a quiet Sunday without incident, and taking part in an open-air church parade on the veldt, the whole division prepared to move off early next morning to meet the enemy. The enemy, however, was not anxious to come to close quarters with this great force, now numbering some 10,000 men, and carefully retreated before it. Starting at two in the morning in the star-light, and marching as advance guard screen for twelve hours, the Fifes soon began to have a pretty fair idea of what a soldier's work is like.

What a magnificent spectacle the march of this mighty column presented to the eye of the novice. First the thinly scattered horsemen, stretched in long lines as far as the eye could travel; behind them lines of infantry in skirmishing order, plodding along with an appearance of irresistible determination; then the thundering artillery, with its jingling chains and cheery drivers; after them the miles of baggage waggons, drawn by mules and bullocks, making an apparently interminable tail to the fighting force as it stretched away in a cloud of red dust to the horizon.

No enemy was found as the force advanced, and at last the column came to a halt at a spot where camp was pitched for the night. Tents had been left behind, but each squadron or company pegged down beside its own transport waggons and slept on the veldt. Nor was this any hardship so long as the dry, cold, winter weather lasted, for every weary trooper slept like a log, and would willingly have lain longer, as a rule, if he had been allowed. Early hours are a feature of the soldier's life in the field, however, and reveille at two or three o'clock in the morning was the usual order. What a magnificent sight a camp is out in the open on a fine, clear night. Hundreds of camp fires, each surrounded by a group of bronzed soldiers, cooking and chatting,

shouts and choruses and laughter on all sides, make it a most exhilarating spectacle.

It should be mentioned that the Scottish yeomen were the only mounted troops, with the exception of a few Kimberley Rifles, attached to Sir Archibald Hunter's division, so that each day found them on advance or rear guard, or on one of the flanks, looking out for an elusive enemy that chose to remain invisible. The capture of the town of Christiana was the first achievement of the Fife squadron in the field. Two days out from Fourteen Streams, Captain Hodge was ordered to surround this town and search the place. It had been vacated by the Boers the night before, and in the neighbourhood traces of the recent camping ground of the enemy were plainly visible. The Fifes surrounded the place at a gallop in the most approved method, and "the citadel fell" without a shot being fired. The white flag was everywhere to be seen, and the Landrost or Provost of the town handed over the keys.

The half-hour spent in looting the deserted hotel, which belonged to a fighting Burgher, was amongst the bright, outstanding incidents of the campaign. The recollection of the sack of the cellars and cigar stores was a source of pleasure to the squadron in many a less happy moment.

The fact that Lord Roberts' main army was no further than Kroonstad at this time, and that the capture of Christiana was the first act of the war to be performed on the soil of the Transvaal, entitles the Fife yeomen to distinction. Day after day the column now pushed on through the treeless, waterless desert of Bechuanaland on its way to beleaguered Mafeking. Marching early and camping late, exposed to the broiling sun all day and to the frost at night, it is idle to deny that these were days of hardship. To make

matters worse, the commissariat was so limited by reason of lack of transport that half rations only were allowed. Two hard biscuits a day, and a tin of salt beef or bully between two, was little enough to live upon, especially as the open-air life and bodily exercise made every man as hungry as a hawk. There was no murmur of complaint, however, because every man knew that it was unavoidable.

A drink of thin coffee at three in the morning, without sugar or milk, and half of a hard biscuit, is the fare on which a soldier starts off to do a hard day's work. Every second man has his pound tin of bully strapped to the saddle, and shares this with his companion at any convenient halt in the middle of the day.

The tantalising slowness of a great column of troops was the first thing that impressed the mind of the new troopers, who, in their fond imaginings, had pictured themselves galloping about in true colonial style, and having a skirmish or a pitched battle three times a day. Instead of that, a uniform speed of two to three miles an hour, a sort of glorified funeral march, without a single shot at an enemy, was the sad reality of the business.

On the Queen's Birthday (25th May) the town of Vryburg was reached, and the Yeomanry camped in the large square or plaats, which is an invariable feature of every town planned by the early Dutch settlers. The inhabitants—those of them who were not on commando—were delighted at the arrival of the column. For six months, while Kimberley was besieged, they had been cut off from communication with the outer world, the stores had all been looted by the Boers, and they were left even without oil or candles, so that they had to go to bed at six or seven in the evening. Food was at famine prices, and the only contents of the stores seemed to be enamel paint and baby linen—neither of

which were of any service to a hungry army. The chief aim of life at this time amongst the soldiers who were exploring the town was to get enough to eat—every other idea had to take second place.

The washing of shirts in a small stream near the town occupied the spare time of many of the men during the few days' halt in Vryburg. To some of them the art of washing was almost unknown, and a great deal of humour was derived from the performance. The first step in the process was to find a rock or large flat stone to support the garment while soap was applied. The washing over, it was necessary to sit for ten minutes while the sun dried the garment, and it could then be worn again.

While the force lay at Vryburg, Mafeking was relieved by a flying column of mounted men, who had pushed on in front under the command of Colonel Mahon. The Scottish Yeomanry joined this body at Lichtenburg a few days later, and had the pleasure and advantage of working alongside of the Imperial Light Horse, a famous corps, which had gone through the siege of Ladysmith, and did splendid work afterwards in the field.

At Lichtenburg the force lay for two or three days, resting the horses and awaiting the arrival of artillery and waggons from Mafeking. A lovely old town is Lichtenburg, quiet and sleepy out there in the wilderness remote from railways, and until within the last few years almost an outpost of civilisation, where the old lion-hunting Dutchman smoked his pipe in peace. At a corner of the inevitable square was Delarey's house, the home of the daring and resolute farmer and ex-transport rider, who gave our troops many a bad half hour in the later stages of the war. Food was scarce in Lichtenburg, but an occasional loaf of bread from

the oven of some vrouw in the town found its way to the camp and was speedily vanquished.

At this time all the talk was of the proclamation of peace and the capture of Pretoria, and a mighty burst of cheering in the infantry lines one night at sundown was supposed to herald the announcement of this good news. On enquiry, it was found to mean nothing more than the issue of a ration of rum, which is invariably greeted by the troops with loud acclamation.

The pleasant, sleepy life of Lichtenburg, however, was soon exchanged for the trek once more, and the Scotsmen, accompanied by the I. L. H. and the Field Artillery, found themselves at the little town of Ventersdorp after a couple of days' forced marching, a good deal of which was done in the dark of the frosty winter mornings.

The fact that Sir Archibald Hunter and his staff pushed on adventurously and reached the town, which was in possession of armed Boers, was not generally known at the time; but it was only by a bit of bluff and presence of mind that they escaped capture by the enemy on this occasion.

Pretoria had been entered by the British, and this news was made known to the Fifes on arrival here. No one was sorry, of course, and all looked forward to the end of a war which at that time seemed to be all marching and no fighting. During the couple of days spent at Ventersdorp hundreds of Burghers came in and surrendered, and obtained passes to return to their farms after handing over their rifles and bandoliers.

The work of the campaign was not yet over, and, after two days, the company was again off with the flying column, to reach the town of Potchefstroom by daybreak next morning. Leaving Ventersdorp at three on a Sunday afternoon, they pressed on till

about eleven o'clock, and then halted for a couple of hours to rest the horses. How intensely cold it was that night out on the veldt. Few of the men, accustomed as they were to a rigorous northern climate, had ever experienced anything so terrible. A thick, icy fog hung over the face of the earth, making the darkness deeper and the going more than ever dangerous. At one a.m. the horses were saddled, and the men, who had been walking about on the frozen grass to keep themselves warm, mounted once more and groped their way along. It seemed an interminable march—on, on, in the darkness, unable to see the man alongside, teeth chattering, feet and fingers numb with the cold—every man having the impression that that night was the longest he had ever spent. The thermometer must have registered twenty degrees of frost, and everyone was longing for the first rays of the rising sun.

At last, through the darkness and the mist, the sound of crowing cocks struck gladly on the tingling ears of the troopers. Potchefstroom at last! was the thought that filled every heart with joy. After a great deal of halting and hanging about, while the day was gradually dawning, it became apparent that something was wrong. The guides had apparently lost their way, and it transpired that the village in front was Frederikstad, distant some ten or twelve miles from the destination of the column; and so, turning off at a tangent, the weary march was resumed. At eleven o'clock that forenoon Potchefstroom was reached, an escaping railway train was captured, and the town was occupied by the British amid the rejoicings of the natives and a few British residents, whose lives for some time back had been far from enviable. That was the first great night march of the Fife Light Horse, and every man hoped that it might be the last. Little did they dream that more than

a year later they would be doing two or three every week, and enjoying them as much as it is possible to enjoy adventures of this somnambulistic description.

Picquet of Fife Yeomen holding Bridge at Potchefstroom

CHAPTER VI.

OCCUPATION OF POTCHEFSTROOM.

ONE of the first proceedings on arrival in Potchefstroom was the hoisting of the Union Jack, said to be the same ensign that was hauled down in 1881, when the Boers under Kronje besieged and defeated the little British garrison in a somewhat Dutch fashion, after the arrangement come to between the two Governments at that time. The old ramparts and fortifications were still to the fore, and, whether from recollection of former times or for other reasons, an elaborate scheme of defence, which entailed a good deal of pick and shovel work on the exhausted troops, was immediately embarked upon. Day by day crowds of Boers in waggons and Cape carts trooped into the town to take the oath and deliver up their rifles, which, having been stacked and burned in the market-place, were afterwards repaired and used again by the enemy, if we are to believe the extraordinary story of De Wet in his "Three Years' War." Picquet duty at the different roads leading into the town, and occasional patrols to neighbouring farms, formed the bulk of the duty of the squadron at this time. Leaving the camp on horseback, and riding through the long, straggling town (the late capital of the South African Republic) to some bridge or outlying position on the outskirts, a twenty-four hours' picnic was spent in a delightful freedom from restraint. Every waggon or cart that came in or left the town had to be stopped and searched, and many

interesting conversations with the surrounding farmers took place. At this time the nights were intensely cold, and at daybreak each morning the ground was encrusted with hoar frost and the streams and ponds were covered with ice. No member of the squadron will ever forget the splendid picquets at the Venterskroon Road or the Meal Mill—glorified picnics they were, with plenty of firewood (not always obtainable elsewhere), and "plenty skoff" to eat, as the Kaffirs would say.

The patrols from Potchefstroom were not always so delightful, and one in particular was long remembered by the uncomplimentary name of "starvation patrol." This was, indeed, one of the unhappiest experiences of the Fifes at this stage in the campaign. Leaving the town about three one morning, without overcoats and thinly clad, the squadron rode out to the south in the direction of the Vaal river to make a reconnaissance at a drift which De Wet was supposed to be using. It was anticipated that the whole business would be over by mid-day, and that at the most it would be merely a twelve hours' affair. In the afternoon a message was received by helio to remain out all night and guard a certain drift. This was delightful; but as the men had had nothing to eat all day, and as no supplies had been brought, and there were none in the neighbourhood, it looked as if a hungry night lay ahead of them. To relate how some of them saw with eager eyes a flight of pigeons settling on a deserted cottage beside the drift—to say that each man wondered whether his hungry neighbour had observed them also—would be to give some idea of the animal side of the trooper's nature. No sooner had the shades of night fallen than that cottage was surrounded by those who had marked the possibility of a meal. Seized in the rafters, killed, skinned (for there was no time to pluck them), and roasted in the embers

of the fire, they were devoured half raw by the men with the voracity of starving animals. Let those who sit at home and live in the lap of luxury hold up their hands in horror at the picture: only those who have worked hard for twenty-four hours in the open-air without food can appreciate the irresistible craving to satisfy hunger, which becomes the leading and controlling passion of the moment. Those who were not lucky enough to commandeer even a pigeon—the men who were posted on sentry-go for example—had a forty-eight hours' fast on that occasion, which would have made them exceedingly dangerous in any poultry-yard. Another incident which made this night a memorable one in the annals of the Fifes was the fact that no blankets had been carried, as the affair was supposed to be merely a short patrol. What a cold, wretched night that was: how they crouched together for warmth in the moonlight, unable to sleep for the chattering of their teeth and the numbness of their feet. As they stamped about at daybreak trying to raise the circulation, each man had had an object lesson as an amateur soldier that will entitle Thomas Atkins to his respect and admiration as long as he lives. For these and similar hardships are borne without a murmur by our soldiers in the field, and no one ever hears a word about them.

The more the yeomen saw of campaigning, and the more they saw of the silent, passive, cheerful heroism of the British soldier, the more they admired him. Needless to say, they did their utmost to prove themselves worthy to be comrades-in-arms of these splendid fellows.

If the return to camp after this starvation patrol was not exactly in the nature of a return from the jaws of death, it was a glad release from a very painful predicament. When the men were let loose again upon their accumulated two days' rations, these were severely punished.

Many ponies were delivered up by the surrendering Burghers at this time, and remounts were plentiful for the moment. A pretty little pony, a dappled grey with a good deal of Arab blood in his veins, afterwards known to the squadron as "Chummy," was introduced to the ranks amongst these. It had carried a burly Boer through the hottest six months of the campaign, and was destined to carry one of the Fife troopers for a couple of years more. Most of the men by this time had gone through one or two remounts—a fact which was at once attributed at home to carelessness and want of knowledge of how to take care of a horse. This was not altogether the case. No doubt there were one or two who were not accustomed to grooming and saddling their own horses till they joined the I.Y., but the greater number of the first contingent of Yeomanry were practical men—farmers and others—who knew how best to preserve their mount and to make the most of it. The cause of many a sore back and many a girth-gall was to be found in the saddlery sent out, which was of the size and pattern suited to the home cavalry horse, and not the thin, wiry little ponies of the veldt, or the short, cobby little Argentines. The long, slow marches, also, and the consequent weariness of the riders making them sit loosely in the saddle, produced sore backs very quickly. There is no doubt that the rifle bucket (a leather attachment hung to the British saddles to hold the rifle) had a very bad effect in producing sores. The weight on one side of the saddle is bad of itself, but the tendency to hold the muzzle in the hand and lean on it is irresistible. The Boer system of slinging the rifle on the back was the better one, and indeed it was imitated later in the equipment of our Mounted Infantry.

Sickness began to claim a number of men, and the squadron began to feel the result of the hardships of a

campaign, as was evidenced by the gradual shrinkage in the number fit for parade. Sergeant Lumsden, who had been acting sergeant-major since Sergeant-Major Simpson's collapse, now in his turn was invalided to hospital. Several others, attacked by the cold at nights, and suffering from dysentery and other ailments, were laid aside through illness. Dysentery, that scourge of the soldier's life, had indeed never been absent from the ranks since the company sailed from Liverpool. The total strength of the company at this time—after three months in the field—had fallen below one hundred. At Cape Town, at Kimberley, at Pokwani, at Lichtenburg, derelict troopers, broken down by disease or injured by accidents, had been left behind.

Before the squadron left Potchefstroom, the first experience—one which they were to get sadly accustomed to by-and-bye—of a wet night in the open warned the men that the dry winter season would not last for ever, and that there was perhaps something worse in the way of weather than frost and cold. To waken up for the first time in life to feel the rain-drops pattering on the face, and to hear the noise on the covering overcoat, is an unpleasant surprise indeed. Combined, as it was on this occasion, with an untimely reveille and an expected attack, it was part of a disagreeable night's work; but the town was unmolested during its occupation, the Boers finding it easier to wait till the troops had cleared out, when they immediately returned and took possession. The tales that were afterwards told, when the Fifes returned a year later, of the treatment accorded to the local blacksmith because he had repaired the British pom-pom, and the beating out of the brains of the local brewer who supplied beer to the rooineks, left an unpleasant impression of Mr Christian De Wet and the ways of his commando.

At Potchefstroom, camped as they were beside the I. L. H.—hardy colonial warriors, who knew a good deal about campaigning and how to do it comfortably—the Fife men soon learned a few wrinkles that were of great service to them afterwards. The Imperial Light Horse, instead of having bulky tents, which had to be left behind, carried light, portable booby huts or bivouacs of canvas, each man bringing one-half of the structure with him if transport was scarce. In this way they were prepared for any weather, and by the help of the fur carosses which they each possessed, managed to keep warm on the coldest night. It is a strange thing that, although the British soldiers in the Crimea were tentless, while the French alongside them were snugly ensconced in their canvas huts, the British army to-day is still encumbered with heavy tents, which have to be left behind whenever any real work is to be done. The weight of a few bell-tents, wet with the dew of morning, can only be properly appreciated by carrying a few of them out of a waggon which has sunk beneath their weight into the mud. In after months, when the Fife tents had all been captured and burned by the Boers, the use of blanket bivouacs soon came to be appreciated; and, when accustomed to them, there was no desire to go back to crowded tent life again.

After a stay of a fortnight, orders were received that Sir Archibald Hunter's force was to proceed to Pretoria by way of Johannesburg. Although delighted at the prospect of reaching the goal of their ambitions, it was not without regret that the company said good-bye to the old capital on the banks of the Mooi river. The Mooi (or beautiful) river, where it splashed down by the old meal mill by the bridge leading into the town, was quite the most home-like bit of South African scenery the Scotsmen had come across, and they cherished

pleasant recollections of the picquets out there at night when the roaring camp-fire was the centre of a happy band. Kind friends at home had warned the departing troopers that they were not going out to a picnic; but, after all, the two weeks spent in Potchefstroom was probably the finest picnic in the lives of those who were there. The men of the Fifes will never forget the rambling old town, with its solitary baker's shop, where a cup of tea could be had for sixpence; its brewery, where they never seemed to brew any beer; its little ramshackle hotels, with a piano in the back parlour, and all the other little touches of civilisation that made the time pass so pleasantly. When the company left it, one hundred strong, it scarcely imagined that it was destined to return almost a year later sadly reduced by disease and death. Yet in March of the following year, after many strange vicissitudes, the Fife men found themselves enjoying a square meal in Vrouw Van Zyl's eating-house, and revisiting the scenes of their former wanderings. Where the picquets had lain out by the Venterskroon bridge, iron block-houses were then erected, and garrisoned by Coldstream Guards and other regular troops. Like every other town which had been "pacified" by the temporary visit of British troops, Potchefstroom had known the alternate occupation of Briton and Boer, and had some strange ups-and-downs before its first friends, the Fife yeomen, returned to pay it a second visit.

CHAPTER VII.

TO PRETORIA.

LEAVING Potchefstroom finally pacified and disarmed as they fondly imagined, the troops set off, well mounted and in good spirits, towards the north. The magic word "Pretoria" was on every lip, and every heart beat high. For some unexplained reason, from the very day that the squadron had left Cupar, the fondest hope of every mother's son was that he might ride in triumph into Oom Paul's capital and witness the hoisting of the Union Jack over the seat of the government of the South African Republic.

Great, then, was the delight in every mind when it was rumoured that at last the goal of every man's ambition was the destination of the column. See Rome and die is an old maxim; but in truth there were many who would have died happy, or who thought they would, if once they had ridden through the streets of the capital of the Transvaal. It had been a keen disappointment that the company had not had the good luck to be with the main body in the general advance through the Free State, and when the news of the triumphal entry of Lord Roberts' army into Pretoria reached them in the wilderness, every man felt that he had a personal grievance to urge against his fate.

Better late than never, it is true, and it looked as if the Fifes would not be so very late after all in arriving at the centre of the military universe for the time being. Trekking along the western side of the Gatsrand (or

holey ridge, from the number of meercat holes in the ground), the column made three marches towards the north and east before arriving at Johannesburg. Near Krugersdorp the column was split up—the other companies of the Scottish battalion went off with another command, and the Fifes were divorced from their brither Scots for the next ten months. The number of mines on all sides showed that the Rand proper had been reached, and soon the waterworks of a great city warned them that the column was approaching the golden gates of the premier town in South Africa. Everyone was on the *qui vive;* Kimberley had been disappointing, and no town worth calling a town had been encountered since. It was natural, therefore, that some interest should be expressed in Johannesburg, a place of which so much had been heard at the commencement of the war, and indeed for several years. It was hoped that the column would halt on the outskirts, and that an opportunity would be allowed to inspect the city. It seemed impossible that the stores could be empty in such a large place, and everyone had hopes that he would be able to replenish his slender stock of foodstuffs from the shops and warehouses.

When the town was approached it became apparent that no halt was to be made; and at last the column entered the streets and wended its way to the other side of the town. Certainly it was a finer city than Kimberley—the streets were broad and well planned, and the buildings had an appearance of solidity and comfort that was conspicuous by its absence in any other South African town they had been in. The plate-glass magnificence of some of the large stores had quite a home-like European look. Alas! to our chagrin, they were all more or less empty. The usual plethora of enamel paint and uneatable haberdashery

was there, but little or nothing of the more useful nature of matches, candles, or sugar. After a brief halt in a small open square, the column again moved on, and finally, having left Johannesburg behind, camped on a slope beside the Simmer and Jack gold mines. The camp was a long way from water, and it was late in the evening until the tea was boiled, and the men were "down to it," as soldiers term it. A very expressive and reasonable term this "down to it," for it is manifestly absurd to talk of going to bed when there is no bed. The soldier, when he is rolled in his blanket and big overcoat, with his head upon his saddle, is simply "down to it," and is delighted so to be. His only nightmare is a sudden reveille in the middle of the night, a weary stand to arms in the moonlight, or a sudden night march or patrol. Defend him from dangers such as these, and he is as happy—aye, and happier—than many a luxurious sleeper in a well-appointed bedroom.

Next day the march was continued, and the column camped midway between the two towns—the capital of commerce and the seat of government. When, on the 2nd of July, the march was resumed once more, it was generally known that this was the last lap to Pretoria, where everybody understood that, after a grand review of some sort, the Yeomanry would go down country and embark for home. Extraordinary rumours of all sorts are a regular feature of the soldier's life on active service. This is explained to some extent by the fact that there are no newspapers, and therefore no authentic information. The result is that anyone who is gifted with a brilliant imagination can set afloat a plausible story, which soon gains general credence, and often is so magnified and altered as it passes from one regiment to another that the author has difficulty in recognising it when it finds its way back again.

The want of newspapers and the want of mails from home at this time was almost a greater hardship than the scarcity of food and water. For a couple of months the men had been cut off from the outer world, and for a much longer period from any news from home. One of the curious results of being in a country where no daily paper was published was that nobody knew the day of the week. Many a debate arose as to whether it was Sunday or Wednesday, and the matter had to be left to some man with a diary for decision.

The Fifes were on the left flank of the column on the last day's march to Pretoria, and as the convoy was winding its way down the centre of a narrow valley, they were over the hilltops and out of sight of the waggons and main body. On every side were evidences of the recent general advance of Lord Roberts' army. The air was heavy with the stench of putrid carcases, and the vultures, flapping lazily overhead or hopping amongst the ant-hills, had a leisurely, satisfied look, as if they were enjoying a time of prosperity and plenty.

As the day advanced, and it became evident that Pretoria could not be far off, all eyes were strained in the direction which the column was taking to catch the first glimpse of the place which so many had travelled seven thousand miles to see. There can be no doubt that the entry to the capital of the Transvaal was regarded as the climax of an enterprise which had drawn men from their peaceful homes and daily occupation, and for which they had left friends and family to undertake a long and adventurous journey over land and sea. Pretoria was the loadstone which had fired their curiosity and aroused their passions; that had impelled them to engage for a time in the almost forgotten art of war. Now it was within a few miles—a few hours at the most and they must reach it—and a feeling of exultation and

indefinable happiness pervaded every mind. The very horses seemed to feel the magnetic influence of the moment, and to step out with unusual briskness.

The scenery was becoming every moment more Scottish in its character, the long valley through which the column had been wending became a rugged highland glen, and at every sharp turn in the road the waggons and water-carts were in danger of falling over the edges into the mountain stream which rushed amongst the rocks some fifty feet below. Winding down this rugged gorge, it soon became apparent that screens and scouts could no longer be of service, and gradually the whole column, flankers and all, found themselves riding on the narrow track alongside the buck waggons.

Suddenly, on rounding a corner of jagged rocks, Pretoria, lying right below in a hollow at the foot of the hillside, burst upon the gaze. From the distance, seen as it was in a sort of bird's-eye view, the details of the scene were criticised and commented on. The Government buildings were immediately located towering in the centre above the heads of the surrounding houses. The Union Jack floated proudly over all with a quiet dignity that seemed to infer that it was quite at home again after an absence of twenty years. Soon the column was meandering through suburban streets, flanked on each side by prim and comfortable-looking villas situated in beautiful gardens, and many of them occupied by officials and officers of the new *regime*. The camp at Arcadia, one of the suburban slopes, was reached without passing through the centre of the town, so that no particulars of the shops and stores had yet been gathered. Every man, of course, was bent upon a voyage of discovery as soon as leave could be obtained, and the chief aims of life at the moment were to buy

matches and sugar, and to see Oom Paul's house. In the first they were doomed to be disappointed, for matches and sugar were not to be had for gold; but Oom Paul's house was there, and the first man who returned and reported having seen it was regarded as having achieved the main object of life.

Just at this time of year (July) the weather was exceedingly cold, and life in the open was not an ideal existence. Cloudy skies and cold winds, that reminded the troopers of March winds at home, were the order of the day. Sickness became more prevalent, and one or two more men were carried off to hospital. The camp was well supplied with water, and rations were plentiful, with the important exception of sugar, which, as already mentioned, was not obtainable. It was extraordinary to note the craving for anything sweet which developed in full-grown men after a few weeks of a sugarless life. Later in the campaign bronzed and bearded soldiers might be seen at the Field Force canteens buying quantities of Turkish delight at the price of a shilling for a small box.

The one great compensation in the campaigner's life was tobacco. Boer tobacco, in large cotton bags, was easily obtained as a rule, and pipes were lit first thing in the morning, and only laid aside last thing at night. The open air rendered tobacco smoking perfectly innocuous, and as the company was now supplied with tents, each evening found the men trying their utmost to get up a home-like atmosphere of reek. This was not easy, as the smoke seemed to evaporate through the canvas and disappear as fast as it was emitted.

Every day there was talk of peace proposals and terms of settlement. One forenoon a gay cavalcade rode past the lines, and it was announced that General Botha, with an escort of lancers, had come into Pretoria

to discuss matters with our Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts. What came of that conference is matter of common knowledge. Soon it became evident that the capture of Pretoria and the proclamation of annexation would not be accepted as final by the Boers. Ugly rumours floated around the camp of stores of provisions and extensive fortifications in the Lydenburg hill district; but it was hoped that, as organised resistance must be at an end, the Yeomanry and irregulars would be allowed to depart in peace, while the regular army was left to finish matters up. These surmises showed a lack of appreciation of the real position. Two years later raw irregulars were raised to assist to bring the war to a close. The original Yeomanry, who volunteered at a time of crisis, and who left their occupations and their homes for one shilling a day, were beginning to think that, when police duty began and the period of organised war seemed at an end, they would have the option of going home to attend to their business. This proved to be a fallacy.

Marching orders were received after a stay of three days in the capital, and as the Fife men turned their backs upon Pretoria late one afternoon and trekked away from the railway, it became apparent that the Lydenburg hills story might not be without foundation. Marching orders, as is usual in active service, had come very suddenly, and those who were in the town on pass had some difficulty in being ready for parade. The sun was low in the sky when the outskirts of Pretoria were left behind, and, trekking till midnight, the company camped with General Hutton's brigade, which it had been ordered to join, at a spot called Reitfontein, some thirty miles south-east of Pretoria.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FUN BEGINS.

GENERAL HUTTON was in command of a brigade chiefly composed of mounted irregulars —New Zealand Rough Riders (or Roost Robbers, as they were more often called), Australian Bushmen, and other equally serviceable corps—so that the Fifes on arrival found themselves in good company. Their old friends the Imperial Light Horse were also there, and, as usual, were bearing the brunt and sustaining casualties at the hands of the enemy. General Hutton's brigade numbered 5520 men, including 1520 mounted troops and 26 guns. On 6th July, when the company joined, the enemy was reported on the Standerton road. Driven out of Pretoria, they were apparently determined to continue the struggle and to resist the advance of the British along the railway line to Delagoa Bay. It became a question, therefore, of driving them from position to position, and gradually forcing them towards the Portuguese border, where it was hoped they would have to surrender.

Unfortunately, the first position they occupied was a very good one, and proved a hard nut to crack. They were supposed to number 4000 men, with 15 guns, at this time, and were in command of Louis Botha, whose headquarters or hooftlaager was at Bronkhorstspruit. This spruit, which was several miles south of the railway station of that name, was the scene of a disaster to a body of our troops under Colonel Anstruther (a Fife

man) twenty years before. The Boer forces held an almost impregnable line of good positions round this centre on a front of fifteen miles, and every attempt to break through or to drive them out seemed to be unavailing. On the first day after their arrival with General Hutton, the Fifes, who were out reconnoitring, came suddenly under a brisk fire from the enemy, when the first shots were exchanged and a rapid retirement effected with the loss of one horse. This loss of a horse and saddle was the first casualty sustained by the company in the field, and the plight of the trooper, whose heavy overcoat had to be left behind, was calculated on these cold nights to bring home to him the hazards of war. Covered with old sacks, he presented a cold and shivering spectacle at sunrise next morning.

'A detachment of the company was told off at this time to escort a convoy of waggons to the town of Springs and bring back supplies to the column. It was a bullock convoy, and, as a consequence, moved at night and rested by day. Starting at eight o'clock one evening, it had hardly gone a mile before midnight, thanks to the darkness and confusion, and Springs was not reached until the sun was high next morning. The night was bitterly cold, and the movement of the lumbering ox waggons was so tediously slow that it made the march seem doubly long. When the troopers plodding along on the flanks began to find their feet and hands numb with the frost they dismounted and marched on foot. There was a body of active service Volunteers marching on foot with the waggons—London men of some Middlesex regiment—who seemed to be even more sorry for themselves that night than the Yeomanry. Even when walking briskly it was impossible to keep warm, and walking with a heavy overcoat and cartridges and rifle is by no means an amusing form of exercise.

Springs was ultimately reached, and it was generally agreed that a few hours' sleep would be a good thing while the waggons were being loaded. The return journey was begun the same afternoon, and the troopers set off happy in the possession of a quantity of tinned meat and other stores that would command any price when the column was reached once more. Later in the campaign the acquisition of supplies from the A.S.C. was the accomplishment of every self-respecting soldier, especially when riding in support of the rear-guard. This job entailed the work of dealing with broken-down waggons; and on one memorable night march, when a waggon had tilted into a donga that ran alongside the road, a great haul was made by the company by the aid of the "moonbeam's misty light." To this day some of them must reproach themselves for the pillaging of the M.I.'s jam supply; but of course anything is fair in time of war, and the M.I., good men though they were, had no soul above making away with the supplies of their friends of the I.Y. when they had the chance. To the uninitiated, it should be explained that during the war large numbers of infantry soldiers were mounted on ponies, and became Mounted Infantry or M.I. They were as fine men as were to be met in the field, and although their knowledge of horsemanship left a good deal to be desired, they made up for this by their other many good qualities.

On 7th July the Boers had concentrated their attention on the force under Mahon, who suffered heavily, losing two officers and six men killed and eleven wounded of the I.L.H.—the total list of casualties for the day being two officers and six men killed, one officer and twenty-eight men wounded.

The following day Botha attacked with an increased force, estimated at about 6000; and when it is remem-

bered that their alignment round Hutton's position covered a circumference of twenty-three miles, it may be to some extent realised what a task he had. A strong flanking movement on the right towards Springs, led by Commandant Dirksee, was checked by the New Zealanders, the 20th Company, and G Battery R. H. A.

For the next few days Hutton held his own, and on the 10th of July General French, with Colonel Porter's brigade of cavalry (about 1000 strong), joined, and French took over command.

On the 11th a successful engagement took place, the cavalry on the right, Hutton's main force in the centre, with Mahon, Alderson, and Pilcher on the left. The ridges had just been cleared when, at two o'clock, orders came for Mahon and Pilcher to return to Pretoria with their respective commands. Grobelaar and Delarey were threatening all along the Magaliesberg range, had taken the post at Mazilikats Nek, composed of Lincolns and Greys, and had attacked the troops at Watervaal.

On 15th July the company was ordered back to Pretoria, and, leaving their colonial friends with unfeigned regret, they bade farewell to General Hutton and his brigade; not, however, before the General had congratulated Captain Hodge on the way his company had done their duty.

It was while the company was attached to the Colonial Brigade that a well-known corporal of the Fifes, who possessed in rich measure the brogue of his native land, asked a sergeant-major of a regular regiment to which he and some others were attached the famous question—"Dae ye no blaw a trumpet in the mornin'?" So long as any member of the 20th Company lives he will remember the account of the sergeant-major of the line and his expression when he was asked this simple question. Another account of how the worthy corporal

surprised some English Tommies, who were relieving his guard, by the stentorian command—"Auld gaird, shoother airms!" is not so well authenticated.

Humorous incidents and sayings were so scarce at this stage that anything in the nature of a joke was repeated on all sides and made as much of as possible. An amusing story in connection with the colonials has the merit of absolute truth. One of the Australians, determined to have a mount, had the audacity during the night to commandeer one of General Hutton's chargers, and when his servants commenced to search for it, and officers commanding regiments ordered its return, the Australian, who had docked its mane and tail, and otherwise altered its appearance, removed it to the New Zealanders' lines and tied it up there. It is said that the General, when it was recovered, ordered the New Zealanders to parade, and informed them that he could not blame them, as their fathers had been horse-stealers before them, and it was well known that what was bred in the bone would come out in the flesh.

A member of the company attached at this time to the New Zealand Rough Riders had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the enemy, and the following description of how he fared may be of interest:—

"Having walked into an ambushed picquet of the Johannesburg Police, who were concealed amongst the rocks on top of a kopje, we were taken to the hooft-laager or headquarters camp to be dealt with by the Commandant-General, Louis Botha. Crossing the river at Bronkhorstspruit, we came upon a small group of Boers squatting on the grass beside a tent close to the spruit. In the background was a goedkoop winkel or cheap store, shaded by a few trees. In the centre of the group of Boers was a dark, bronzed man of somewhat better appearance than the rest, to whom our escort

raised their hats. We afterwards found that this was Louis Botha, their commander-in-chief. He was dressed with more neatness than the average Boer we had seen, and wore a clean linen collar. A Norfolk jacket and Tyrolean hat formed part of his costume, and he was smoking and reading a book at the moment we approached.

"After a few remarks, and a little joke about a Scotch yeoman without a kilt, we were marched off to a waggon and driven over to the railway station of Balmoral, whence we were taken by train to the prison cage at Nooitgedacht, near Barberton.

"This prison was a mere open-air enclosure of four or five acres of ploughed land, in a deep valley, surrounded by hills 5000 feet in height. It lay between the Delagoa Bay railway on one side and the Crocodile river on the other. At the time of our capture there were 1800 British prisoners there—a ragged, half-starved, merry crowd of Tommies of every branch of the service. Their miserable plight, herded night and day in an insanitary enclosure, did not make them less cheerful. The fact is, it takes a lot to depress Thomas Atkins, and the worse his plight the better his spirits as a rule. When rain poured and sleep was impossible in the open, they marched up and down singing gay choruses and enjoying themselves immensely. The scarcity of firewood was the worst feature of life in the Boer prison. The scanty rations issued consisted of mealie meal or maize meal and rice, and as these required to be boiled, firewood was a necessity. Once a week a number of logs were thrown into the enclosure, and a terrible scramble for possession of them invariably followed. The prison was surrounded by two fences of barbed wire, an outer and an inner fence, about ten feet high, and between them a mesh of crossed wires made escape impossible. This

stockade was lit at night with electric lights, worked by a donkey engine, which was used during the day to grind mealies. Sentries were posted at intervals round the outside of the enclosure with Mauser rifles, which they were continually letting off by accident, to the great danger of everyone near them. The commandant in charge of the prison, a Boer called Grobelar, had an unpleasant way of ordering the sentries to charge their magazines and present their rifles at the mob when the prisoners in their scramble for firewood were inclined to press on the inner fence. On one or two occasions (as when an Irish fusilier hurled a brick at the commandant) a volley was fired over the prisoners' heads, and this had a wonderfully sobering effect on the crowd. The rule was that no man was allowed to come within a yard of the fence, and several men were fired upon with blank cartridge to impress this rule upon the memory. One prisoner (a colonial) suffered a good deal from the wound made by the wad of a blank cartridge which lodged in his leg. Another was almost blinded, and had his pipe broken by this playful trick. The principal occupation of the 1800 prisoners during the day was the washing and cleaning of their shirts, for they were much afflicted by the presence of many energetic little friends, who often made sleep at night impossible. Even a daily washing was no remedy for this state of affairs, and sunset invariably witnessed a renewed outbreak of hostilities and a great deal of bad language. At night the Burghers' laager adjacent to the prison sent forth the sounds of the Boers' psalm-singing aad evening devotions, and the sentries round the wires sat beside small lion-scaring watch-fires and indulged in the singing of doleful dirges of a religious nature. To lie awake in a ploughed field at night shivering with cold, exceedingly hungry, and tormented almost beyond endurance by

the incessant irritation of vermin, while a sentry with a loaded rifle raises his voice in devotion and praise, is an experience calculated to make a man a scoffer at religion for the remainder of his life. Never, let us hope, will 'Man's inhumanity to man' be shown by our countrymen as it was by the Boers to their prisoners in the cage at Nooitgedacht. Captives and prisoners of war do not expect luxury or even comfort, but surely they are entitled to look for that amount of consideration that is commonly given to a dog or other dumb animal by its master. The condition of a regularly fed, well cared for animal in a menagerie was an enviable one compared to that of the British prisoners of war. They could not fail to contrast their plight with the fate of the Boers in the refugee camps which they saw after their release. Housed in spacious marquees, living in an unaccustomed atmosphere of enforced cleanliness and sanitary decency, the occupants of the concentration camps belied by their own looks of cheerfulness the extraordinary stories of a section of the British public.

"The food supplied to the British prisoners was barely enough to keep them alive. A saucerful of half-boiled mealie porridge in the morning and a saucerful of boiled rice at night was the allowance, which only made the prisoners feel more hungry. The cooking was done in the New Zealand mess in an old kerosene tin taken from a midden, and for which one of the sentries who fetched it received a shilling. Plates and spoons were unknown, but substitutes were found in old sardine tins, and one of the few occupations of the prisoner's life was the making of wooden spoons. It was delightful to get anything to do in these days, for there was nothing to read and nothing to talk about except the prospect of release.

"At daybreak one morning about the end of August

a low, dull thud was heard like the sound of distant thunder. Many of the prisoners sat up and listened. Ten minutes later a faint boom again sounded in the distant hills. Many argued that it must be a gun; others declared that they heard nothing. By this time, however, dozens of men were standing almost holding their breath in their eagerness to catch the sound. Again it sounded, faint and distant, but undoubtedly a gun, and from end to end of the enclosure went up from 1800 British throats a rousing British cheer. In a few hours the sound of several guns could be distinctly heard, and at intervals the hillsides rang with the cheers of the delighted Tommies. The Boers began to wear a troubled look. Like the prisoner of Chillon—

> 'A kind of change came in our fate,
> Our keepers grew compassionate.'

"For three days, from sunrise to sunset, the ground shook and the air vibrated with the glad roar of the relieving artillery, and every heart beat high in anticipation of freedom. Naval guns, field guns, and pom-poms kept up a mighty chorus, and with a wicked satisfaction the prisoners noted the rumbling Red Cross trains full of dead and wounded Boers that passed the prison two or three times a day. Oom Paul passed down the line, and addressed the Burghers at the little wayside station as he fled. A common chorus of the prisoners in the evening was an original rendering of 'Old Cock Robin,' with the refrain—

> 'And the Boers in their laager were a-sighing one and all
> When they heard of the flight of old Oom Paul';

and certainly his hurried disappearance from the scene was rather a blow to them.

"The trains on the railway were now all running in one direction, away from the British, and the dead and wounded were coming down in coal trucks. They will

not stand, was the firm conviction of the prisoners, as they heard and saw the evidences of the punishment they were receiving.

"A perfect Barnum's show was now hurrying down the valley past the prison—waggons with women and children, furniture and bedding, and all their household goods. Kaffirs driving pigs and poultry, sheep and goats, and every kind of live stock. A small boy riding a donkey trotted past the fence with the cheerful remark, 'Khaki no catch me,' which delighted the prisoners enormously. They were lined up at the fence enjoying the procession as if it had been organised for their amusement.

"Soon the whole of Botha's army was flying helter-skelter. They had stood obstinately for three days in the face of 30,000 troops and 50 pieces of artillery, but at last they could 'stick it' no longer.

"The first, of course, to fly (they were always the first in retreat, the Boers confided in us) was the dastardly Irish brigade, distinguished by the green ribbons round their hats. When the Irish Fusiliers and Irish Yeomanry saw them approaching they were received with howls of execration, and it looked as if the prisoners were to break out and beat them with their fists. Never did men look more like whipped curs than Colonel Lynch's Irishmen as they led the retreat. The Burghers assured the prisoners that these men had always been first when it was a case of looting a store or getting away from the enemy.

The Burghers were now coming down in thousands, the valley was filled with smoke—for they burned everything they could not get away—and the gates of the prison were thrown open. Viljoen, standing in a Cape cart, implored the prisoners to return peaceably to their own army, and with a wild cheer at the regaining of

their freedom, the prisoners advanced in 'column of lumps' towards General French's camp. This was still some ten miles distant, and soon the weak and emaciated prisoners began to fall out by the wayside. Many were unable to continue the march, and had to be brought in on ambulances. A few days later, the prisoners were paraded in their rags before Lord Roberts, who was accompanied by Lord Kitchener, his chief of staff, and Generals Buller, French, Ian Hamilton, and Pole-Carew. Thereafter the prisoners were entrained for Pretoria, where they were provided with good food, and equipped with clean clothing and blankets and drafted back to their own regiments. They had had a taste of brother Boer's hospitality, and had received an instructive lesson in his ways of behaving when he had the upper hand."

CHAPTER IX.

A TREK IN THE BUSHVELDT.

ARRIVED at Pretoria late in the evening after a hurried march, which resulted in one good horse, at least, dying in the streets of the town, the company joined the command of Colonel Mahon again, and was attached to the 7th battalion, consisting of Devon, Dorset, Somerset, and Sussex Yeomanry. It was with this battalion of south country farmers that the Fifes were to see the greater part of their service. To the Sussex squadron they were destined to be even more closely allied than to the others, as both were, after a few months, so reduced in strength that they formed one composite company in the field. No better companions could have been wished. In the life of a campaigner there is much opportunity for a man to know his fellow-men: they eat together, and work together, and sleep together. Society, which at home is divided into families and villages, is divided in the field into messes and commandos, and each member of a force is brought into continual contact and closest intimacy with all the others. A great deal depends, therefore, on the kind of men who compose a squadron or a regiment. It may safely be said that, if the Fifes had searched through the 200,000 men who composed the South African field force, they could not have chosen better travelling companions than the 7th battalion. Not only were they the sort of men to make life in camp cheerful, and to render a long trek less monotonous, but when the sterner work of war

was taken in hand, and the Mausers began, they proved themselves worthy companions, and men to be relied on in moments of emergency. After nine or ten months of service together in almost daily contact with the enemy, the Fifes parted with their southern friends with the greatest regret, and without ever having had the shadow of a quarrel with them.

Colonel Mahon's force was now augmented by the arrival of two new squadrons of Yeomanry, the Rough Riders from London, who had come straight up country by train to Pretoria, and then took the field for the first time. These new chums, called by familiar abbreviation "the Roughs," did not at first belie their name. They had the misfortune to go through their initiation into the art of war a few months later than their already seasoned comrades. Naturally they commenced at the beginning, and appeared in the heavy dragoon style with a superfluity of hay-nets, shoe-cases, and other useless pieces of impedimenta. The result was that, when they set off at a trot, such trifles as tins of bully beef and other extras that were loosely strapped to their saddles shook off on all sides, to the delight of the men who followed in their wake and reaped the harvest.

On a Monday morning in the middle of July the force moved out in the direction of Middelburg, on a memorable trek to Balmoral, a town on the Delagoa Bay railway. They formed part of a division under Hamilton which drove the Boers back from the right flank of their positions east of Pretoria. The 7th battalion on this march did a great deal of scouting and drawing fire when the troops approached the kopjes, which were exceedingly plentiful in these parts.

One story at the expense of the Rough Riders afforded much amusement to the Fife squadron. The enemy had opposed the advance, and a brisk shell fire

was being kept up between the two sides, when orders were given that a certain position must be taken at once. It may here be stated that the Fifes had galloped another position some hours before, and were occupying it with a view to keeping off the enemy. An officer of the Rough Riders now galloped up, and, waving his hand in the direction of the kopje where the Fifes were posted, announced in a loud voice—"The General says that kopje must be taken. The Rough Riders will take it." Putting spurs to his horse, he galloped with the whole squadron towards the crest, and suddenly came upon one of the Fife number three's, or men in charge of horses, who was having a shave by way of passing the time. Their disgust when they found that their gallant charge was all in vain was added to by the good-natured chaff of their Fife friends, who asked them if they had come to relieve them, and whether they had brought their rations, &c. History does not relate whether they found another kopje and performed another charge.

After a week's marching and fighting, the force, which had halted at Bronkhorstspruit for a day, pushed on to Balmoral, which had been hastily evacuated by the Boers on their approach. The account of the column's entry into Balmoral was a sad one. In the afternoon rain began to descend in torrents, a cold wind arose, and in an atmosphere like that of a Scotch November day the Fifes plodded along through the mud and waded their horses through rushing streams. Night fell and darkness came on while they were still miles from their destination.

Meantime the long column of supply waggons which they were escorting found it increasingly difficult to make progress on the heavy roads of puddled clay, which each waggon made more impassable for the following one.

The thunder roared, and it was only by the vivid flashes of lightning that it was possible to see the struggling teams of mules and bullocks as they ploughed their way through the stormy night.

It was almost midnight before the Fifes, wet and exhausted, reached the camping ground of the column, and what a scene of confusion it was when they got there. The wind howled, and almost drowned the noise of cracking whips and yelling Kaffirs. Men rode about shouting to find out where their own contingent lay. Many did not reach their own lines till morning, but anchored to the first waggon they could see. Several soldiers and Kaffirs died of exposure to the weather before daybreak, but the tremendous loss of transport animals was not realised until the force returned by the road it had come. This it did after a day's rest, having been recalled to Pretoria to meet some new move of the enemy. On returning it was found that the whole road on both sides of the way was strewn with the carcases of mules and bullocks, and that at least two hundred animals had perished in the endeavour to reach Balmoral. Needless to say, when the South African sun beat down as it did upon the return journey, the air, to use the expressive phrase of Thomas Atkins, "fairly hummed."

The company, glad to forget this unpleasant experience, reached the capital again on the last day of July, and were reviewed with the rest of the force by the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, in the Market Square. Camping in the outskirts of the town, the afternoon was spent in the issue of remounts to those whose horses were no more, and thereafter orders were issued that reveille would be at four next morning. "Reveille at four; march at five," was invariably the telegraphic form of orders for the morrow at this time.

Colonel Mahon now left Pretoria, and advanced in a westerly direction towards Commando Nek. Within eight miles of Pretoria some Boers in a fruit farm opened fire on the screen, but were soon dislodged. That night the force camped beside an orange grove, and men with sacks and nose-bags were busy gathering quantities of ripe fruit and taking them back to camp. Those who do not know the thirsty climate of the veldt will be astonished at the confession of one man, who admitted that he ate thirty tangerines before he off-saddled. Next night the force joined Ian Hamilton's great column, with its square miles of troops and camp fires. During the following two days the Fife company was beautifully ambushed by a party of Boers, whose laager lay behind a kopje. The Fifes, advancing with scouts out in approved fashion, reached the deserted laager and pushed on across a stream, when the enemy suddenly poured in a volley and scattered them. Three horses hit and one man's hat shot was the not very serious casualty list. In a short time the Boers were driven off, and a large number of waggons, cattle, &c., captured.

The force was now on the heels of De Wet, who was encumbered with an enormous waggon laager, which, as he has since admitted, came very near costing him and his entire force their freedom. Seeing that he was closely pursued, and that it was merely a matter of time till his laager fell into the hands of the British, the wily Boer leader made a rush through Oliphant's Nek, and was hurrying into the Bushveldt, where he hoped to take advantage of the nature of the country to elude his foes.

This Bushveldt is a vast waterless country, perfectly flat for the most part, and everywhere overgrown with stunted old trees of the prickly mimosa variety. The movement of a column in this country is exceedingly difficult, as it is impossible to follow a straight course.

The waggons and horses had to dodge about and seek a way where it could be found. To collide with a mimosa tree on horseback is an experience that will be long remembered by the unfortunate person who does so. They are not unlike the elder tree in appearance, but are literally bristling with long, sharp spikes like darning needles, which will tear the clothes and scratch the eyes out of the person who is foolhardy enough to embrace them. As a horse only allows for its own height, and has not the sense to know that its rider requires a little extra headway, the result of falling asleep in the saddle in the Bushveldt was extremely unpleasant.

De Wet, having reached this part of the country, contrived to hide his laager in some isolated and unlikely spot, and made off south with a small bodyguard to the Magaliesbergs, which he crossed at a place called Blok Kloof, afterwards well known to the yeomen.

Meantime the Fifes and their friends, who had been living on the produce of the country as they came along —rations having given out—arrived at a place called Warmbaths, where hot mineral springs afforded the men the unaccustomed luxury of a hot bath. A long row of one hundred bathrooms, each containing a bath well supplied with hot and cold water, was eagerly besieged by the troopers, who found their British instinct of cleanliness reasserting itself after a few months of enforced disregard of practices that are said to be akin to godliness.

Lumsden's Horse, a corps of tea-planters from India, were also with Mahon's corps, and as some of the yeomen had brothers and cousins amongst them, visits to each other in camp were frequent. After twenty-eight days of a wild chase after De Wet, the force returned to Pretoria, and the slippery Boer leader crossed into the

Free State, and metaphorically put his fingers to his nose at the Fife Light Horse. A terrible loss of horse-flesh on both sides was the result of this excursion into the Bushveldt, and the Fifes were almost altogether dismounted. Several of them had been without horses for some time, and had occasion to curse De Wet and his Burghers as they trudged along on foot at the rate of thirty miles a day. If anything was likely to make a man careful of horse-flesh this was. One member of the company, Trooper Renny, who had taken ill at Warmbaths, and was sent down to Krugersdorp by bullock waggon on the railway, had died there before the company returned to Pretoria. He had been more or less unwell from the day he had set foot in the country, but as he was a big strong fellow, no one imagined that he would collapse so quickly when enteric seized him, and the news of his end was received with sorrow by his companions. By this time men were dropping out almost every week, and the squadron was formed into two troops from the remains of the original force. Heavy rains at night and no tents on the trek accounted for many cases of fever and rheumatism.

CHAPTER X.

WITH CLEMENTS.

THE beginning of September found the Fifes in Pretoria again, and wondering what the next move of the wonderful war game was to be. Remounts were issued on a Sunday, and next day the composite battalion was off to join Clements' column, which was operating in the Rustenburg district of the Transvaal. A halt for the first night was called at Rietfontein, a large depôt for stores at that time, about twenty miles west of Pretoria, close to the Magaliesbergs, and within range of Nitral's Nek and Commando Nek, the scene of one or two exciting incidents in the war. Trekking up the Hekpoort valley, which lies along the south side of the Magaliesbergs, between them and the Witwatersrand, the yeomen joined Clements' force, and found them suffering from the polite attention of the merry band of snipers who were in the habit of keeping the outposts busy at this stage. Next morning reveille was at four o'clock, and the force marched up the valley—the mounted men clearing the low ground, and the infantry on the kopjes and hills on either side; but the snipers were not to be deterred by tactics of this sort, and kept up a continual and irritating opposition to the advance from every coign of vantage.

The approach of the yeomen in extended order to a bare, grassy kopje near Hekpoort met with a warm reception, and one of the Fifes (Trooper Mundell) was wounded in the shoulder. The Rough Riders had two or three casualties on this occasion.

This is one of the great lessons of modern war—the utter impossibility of any living creature approaching a few well-placed rifles without cover. Even if the rifles are lying on the open veldt it is impossible to get near them, and equally impossible to locate them. At Belmont and Graspan this was proved, and it has been proved hundreds of times since. Six men on a hillside may baffle six hundred men for hours, unless they can be surrounded. A rifle firing smokeless powder from behind a rock, and killing men at 1500 yards, is the difficult problem of war. Shells do it no harm, no amount of fire will locate it, and until it is laid by the heels it continues to kill. This feeling of being hit in the chest by an unseen foe, who is merely represented by an acre of rocky hillside, is the one that takes all the old ideas of courage and chivalry from the present-day battlefield. War is becoming more and more a game of skill, and less and less an affair of personal strength and courage, although these qualities still tell in favour of the side that possesses them. The invention of a noiseless rifle will be the last straw that will make the soldier's lot an altogether unenviable one.

The column camped early on this occasion, and the yeomen had just finished their midday dinner, when bang went a Boer gun on a distant kopje, and with a long wail and a wobble a shell fell into the camp. Soon they were dropping gaily on all sides, and the British cow-gun and field battery took up the challenge, and were giving a good account of themselves. The Boers shifted, and for a time all was peaceful. Suddenly from another point on the horizon the boom of a Krupp gun broke upon the silence of the hot afternoon. This time they had got the range very accurately, and began to throw in shell after shell in rapid succession from a position about 6000 yards off the camp. The shrapnel

burst several times right over the Fifes' horses, another burst amongst a group of men to whom Corporal Cargill was issuing corn, but no damage was done, although a piece of the shell actually buried itself in the sack of oats with which he was working.

So far as the Fife men could see, shell fire never did any damage on either side, and merely served as an agreeable interlude to liven the soldier's life. "It isn't that they do much harm," said the General, "it's their beastly moral effect;" and this might have been witnessed that afternoon as the Fifes ran to gather up the broken fragments to preserve them as trophies.

On the 10th of September a stiff encounter with Delarey took place at Boschfontein, and the Fifes and Sussex had their full share of all that was going. Pom-poms, field guns, and Maxims were all at it hammer and tongs, and the yeomen who were in front had a very trying day in the heat of the sun and under a heavy fire. The Worcester Regiment had a dozen casualties in this little encounter, but the loss of the I. Y. was confined to horse-flesh.

On the following day the column halted, and next day a start was no sooner made than the Boers barred the way from a ridge of kopjes that ran across the valley. A regular bombardment ensued, and the fight lasted all day; but the Boers stuck to their position till nightfall, when they retired.

The Fifes had no sooner reached camp next day than they were ordered out to clear some Boers from a river bed in the vicinity. Two troops went out, and were divided into three parties—one to lie in wait, while the other two commenced at different points to beat up the bed of the river till they met. The move proved entirely successful, and several Boers and their horses were hands-upped.

Almost a week later, after a few days' halt at Hekpoort, a little village on the Crocodile river, a Sunday reconnaissance was undertaken by the mounted men, when the Fifes and Sussex got into a hot corner—the Rough Riders having retired from a position on their right and allowed the enemy to close in on them. Lieutenant Stanley, of the Sussex, a brave officer, and a well-known cricketer, was shot through the head, and was buried next day. His grave was dug in the garden of a Scotchman's house, by the side of a stream, where the willows and blossoming peach trees cast their pleasant shade. Sewn up in his brown military blankets, he was borne to his last resting-place by the men of his squadron, several of whom had been at Eton and Oxford with him in former years.

At this time General Clements' column was co-operating with a force under Colonel Ridley. Enteric, that scourge of armies in the field, had been claiming many victims, and a waggon train containing thirty sufferers was despatched to Pretoria.

In the beginning of October the force returned to Commando Nek, and mails from home, the first for many months, were eagerly seized upon, and newspapers and letters—luxuries almost forgotten—were read and re-read with the keenest enjoyment. Horses were beginning to give out again under the strain of the continual marching and counter-marching over rocky hills and rough ground. The news of the departure of the C.I.V.'s (the London Volunteer force), and the imminence of the rainy season, tended to make the men somewhat discontented with their lot.

A grand drive over the Magaliesbergs—in which the bulk of the hard work fell to the infantry, while the mounted men had short marches and many farms to search—dispelled the temporary grumbling or grousing

which always asserted itself when the column camped for any length of time in one place. Keep the soldier moving, and give him plenty of fighting and hard work, and he is the most cheerful and contented man on earth; but lay him up at a base depôt for a week, and he becomes a miserable and discontented wretch.

On the conclusion of this drive, which resulted in the capture of a number of Boers, the column camped at Nooitgedacht, on the south side of the range, a spot which was to witness a sad tragedy some three months later. Here the Rough Riders left the command and returned to Pretoria, and the Yeomanry were joined by many of their original comrades, who had been doing police duty in the capital.

Rations were now becoming more plentiful, and besides an increased allowance of biscuits, tinned jam and bacon were added to the soldier's fare, so that he began to put on flesh again. Clements was a very popular general with the men of his own column, and this was in no small measure due to the fact that he fed them well. Thomas Atkins is essentially a practical man, and has no appreciation for the higher qualities of his leaders unless they give him plenty to eat. A large capture of Boers was a very satisfactory announcement to the troops, but it was not received with more enthusiasm than the intimation of a tot of rum all round or a special issue of jam. Only those who have lived upon the plaster-of-Paris variety of army biscuits for a few weeks can understand how glad the soldier is of anything with a flavour.

If the writer was asked what was the saddest sight he had seen during the South African War, he would say that nothing had brought home to him the reality of war so much as the sight of a little toddling child at a farm near Hekpoort trying to nibble the corner

off an army biscuit. To see children who have been deprived for months of such necessaries of their life as sugar and jam, and who are reduced to sucking a hard dog biscuit, is to realise that war is a cruel and wicked method of settling international disputes. It was comforting, to some extent, to reflect that it was our obstinate enemies who were alone responsible for the prolongation of the conflict.

The yeomen were now detached from the rest of the force to hold a mountain pass in the Magaliesbergs called Blok Kloof, the narrow defile or bridle path that De Wet and his bodyguard crossed when they escaped south into the Free State. His account of the passage of this mountain gorge is to be found in "Three Years' War." As all the other possible neks in this range were securely guarded, it was resolved that no further body of the Boers should use this route, so the yeomen were stationed at the foot of the kloof, and had to send up strong picquets morning and night to do sentry-go on top of the hill.

It was a lovely camp at Blok Kloof, a perfectly ideal spot for a picnic, and it would have been a picnic had it not been for the picquet duties, which came round every second day and night. The annual rains were now in full swing, swamping the camp every twenty-four hours, and this rather spoiled the pleasure of life in the open.

At the foot of the precipitous rocky mountain side was a more gradual slope of grassy ground, beautifully shaded by a belt of mimosa trees that fringed the foot of the hills. Although only at the beginning of the real ascent, this grassy camping-ground was several hundred feet above the valley, and quite concealed by the scattered bush. The tents, of course, could not be pitched in army fashion in regular lines, but were scattered among the trees in the most refreshing dis-

order. The waggons were drawn up on an open bit of green sward, and the whole camp had the air of a gipsy encampment rather than that of a military force. During the day those who had been on picquet the previous night had nothing to do but lie about and sun themselves, and smoke their pipes over the newspapers of three months before, that had only been read three times over. To learn to appreciate a newspaper properly it is necessary to be cut off from all reliable news of the world for several months, and then to be suddenly presented with a paper not older than last year's issue. The smallest patent medicine advertisement is not overlooked under these circumstances, and the greatest interest is manifested in all that takes place in the native kailyard of the reader. The only serious occupation in these pleasant days at Blok Kloof was the drying of blankets in the sun. It was a proceeding in which there was not a great déal of satisfaction, for the blankets were as certain to be wet again very shortly. The reason for this was that the rainy season had now fairly set in. Every afternoon about four o'clock a great fleecy cloud began to gather in the west. Gradually it grew bigger and bigger until it resembled great mountains of cotton-wool, and in another hour the whole face of the heavens was overcast, an ominous silence hanging over the earth. The very animals seemed to know that something was about to happen, and even the birds were silent in the branches. Suddenly a wild blast of icy cold wind swept through the camp and rattled in anger against the flapping tents. It was as if the windows of a warm room had suddenly been thrown open on a winter's night. Then close on the heels of this icy breath came a mighty rush of storm-wind, tearing up tent pegs, scattering camp fires, and hurling sand and stones along in its wild career. All hands manned the

tent poles, and for a minute it was a struggle between them and the fury of the gale. In another moment this outrider or advance guard had passed on, and the main body of the storm prepared to deliver the attack. Everything by this time was hidden in the inky blackness, and it was difficult to distinguish the trembling horses as they stood with their hind-quarters to the advancing storm preparing for the onslaught. Suddenly a lurid glare of lightning flashed across the heavens, and in another moment a crash that made the very hillside tremble broke upon the ear. Flash after flash in rapid succession played round the horizon, crash after crash of thunder echoed down the hillsides, and in blinding sheets the torrential rain poured down with an irresistible violence that mocked the tents and trenches of the wretched soldiers. Never was a homeless dog more miserable than Thomas Atkins in one of these dreadful thunderstorms. Never was shelter more desired or more impossible of attainment. Soon the camp was running like a river, the horses had pulled their pegs and were stampeding in front of the blast, and men were wandering about with their blankets carefully rolled in a waterproof sheet, wondering how long the storm would continue. As a rule, the sky cleared about midnight, and the moon and stars looked down through the clear frosty air upon an indescribable scene of muddy devastation. On a sloping hillside things were not so bad, for the rain ran off as fast as it fell; but in a camp on the flat it was often impossible to find a dry spot anywhere to anchor down for the night. Every afternoon, after a day of great heat, these thunderstorms swept over the country, and made life in the open or under canvas anything but a pleasure. After a few months in the field, however, men became inured to these continual drenchings, and managed to swim along wonderfully.

Had it not been for the continual climbing of the steep heights with blankets on back, and the wet, cold sentry-go up beside the chattering baboons, life at Blok Kloof would have been thoroughly enjoyable. The baboons not only gave the midnight sentry a good deal of anxiety by rattling the rocks and stones down the hillside, but they infested the immediate neighbourhood of the camp, and were to be seen amongst the trees and rocks in the quiet sultry afternoons when it was a pleasure to lie and bask upon the grass. Bees were numerous, too, in this camp, although seldom met with on the veldt. Their nests seemed to be in the trunks of the old trees that grew at the foot of the hills, and during the day tents were buzzing with the noise of their wings as they wandered in and out beneath the curtain. At Blok Kloof, in spite of the weather conditions, the health of the company was fairly good, but one old campaigner, who had been through the Matabele war, had to go to hospital, much against his will.

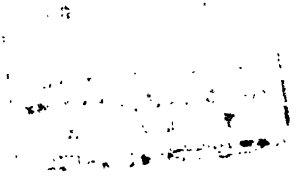
Suddenly the order came one afternoon to rejoin Clements' column, and just as the daily thunderstorm was gathering the waggons were packed and the little force set off towards Damhoek, near which they were camped. How it poured that night. Overcoats were sodden and heavy, boots were full of moisture, the whole valley was inches deep in water, and in the gathering darkness the little force of Yeomanry pushed on, wondering how long it would last. Several drifts had to be crossed, and as the rivers were swollen by the rain on the hills the crossing of the waggons was attended with some difficulty. In the end one of the waggons (a Somerset one, badly loaded and rickety) broke down or lost a wheel, and had to be left in the stream all night about a couple of miles from camp.

Out all night beside a drift, doing sentry-go over a

broken-down waggon, some of the Fife men had time to reflect upon the wickedness of their Somerset friends, who were unable to pack a waggon properly, and placed all the weight upon the front wheels. This sort of job was one of the penalties of rearguard work, but there certainly was some compensation to be derived from a midnight attack upon the Somerset rations. Early next morning the waggon was repaired, and the men who had been left to guard it were ordered to camp as the column was about to march.

During the night a strange accident happened to one of the Fife tents, which had been pitched in the dark, and as the ropes were tight and the rain heavy it was not to be wondered at. As the inmates were lying asleep inside on the swampy ground the cap of the tent burst with a report like a big gun, and the tent slipped down the pole on top of them; but they did not allow this to interfere with their night's rest, and crawled out at daybreak next morning from beneath the wet canvas.

Soon the sun rose, the waggons were loaded up, the men stood to their horses, and the column began to get under weigh. At the last moment it was decided that the Somersets were to be left behind on account of their wretched transport, and for the future the 7th battalion consisted of the Devons, Dorsets, Sussex, and Fifes.



From a Photo by W. M'D. STUART

Captain Chapell Hodge

CHAPTER XI.

DEATH OF CAPTAIN HODGE.

THE column now set off in the direction of Krugersdorp, and the first obstacle that retarded its progress was a deep drift, with steep, muddy banks, where the transport animals had very little footing. The South African rivers, as a rule, flow through a deep cutting in the soft clay soil of the valleys, and their banks are very often twenty or thirty feet high, and almost perpendicular. When a road or track crosses them, a steep descent to the river bed is generally followed by an equally steep climb on the opposite side. After one or two waggons have crossed, the water is worked up on the opposite bank by the feet of the bullocks and the waggon wheels, and soon the road is converted into mud and slime. As the other waggons come along the mules or bullocks lose their footing, slip on their knees, and the great rumbling waggon comes to an anchor in the bed of the stream. Drag ropes, pulled by a line of men, and sometimes the team of another waggon, have to be called on to assist when this happens. The noise the Kaffirs make on these occasions is indescribable and fearsome. Standing in two lines on each side of the drift, and some of them in mid-stream up to the waist in water, they endeavour to get the waggons across by dint of mere voice power. Waving whips and sjamboks over their heads, they bring them down on the backs of the struggling team or on each other, and give forth wild war-whoops calculated to terrify the most

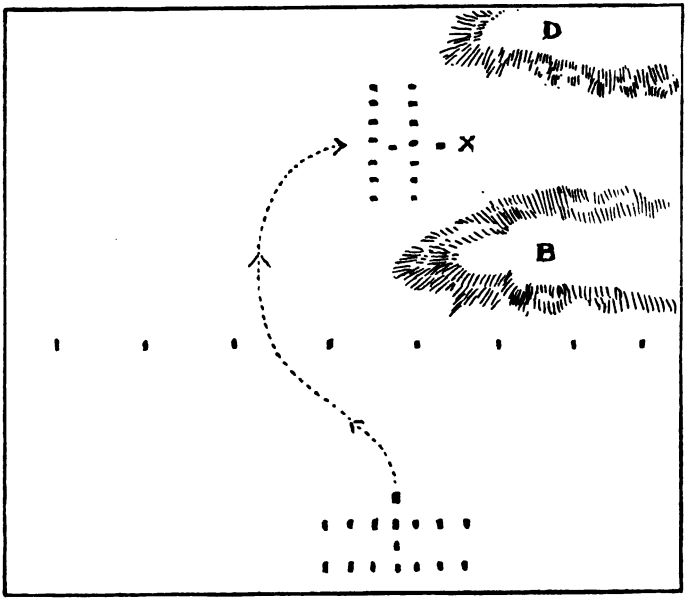
hardened bullock in the span. Ike—ike—ivā-ā-ā! they shout, and down comes the mighty whip, like the cast of a salmon rod, on the backs of the team; every muscle and nerve is strained, and, unless the chain breaks, the mighty waggon lurches out of the river bed and creaks up the banks to the veldt above. At some drifts every waggon has to be double-spanned as it comes along, and considerable delay to the progress of the column is the result. Occasionally a waggon breaks down in mid-stream, or sinks in the muddy bottom, and has to be unloaded, and all the sacks of oats and other contents carried up the opposite banks before it can be moved.

On the occasion in question two or three hours saw every wheel across the river, and the trek was resumed. The Fifes were on the left flank, and were very busy driving off cattle and sheep, for they were now being cleared by the columns in order to impress the Boers with the folly of further resistance. From every farm and glen another herd of live stock was added to the lot, and as many as 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 head of sheep were driven in on this excursion.

Camp was pitched that afternoon at a place called Hartley's Nek, in the Witwatersrand hills. It was a splendid spot for a camp, and at a large mill close by a store full of Boer tobacco was largely patronised by those whose supply of smokeables was running short. There was a good flowing river here too, where the unaccustomed luxury of a bathe was indulged in before sunset.

An early start was made next morning, and as the Fifes were advance guard, they had to be off first to screen the movement of the column. It was known that the Boers were in the neighbourhood, and the pack horse with extra ammunition was ordered to follow up the company in case of need.

About ten or eleven in the forenoon the screen of scouts approached some broken, rocky ground on the right front, when the enemy suddenly opened fire. The scouts galloped back under a regular fusilade of bullets, and got out of range without any casualty. Captain Hodge was riding at the head of the support, which consisted of the half of the Fife squadron that was not on the screen, and when the Boers opened fire from the position B on the accompanying sketch, he received orders to gallop round in a wide semicircle and get behind the enemy's position.



The two troops, riding at ten paces interval, as was usual in supporting a screen, went off at a gallop, and in a few minutes, as it seemed, rode down the grassy slope at the back of the rocky kopje. A Boer was seen galloping away as they approached. Another kopje in

rear of the first position was on the left, and, as they were about to ride in between the two positions, Captain Hodge halted and ordered scouts out ahead before going further. No sooner had his hand gone up to signal a halt then every rock and bush on both sides and in front seemed to open fire on the little band of halted horsemen. The ground simply boiled with bullets, falling like raindrops on the surface of a pond. The order, "Files about—gallop!" was hardly needed, for every man knew at once that a moment's delay in such a storm might be his last.

As the bullets whisked past on both sides of their heads the horses shot off like arrows in a neck and neck race up the slope. Even they, poor animals, seemed to know that something was wrong, and that it was a time to show their mettle. Hardly had they started when the captain's charger, with empty saddle, galloped past, and showed the others a clean pair of heels. When the bullets began to fall astern and the fire slackened, Lieutenant Purvis and some others immediately went back to find Captain Hodge, and came upon him grievously wounded where he had fallen at the first volley. He was immediately carried to the shelter of a Kaffir kraal close by, his wounds were attended to by the doctors, and an ambulance was sent for. The bullet had entered the small of the back, and, emerging at the shoulder, had penetrated under the jaw and passed through the cheek. It was hoped, however, that the Captain would recover, and he appeared to be fighting bravely against his sufferings.

That night the camp was pitched at a place called Cyferfontein, and it was reported that two or three had been killed by snipers that day. A woman had been taken prisoner with a rifle in her hand on one of the kopjes on the flank. Naturally she was an object of

some interest as she came into camp, and everyone was anxious to set eyes on this modern amazon. She was of enormous size, must have weighed close on twenty stone, terribly ugly, and absolutely shapeless. She wore the usual black dress without any waist, and a black kappy or sun-bonnet such as is worn by all the Dutch women in South Africa. Her feet were covered with veldt schoon, a sort of heavy clogs, and she was innocent of stockings. From the appearance of this good vrouw, it was evident that her time might have been better spent in having a wash than in shooting at the rooineks. The Boers, even where they live near a running stream, seem to have a strange distrust of cold water, and in this respect resemble our lowest class at home. By calling a perfectly harmless little stream Crocodile river, they excuse themselves for giving it a wide berth.

Next day the column marched off early, and did a good deal of farm-clearing and forage-burning. This by way of a lesson to snipers. Needless to say, the Fife men did not adopt any half measures, and the satisfaction with which they set fire to forage and waggons and other belongings of their fugitive enemies was increased as they thought of the bullets that were continually coming from behind rocks and trees and whizzing past their ears. They had come out to fight, not to be shot at by an enemy they could not see, and the result was that they let off their feelings in the way of bonfires and cattle-lifting with the greatest pleasure.

Camped at Vlakfontein that night, it was reported that Captain Hodge was not so well, and the company turned in for the night with heavy hearts.

Next morning, at half-past four, the stable guards announced reveille, and as the troopers emerged from their tents to feed their horses they were informed that

their captain was no more. It was indeed a dismal morning: the sky was murky, the rain poured down, and the great black clouds were hurrying over the face of the heavens. A feeling of depression seemed to settle on every man as he went about his duties: for months past the company had been a sort of happy family, and now it felt as if the head of the family was gone; but there was no time to be lost, for already the column was on the move. The Fifes were rearguard this morning, and had an hour's grace, in which the funeral of their leader must be conducted. A wooden cross was hastily improvised, and in a drenching rain and cold wind the little procession started from the Red Cross tent to the spot beneath the great acacia trees where the grave had been prepared. Sewn up in his brown military blanket, and borne on a stretcher, the form of Captain Hodge was lowered by the surcingles of his sorrowing troopers into a soldier's grave.

Firing three rounds into the air, the grave was carefully marked off with stones, the cross placed at its head, and the rear screen mounted and trekked on, knowing well that in a few hours the hand that laid their captain low would be gloating over the evidence of its handiwork.

Down came the rain in torrents, the cold wind howled, and the whole face of the earth was like the surface of a muddy pond. Soon it became evident that the waggons could not struggle along much further through the mud and wet. After a trek of ten miles, in which it was with the greatest difficulty that the horses could be made to face the storm, the column came to an anchor at Leeuwfontein (Lion's Spring), where even a lion would have refused to sleep on such a night. There was not a dry spot anywhere, and tents were erected in the mud, and an effort at cheerfulness was difficult indeed. By night-

fall the storm redoubled its fury, tents swayed and groaned, blankets were soaked and clothes sodden, bullocks roared piteously around the laager, and everyone longed for daybreak.

At last daylight came, but brought no intermission in the storm. The camp was a dreary spectacle in the cold grey light of early morning. Scarcely a horse was left in the lines. The soft ground, trodden into a quagmire by restless hoofs, had failed to hold the picketing pegs, and the wretched horses had stampeded in all directions. Round the camp carcases of dead bullocks and horses showed that the storm had told its tale. It looked as if the column would be storm-stayed in this filthy swamp. Fortunately, by ten or eleven in the forenoon, the sky cleared a little, orders were given to inspan, and a move was made to better ground. A trek of four miles brought the force to a dry slope, where tents were pitched and blankets dried, and a waggon was despatched for wood to make a fire. Fires or hot coffee had not been possible for twenty-four hours, and a warm drink and a baking sun soon revived the dejected soldiers. When the waggon returned laden with oranges from a neighbouring grove, the heat was so great that a little ripe fruit was very refreshing. It is a curious country South Africa—a country of extremes. Yesterday it had been as cold as a Christmas day in the old country, this day it was warmer than a Scottish July.

CHAPTER XII.

NOOITGEDACHT (NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN).

LEAVING Leeuwfontein after a three days' halt, during which forage patrols and other duties fell to the lot of the Yeomanry, General Clements set off on an excursion in the direction of Zeerust, and a great deal of burning and clearing was undertaken in the direction of Elands river. Long treks and hard work began to tell upon the horses, and scarcely a day passed but some member of the company had to say good-bye to his tottering old Bucephalus. To lead a horse aside from the column and blow its brains out behind a bush was a job that many had to undertake when their horse had knelt down to say its prayers three or four times in half an hour. After collecting tremendous herds of live stock (acres of cattle and square miles of sheep was the only way to measure them), the column made for Krugersdorp, and was sniped into the very outpost lines of the town by the indignant Boer, who had heard the lowing of his flocks and herds with sullen anger when he realised that they were surrounded by an armed screen of rooineks. In case anyone should be ignorant of the origin of the word "rooinek," it should be explained that when a Britisher arrives in South Africa the sun immediately attacks the back of his neck and makes it a fiery red, hence the name of red-necks, which the Boers substituted for the old name of rooibatjes or red-coats, by which they called the British soldier at the time of Majuba.

A week in the middle of November was spent in Krugersdorp, an ugly little mining town of modern growth, with little of the attractiveness of the old Dutch villages. In "The Dive," an underground restaurant, a sort of local "Trocadero," the luxury of a square meal proved a great attraction. There was little to be seen in the town, and beyond a few clothes-lines for guy-ropes and a few pipes, there was nothing to be had in the way of stores. The horses were rested, however, and grazing guards were out every afternoon while they roamed at will across the veldt. A pond of water close to the camp was reserved for drinking purposes, but by taking an empty biscuit box and filling it with water a bath of a sort was possible. Many of the troopers paid a visit to the local cemetery, where Trooper Renny had been buried three months before.

Suddenly, at two o'clock one morning, an unexpected reveille was announced, and in the inky darkness of a wet night tents were hastily struck, horses up-saddled, and preparations made to march. The enemy were reported to be in force near at hand, and General Clements was ordered out to greet them at daybreak. The Fifes were on the left flank, and as soon as the first streak of dawn rendered them visible to the snipers, they began to send bullets whisking past the flankers' heads. It was useless to stop and fire back, as they could not be located, so there was nothing for the men to do but march on stolidly and use bad language. It was a very one-sided game this of riding about the country to be shot at by a hidden enemy. Soon the firing in front of the column developed into a regular attempt to oppose the march, and after a heavy Mauser fire for some time, the pom-pom began to bark and the field guns threw a few shells against the kopjes. The enemy fell back, and a position was reached where the water supply and the

lie of the land made a suitable camping-ground. As the force was reaching this spot several shots were fired from the vicinity of a farm-house, which was at once demolished by the guns, and when it was surrounded by mounted men several women-snipers were captured with rifles in their possession.

Next day the Boers sounded reveille by a brisk shell fire from their Krupp guns, directed evidently at the heights round the camp, where the artillery was posted. Their shots were pitched a trifle high, and passing over the tops of the kopjes, fell close to the lines of the tents and horses. There was no time for any thought of breakfast, but saddling up in haste the yeomen were mounted and away to support the guns. Within five minutes of the bursting of the first shell the men were holding their horses on the slopes, where the artillery were getting to work, and awaiting further orders. Meantime "Weary Willie," the big cow-gun, had wakened up, and the hillsides trembled as the gunners pumped lyddite into the enemy's position. "Let 'em 'ave some sugar in their coffee, Bill," one cheerful gunner was saying to another as he staggered along with another shell.

The Yeomanry were standing on a wide, grassy plateau alongside the guns, where the Boers on the opposite heights must have seen them. Suddenly, without a moment's warning, the sound of a pom-pom rang out from a nek between two hills, and in another moment the scream of approaching shells began to make the horses cock their ears. Rat-tat-tat-tat went the pom-pom, the shells howled and whistled like the wind in the rigging of a ship, and before the Fifes had time to realise it, the shells were bursting in a long line about fifty yards off. Another belt followed, and immediately landed at their very feet. The order was at once given

Group of Company taken at Krugersdorp a fortnight before the Battle of Nooitgedacht

to lead the horses under cover, a matter of 500 yards, and as they walked off trying to look unconcerned, the earth was literally ploughed up and thrown about by these infernal missiles. No man cared to mount and trot off, but the slow journey on foot was a most unpleasant one. When at last the squadron got under cover, some of the men were covered with dirt thrown up by the shells, and everybody marvelled at their escape. Men who could hardly be accused of cowardice were a sort of pale green in colour, and no one professed to have enjoyed the entertainment.

Fighting was continued till midday, and then a mounted patrol was sent out, which did not return till sundown. It was a long and hungry day, but there never was a merrier band than the Fifes that night when the tea-dixies were brought from the fire, and the rations having been vanquished, pipes were lit and talk of hairbreadth escapes and strange experiences went round the tents.

Next morning, at two o'clock, the force stood to arms, and in the forenoon, the Boers having apparently cleared, moved on to Rietfontein (another of the many Rietfonteins), and so, after a few more days of sniping and fighting and farm-burning, back to Krugersdorp once more.

The camp this time was pitched near the town on the ground of the very diamond mine where the Jameson raiders surrendered. New clothes and hats were issued to the ragged warriors, and the squadron was so pleased with the unwonted respectability of its appearance that a local photographer was commissioned to take a group of the company on the last few plates which he possessed.

In a few days the order came to trek once more, and the column set off to its old familiar haunts in the Hek-

poort valley to tackle Delarey. On the 1st of December Krugersdorp was left behind, and on the 9th the column camped at Nooitgedacht to await reinforcements, as it was reported that Delarey was in command of a large number of men. Clements' column at this time numbered only 1200.

For several days the column lay at the foot of the Magaliesbergs in helio communication with Commando Nek, which in its turn was in communication with Pretoria. The intelligence department promised a daybreak attack each morning, and although the force stood to arms before daybreak every morning, no attack was made. The niggers were beginning to be discredited, and it was generally supposed that Delarey was not anxious for a fight. The Boer laager was situated about ten miles off amongst the hills, and, according to report, they were making no warlike preparations. Little did the British know that Delarey had sent an urgent message to Beyers, whose commando was north in the Bushveldt, to come and help him to overpower General Clements' little force. This was the explanation of their apparent inactivity, and already 2000 mounted men were trekking from Pietersburg to co-operate with Delarey's commando of 1500 in a grand assault-at-arms.

The British camp lay on a grassy slope between the valley and the steep Magaliesbergs that rose a thousand feet high behind the camp. The rocky slopes were surmounted by a long cliff of rocks, somewhat resembling Salisbury Crags in Edinburgh. On the top of this cliff the Northumberland Fusiliers, nearly 400 strong, were posted to protect the camp from surprise. On the other side the hills sloped very gradually to the Rustenburg valley.

At earliest dawn on the morning of the 13th De-

cember the camp of the slumbering rooineks was awakened by the rattle of Mausers on the hillsides. The camp resounded with cries of "Stand to your horses," "Saddle up," "Inspan," and a dozen other calls of alarm. Every trooper's ear knew well the sound of a Mauser, however, and no warning was necessary to rouse him. Every man knew by instinct that the promised attack had come at last. In three minutes horses were saddled and men were standing to arms. The firing ceased, and an eerie silence supervened. As some were beginning to think that they had been aroused by a mere outpost disturbance, and that no serious attack was meditated, the solemn silence was broken abruptly by a rattle of musketry, and the hilltops rang from one end to the other with the noise of battle. The storm had burst, and soon the dropping bullets falling over the steep cliffs at the back of the camp announced that the enemy's firing line was not far off. The order was given to lead the horses up to the foot of the hills, where they would be out of danger. At the same time the waggons were got down the slope into the valley below. The yeomen were ordered to climb the hill by a kloof or gulley where a small stream trickled down from the top, and an effort was made to send up ammunition to the Northumberlands above. As soon as the mules carrying the ammunition reached the top of the kloof and crossed the skyline, they were caught by the enemy's fire. Lieutenant Gilmour and ten men of the Fifes, who had volunteered to climb the hill, were recalled, and orders were given to get the horses away through the camp into the valley. Captain Purvis, who had been in command of the company since Captain Hodge's death, had meantime led the rest of the Fife men up the hill by another route, and the Devon and Dorset companies were also ordered to make for the heights.

As the camp was being rapidly cleared of horses and waggons, the rattle of rifles on the top of the hill never ceased for a moment. Soon it became evident that the British fire was slackening, and that the Mausers had the upper hand. A heavy fire was poured down from the cliffs into the camp beneath, and there was then no doubt that the Boers had overpowered the Northumberlands and were in possession of the summit.

The camp was now swept by a regular hailstorm of bullets, and the attack had been developed on the other side of the valley—indeed, the Boers seemed to have drawn a circle round the little force. The field guns were ordered to shell the ridge of the hills with shrapnel, but they might as well have tried to stem the tide of victory with a fire-hose. A Boer dressed in khaki had been standing at the top of the kloof waving his arm and urging the yeomanry to hurry up or they would be too late. Scrambling up the hillside over bush and boulders, the willing men of Fife and Devon were being mercilessly shot down by a cross fire from the cliffs above. A staff officer reached the skyline and fell heavily to the ground riddled with bullets. Lieutenant Campbell urged his men on, and as he clambered up breathless and excited was shot through the head. At the same moment Captain Purvis fell to the ground wounded in three places, and when the lyddite shells from the big gun began to pound the hillside in a vain attempt to hold back the enemy, it looked as if every man must be annihilated.

The Boers were now behind rocks within twenty yards of the yeomen in the kloof, who had no cover beyond what the long grass afforded them. Crawling on hands and knees, and shooting as they advanced, the men showed no sign of breaking, and, indeed, retreat would have been certain death. Walker fell back across the

body of a firing comrade, Wilson's throat was lacerated by a bullet, Matthew and Mudge died without a word, and Grant had his arm shattered and lay groaning behind a rock. It was a terrible moment, and one that the survivors will never forget. When it became evident that further resistance was useless, Bonthrone rose and held up his hands in token of surrender. He was at once shot in the spine. In another moment the light of heaven was suddenly obscured by the bursting of a lyddite shell, and when the clouds of green smoke cleared off the sergeant-major was seen to be lying in the bed of the stream, where he had been hurled by the force of the explosion. Blinded and deaf, he lay for several hours in a pool of water, and felt the effects of the shock for weeks afterwards.

By this time the Boers were swarming past our men, the few survivors having thrown down their rifles in despair, and were pressing on to the camp. Of the fifty yeomen in the kloof thirty were killed or wounded and the rest were taken prisoners.

In the valley below things were little better. Colonel Legge, commanding the mounted troops, had been shot revolver in hand at the very outset. General Clements was giving hurried orders to his brigade-major, when the latter was struck down by an expanding bullet, which killed him instantly. Soon the whole of the staff, with the exception of Captain Carr, had been put out of action, and the General was left to direct the fight almost single-handed. Great difficulty was experienced in removing the cow-gun. As fast as the oxen were inspanned they were shot down, and at one time it looked as if the gun would have to be abandoned. The General insisted on its removal, however, and after serious loss of life and a marvellous display of cool courage on the part of the artillerymen, the lumbering

"Weary Willie" was drawn out of range by a half-dozen of the fine team of black bullocks that belonged to it. A waggon of ammunition had to be left behind, in spite of the brave endeavours of Sergeant Pullar and six men of the Fifes to remove it.

The waggons and other transport were now lying in a small grassy hollow in the centre of the valley, out of rifle range, but perfectly visible to the enemy. They were huddled together in inextricable confusion—roaring ox-teams, mule waggons, ambulances, water carts, and led horses—a regular chaos of noise and disorder. The Boers opened fire from the end of the valley with a Krupp gun, and shrapnel began to burst overhead. The Kaffirs went mad with terror, the wounded animals roared and bellowed, horses plunged and reared, and it looked as if the last scene of the drama was to be enacted here. Another moment and the shrieking of pom-pom shells as they swept down the hollow added to the horror and confusion. Filling the air with their tumult, they tore through the canvas covers of the waggons and plunged amongst the terrified animals, causing awful destruction. The climax had been reached, and without a moment's warning the convoy set off in a mad rush down the valley. Cracking their whips and yelling like madmen, the natives lashed their teams into the open valley, and by so doing only offered a better target for the enemy's guns. Eight or ten abreast, the waggons raced neck and neck until they crashed one after another into a deep, marshy donga that lay across their path. It was a moment of indescribable confusion. Waggons were overturned, loose teams were charging in all directions, and for a time it looked as if the fight was to end in a general rout. Fortunately the stampede was arrested by men galloping after the waggon boys with revolvers, and threatening to shoot them if

they did not return. The Boer pom-pom was put out of action by a shell, and this also helped to restore the balance of the fight. Meantime all the guns had been safely withdrawn from the camp, thanks to the heroism of the gunners, who, in one case, pulled a field gun down the hill by hand when the Boers had approached to within fifty yards of it. Hour after hour the battle raged furiously, and men fell so fast that the ambulance parties could not cope with their work. The Boers, encouraged by their success, pressed on all sides, and the circle of fire grew ever narrower.

At four o'clock in the afternoon an organised retreat was commenced, and flank screens of the infantry were thrown out on each side of the valley. The mounted men acted as rearguard, and several casualties were sustained in effecting the retreat. As the column moved off down the valley the Boers followed up and attacked it from every available position. By six o'clock the sun, which had beaten down fiercely all day, sank behind the hills, and when darkness set in the fire of the Mausers ceased. The stars came out, and in the silence of the retreat the men had a first opportunity of thinking over the exciting events of the day. None of the party that had climbed the hill had apparently escaped, but it was only at roll-call next morning that the true state of affairs could be known. At midnight the big gun stuck fast in the river bed, and it required two hours of the hardest work with drag-ropes and implements to bring it along. At sunrise next morning the column halted at Commando Nek, beneath the shelter of position guns and batteries manned by a British garrison.

The Fifes were now a little band of twenty-five, the sole representatives of the fifty men who had stood to arms the day before. Busy Red Cross parties were sorting out the wounded from the dead, while the sound

of pick and shovel in the distance beat sullenly upon the early morning air. It was a solemn roll-call, and it is not likely that those who were present to answer their names will ever forget that day, or the bravery of their less fortunate comrades who had been called on to give up their lives for their Queen and fatherland.

Where so many displayed the highest courage, there were one or two acts of conspicuous bravery performed that day that will live in history, and one of these is the story of how Sergeant Farmer, of the Cameron Highlanders M.I., won the Victoria Cross. A picquet was being hotly engaged by the enemy, when a detachment of Camerons, numbering fifteen, under Lieutenant Sandilands, and including Farmer, marched out to their relief. Arriving on the spot, they found most of the picquet killed or wounded, and the remainder fighting against desperate odds. The enemy, who were hidden behind trees, waited until the relief party advanced to within twenty yards, and then opened a deadly and murderous fire, killing two and wounding five men, including Lieutenant Sandilands. Seeing his officer wounded and bleeding on the ground, and knowing too well that if he were allowed to remain where he was he must surely die, the gallant sergeant went to his assistance, and succeeded in carrying him to a place of safety amid a perfect hail of bullets. Having seen his officer carefully looked after, with what appeared to be certain death staring him in the face, Farmer returned to his sorely-pressed comrades. They fought on, but at length were compelled to surrender, and so in one day Farmer had gained the V.C. and was taken prisoner by the enemy.

A Tent at Krugersdorp

Scott Braes Walker Sturrock Macdonald Campbell
Dugdale Gosling Haines Anderson Matthew M'Grady

CHAPTER XIII.

A LITTLE BAND AND LOWLY.

GENERAL FRENCH was now despatched to clear the Boers from the position won at Nooitgedacht, but the Yeomanry, being so reduced in numbers, and so handicapped for want of transport and stores, were sent in to Rietfontein to be re-fitted.

The wounded men of the company who were lying in the open on the field of the battle relate how the Boers were busy fortifying and entrenching the position they had taken, and how this work was superintended by French and German officers in their service. When the British forces returned they got a warm reception, and fell back for a time with considerable loss. The Boers, however, had lost heavily on the 13th, and had been busy bringing their dead and wounded down from the hills on the backs of their ponies. Some idea of the intensity of the fire in the camp on the day of the fight may be gathered from the fact that the pet monkey—that had been with the Fifes for several months, and was chained to a tree in their camp—was wounded in three places. When it was found the Red Cross party bandaged its wounds, but it escaped and made off to its native hills.

With the renewed attack by General French we have no concern, for the small remnant of the 20th Company was now at Rietfontein awaiting the issue of blankets, overcoats, forks and spoons, and other necessaries. On the 16th Trooper E. A. M'Grady, who had been lying

ill in Clements' camp before the attack, succumbed to enteric fever. No member of the company was a greater favourite or more deservedly popular with his companions. Every man felt that he had lost a good friend, and that a brave and reliable member of the company had gone. His funeral took place in the afternoon, and Lieutenant Gilmour, the sole remaining officer of the company, read the burial service. He was laid in a soldier's grave at the foot of the kopje which lies in the centre of the valley, about twenty miles west of Pretoria.

The company was now without tents, and as it was midsummer the sun was intensely hot during the day, while heavy rains were still of nightly occurrence. Blankets were issued to the men, and this enabled them to erect bivouacs or booby huts to protect them from the weather. Christmas was spent at Rietfontein in this way, and, thanks to the kindly forethought of Lieutenant Gilmour and Sergeant Pullar, some semblance of conviviality was possible. A concert, attended by all the troops in camp, was held that evening round a camp fire, to which each member of the audience had to contribute a precious log of wood. On the 29th of December the Fifes moved off with a column under General Cunningham, and proceeded by night march through Commando Nek into the Rustenburg district, north of the Magaliesbergs. The force camped next morning on the slope of a solitary hill in the centre of the valley, by name Wolhuter's Kop. Here the company's lines were pitched beside a battalion of Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, and as many of these were Fife and Forfar men, the New Year was brought in in good company.

The Boers, under Delarey, were not far distant, and a very ugly position some ten miles up the valley was said to be strongly held by them. This position, called

Buffelspoort, was to be attacked by General Cunningham in a day or two, and reinforcements were hourly arriving, until his column must have numbered 3000 men. It was not very reassuring to see the mounted infantry being taught to ride in a riding school in the centre of the valley, where they were trotting round morning, noon, and night. This was field-training with a vengeance, and no doubt Delarey's men, with their telescopes, were criticising the various styles of horsemanship. These mounted infantry were being formed and equipped on the spot from the foot battalions in the field.

At midnight on the 3rd of January the column commenced to march against the Boer position, but not before large fires had been lit throughout the camp to provide coffee for the troops, and incidently to warn the Boers of their approach. At daybreak, after six hours' slow marching, the Boer position loomed immediately in front. The column, which had been bucketing along a narrow track through the thick bush, now debouched on the open veldt and advanced against the kopjes in battle array.

Line after line of mounted men were extended for almost five miles against the front of the position. The Fifes were in the second line from the front, and every man listened impatiently for the first report of a rifle to announce that the fight had begun. On these occasions the anticipation was worse than the reality; and to creep up on horseback beneath the beetling crags that might at any moment ring out with the report of the enemy's rifles required more heroism than was needed to gallop a position in the heat of a fight. In the present instance the suspense was long and agonising, and it was only when the position had been thoroughly overrun that it was ascertained that the birds had flown. Buffelspoort was taken without any opposition, to the disappointment

of those who had been looking for what was called a "scrap."

The column remained here until a very heavy convoy of provisions had been taken through to Rustenburg. To enable this to be accomplished in safety, the mounted troops were ordered out with the guns every morning at one o'clock. After occupying the hilltops on either side of the valley from sunrise until late in the afternoon, they seldom were back in camp till nightfall. After a week of this, the Fifes were ordered to occupy Breedt Nek, a rocky defile in the Magaliesbergs. The approach to this position was steep and rocky, and in some places the company's waggon had to be lifted bodily before it could be taken on. When the position was finally reached, the company settled down, along with 200 men of the Border Regiment, to hold the nek against all comers. Picquets by night and observation posts by day, together with a great deal of manual labour with pick and shovel, formed the programme of the garrison. After a week's work, the position was as well fortified as Edinburgh Castle; but before any attack was delivered to test it, the troops were ordered down to rejoin Cunningham's brigade. The morning that the little garrison was ordered down from its eyrie in the mountains a storm of wind and rain of extraordinary fury was raging on the hills. Soaked by the rain, and shivering in a cutting wind, the sentries on the heights above the nek were not sorry when they were recalled. In the camp it had been found impossible to light a fire, and, without their morning coffee, the troops commenced to get the waggons down the hillside.

The column was reached at sunset, and the company camped on the village green of a beautiful little hamlet, which might have been situated in the south of England from its appearance. There was no rest meantime,

however, and half the company was sent out on picquet to a point at some distance from the camp. No time was allowed for such a trifle as tea, and off they marched on foot to their allotted post, which was on the other side of a considerable stream. Having waded across this, and settled down for a cold, damp night without the solace of a pipe, an incident occurred which would have been humorous if it had not been pathetic. A man coming out from camp with a dixie of tea for the picquet, was shouting in the dark to find its whereabouts. Having been guided to the spot on the other side of the stream, he essayed to wade across, but losing his footing midway, he collapsed into the river, and the dark waters closed over the head of the tea kettle and washed it down the stream. Little incidents like these, laughable as they appear after a lapse of time, are amongst the tragedies of war, and only those who spend twenty-four hours in a cold, inhospitable climate without a warm drink can realise the disappointment which an accident of this sort causes.

Next morning the sun shone bright, the morning coffee, or "gunfire" as Thomas Atkins calls it, was ready betimes, and the force moved off in the best of spirits towards Oliphant's Nek. At this point, where a good road crossed the Magaliesbergs, a halt was called for a couple of days. Oliphant's Nek, though no longer the haunt of elephants, was well grown with bush, and made a splendid site for a camp. Firewood was plentiful, and every couple of troopers could have their own camp-fire at the end of their bivouac. As the force lay here an unpleasant little tragedy occurred which brought home to every man the disagreeable nature of the game he was playing. Two troopers of Roberts' Horse, a colonial corps, with which the Fife men were very friendly, strolled out of camp to search for a stray horse

amongst the bush. Half-an-hour later one of them came back for a dooley or ambulance to bring in the body of his comrade, who had been shot in cold blood by a Boer concealed amongst the trees. He himself had been slightly wounded, but his companion had been shot through the heart. This was war, no doubt, but it was a sort of war that the Yeomanry had scarcely bargained for.

Next day the force marched through the pass to try conclusions with Delarey, who was in command of a large force in the hill country to the south. Ever since Nooitgedacht the men had been ordered to stand to arms an hour before daybreak, and as a great deal of night work had fallen to the lot of the mounted men for some time, they had almost forgotten what a good night's sleep was like. This was also due in great measure to the fact that the squadron was so reduced in numbers.

CHAPTER XIV.

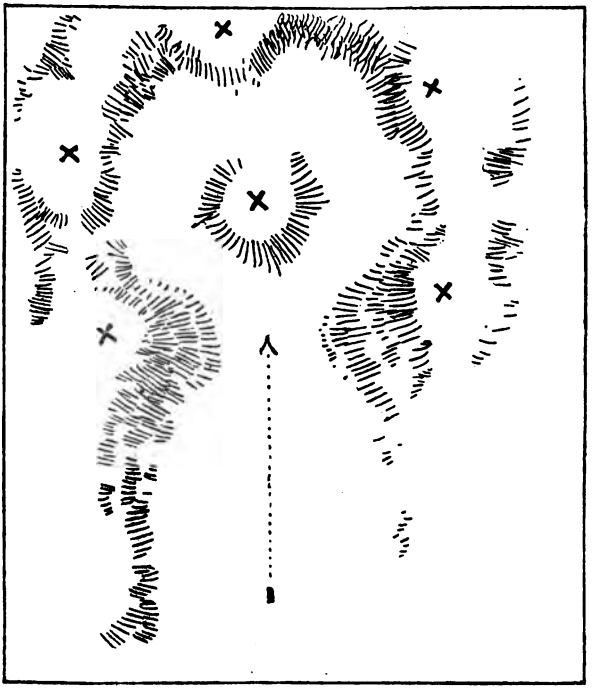
MIDDLEFONTEIN AND MODDERFONTEIN.

AT daybreak on the 23rd of January, 1901, the Fife Yeomanry, along with the English companies to which they were attached, under the command of General Cunningham, marched against the enemy. They were acting as support to the guns, their numbers being so small at this time that they were unable to provide a screen of scouts for the column or undertake any job that required a large body of men.

Having left Oliphant's Nek behind in charge of a garrison of Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, the column headed south, and wended its way down a long valley, flanked on either side with a ridge of grassy kopjes. After marching for a few hours without opposition, the enemy disclosed themselves on some high hills in front by opening fire on the advance guard.

Whether by design or otherwise, the Boers now showed themselves on horseback on the high grassy slopes in hasty retreat, and offered a splendid target for the guns. At once the field batteries were unlimbered and opened fire upon the hilltops on both sides of the way. As the shrapnel burst over the heights the Boers were to be seen galloping in hot haste over the skyline, and apparently vacating their positions. It was most unusual for brother Boer to show himself so openly, and as there was no reason why he should not have had his horses under cover before the force reached this spot, his movements were somewhat difficult to explain.

When it was seen that the enemy were clearing off at the gallop, the Fife men were sent to take a bare, stony kopje which lay in the centre of a hollow amongst the hills in front. The Boer tactics were soon made evident. The Fifes galloped the kopje, and when they reached the top were greeted with a withering volley from the hills beyond. Having taken cover, the guns were brought up and opened fire, and at the same time the tail of the convoy and rearguard advanced on to the kopje and allowed the gate through which the position had been reached to fall into the hands of the enemy. They lost not a moment in announcing by a regular rattle of musketry from all sides that the rooineks had been trapped again.



The British force, unable to advance, was equally unable to retire, and had practically telescoped on to a bare hillside, which was within rifle range of the hills on all sides. The Boers were strongly posted all round, and commenced a vigorous attack, that made the prospect very bad indeed for the unfortunate British soldier.

By good luck, the position was in direct helio communication with Oliphant's Nek, and if it could be held, help would assuredly be sent to the beleaguered party. All day long a heavy fire was kept up on both sides, but every effort to drive the Boers back proved unavailing. Twelve field guns—that the Boers afterwards admitted they had not reckoned with—made their positions far from comfortable. A busy pom-pom searched every kloof and gully, and Maxim guns blazed away ammunition at likely spots on the hillsides; but the rattle of Mausers never slackened.

At sunset the firing lines were drawn in, and, amid a regular salvo of artillery fire, the force prepared to spend an uncomfortable night. No boots or spurs were removed, and the horses stood upsaddled and ready for the fray. All night long the infantry were putting up sangars or stone shelters for the inevitable renewal of the fight, and the Boers were similarly improving their positions under cover of darkness.

Before the sun set the flickering helio had flashed a sad message to the surrounded troops, a message that informed them that the Queen for whom they were fighting would reign on earth no more. The men lay down beside their horses and enjoyed a few hours' rest and sleep, rising before daybreak and preparing for a renewal of the struggle. As soon as dawn lightened up the sky the waking Mausers commenced to spit lead into the camp on all sides. First one or two, then a few dozen, and finally the rattle of hundreds and thousands

of rifled barrels broke the stillness of the morning. All the time a desultory rain of bullets fell into the camp, and horses and bullocks here and there fell to the ground after stopping a flying piece of lead. The Fife men were acting as escort to General Cunningham; but as he was unable to stir from the hillside on which he was standing, their duty consisted of lying about in readiness for orders. A dozen pieces of field artillery were playing on the kopjes, and were stationed close beside each other where the Fife men lay. Suddenly a Krupp gun opened fire on the position, and a momentary excitement was developed as the shells came over towards the hill; but the shooting was inaccurate, and no damage was done. The gunners were now bending all their efforts to silence the artillery opposition, and after a few more shots were fired the Krupp was knocked out of action. Four guns played for hours upon a kopje on one side of the camp, but seemed to have no effect in silencing the fire. Although it looked as if a rat could scarcely live under such a cannonade, every bursting shell was followed by a volley of Mausers that seemed to mock the efforts of the gunners. One of the Fife men, finding that the bullets were whizzing overhead in a certain direction, put up a few stones to shelter his head, and sat down again. No sooner had he done so than a bullet struck the stone which he had just placed in position and ricocheted through his horse's ribs. There was barely time to remove the horse from the immediate proximity of the others when it fell to the ground. As the day wore on, it became evident that the Boer bullets were causing havoc in the firing line, and the doolies were running briskly back and forward with wounded and with dead. One ambulance, whose mission could not be mistaken, was returning from an outlying position with a wounded man, and was literally riddled with

Boer bullets. Stretcher-bearers, with stiff, blanket-covered burdens, were also to be seen retiring from the firing line at intervals. At nightfall another tremendous bombardment from the guns hurled defiance at the enemy, and another pause in the fighting was necessitated by the gathering darkness. The Fife squadron (barely the size of a troop) was now ordered to picquet an outlying position, which had been captured during the day, and which, it was expected, the Boers might try to recover overnight or at daybreak.

An uneasy night was spent in guarding this rocky, bush-covered outpost. At intervals of five or ten minutes all night the other picquets, provided by the infantry, were firing at imaginary enemies in the dark. A loose pig or a stray mule in the surrounding bush called forth a volley, and, amid a succession of alarms like this, sleep was impossible. The result was that the whole picquet had practically to stand to arms all night. At daybreak excitement rose to fever heat, and every rifle was loaded and ready to begin.

Daybreak came and the sky began to lighten, until first one dark object and then another showed itself clearly to be a bush or stone. Now or never, was the feeling of every man as he peered over his sangar and awaited the first shot. The position had been splendidly fortified during the night with no small labour, and the 20th Company was prepared to sell it dearly. The moments fled, the daylight increased, until it became evident that something was wrong. Not a shot was heard around the camp. Evidently they had had enough. To keep their spirits up the gunners began to work the guns, and the enemy, by a feeble reply, announced that he was tired of the game. The truth was that another British column was threatening the Boers on the other side, and had camped within a day's march of their position.

In the afternoon, after a little more scrapping, the column commenced to retire, and the Fifes were told off to act as rearguard. This was no sinecure, for the Boers, who were really in full retreat at the same time, had left a rearguard to keep their enemy busy while they withdrew. For some time the two forces, lying on opposite ridges of rock, pelted lead at each other as hard as they could. The British position was one which had to be reached over a higher skyline, and retreat was impossible as long as daylight lasted. Two guns had been left to support the rearguard, and it became an awkward problem how to get them away. The teams could not approach the position without crossing the skyline: the enemy's fire was accurate and heavy, and to bring horses on the scene would have been madness. The Fifes, in galloping over the skyline, had had a taste of what might be the reception accorded to a gun team.

The difficulty was solved by raising the recoil brake and shooting the guns backwards over the ridge under cover. The teams were then inspanned, and the guns galloped off after the retreating column. The infantry were all gone, and of the whole force only a handful of Yeomanry were left in a position from which, owing to the lie of the ground, retreat was impossible without great loss of horse-flesh. It was within an hour of sunset, however, and the only hope of the little rearguard was to keep up a show of defence until sundown, and then get away. The Boers seemed to redouble their efforts to capture the force, and gradually closed on the flank. Fortunately darkness at last enabled the men to mount and make off over the rocky ridge behind and down the steep hillside of the deserted camp. The whisking bullets hastened them on their way, and putting spurs to their horses, they made off at a gallop through the gathering darkness of the night. After a

ride of five or six miles, the camp of the column, in an open bit of country, was safely reached. It was with a feeling of relief that Middlefontein, with its odours of putrid horse-flesh and its carcases of bullocks, was left behind.

CHAPTER XV.

WITH GALLANT BENSON.

HAVING escaped from a position which threatened to become a second Nooitgedacht, the company settled down for the night at a place called Koffyfontein, where the lines were amongst the long dry grass that surrounded a peach grove and a few deserted houses. Peach groves and orange groves were now laden with ripe fruit, and scarcely a day passed but the troopers had a nose-bag filled with the spoil of a farm garden. As a rule, the garden of a Boer farm consists of a peach and orange grove, surrounded by a hedge of quince and fig bushes. Many other fruits flourish in these gardens: pears and pomegranates, and very often vines, are to be found growing wild amongst the peach trees. The figs were perhaps more appreciated than any other fruit, and resembled large ripe gooseberries rather than the dried article known in this country. Peaches are cut into slices before they ripen, and are dried in the sun on wicker screens. A pocketful of these dried peaches often formed an agreeable solace on a long march.

General Cunningham's column now made for Vlakfontein, where General Babington's column, having been sent to relieve the beleaguered force at Middlefontein, was lying. The 19th company of the Scottish Yeomanry were with Babington, and at evening, when the two forces camped side by side, there were many cordial visits between the two long-separated bodies of Scotchmen, who were thus unexpectedly brought together.

Next day the Fife men took the opportunity of going to see Captain Hodge's grave, and found that it had been visited by his old regiment, the 12th Lancers, who had erected a new and more substantial cross to mark the spot. In the afternoon the column, having borrowed a little ammunition for the guns, set off towards Krugersdorp, and said good-bye for a time to the rest of the Scottish yeomen, who went on to hustle Delarey. The night before they reached Krugersdorp the camp was pitched at a place called Steinkopjes, and several of the Fifes and Sussex were on picquet on a hill behind the laager. In the early morning the snipers gathered round and hustled the rooineks out of the position most unceremoniously. The ground over which they marched was exceedingly broken and rocky, and the rearguard was handled with the greatest skill in very difficult circumstances.

Krugersdorp was reached late in the afternoon after a very fatiguing march, on which dozens of the infantry collapsed. As the day wore on, the Fifes, supporting the rearguard, had dismounted one by one, and were marching by the footsore Tommies, who had mounted in their place. Men and horses were just about dead beat when camp was reached, and all looked forward to a rest after the trying experiences of the last week.

This was not to be, for no sooner had the lines been laid out than the mounted men were ordered not to off-saddle, but to hold themselves ready to march at any moment to the relief of a force that had been held up by the Boers at a place called Modderfontein, about twenty miles away.

This was bad news indeed, and none who heard the weary troopers that afternoon would wonder at the expression "to swear like a trooper." Their language was painfully free, for it is the soldier's prerogative to grumble

at everything, and, on occasions like this, to condemn the whole British Empire. When every man had tried to persuade himself that his horse was unfit for another march (and indeed most of them were), it appeared that, as no horse was better than another, they must all go. Helio messages of a more or less contradictory order were coming into camp, and orders were issued and countermanded every five minutes. Messages asking for help had been received from Modderfontein, where the Oxford Yeomanry and some other troops had taken a convoy of supplies to an outlying post. Soon afterwards information arrived saying that no help was now required, as the enemy had been driven off. Ultimately it transpired that the Boers had captured the post and convoy, and were sending messages purporting to be from our troops.

At last the order was given that no move would be made that night, and with the greatest feelings of relief, the men of the Fife and South of England Yeomanry turned in for a night's sleep, only two having been got the previous week. At two in the morning, or some such untimely hour, the hoarse voice of the regimental sergeant-major could be heard shouting down the lines, "Saddle up, there—saddle up!" and amid a renewal of the storm of bad language, the force turned out and stood to arms. Not till eleven o'clock in the forenoon, however, were orders to march actually received, and at last the yeomen found themselves at the head of a large force bound for the recapture of Modderfontein. Passing the great gold mine at Randfontein, whose powerful search-light had been visible from the heights at Breedt Nek, thirty miles away, the column camped for the night at Wonderfontein. Next day's march brought them within striking distance of the enemy, who occupied a particularly strong position right in front.

"The enemy's position will be attacked at daybreak," were the cheerful orders that were issued to the troops as they "got down to it" for a night's rest. In their little blanket bivouacs that night, ere they fell asleep, one or two of the troopers arranged with their mates that each should have the home address of the other, and write to tell his people if one of them should be so foolish as to stop a flying bullet. The little band had seen so much of the grim reality of war lately that they were justified in anticipating what might be in store for them. As a matter of fact, the brunt of the attack next morning did not fall upon the mounted men at all. Advancing against the bare, grassy kopjes where the enemy were posted, the mounted men were not long in drawing fire. The position, which was not more than a hundred feet high, looked perfectly harmless, but was in reality one of those places that the Boer riflemen could render entirely impregnable. A sort of grassy bank, four miles long, and flanked by gentle slopes at each end, it was surrounded on all sides by a perfectly open plain, which gave no vestige of shelter to an advancing enemy. The Yeomanry were detached to work round the left flank of the position with a pom-pom, and were waiting for a favourable opportunity while the main attack was delivered in the centre of the position some two miles away.

While the attack was in progress the Boers opened fire with a pom-pom on the waggons and transport animals, but they were got out of range before much damage was done. The day was one of excessive heat, and for the yeomen there was little excitement—a little desultory firing, a trip to a point within range of the Boer rifles to water horses, and lying about in the sweltering sun, formed their day's programme. Camp was being marked out at sundown when orders were suddenly re-

ceived to retire to the original camping ground that had been left that morning. At six o'clock the weary return journey began, and lasted till almost midnight; but it was so far satisfactory to know that the camp was in open country, and so not liable to a counter-attack next morning. The reports of the day's work pointed to a heavy loss amongst the infantry, one company especially having been decimated in the attempt to take the heights.

Next day reinforcements arrived, and on the following day the attack was renewed, but again without success, and at last it became apparent that the position was not to be taken without great loss of life. The attempt to storm it was finally abandoned, and the force rested for a couple of days at a place called Roodepoort, beside a large peach grove where fruit was plentiful. It was now arranged that the troops should work round the Gatsrand and enter the Modderfontein position from the rear. Marching past a station called Banks, on the Johannesburg and Potchefstroom railway, an attempt was made to get through a nek in the hills above Welverdiend; but as it was found to be strongly occupied by the enemy, another road was taken a few miles further on.

The 7th battalion, including the Fifes, now left Cunningham's column, and were attached to a mounted force or flying column under Colonel Benson, accompanied by a few field guns, a howitzer, and a pom-pom. The squadron was by this time reduced to twelve men on parade; but, according to the "survival of the fittest" theory, they were each worth a dozen untried men. While the Fife contingent was so small, the Devons and Dorsets had been joined by a large draft of details, and the battalion was stronger than it had been for some time. As a result of this, it had been promoted again to do the scouting

and rearguard work for the column, and the men were beginning to regain the self-esteem they had lost when they degenerated into mere escort-to-the-guns and performers of odd jobs of that kind.

In a broken country such as that on the south of the Gatsrand there was much excitement in scouting and outpost work, especially as the merry snipers were particularly lively at this time.

The country in which Colonel Benson's force was now operating had apparently been neglected by the troops hitherto, and in consequence large numbers of women and children had to be removed from the various farm houses in the district. It was not very agreeable work this farm clearing, but if anything tended more than another to make its performance less unpleasant, it was the thankfulness of the Boer families for the many kindnesses shown to them by the soldiers. The fatherly care of Tommy Atkins in handling the little children of his enemies was wonderful to witness. The work of farm clearing was fraught with considerable danger, as the Boers invariably retired to the surrounding kopjes, and sniped the soldiers as they left the scene of their labours. What made this treatment specially exasperating was that the officers would never allow the men to leave a farm house until the waggons with the women and children were safely away. When they had gone to a safe distance, the men were then allowed to gallop for it under a heavy fire from the goodman and his sons on the hillsides. In the opinion of the men, this way of doing things was carrying chivalry too far, especially in dealing with an enemy who showed how little they appreciated it.

One of the amusing incidents of this trek was the surrounding of a picquet of Fife men, under Corporal Cargill, by the Boers, and their subsequent rescue by a

pom-pom and two hundred men. It was an incident that amused the remainder of the company, perhaps more than the men involved, but they escaped without any casualty after a bad half-hour.

Of all the leaders that the Fifes had served under during the campaign Colonel Benson was considered the best. He could play the Boer game as well as the Boers themselves. Once he got on their track he never allowed them to rest, but kept them moving, captured their waggons and stock, shifted them from one position to another, and followed them into the most difficult bits of country without a casualty. The work was hard, but the men did not complain, for they realised that they were led by a man who was no mere book soldier, but a terror to the enemy. Never a day passed without a capture. The scent was never lost, and every morning at daybreak the men found themselves on the heels of their elusive foes.

After a fortnight's work of this sort, the column made tracks for Potchefstroom, where a concentration camp awaited the arrival of the women and children. This was one of the first concentration camps the Fifes had seen, and they were almost envious of the inmates when they saw the long rows of beautiful Indian marquees, spotlessly clean and well furnished, in which they were accommodated. A look of order and neatness pervaded the place, and every family had their Kaffir servants to cook and clean for them when required. Surely a nation at war was never more magnanimous thought the troopers as they watched the children playing and the vrouws sewing at the tent doors in the cool of the evening.

Potchefstroom was exactly as it had been on the previous visit, except that the sites of the outpost picnics were occupied by iron blockhouses, fortified and garrisoned by regular troops.

No sooner had the women been disembarked and the stores replenished than the column set off again in the direction of Frederikstad and Ventersdorp, to keep the active Delarey in check. They had not been more than twenty-four hours in Potchefstroom, but in that time several remounts had been allotted to the company, and a draft of twenty details rejoined and made up the company's strength again to about forty all told. Corporal Cargill, who up till this time had been one of the never-say-dies, had to lay up with enteric, and was invalided home after a serious illness. He was a great loss to the company, for he had always proved himself a man who could be relied on in any emergency. One of the men who rejoined the company at Potchefstroom was Wacher, whose death falls to be recorded a couple of days later.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LOSBERG.

LEAVING Potchefstroom by the bridge across the Mooi river, Colonel Benson now struck west to a place called Witpoort, and then doubled back towards Frederikstad, on the railway line.

A letter from one of the Fife men, which appeared in the home papers, describes how the Boers were hustled occasionally by Benson's column, and also records the death of two well-known and popular members of the company.

"Yesterday (28th February) was the anniversary of our setting sail from home, and we celebrated it by a grand battue or Boer chase, which was perhaps more exciting than any day's work we have had out here since we got to the front.

"The day began in the usual way: reveille at 3.30, march at 5; and in the darkness of the early morning we saddled our horses and loaded our kits upon the waggon. Riding out of camp before dawn, we were ready to form the advance screen of the column whenever daylight came. The veldt was flat and open, and not at all the sort of ground to suit the Boers. The long waving grass is turning khaki in colour again, and our men are difficult to distinguish as they advance.

"We trotted on at a good pace for some miles, and the sun was already high in the heavens when we approached the kopjes so dear to the heart of our enemy. We began to keep our eyes skinned and to move with

caution, but were still advancing rapidly, and had left the column some considerable distance behind, when we came upon a large mealie patch, beyond which was a kopje surmounted by trees and Kaffir kraals. As we emerged on the other side of the mealie field the screen halted from the centre, and an orderly galloping along told each pair of horsemen to stop and keep a sharp look-out till the column came up a bit. We had no sooner halted than half-a-dozen men were seen riding away round the side of the kopje in front of us, and from the spot they had left the smoke of a fire was rising. A Boer picquet, we thought, and were adjusting the sights of our rifles to have a shot at two thousand yards, when suddenly, right beside us somewhere, the click-clack, click-clack of Mausers rang out.

"Mounting at once, we galloped through the crashing mealie stems in the direction of the firing. Sergt. John Anderson came galloping towards us, and announced that the Boers were amongst the mealies, between us and the two outer flank pairs of scouts. They had opened fire on them at fifty yards, but what damage had been done was not known. At that moment the Boers were seen making off down the slope in front towards the foot of the opposite hill, and on Captain Gilmour coming up we all set off at their heels, firing at their retreating figures from the backs of our horses.

"The Devons, who were supporting the advance screen, now came up and joined us, and as the Boers had taken up a position on our left front and opened fire, we set off at a wild gallop to the top of the kopje in front. When we were half-way there the rattle of Mausers and the whistle of their bullets were drowned by the sudden angry bark of a pom-pom. The shells whistled overhead with an ugly howl, and every horse went off like an arrow. As we were wondering whether

we were charging a pom-pom and a posse of Boers concealed amongst the kraals, we saw with great relief the shells of our own pom-pom bursting right on the Boer position. In another minute we had reached the top and were amongst the kraals.

"We had no sooner dismounted than we were told to mount again and gallop forward. Down we went into another hollow, right through the Boer laager, which they had evidently left in a hurry a very short time before. We saw the tracks of their waggons and were hot on the scent, the Devons and Fifes all mixed up and going neck-and-neck. At every ridge we came to we could see the Boers, two or three hundred strong, swarming over the next skyline, and scarcely waiting to fire a shot. Pausing, we fired a few rounds at them as they disappeared, and galloped on again after Captain Gilmour, who was mounted on his charger Bull's-eye, and going well. We scarcely required his shout to urge us on, for the Devons were pressing us hard for the lead, and we had to show them what the men of Fife could do. On through the waving grass we went, over rocks and holes and every obstacle, never turning round to see whether the column was coming on. As we shot past a kraal, the Kaffir boys leaned against the wall and smiled to see the rooineks having it all their own way with the Boer baas. They seemed to think the whole business was for their amusement, and showed their delight accordingly. Mile after mile we galloped, but could get no nearer our retreating foe, who evidently thought we were in great force, although, as a matter of fact, we were not fifty strong, and they might easily have turned the tables on us if they had stood. For ten miles, at least, we chased them, and when at last we halted I was bathed in perspiration, my horse's heart was going like a steam hammer, and my rifle barrel was almost red

hot. We overtook several of their wounded horses, but did not find the track of their retreat marked with their dead and wounded. Several of them, when their horses were shot, got away two on a horse. When our horses could go no further we closed in and prepared to retire, and as we saw a forest of spears on the horizon, and a squadron of lancers on their panting steeds came along to outflank the enemy and cut them up, we raised a derisive cheer and advised them to come home. It was unlikely that they would ever see the enemy that we had barely been able to keep in rifle range.

"On our way back it was admitted that it had been much better sport than a day with the hounds in Fife, and the Devons declared it was as good as a stag hunt on Dartmoor. Our only regret was that we had not been able to show the Boers our bayonet charge on horseback that we had learned down country at Worcester. When we reached camp in the evening, after a long march back, we heard with sorrow that Wacher had been killed and Prentice severely wounded at the very outset of the day's work. It appears they ran right into the Boers in the mealie patch, and were shot down at fifty yards. The couple on the extreme flank—Honeyman and Findlay—had an exciting ride for their lives, for they were actually beyond the Boers when they opened fire. Findlay had four holes in his hat when he got back, but was quite uninjured. We buried Wacher to-day in a soaking rainstorm beside the Mooi river."

These wild chases were of almost daily occurrence with Colonel Benson's force, and the Boers began to see that he was a man to be feared. The day after Wacher's funeral the force halted, and the Fifes supplied a picquet on a bare kopje on the other side of the Mooi river. After a long day in the heat of the sun, they proceeded

to return to camp at sundown, but were quite unable to find the drift by which to cross the river. As it was almost dark, it was absolutely necessary to cross, and although the river looked deep and muddy, with overhanging banks, there was nothing for it but to plunge across. The bold Trooper Francis, recollecting the hints on scouting of the Cupar lecture room, spurred his horse, much against its will, into the water. Sempill, Sturrock, and Clacher, the remaining men of the picquet, followed on, and, after a little wild plunging, got safely to the other side. The take-off was a regular header into the water, and every man was drenched; but in a few minutes they were back in camp and none the worse.

The column now made for the Gatsrand once more, and, crossing the hills, started to chase the Boers round the well-known Losberg. This hill stands out in conspicuous loneliness on the plain between the Gatsrand and the Vaal river, and as it is about ten or fifteen miles round the base, it afforded an excellent place for the Boers to play at hide-and-seek. A commando of Boers, with a laager of women and children, was reported to be in the neighbourhood at this time, and the result was that reveille was ordered at midnight, and, marching at one every morning, the column found itself trying to get to close quarters with an enemy that always seemed to have a day's start. It was a most exasperating job, and after two or three night marches in succession, the Fifes found themselves doing the whole round of the Losberg in twenty-four hours, and also covering another ten or twelve miles of country in the direction of Potchefstroom. Starting at one in the morning, the force moved round the plain at the base of the hill in the moonlight, at daybreak preparations for an attack were made on an invisible enemy, then the march round was resumed till the other side of the mountain was

reached; and then the whole plan of the campaign altered in the mysterious way that was not uncommon in the field.

Although the men were not aware of it, a helio message had been received announcing that Delarey was besieging Lichtenburg, and that the column must repair immediately to Potchefstroom, in case a relief force was required. Saying good-bye to any interview with Johnny Boer, the force set off. The route lay across a vast, low-lying plain, intersected at intervals by muddy spruits. The following account of this excursion is taken from one of the trooper's letters, and conveys a fairly accurate idea of the appreciation of these outings at the time of their occurrence:—

"We turned in about seven last night to have a few hours' sleep, and at midnight commenced to march by moonlight against the enemy—to steal with cat-like tread upon our prey. We trekked till daylight, we trekked till noon, as the sun began to slope towards the west we still trekked on without a halt, our horses staggering like drunken men, and we ourselves sound asleep at times in the saddle. Occasionally a horse would kneel down to pray, and the rudely-awakened rider would spoil the beauty of the scene by indulging in an outburst of bad language. We were a sore and sorry band, and as the sun declined clouds overspread the sky and a drenching rain and fog added to the general cheerfulness. With overcoats heavy with rain, and weighed down with the extra ammunition—intended as a present for a good Boer—no camp in sight, we walked along, dragging our half-dead horses behind us, through the mud. Just as we were beginning to ask ourselves, "How long, O Lord, how long?" we reached the convoy, and as night was falling, pitched our blanket bivouacs on the swampy veldt."

These blanket bivouacs were now the happy home of the majority of men in the field. They were much more portable and much easier to erect than the heavy bell-tents used in our army, and were thus more convenient when waggons were left behind. A mounted man could carry the blanket under his saddle, and use his rifle as a support for the erection. The plan of erecting these bivouacs or booby-huts was as follows:— Two men subscribed one blanket and a rifle apiece, the blankets were fixed by loops to the muzzles of the rifles, which were then pegged to the ground by means of a bridle and reins or a piece of string, the corners of the blankets being also pegged out to their full extent. The result was that, with the addition of two saddles and a few old sacks at the head, a very comfortable and perfectly weather-proof house was obtained.

SKETCH OF BLANKET BIVOUAC

On the day following this circular tour of the Losberg, Potchefstroom was reached, and the company settled down for five of the wettest days and nights in its experience. Hitherto the rain had been an affair of one day or night at the most, followed by scorching sunshine. On this occasion the weather so completely lost control of itself that it rained day and night without intermission for the best part of a week. When it rains in South Africa it does rain. Soon the camp was like a swamp, and men with tents and bivouacs were on the look-out for rising ground, which was hard to find. The daily farce of taking the poor horses down to the Mooi river, where they stood and shed tears into the water for a few minutes, was the only duty that could be performed during this storm. It was impossible for the men to have tea or coffee, because everything in the shape of fuel was too wet to burn. There was nothing for it but to lie in wet blankets on the mud and pray for the sun to come out. Things were so wet during these few days of rain that the men's hands were blistered like the hands of a washerwoman who has been all day at the tub. Rheumatism was prevalent, and even the horses could hardly bend a leg after a night's exposure to the rain. At last, however, the sun came out, and the earth began to smoke and the blankets to dry in the magic way that things do dry in South Africa when the sun shines. Even the stolid, imperturbable shoeing-smith, who had declared while it rained that at anyrate "this was better than working," had to admit that the return of the sun was matter for rejoicing.

The company again said good-bye to Potchefstroom, and set out to look for drowned Boers on the veldt.

"THE SUBMERGED 20TH."

(From the original sketch by Corpl. Ross of the Sussex I. Y.)

Sussex Yeoman—"It don't look like clearing up!"

Fife Yeoman—"A' weel, it's as bad for the Boors. I hope they a' dee o' pneumonia!"

CHAPTER XVII.

FAREWELL TO THE TRANSVAAL.

THE last trek in the Transvaal was now embarked upon, although of course no suspicion that it was the last was entertained at its outset. So many trips had been inaugurated in the belief that each was positively the last appearance that the men had lost all interest in the question of their emancipation. They were resolved to stick it out, as they expressed it, and to see the war brought to a close if need be.

The column now made for the town of Parys, on the Vaal river, and entered a very difficult bit of country, such as the soldier had no reason to regard with pleasure. It was the very place to find brother Boer in his worst form—as a sniper amongst the rocks. And brother Boer was not long in learning that the rooineks were in an awkward corner of the country. Whether the fiery cross had gone out or not, the fact was evident that the enemy were gathering round to give trouble. From early morn till dewy eve they buzzed around the column, taking pot-shots at the scouts from every kloof and gully. A forage patrol to a farm, which lay at the end of a long narrow valley, proved a lively outing for the yeomen who were engaged in it. Proceeding down the valley, the high, wooded hills on both sides were surmounted by groups of men on foot, whose horses had been left half-way up the hill when it became too steep. The farm was safely reached, the barns emptied, and the waggons of forage, accompanied by the inevitable pom-

pom, started back to camp. The rearguard rode up the valley, and as it passed the foot of the hills the picquets on top began to descend to their horses with a view to retiring. This was the treacherous Boer's opportunity, and when he saw a handful of men on horseback sliding down the face of a precipitous hill with considerable difficulty, he at once proclaimed himself.

Suddenly the valley re-echoed with the sound of rifles, and the bullets began to patter on the rocks and bushes of the hillside round the retiring picquets. It was an uncomfortable moment, and the Boers knew they had their enemy on toast. To stop was fatal; it was impossible to hurry; there was nothing for it but to crawl leisurely down the rocky slope under an exasperating fire. One man had his reins cut with a bullet, another had his hat shot off; but all reached the level safely, and made off at a gallop up the valley. Some Kaffir kraals were in front, surrounded by a fence of brushwood, which barred the passage of the galloping horsemen. Over this hurdle the little ponies, in spite of the kits on their backs, managed to jump, and were soon under cover. Fire was opened on the kloof from which the enemy were shooting, and their fire at once ceased.

Immediately after this little episode a terrific hailstorm set in, and it was impossible to urge the horses in the face of the stinging shower of ice. The hailstones were of extraordinary size, and rattled down with such violence that hands were cut and scratched by them. Some, with a view to easing their ponies, had left camp without an overcoat, and suffered for their thoughtfulness. The camp that afternoon, when it was reached, presented an indescribable scene of watery desolation. The bivouac was in a hollow amongst the hills, and the melting ice coming down the gullies made a river of

considerable depth and breadth, which swept through the camp and buried kits in the mud, destroying all hopes of a comfortable night's rest. To add to the discomfort of that night, the snipers kept up a sort of moonlight sonata with the greatest persistence, and gave the outposts little peace.

About this time the company lost another of its men, who was wounded in a very unexpected fashion by a ricochet or stray shot. Trooper Macdonald (of Banff) was sitting with some others on a sloping hillside, while the guns were blazing away at a Boer position about two thousand yards off. The Fifes were acting as support to the guns, and were squatting on the back of the hill holding their horses, and of course under cover of the hill, which rose between them and the enemy. Suddenly, as Macdonald was filling his pipe, feeling as safe as he would have done in the streets of Edinburgh, a spent bullet, dropping over the hilltop, and no doubt aimed at the guns, caught him in the small of the back and passed through his body into the ground. The bullet, which made no noise in its approach, hit its mark with a thud which suggested a kick from a horse, and for a few minutes the other men sitting round thought that this was what had occurred. It may seem strange that a small pointed bullet, no thicker than a lead pencil, should make any noise when it enters the human body; but, as a matter of fact, the noise in this case was like the sound of a heavy bale of cloth falling on a wooden floor. In this way another good man was removed to hospital, and the small company became even smaller than before. Fortunately the wound was not serious, and in a month or so Macdonald had quite recovered.

A reconnaissance along the banks of the Vaal in the neighbourhood of Parys afforded another day's amusement at this time. The Boers were in some force on

the Free State side of the river, and as they knew that the troops could not get across to them, were bold as lions. Taking up a position on a grassy kopje on the southern bank, they made it quite impossible for the troops to reach the spot where a ferry-boat was moored at the river side. The result was that the ferry-boat had to be destroyed by shell fire from a considerable distance. The Fifes, in galloping to a position with Lieutenant Pullar, came under an unpleasant cross fire—or enfilading fire, to use the military term—but reached the rocky eminence they were making for without casualty. The return journey was also accelerated by an unpleasant quantity of lead from the other side of the river.

The extrication of the column from the difficult hill country in which it had been operating was performed as only Colonel Benson knew how to perform it. With magnificent foresight, the heights commanding the exit from the hills had been occupied overnight by the infantry, and the Boers, who had informed the natives that not one of the force would get out alive, were driven before the mounted men and guns like dust before the wind. The usefulness of the howitzer was very apparent on this occasion. For the benefit of those who are not conversant with military matters, it may be explained that this is a gun so constructed that it throws shells at a considerable angle into the air. It is therefore very useful in attacking hill positions or throwing shells up the face of a brae. In the present instance it was by means of a howitzer and a few lyddite shells that the Boers were driven from ridge to ridge and from height to height until the column emerged with some feeling of relief on to the open plain. Each man in his own mind decided that there never was a better tactician than Colonel Benson. They had been in some nasty places with him, and he had always emerged triumphant, and that without serious loss.

The column again worked back to the well-known region between the Losberg and the Gatsrand, and had one or two very exciting chases after the Boers in comparatively open country. In one of these wild swoops the column, after a few hours' march, came on the heels of the Boers at daybreak, and immediately set off with a pom-pom and a couple of field guns to close with them if possible. It was a lovely morning, and a fine open stretch of veldt lay in front; with slight rises or skylines at intervals of two or three miles, and small muddy streams flowing between. In such a country there was no reason why the field guns should not have a gallop, and so the whole force set off neck and neck like a pack of hounds on the scent. Coming to a muddy spruit, the guns struggled through bravely and set off to the crest in front at a good steady trot. When the yeomen reached the skyline under fire, great was their delight to find one or two bullock waggons unable to go further, and left behind by the Boers. These waggons were well loaded with women and children, who raised a dreadful clamour when the pom-pom came up, and, hastily unlimbering, opened fire on the fleeing Boers, who were about a mile away, and galloping at the hardest. An old man and a youth of about eighteen years of age, who had been left to drive the waggons, had coats on that were worn into holes across the back by the bandoliers of ammunition they had been wearing for the past two years. In spite of this, however, they protested that they had never fired a shot. A search of the waggon disclosed a Martini-Henry rifle, which was hot with firing, having apparently been used until our men were within a hundred yards of the waggon. Quantities of Mauser ammunition were also discovered. Several men were told off to escort the waggons back to camp, while the chase was continued, and others

were captured further on. After a chase of five or six miles the fugitive Boers at last reached a position where they could stand. They did so, and opened a hot fire upon the advancing yeomen. Captain Gilmour got into a very warm corner, and as he lay firing at the enemy's position two men of the Sussex on each side of him were wounded. One of them, Trooper Blake, died next day, and was buried at Modderfontein.

In escorting the captured waggons back to camp the writer witnessed the only act bordering on barbarism, perpetrated by a British soldier, that came under his notice during the war. On one of the waggons was seated a boy of twelve or thirteen years of age, a handsome little fellow, who seemed to have a certain manly feeling of unhappiness that he should be left behind with the women while his big brothers went off on horseback to fight. He was the possessor of a fine slouch hat, with a white and chocolate coloured ribbon round it. One of the lancers who were with Benson's column, riding up to the waggon, caught sight of the boy's hat, and immediately leaned over and snatched it from his head, throwing his own tattered headgear on the waggon. The little Boer looked for a minute as if the tears were not far from his eyes, for he was evidently proud of his hat, but when he caught sight of the lancer's disreputable article, a sudden look of indignation and disgust overspread his features, and he turned away determined to wear no hat at all rather than such a sorry specimen. The lancer—a great, rough character—had no sooner placed the boy's hat upon his head than a chorus of rage and disapproval was raised by the other troopers, who at once shouted, "Give the kiddie back his hat," and threatened to make unpleasantness if this was not done at once. There was no doubt that they meant to enforce their threats if it

was not immediately returned, and so, with a shame-faced scowl, the hat was returned to the little Boer. There were limits beyond which even Thomas Atkins, with his rough and ready ways, was not allowed to pass. The chivalrous nature of the British soldier never shows more strongly than when he is in charge of a prisoner of war. There are, of course, individuals like this lancer, but they are very few and far between.

While the column now halted at Modderfontein, in the very position which had been so successfully defended by the Boers some weeks before, the Fifes were informed that they were to proceed to Banks station and train for the south. Every man was delighted, and it was generally supposed that the company was bound for home at last. Farewells to the sorrowing Sussex and the other companies of the regiment having been made, the company inspanned their waggon, mounted their horses, and started for the railway line. Arrived at Banks station, a sad disappointment awaited them, for a message had been received that they were to return forthwith to rejoin the column at Modderfontein. There was nothing for it but to return, and although the temper of the yeomen was sorely tried, they at once set off to rejoin the comrades to whom they had bidden an affectionate farewell. As they rode into camp in the twilight, the sarcastic singing of "Will ye no come back again?" greeted their ears on all sides.

Colonel Benson again set off in the direction of the Vaal, and after a few more exciting scraps with the enemy, and the capture of a number of poor Boers of the lowest class, who were found in caves along the river bank, the column reached the town of Vereeniging, since made famous by the Peace Conference. Vereeniging is situated on the railway at the point where it crosses the Vaal, and is in the heart of a prosperous coalfield, which

to the men of Fife, or to some of them at anyrate, was suggestive of home, sweet home. Here the Fife men said good-bye to their friends and some faithful steeds and entrained for Bloemfontein—receiving on their departure the thanks of their brigadier, Colonel Benson, for the manner in which they had worked with his column, of which they were not a little proud.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BLOEMFONTEIN, AND RAMBLES IN THE FREE STATE.

BLOEMFONTEIN, at the time of the arrival of the Fife yeomen—the beginning of April, 1900—was wonderfully gay and busy. Unlike Pretoria and the other towns of the Transvaal, its shops were full of goods, and the streets could boast of an occasional civilian. Khaki was not so all-pervading as it had been further north, and the conditions of life were altogether more normal and more civilised.

The few soldiers who were about the town at this time were of a kind quite new to the warriors from the veldt. They were spick and span in brand new hats and uniforms, and looked, from their ostrich tips to their nickel spurs, as if they had just come out of a glass case. To quote Thomas Atkins once again, they had evidently been opening some new boxes—of toy soldiers. These men, who had evidently not lately smelt powder, were attached to various headquarters staffs, rest camps, and remount depôts.

Passing through the market square of the town, the Fifes climbed a steep hill, and were ultimately ordered to pitch camp on a muddy flat opposite the cemetery. This teaming graveyard was one of the sights of Bloemfontein, and as they lay right opposite it, the Fife men had ample opportunity of pondering over the story that it told. Row upon row of white wooden crosses, many marked by a mere number, acres of undulating mounds, and a continual stream of solemn funeral processions, bore

evidence of the fact that for many Bloemfontein marked the final chapter in the South African war. This was not so much due to the unhealthiness of the place itself as to the fact that it was a great hospital centre for a large field army, at which invalids and wounded men were continually arriving. It was not a cheerful phase of war, however, and the men were anxious to be out on the open veldt again. The difference between a clean camp every evening amongst the long waving grass and the squalid, muddy bivouac at Bloemfontein made it difficult to understand how anyone could prefer the latter. At Bloemfontein, as at Pretoria, there were literally square miles of hospital camps, where the Red Cross flag fluttered over the lines of great marquees that contained so much of misery and suffering. A visit to the cemetery one evening disclosed the fact that twenty graves were dug to be ready for the harvest of the morrow. The very air seemed to be permeated with enteric, and the wandering trooper was glad to quit the spot without delay.

On the other side of the camp where the yeomen lay was a large rest camp for infantry soldiers, and here, to their delight and surprise, the Fifes met the active service section of the Black Watch from Dundee, in charge of Lieutenants Valentine and Tosh. The meeting of old friends, or even of men who hail from the same place, is one of the greatest pleasures that can befal a wanderer in a foreign land. This meeting between the yeomen and the highlanders from Fife and Forfar was particularly cordial, and the mounted men felt proud indeed to claim acquaintance with the kilted soldiers whose name was such a terror to their enemies. The bergskotten or mountain Scots were held in proper veneration by the Boers, who had reason to know them pretty well. The highlanders now at Bloemfontein were

homeward bound, but there was no such luck in store for the Yeomanry.

Without any warning, a trainload of new levies, fresh from home, was marched up from the station, and the Fife men were informed that these new natives of the Kingdom were to be their future comrades-in-arms. This announcement was accompanied by the information that the men of the first contingent would not be allowed to go home until the new men were efficient in the field. This was joy indeed! The new men, with the very best intentions in the world, could not possibly hope to be able to tackle the Boer at his own game with success in less than three months. In fact, the old men, after twelve months in the field, were learning every day, and gaining further insight into the art of guerilla warfare. Moreover, the second contingent of Yeomanry were yeomen in name only, and many of them knew nothing—did not even pretend to know anything—of horsemanship. Many of them could not bit and saddle a horse without assistance, and some of them confessed candidly that they had received no training in cavalry work at all while they were at Aldershot prior to sailing for the front. Of course there were some among them who had nothing to learn in regard to riding and care of the horse; but, without exception, they had everything to learn of brother Boer and his methods on the veldt.

Having obtained mounts for the newcomers, and instructed them in the intricacies of military saddlery and accoutrements, an inspection of the squadron was held by General Knox, and marching orders were thereafter issued. Late one afternoon the company, now 150 strong (with drafts for the other companies, bringing the force up to nearly 300), moved out of Bloemfontein in the direction of Thaban'chu (called Tabanchew), and camped at a spot midway between the capital and the

notorious Sanna's Post. Here another contingent of Black Watch volunteers was encountered, and many old friends were soon shaking hands and indulging in the polite art of question-asking. The Fife waggon had broken down soon after leaving Bloemfontein, and a dreadful thunderstorm, with a deluge of tropical rain, made the yeomen glad to accept the hospitable offer of the highlanders to share their tents till the waggon arrived.

Major Miller and Captain Smith were the officers with this party, which was making for Bloemfontein on its way home. Two half-drowned yeomen of their acquaintance, who sought the hospitable shelter of their canvas roof, will ever be grateful for their kindness on that occasion.

At midnight a cheer announced the arrival of the waggon, and late as it was, the old men lost no time in erecting their tent, and slept in comfort till daybreak.

Next night a halt was made at Sanna's Post, and on the following day Thaban'chu was reached, and the company camped beyond the village under the shadow of the mighty hill—the black mountain, as it is named. Another day's march brought the company to Colonel Pilcher's column, which it had been ordered to join, with whom were the 17th and 18th companies of Scottish Yeomanry, under Colonel Campbell.

A party of men was left behind here for a night to bring on mails next day, and was visited by another tremendous storm of rain and thunder, which filled a dry donga between the town and the camp with a rushing torrent, preventing Sergeant Waldie and others of the party from getting to camp until a horse arrived to carry them across.

No sooner had the new force joined Colonel Pilcher than the Boers again began to give trouble. Almost the

first night the column camped the enemy took up a position on an eminence within range of the lines, from which it was considered necessary to remove them. For this purpose two troops of the Fife squadron were ordered out, one to outflank the position and the other to attack in front. Unfortunately the troop advancing on the front did not wait until the flank had been turned, but rushed against the enemy's rifles. A wire fence near the foot of the kopje obstructed the approach, and the new men, in their innocence, all made a rush at the same moment for the one opening that was visible. No sooner were they gathered in a heap than a merry rattle of Mausers announced to those in camp that the enemy was not to retire without giving trouble. Meantime the raw troopers wheeled about, and, crowding together, galloped out of range, some without their hats, and others minus a rifle. In a few minutes riderless horses came galloping into their places in the lines, and the old members, who had seen empty saddles before, were preparing to lament the early death of the promising recruits. As they were endeavouring to identify the saddlery, a mounted orderly galloped into camp with a message, and announced that he had seen the riderless horses, but that he thought the riders were not killed, "but just fell aff wi' fricht." By way of confirmation, several of them returned to camp on foot, and put their comrades out of suspense.

No blame to the men themselves that they were hurried into the field before they had received any training. If there was any blame it was to be attributed to the men at home who could ride and shoot, but refused to place their services at their country's disposal. The men who came were willing to do their best, but their treatment was unfair in the extreme, and if any had been killed on this occasion it would not have been

their own fault. Where were the men who had declared, when the first contingent was raised, that, if a further call was made, they would volunteer at once? They were sitting comfortably at home, sneering at the Yeomanry, and saying, when they heard of their inexperience, "I told you so."

The new men steadily improved after this, for there is nothing that makes a soldier so quickly as a little lead in the air. At first they spent their time in camp quarrelling and fighting, they scorned the idea of obedience or discipline, and treated the suggestion that they would be sniped if they did not look alive with supreme contempt. After a few days of rearguard work, they could mount with the first and gallop with the best, but admitted, after a few narrow escapes, that they did not know everything; and when they had been under fire together a few times they forgot to quarrel and curse each other when they were in camp. A little Mauser fire changed them from larrikins into soldiers in a few weeks.

The column now reached a place called Belmont, which was famous in the Fife annals of the campaign as the place where the interesting love-letters of Laura Lindequé were discovered. Her father was a prosperous Free State farmer, judging by the appearance of the farm, and her lover was a scion of a well-known Boer family, who had held the highest office in the State. He was employed in a bureau in Bloemfontein, and some idea of his powers as a writer of amatory epistles may be gathered from the fact that the floor of the paternal coach-house was strewn a foot deep with these precious effusions. Laura's life seemed to have been brightened for two or three years with an almost daily letter of ten or twelve pages of official foolscap. The discovery of this mine of wealth in the way of amusing

literature was a regular godsend to men who had received no mails for some time, and with whom reading matter was exceedingly scarce. For many nights tents and bivouacs rang with happy laughter as the correspondence was read aloud. The announcement that the sideboard had been bought brought matters to an interesting point, but unfortunately the next letter declared that the ardent lover awaited but the blast of the bugle to hurl himself against the wicked rooineks. Henceforth, he said, I will write not in the accursed English tongue, but in the dear old Hollandsche spraak of my voorvaders. The letters thereafter had to be translated, and it was gathered that the blast of the bugle had called our hero to the front, where he was acting on the commissariat of the Boer forces, and hurling himself upon his enemies by doling out coffee and sugar to the Burghers. His accounts of several battles in Natal brought his voluminous correspondence to an abrupt conclusion. Some of the letters were exceedingly funny, as love letters generally are, and when, after nine or ten closely-written pages of the utmost drivel, he urged his darling, if she felt low-spirited, to read his letter all over again from the beginning, the roars of the troopers proclaimed that their sense of humour was not impaired by the life of soldiering. If the column halted at midday a group of M.I. might be seen squatting on the veldt and chuckling over some bit of paper, one of the many letters of our friend, for there were enough to go round the whole column and keep them in good spirits. It may be thought that the correspondence of our enemies should have been sacred; but, as a matter of fact, there was no harm in the troopers reading the private affairs of people they never knew, and were never likely to know. One of the chief pleasures of rummaging in empty farm houses was to find the old

letters of the inmates, and, as a rule, these seemed to be mostly of the love-letter variety.

The column now made several night marches, and had a good deal of fighting round a large mountain called the Korannaberg, the top of which was a plateau ten miles long and seven miles broad. This hill, like many others in the Free State, was a tafel kop or table mountain, surrounded by a precipitous ledge of rock of great height, and as this ledge ran right round the hill, there was only one possible way of reaching the summit.

At the corner of this Korannaberg Colonel Pilcher's column received a check one day by a party of snipers, who were posted on the rocky face of the hill. It was impossible to pass, because the column had to march between the base of the hill and the Zand river, and these snipers were in a position to pick off men and horses as they came along. The result was that the column had to halt and shell the face of the hill. Still the snipers were neither dislodged nor silenced. After a great deal of ammunition had been wasted, a party of men were despatched to drive along the face of the hill and clear it. Not until these men were close upon them, and some of them had been ruthlessly shot down as they scrambled amongst the rocks, did these villainous snipers throw their hands up and at once become the honoured guests of the British soldier. When they were brought in it was found that an old farmer and his six sons were responsible for the mischief.

A night march now brought the force to Senekal, a deserted village, occupied by one Jew and his family, who had entertained De Wet a short time before, and supplied him with a new hat and coat, for which the great guerilla leader omitted to pay him. While camped here, a night attack on a farm, some twelve miles away, to capture De Wet, who was sleeping there with a small

bodyguard, ended in a fiasco. The wheels of the pom-pom and all the harness chains having been bound with puttees to ensure their noiselessness, a mounted force set out in the black darkness to reach the spot. Unfortunately, when within a few miles of the place, they ran into a picquet of natives, who, firing their rifles, rode off to apprise the laager. There was nothing for the expedition to do but return to camp, which they did in the early hours of the morning.

Another night march, undertaken a few days later, was more successful, and the Boer laager was put to flight and several men captured or killed. One of the new Fife contingent, who had been captured by the enemy a few days before, effected his escape from them by concealing himself when the attack began, and in a few minutes he was left alone in the laager. His description of the rude awakening of the enemy by a volley close to their lines, and their hasty flight on bareback horses, was borne out by the quantity of saddlery and other belongings which they left behind.

The town of Reitz was now visited, and a day was spent by the Yeomanry in a systematic destruction of all forage and supplies in the place. This was the town that was afterwards the scene of President Steyn's wild flight in a somewhat picturesque costume a few months later. On the day on which it was visited by the Fifes a cold rain storm of considerable severity was raging, and the place looked gloomy enough with the great bonfires flaring against the dull, wintry-looking sky.

The first few days of May were again spent at Senekal, where several of the old men left for home. The company as a company was not yet allowed to leave, however, but were informed that at the end of the next trek they would be permitted to quit the field. The column now crossed the railway line and made for the

ground to the south of the Vaal river, which the old members of the company had seen when with Colonel Benson they had trekked and fought on the northern banks of the river. After passing Bothaville, where the graves of Colonel Le Gallais and his brave men are to be seen side by side with those of their enemies who were killed in the fierce fight there, the column camped at a spot called Commando Drift, on the Vaal river. While lying here the Boers, who were in force on the opposite side, opened a sudden night attack on the camp under cover of darkness. The flash of their rifles amongst the bush on the river bank revealed their position, however, and the guns opened fire on them with case shot and put them to flight. One of the results of this little escapade was that all the camp fires had to be hastily extinguished, so that the dinner, which was being cooked, was spoiled. Brother Boer came in for a good deal of abuse that night, and condemnation of his bad form was loud, especially from a well-known lazy man of the company, who had not even bothered to turn out of his tent, and who had been wounded as he lay in the dark smoking.

Some members of the company on this occasion were absent on a two days' patrol, which finished up with an experience that almost spoiled the pleasure of an otherwise pleasant picnic. The patrol, consisting of the yeomen and their friends the 6th and 7th M.I., had arrived at Bothaville, where they were to be rejoined by Colonel Pilcher's main body. Having arrived early in the day, and seeing the dust of the main body on the horizon several miles away, they settled down to have an afternoon nap, and turned the horses out to graze. One or two Cape carts and Scotch carts that accompanied them were outspanned beside the farm house, and the party must have presented all the appearance of a Boer uitspan.

As the tea kettles were beginning to boil, and the troopers were dozing under the shadow of the Cape carts, a sudden unearthly bark from a pom-pom made every man bound to his feet. Two weary shells came whistling on the breeze, and landed within twenty yards of the little party. Again a whole dozen shells were sent to find the range, and came dashing in amongst the carts and saddles. Teapots were overturned, dust was thrown about, and as the shells exploded gaily in their midst the troopers set off in pursuit of their wandering steeds. The horses, of course, began to make off as fast as their knee-halters would allow, and as the men chased them in great excitement they presented a clear target for the enemy. Another belt of shells came howling overhead and slaughtered a couple of horses, and as there was not even a rabbit hole to give cover it looked as if the little force was to be annihilated within sight almost of its advancing main body. Fortunately, one of the signallers, suspecting that something was wrong (for the enemy were known to have no guns), flashed a helio on the spot on the horizon where the pom-pom was firing. Soon an answer was received, "Who the h—— are you?" and the matter was cleared up. It was not De Wet who had dug up a gun, but the well-known Thorneycroft, who was making for the same rendezvous as Colonel Pilcher, and who had mistaken the patrol for a party of Boers. After this, the column trekked by the Lonely Kopje, or Kopje Allein, to a station on the railway called Virginia Siding, where a pleasant trek—that had been one of the most successful in the way of pigs and poultry that the company had ever enjoyed—was brought to an end. The last two treks of the company had indeed been the most enjoyable of the campaign, food (or skoff, as the Kaffirs called it,) had been plentiful, and the work had been varied and interesting. Night

marches and other troubles were compensated for by the capture of such charming young ladies as Miss Van Wyk, whose lovely face, enshrined in a large sun-bonnet, and shaded by a green silk parasol, make a lasting impression on the hearts of her Fife captors. If they had only had the pleasure of meeting the no doubt equally charming Miss Laura Lindequé, and cutting out her ardent Boer lover, their happiness and triumph would have been complete.

Lieutenant Purvis

Lieutenant Simpson

Lieutenant Gilmour

Lieutenant Burton Stewart

Lieutenant Pullar

CHAPTER XIX.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

THE time had surely come when the little remnant of the squadron, that had seen so many vicissitudes and done so much hard work, was to be allowed to depart in peace. At Virginia Siding, a railway station on the main line through the Free State, their wanderings were actually to be brought to an end. The last armed camp they were to sleep in was pitched upon the dusty veldt, on the site of former camps of the great army of Lord Roberts, and probably of many forces since. The air was redolent of dead horse, the ground was strewn with skeletons and bones—it was altogether not the place that would have been chosen for a picnic. All this mattered little, however, to the survivors, who were informed by Captain Gilmour that they would proceed down country next day, and might sail for home within a week's time. Latterly they had grown so accustomed to a nomad life and the excitements of the field that they had come to enjoy it, and chafed at the idea of being two days in one place. They were so inured to hunger and night marching, and the other accompaniments of campaigning, that they thought nothing of them. Although it may seem to place a very low estimate on human character, the misery and dissatisfaction of the new drafts, when confronted with the unaccustomed hardships of life in the field, made life appear all the more enjoyable. What was a totally insufficient ration of food for a new chum was more than

ample for them; when he was half-dead for want of sleep, they were quite lively; when he groaned at the dirt and discomfort of the life of a tramp, the old men revelled in their long-time uncleanliness. When all was said and done, they were not sorry at the prospect of a return to the Land of Cakes, where water and soap and other luxuries of life were plentiful.

Having disposed of their various belongings in the way of saddlery and other equipment for the field to those who were in want of them, they chartered a few waggon boys to carry their kits to the station, and set off in great spirits for Bloemfontein. Before leaving, Captain Gilmour wished them farewell, and announced his intention of remaining with the company till an officer could be found to take his place. While appreciating the motives that prompted him to take this step—motives that were highly creditable to his sense of duty—they regretted that they should not have him with them on their return to Cupar. It almost seemed like deserting their captain to leave in this way; but, after all, business had to be returned to, and sentiment had to stand aside. Lieutenant Pullar—than whom no officer in the battalion was more popular—took charge of the party on the journey home.

Arrived at Bloemfontein in open trucks, after dark, the men settled down to spend the night as they were. About midnight the waggons were shunted off to join some train going north again, and in the darkness of the night there was only time to seize kits and jump overboard. The rest of the night having been spent on the platform, the company boarded a comfortable corridor train next morning and started for Cape Town.

The journey in the train from Bloemfontein was a most enjoyable affair after fifteen months on the veldt. No more picquets, no more night attacks, no more

trouble of any kind, nothing to do for three days and nights but eat and sleep and smoke the hours away. It was delightful to think that at last the company was homeward bound, although the pleasure was somewhat marred by the fact that trainloads of raw troops from home were still hurrying up country to finish the job that should have been finished before a man returned. The only satisfaction when this thought occurred was to reflect that, after all, the war was no longer war, but a gigantic game of hide and seek, for which one had never bargained.

The whole railway line from Bloemfontein to Cape Town seemed to be an unending chain of garrisons, picquets, and blockhouses, connected by a system of incessant patrols. Right through Cape Colony this was maintained, and on the wild solitude of the karoo, and in the mountain passes separating it from the seaboard, weary parties of sentries were glad to have a newspaper thrown to them from a passing train to keep them in touch with the world. Many of these posts were garrisoned by militia regiments, and they certainly deserved the greatest praise for the patience they displayed in the performance of irksome routine duties. Life on the veldt was bad enough, but it was a treat compared to the monotony of the lines of communication.

As the train passed the Orange river and entered Cape Colony it was joined by a large number of Cape rebels, who were being deported to undergo terms of imprisonment. Great, powerful farmers, with bushy beards and the keen eyes of hunters, they afforded an excellent idea of the men the British were fighting against. They were in charge of a body of Cape Colony volunteers from Dordrecht, called the Dordrecht Volunteer Guard, many of whom were travelling to Cape Town for the first time in their lives.

The train now began to descend through what is known as Bain's Kloof, and even the Scotchmen had to admit that Scotland had nothing in the way of scenery or mountain railways to surpass this. Winding along the side of one steep, rocky hill, the railway could be seen on the other side of the gorge hundreds of feet below. The gradient was so steep that even the floor of the railway carriage was on a decided slope, and every minute the train seemed to be coming down a few hundred feet nearer the level of the plain.

In a few more hours Worcester was reached, and as the Yeomanry camp for mobilisation for home was situated here, the company detrained and made for the camp, where tents were soon allotted to them.

A week was spent in Worcester, and a busy week it was, for every man had many purchases to make in preparation for the voyage home. The men were all at home in the old town, and revisited many of the places they had discovered in the time of their stay on the way up country. The Jewish barber, who had made a corner in sjamboks, was visited daily in the endeavour to beat down prices; and others were busy buying clothes and other odds and ends to enable them to appear clean and smart when they reached Southampton.

The weather, which was now at its best up-country, was particularly villainous in Cape Colony. There the wet season comes on in winter, and as it was now mid-winter at Worcester, the rain came down for days on end. The wind blew with hurricane force, and it was almost impossible to keep a tent erect on account of the continual storm. The high hills were covered with snow, and the air was damp and chilly. It was not with regret, therefore, that the company at last was ordered to entrain for Cape Town on a Sunday afternoon after a week's stay in Worcester.

One sad parting with an old friend occurred the night before, when Trooper Haines returned up-country to take up an appointment in Johannesburg. He was the only member who elected to remain in South Africa at this time, and at midnight, in a storm of wind and rain, he said good-bye to the comrades who had shared so many adventures with him, and joined a north-going train. He was followed by the best wishes of every member of the little band, all of whom had found in him a true friend and a most lovable companion on the veldt. It was indeed a matter for regret that his cheerful presence would not enliven the homeward voyage, and that he would not be there to celebrate with the others the return to Fife, and to pledge with them the days of auld lang syne.

After a night journey in an open truck—fitting end to a strange sojourn—the company reached Cape Town, and embarked at once on board the *Hawarden Castle.* There was no chance of seeing the town, as the port was at this time stricken with plague, and carefully quarantined. The complement of 800 yeomen was soon aboard, and the vessel set off from the quay and commenced the homeward journey.

The day of departure had actually arrived, and the yeomen were once more on the wide ocean—homeward bound. How joyfully this day had been talked of and looked forward to; how eagerly it had been anticipated; and now how sadly and soberly it was being taken when it came. How could their pleasure be otherwise than a sad one when they thought of the friends with whom they had hoped to share it lying beneath the silent veldt. What strange vicissitudes, what cruel cuts of fortune the company had experienced in fifteen months. How happy they had all been together when they sailed into Table Bay, and now only a score of all the hundred and twenty

men who were on board the *Cymric* were speeding away from a land that had not dealt over kindly with them. Even the purpose for which they came out had not been properly achieved, and there was a certain sense of completeness lacking that spoiled the return home. They had done their best, however, and no man can do more.

As the bold outline of Table Mountain faded in the distance, as the snow-topped hills of Cape Colony were lost to sight in the gathering darkness of the night, each man was glad to get below and sling himself in his hammock, to be lulled to sleep by the unaccustomed motion of the sea. There was none of that irrepressible uproar on the troop-deck that marked the outward journey. A year's campaigning had taken the steam off, and rendered the noisy, brawling mess as quiet and staid as a party of church elders. There was no quarrelling and "chewing the rag," as Thomas Atkins calls it, for every man knew his neighbour well and how far he could rely on his good nature. It was strange to note who were the last survivors of the company on this homeward voyage. Where were all the big men—the tug-of-war veterans—where were they? Invalided home, many of them six months before.

If the campaign had proved anything at all, it had proved conclusively how foolish it is to choose soldiers by bulk and to value men by avoirdupois measure. The men who stood out and faced the music were all thin, wiry men of moderate size and strength, while many a man of might and muscle had buckled up under the hardships and fatigues of life in the field. Although the soldier's life in time of war has many glorious compensations, and is certainly the lordliest life of all in many respects, it cannot be denied that it is a life of continual fatigue and vexation. This it always has been, and must ever be, because a soldier to be of any use must

carry a rifle and a tremendous load of ammunition. It has been abundantly demonstrated that it is absolutely necessary for a man marching in an enemy's country to be ready to meet his enemy at any moment, and in order that he may give as good as he gets when they do meet, he must have 200 rounds of ammunition on his person. It is impossible to trust to pack horses and carts for their supply, and the result is that every soldier on active service must be more or less a beast of burden. He must also cross all sorts of country, climb hills, and surmount every obstacle that is to be encountered in a bee-line march. The work of the mounted men in South Africa was in almost every case far harder than that of the infantry, who merely marched from one point to another by the nearest route, while the mounted men had to climb hills and visit outlying farms as part of every day's work.

A typical day's work of the Yeomanry was to leave camp before sunrise to relieve an infantry outpost and let it rejoin the main body, then to move off on a flank of the column, and, dismounting, to climb a high hill and hold it till the column was safely past. Returning to their horses (often under a heavy fire), they had to gallop along to the head of the column again and climb another steep hill in the same way. This mountaineering in the South African sun, with a rifle and two bandoliers full of ammunition, was no light work. Meantime the infantry were plodding along beside the waggons or squatting on the veldt while the convoy crossed a drift. The mounted men had certain compensations, however, in the shape of feathered booty that accompanied them into camp at sunset. The men who could not elude the provost marshal and annex a good fat turkey or a leg of pork for dinner was accounted a poor specimen by his messmates. When camp was pitched the foot-sloggers,

as they were nicknamed, were busy round their camp fires before the "ikonas," or mounted men, had picketed their weary steeds. Then, if pigs and poultry were not forthcoming, sheep had to be killed and dressed, water brought, ration fatigues at the supply waggons had to be attended to, and a dozen other jobs performed before settling down for the night. Amusement or recreation there is none on active service. By eight o'clock every man is asleep who is not on duty, and, as a rule, reveille may be expected any time after two in the morning.

Night duties are of two sorts, outpost duty and horse-picquet in camp. In one case the man has to "hump his swag," or shoulder his blankets, and ride or walk, as the case may be, to a hilltop in the vicinity of the camp; in the other case he has to take his turn of strolling up and down the horse lines with a heavy hammer in his hand to see that no horse pulls its peg or gets loose during the night. These duties come at least twice a week, and sometimes—if the majority of the squadron are lying in some rest camp a hundred miles away—it may come every second night. Outpost duty is, of course, the least desirable, for besides having to go without tea, very often there is little chance of getting breakfast in the morning. Moreover, there is no hope of a smoke, conversation is tabooed, and the greatest tension on the nerves may, in certain positions, be inevitable, as when the picquet is in a nek amongst the haunts of baboons, who grunt and scurry about all night. Stable-guard or horse-picquet on a fine night is not a bad occupation at all, especially if wood is plentiful and a fire can be kept up. In this case the sentry can sit on an empty biscuit-box and doze over the fire till some stray horse falls over a sleeping comrade, who roars with virtuous indignation at the assault.

Take it all round, however, a soldier's life is free from

care, and a campaign, after it is all over, seems to have been a glorious holiday; but while it lasts the strain is intense, and the duties of the hardest. To be on picquet one night, to be ordered on a night march the next, to fight all the following day in the heat, and to return to camp in a rainstorm to find that fires cannot be lit on account of the wet—that is a life which may seem very delightful to look back upon, but while it lasts it makes a man wish that he was dead.

The survivors of the 20th Company will never regret their experience in the field, and in spite of their cordial "never again" so often repeated, will probably be amongst the first to volunteer another time if required; but after a good taste of a soldier's life they will never look upon Thomas Atkins, especially if his breast is hung with medals, without a feeling of admiration—aye, and veneration almost—as they think of his cheerfulness in moments of difficulty and danger.

The South African war has shown many that there is more reason than might appear for the patriotism of the music halls that finds expression in such words as "You're a credit to your country." The British soldier is not overrated. He is the most patient, most kindly, most cheerful and unselfish individual on the face of the earth. The worse things look, the more cheerful he becomes; the less he has to eat, the more willing he is to share it; the more he is sniped at, the more humane is he to his enemies when captured. He has a big heart, in which he finds a place even for the low caste nigger, who is not worthy to lick his boots. In short, he is terribly British, and every inch a man.

(FROM "DUNDEE ADVERTISER," 26TH JUNE, 1901.)

FIFE YEOMEN HOME.

WARM WELCOME TO SOUTHAMPTON.

This morning the *Hawarden Castle*, conveying nearly 800 yeomen and volunteers, including a party of the Fife and Forfar contingent of the Imperial Yeomanry, arrived at Southampton, and the men received a hearty welcome. A fine fresh breeze was blowing across the Solent when the first glimpse was caught of the *Hawarden Castle.* Many people were down early at the entrance to the harbour awaiting her arrival. As she approached the lockway, towed by a powerful tug, a rousing cheer went up from those on shore, answered by the men on board. They swarmed up the rigging, into the lifeboats, and everywhere that they could reach. Anxious fathers and mothers searched for well-known features, and when friends recognised friends many affectionate greetings passed from the shore to the vessel. I scanned the faces on the quarterdeck and the forecastle, hoping to recognise some of the local men. At last my search was rewarded by my finding Corporal Honeyman, of Coupar Angus, who called down that his comrades were all well in health. Many of the men disembarked at once, and were entrained for their respective destinations. During the course of the forenoon several specials left for different parts of England.

The Fife and Forfar men number twenty in all, and every man in the best of health. Their names are :—

Lieutenant H. S. Pullar, Perth.
Sergeant-Major Simpson, Cullen.
Quartermaster-Sergeant Brown, Dundee.
Sergeant Bowman, Buckhaven.
Sergeant Waldie, Cupar-Fife.
Sergeant G. B. Scott, St Andrews.
Sergeant Bucher, Leith.
Sergeant Gordon, Brechin.
Sergeant Campbell, Annan.
Corporal Sturrock, Newport.
Corporal Shiell, Brechin.
Corporal Robb, Arbroath.
Corporal Honeyman, Coupar Angus.
Lance-Corporal Gordon.
Trooper Bell.
Trooper Rintoul, Blebo.
Trooper Matheson.
Trooper Scott.
Trooper Henrie, Cornhill-on-Tweed.
Trooper Truscott, St Ewe, Cornwall.

In reply to greetings from an "Advertiser" reporter, Lieutenant Pullar, who was met by his father, said that they had had a fine voyage on the *Hawarden Castle.* "She can roll a bit," he added. With 800 yeomen on board the Castle Liner was not naturally a paradise upon the sea, and what I saw of her this morning made it clear that life on a transport is no great treat. Coming through the dreaded bay the other day the vessel rolled heavily, and not a few of the men were completely upset, although they had already had considerable experience of the sea. With soldier-like reticence, the yeomen preserve silence regarding their exploits. Readers of the "Advertiser" are now pretty familiar with the principal events in their South African record, and it may suffice here to say that

for some short time before leaving for home no great event occurred in which the yeomen took part. The Fifes were with Colonel Pilcher during the last part of their service. With him they had one or two exciting engagements in the north-west of the Orange Free State. They held a drift on the Vaal river there, and one night at dark their camp was attacked, while some of the men were out on patrol, by about 600 Boers. A stiff engagement ensued. Pilcher turned his big guns upon the enemy, and the vivid flashes of their guns firing in reply served to make a striking illumination in the dark of the evening. The Boers were driven back at the time, but they remained in the vicinity, and afterwards gave further trouble when they were reinforced by a few hundred brother Boers from the Orange River Colony. I may mention that the new yeomen straight out from Aldershot took part in this engagement, and were already, according to the old men, showing considerable adaptability.

Speaking of the vast number of soldiers still on duty in South Africa, one of the Fife men pointed out that they were mainly to be accounted for as on the line of communication.

"What struck me most," he said, "on our way south was the fact that along more than 1000 miles of railway line, down to within 100 miles or so of Cape Town, there were soldiers all the way. Lord Kitchener lays great faith in picquets and block-houses. The latter you can see at points every mile of the way along."

To the northerner this has been an oppressively warm day here, but to the yeoman straight back from life under the blazing South African sun it is only a medium heat. As I have indicated, the *Hawarden Castle*, a small vessel compared to some of the Union-Castle liners, was not an over-pleasant transport with 800 men aboard. Every

inch of space was apparently utilised, and thus the men were glad to get on shore to-day to stretch their legs. No less delighted with their liberty were a few horses brought home by officers. Sentries were placed at the exits from No. 25 berth, alongside of which the *Hawarden Castle* lay, and it was no easy matter for some of the men to escape for a walk in the town. Most of the English companies left here early, but the Scots remained until evening. At 5.30 their special train, bearing Ayr and Edinburgh men as well, left the docks, and will proceed by Cheltenham and the Midland route. It is better not to prophesy at what hour the special will reach the north, but most of the men ought to be home by to-morrow evening at latest.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BRIGHTER SIDE OF WAR.

NO narrative of the 20th Company's doings in South Africa would be complete without an acknowledgment of the many kindnesses received by them from the friends they left behind. To the public-spirited ladies of Fife and Forfar especially they must ever be grateful, and it is well that their gratitude should be recorded. During the whole campaign — fighting in a country where stores were scarce and clothing difficult to obtain—the men were supplied with shirts and socks and other comforts by the goodness of these friends at home, and felt that they were not forgotten. From the sterner sex presents of pipes and tobacco were equally acceptable, and helped to solace the dark evening hours upon the veldt.

After a year and a half of service, it is very doubtful if the troopers were so imbued with a sense of the horrors of war as those who stayed at home and read the papers. When it is all over, it is only the brighter side of life in the field that is remembered, and indeed, throughout the campaign, this was far more in evidence than the darker side of hatred and destruction, which is so often exaggerated by those who only hear one side of the business. As a matter of fact, the soldier is one of the most good natured, peace-loving individuals on earth. Nothing was more noticeable in the field than the kindness of the soldiers, not only to each other, but also to their enemies, and especially to the women and

children. In all fairness, it must also be said of the Boers that they treated those who fell into their hands with marvellous magnanimity. Exceptions there were, of course, on both sides, for in a large army it is impossible to hope that there are not any bad characters; but it is doubtful if it would have been possible to find in any community on the face of the earth of 200,000 people so few bad characters as in the field force in South Africa. The men there were living under ideal conditions of course. They were strictly temperate by necessity, they were fed on the minimum of good, wholesome food, and every day saw them engaged in hard open-air work of some sort. The result was that they were splendidly behaved, and that a very high moral tone was evident throughout the ranks. Many tales could be told to prove their cheerfulness and unselfishness; and every man who was not a regular soldier, and who perhaps had a few doubts as to their character, was loud in their praise after a few months in the field. When their behaviour in the field is contrasted with the behaviour of some of our civilian population at home, it is enough to make one wish that a state of war and a consequent enforcing of discipline was more general. Those who deplore war and everything connected with war as a great moral evil, should take the first opportunity they have of seeing an army in the field, and they will admit that even war has its redeeming features.

The men who cry out against militarism, and who draw gloomy pictures of a nation of bloodthirsty soldiers, or "paid butchers," as they term them, know little of the real soldier's nature. Not only does modern war in no way appeal to the brute side of a man's nature, but it teaches those who engage in it many of the nobler attributes of human character.

This is what Sir Howard Vincent says of our soldiers:

"I have been in an open railway truck through the long hours of the night, in the drenching rain, with men who stripped themselves to warm a more sensitive comrade succumbing to the cold. Their conversation and bearing were fit for any drawing-room. Hour after hour my admiration of the soldiers of the Queen has increased." This is only the experience and impression of everyone who knows Thomas Atkins as he is.

Even his weaknesses are more like virtues at times. The writer well remembers a cold dark night when he was doing sentry-go on the horse lines, and, as part of his duty, was keeping an eye on the waggons where the forage and rations were stored. In the middle of the night he detected a shadowy figure prowling round a waggon, and advancing to see whether it was a nigger at the "skoff," discovered a Tommy with a nose-bag stealing corn for his hungry horse. At a time when all others were soundly sleeping, this soldier, who would have scorned to steal for himself, crept out from his warm blankets and was endeavouring to secure a breakfast for his faithful Argentine. Love for animals is one feature of our soldiers' nature that is always in evidence, and it seems impossible that the men who are so fond of dumb creatures can have that thirst for the blood of their fellow men with which they are credited. It is their duty to shoot and kill, but not their pleasure; and it is certain that if every man was a soldier there would be less likelihood of war. It is those who do not fight who cause the trouble, and unfortunately the soldier has often to be called in to restore order when the advocates of gentleness and peace have brought about a state of war and bloodshed.

If war is a bad thing, there can be no doubt in the mind of any thinking man that it is a necessary thing, and will be a necessity

"So long as the heart has passions,
So long as earth has woes."

The day when the war-drum will beat no longer and when the earth will be governed in peace by the common-sense of most is still a long way off, and the wickedness of those who invite their country's ruin by a cry of peace at any price is only exceeded by their ignorance of human nature. The words spoken by a War Minister in the House of Commons a hundred years ago are still applicable, and should be laid to heart—

"A state of war is, in itself, a state of evil. We wish not for it; we would fain avoid it; we would be at peace could we be so with honour and security to ourselves. But, whether at war or in the most profound peace, let us never neglect to encourage a military aptitude and spirit in the people. History teaches us that, in all nations and times, the extinction of this spirit has been rapidly followed by the loss of every other national virtue."

If it should ever again come to pass that volunteers are called to take the field along with the regular army, it is to be hoped that no able-bodied young man in Fife or Forfar will delay to offer his services. He has here the testimony of those who have tried it to prove to him that the soldier's life is the lordliest life of all, and that he need never hesitate to take up arms for his country by reason that he is not of a bloodthirsty disposition. A year in the army will be found to improve a man's opinion of his fellow men, and to show him much hitherto unsuspected good in human nature. It might safely be prescribed as a tonic to those who are so prone to find wickedness and bad motives in the aspirations of their own countrymen. Although many of them discouraged their country's soldiers by encouraging their enemies, and proved themselves unworthy of the proud privilege of British citizenship, it is to be

hoped that they will now follow the advice of Scotland's national bard, who writes—

"For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger's prize,
The sodger's wealth is honour.'

"The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger,
Remember he's his country's stay
In day and hour of danger."

APPENDIX I.

(FROM "DUNDEE ADVERTISER" OF 29TH JUNE, 1901.)

THE RETURNED YEOMANRY.

Much enthusiasm was evinced in Cupar yesterday over the reception accorded to the members of the original 20th Company of Imperial Yeomanry (Fife and Forfar), who have returned from South Africa. The weather was glorious, the heat being tempered by a refreshing breeze. The citizens responded in a gratifying way to the request of the Provost and Magistrates that they should decorate their places of business and residences in honour of the occasion. The returned yeomen, according to arrangements, mustered at the Riding School, and marched by way of Bonnygate, Crossgate, Station Road, round to Victoria Bridge, and up St Catherine Street to the Corn Exchange, in which the banquet took place. The route is fully a mile in length, and the greater part of it was profusely decorated. Particular attention had been devoted to the decoration of the Town Hall, which was gay with innumerable flags, banners, and lines of streamers, the Royal standard floating from one of the windows. On the front next Crossgate there was a shield with a lion rampant, the Union Jack, and the crown, with a large "Welcome" above it. On the side next St Catherine Street was a capital portrait of Captain Jack Gilmour, and the motto, "A safe return to Captain Gilmour and the I.Y. men in South Africa." The Corn Exchange was gay. The interior of the hall was elaborately decorated. On the end wall there was a Union Jack and lion rampant, surmounted by the arms of Fife, with the words "Welcome to the Gallant Fife and Forfar. God Save the King." On the east wall there was "Success to the New Yeo-

manry. May they worthily follow the Old Light Horse." On the west wall, "God-speed to Captain Gilmour and the Second Contingent I. Y." And on the front wall, "Honour the Brave," "Orange River Colony," "Transvaal," "Cape Colony," "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori," and underneath a portrait of the late Captain Hodge. Other portraits on the walls were those of Captain Jack Gilmour, Colonel Sir John Gilmour, Hon. Colonel J. Anstruther Thomson, and a cabinet containing photos of the members of the original company. The hall was seated for 450 guests, to serve which a staff of 40 waiters had been engaged.

THE PROCESSION.

The procession was timed to leave the Riding School at 1.15 p.m., and long before that hour the streets along the route were crowded with spectators, while every window was filled with onlookers. Business was practically suspended in the town and surrounding districts, and large numbers of visitors put in an appearance. About 12.15 nearly 100 men from the Yeomanry camp at Annsmuir, Ladybank, arrived and proceeded to the Bonnygate, where they took up a position to guard the line of route. The local company of volunteers also paraded and marched to Bonnygate, while a strong detachment of the Fife Militia marched into the town, headed by their pipers, and took up a position in the neighbourhood of the Station Road. A large staff of constables also assisted in keeping the road clear. Promptly at a quarter past one o'clock the veterans stepped out from the Riding School. The band struck up, and with a swinging step the yeomen set out on their march to the Corn Exchange. Along the route flags floated and ladies waved their handkerchiefs and sunshades. The band played "When the boys come marching home," and the swarthy yeomen looked glad as they swung along in the sunshine amid crowds of familiar faces. The one sad note in the scene was the black band on the arms of the officers. At one point an old woman created a sensation by going up to the line of procession and waving a nondescript flag, curiously like

a Boer banner. The yeomen cheered the old woman, and the crowd joined noisily in. As the men marched down Bonnygate between the lines of their Yeomanry comrades the band played "See the Conquering Hero Comes," and as the khaki-clad company swung round at the Cross the great crowd broke into hearty cheers, renewed again and again. At a quarter to two o'clock the men marched into the banqueting hall, receiving an ovation only equalled by that given them when they left Cupar for South Africa.

THE BANQUET.

The chair was occupied by Lord Elgin, Lord-Lieutenant of Fifeshire, and he was accompanied on the platform as follows:—On the right—Captain Purvis, Lord Bruce, Mr R. Cathcart, Colonel Anstruther Thomson, Colonel Johnston, East Wemyss; Mr John Purvis, Kinaldy. On the left—Colonel Sir John Gilmour, Hon. George Waldegrave Leslie, Provost Watson, Colonel Erskine, yr. of Cambo; Major Carnegie of Lour, Commander Maitland-Dougall, Colonel Purvis, Mr Wedderburn, Birkhill; Sheriff Armour. Amongst others on the platform were—Mr Baxter of Teasses; Mr Nairn, Rankeilour; Mr Rigg, Tarvit; Mr Torry, Wemysshall; Mr R. D. Pullar, Perth; Mr Norman; Major Scott Davidson; Major Osborne; Captain Mitchell; Mr Bowman, Muiredge; Captain Kavanagh and Lieutenant Simpson, Fife Artillery; Hon. Sheriff-Substitute Gray; Dr Douglas; Mr W. Thomson, banker; Provost Grant, Arbroath; Mr William Low, Blebo. The croupiers were—Provost Ritchie Welch, St Andrews; Provost Hutchison, Kirkcaldy; Hon. Sheriff-Substitute Honeyman, Chief-Constable Bremner, Dr Nasmyth, and Bailie Arnot. Grace was said by the Rev. Mr Burt, Largo, chaplain to the Fife and Forfar Imperial Yeomanry. During luncheon a capital programme of music was rendered by the band of the regiment. After the luncheon a short but important toast list was proceeded with. Before this was entered upon, Mr John L. Anderson, Town Clerk of Cupar, who was in the uniform of the old Light Horse, intimated the following apologies for absence:—Sir

Ralph Anstruther, Bart.; Mr H. T. Anstruther, M.P.; Sir Thomas Erskine of Cambo, Bart.; Sir A. A. Campbell of Gibliston, Bart.; Sir John Leng, M.P.; Mr M. B. Nairn of Rankeilour; Mr C. M. M. Crichton Johnston of Lathrisk; Mr James Farmer of Brownhills; Mr J. H. Baxter of Gilston; Mr R. Davidson of Clayton; Mr R. W. Rankine of Cunnoquhie; R. E. Walker of Transylaw, Dunfermline; Captain Henderson, St Andrews; Major-General Morgan of Aboyne, Aberdeenshire; Mr H. H. Brown, Procurator-Fiscal of Fife; Mr Lewis Grant, ironfounder, Kirkcaldy; Lord Provost Hunter, Dundee; Major-General Briggs of Strathairly; Mr A. G. Paterson, Dysart; Mr C. Anderson of Fettykil; Captain Harkness, Portsea (late Fife Militia); and Sheriff Kincaid Mackenzie. The Chairman gave the loyal toasts.

Provost Watson, Cupar, in proposing the Imperial Forces, said there seemed less reason now separately to define the reserve forces from the army, as they shared the same duties and the same dangers. In the past volunteers were paraded and drilled in their respective districts, but there was always the impression that the serious work of the soldier might not be called for or be so cheerfully performed; but the lesson of the South African war had dispelled that fallacy for ever, and had proved that their reserve forces could be looked to as the backbone of the nation. Whether as infantry or cavalry, there had been no work they could not do and no duty they could not or would not undertake. Their services had proved a source of strength of which the country was exceedingly proud. (Cheers.)

The toast was coupled with the names of Commander Maitland-Dougall, Colonel Purvis, and Colonel Johnston.

Commander Maitland-Dougall said they were met that day to welcome home a corps that so gallantly and so patriotically left their employment and went to fight voluntarily when their country called upon them. The scenes he saw in 1900 when serving as a naval transport officer at Liverpool and Glasgow marked the spirit in which these volunteers left their homes. The way that discomforts were borne, and the unselfish spirit

shown by the volunteer soldiers, would never be effaced from his memory.

Colonel Purvis, in replying for the land forces, spoke of the growing popularity of the volunteer movement, and of the valuable services rendered by the auxiliary forces, and remarked that he was sure that the men whom they were honouring that day well deserved the honour. (Cheers.)

Colonel Johnston replied for the reserve forces. He stated that he had been intimately connected with these forces from the first inception of the movement. He remembered the enthusiasm which marked its birth; then came the period of indifference; but to-day he thought the reserve forces were being regarded with truer perspective. Some were surprised at the noble response made by the volunteers to the call for men, but he was not, because these men had taken an oath of allegiance to their sovereign, and he knew that as Britishers they would do their duty when called upon. (Cheers.)

Colonel Anstruther Thomson, who was received with loud cheering, said that he enlisted as the first recruit in the Fife Light Horse forty-one years ago, and he little thought then that they would ever be on foreign service. He saw them embark in the *Cymric*, and if he had been twenty-eight years of age instead of eighty-two he would have gone with them. (Loud cheers.) He was very proud that he in some degree lent a hand in forming a regiment which had done such gallant service to its King and its country. (Cheers.) As to the new regiment which had been formed, he would simply refer them to the motto which was written on the wall—"May they worthily follow the old Light Horse."

Lord Elgin then proposed the toast of the afternoon—"The 20th Company (Fife and Forfar) Imperial Yeomanry." They had, he said, assembled to meet those men who had represented them at the front, and to congratulate them on the performance of their duty and on their safe return home, and to give them a very hearty welcome. It would be in their recollection that it was towards the end of 1899, when the call came for mounted men, that the gallant Fife and Forfar Light

Horse claimed, and established their claim, to send a contingent. They would remember the enthusiasm with which that contingent was raised, and they would not easily forget the indefatigable organising skill and devotion which secured their adequate equipment in all the stages for their despatch, and which was administered by the colonel, Sir John Gilmour. (Cheers.) The fact was that Sir John Gilmour had been so much the heart and soul of the business that it was difficult to realise the fact that he was not one of those who had come back from the war. (Laughter and cheers.) They knew Sir John had been there in spirit, and they knew that he had been represented there by two gallant sons—(cheers)—one of whom they trusted was now recovering from his severe injuries, and the other, if he had delayed coming for a little time, had done so because he did not like to leave a job half done, and thereby had proved himself a true chip of the old block. His Lordship then made a brief reference to Nooitgedacht, and remarked that the 20th Company had served under nearly every general, and had earned the good opinion of all. (Cheers.) That in itself was not a bad record. (Hear, hear.) They might arrive, however, at some further idea of the nature of the service in which they had been engaged by another calculation of not quite so agreeable a nature. The contingent left Cupar on 27th February, 1900, with a strength of 6 officers and 121 men, and he was told that, speaking in round numbers, it was not too much to say that one-half had been found in the sad lists which included the killed, the wounded, and the invalided. He was thankful to say that they numbered among their guests 77 that afternoon, and he must congratulate them on the appearance which they presented. (Cheers.) He thought they might congratulate themselves that a good many of those included in the lists had now recovered their health and strength. But he was sure it would be consonant with their feelings in that their hour of rejoicing and triumph that he should not omit a word of remembrance to their less fortunate comrades and sympathy with their relations. Some of those who went out had fallen as a soldier wished to fall—

with his face to the foe—such as the gallant officer who led them out—Captain Hodge—and the promising young officer, Lieutenant Campbell, whose service with the contingent was all too short. But they must remember also that those who succumbed to the dire influence of disease or of hardship deserved equal recognition at their hands. These things reminded them that with all its glories and triumphs and successes war was an evil thing—an evil which he thought no responsible man would bring upon his country without having exhausted every possible alternative. It was a great privilege to be able to couple the toast with one who bore an honoured Fife name—Captain Purvis. He was sure many of his friends felt great sympathy with Mr Purvis of Kinaldy when the news came that his son had been wounded, but they would ask him to accept their most heartfelt congratulations that day on the excellent appearance which the health of Captain Purvis seemed now to present. (Cheers.)

Captain Purvis was received with enthusiastic cheering. He said—In rising to return thanks to you on behalf of my comrades and myself for the right royal welcome and entertainment we have received to-day at your hands, I felt that a more than Titanic burden has been put upon my shoulders, and that with the best intentions in the world, it would be quite impossible for me adequately to convey to you how very grateful we all are for it, and how heartily we appreciate the kind expressions you yourself have just given utterance to. There is a saying that the realisation of anything much looked forward to is seldom equal to the expectation. Well, that may be, but, as with many rules, it has its exceptions. Often and often—and when I speak for myself I know I am speaking for all of us—often and often while trekking across the veldt, we have looked forward to the day of our return to our county town as a very pleasant day. It appeared to us to be so far distant that it was hard to realise that it would ever come. It has come, however, and has exceeded all our rosiest anticipations. I should like to call to mind that this is not the first hospitable entertainment we have received in this hall, and I

know that the one of now eighteen months ago was as heartily appreciated as your hospitality to-day. You were taking such a great deal for granted. The old saying that one volunteer is worth ten pressed men has become so very old that I daresay there was doubt as to how it would work out in modern warfare. From the kind things we have just heard you say, however, and from the fact of your entertaining us in this magnificent manner again to-day, I hope that we may consider that your verdict is that we have done our duty as well as you expected of us. I must ask you to accept these few words on behalf of myself and my comrades of the 20th Company Imperial Yeomanry as testifying to the very great satisfaction they have afforded us. (Cheers.)

Mr Robert Cathcart of Pitcairlie, Convener of the County, proposed "Captain Gilmour and the 20th Company Imperial Yeomanry now in South Africa." Captain Gilmour went out with the original company, and he had remained, with that spirit of a soldier, because he thought he could be of use to his country. (Cheers.) They regretted his absence; at the same time, they could not but admire his conduct, and all he could say was this, and he thought he was speaking for the county, that when Captain Gilmour did come he would get a right royal welcome. (Cheers.)

The toast was enthusiastically pledged, the company singing "Scots wha ha'e" and "For he's a jolly good fellow."

Colonel Sir John Gilmour, with whose name the toast was coupled, on rising to reply, was received with loud cheering. He said he thoroughly appreciated the opportunity given to him to reply for those who were so far away, but he felt that words were well-nigh unnecessary, because the enthusiasm with which the toast had been received was high praise to his son and those whom he hoped he now led. (Cheers.) That day he was certain would ever remain in the hearts of those who had been in the county town as one of the brightest and the best that they had experienced. In the annals of the county it would ever be a day that would be looked back upon with pleasure and with pride. They had met, county and town, to

do their best to welcome back to their midst those who in the time of the Empire's need went to the Empire's help, and they had welcomed them with every symptom of hearty and most sincere and heartfelt rejoicing. He was only too glad to feel and think that while they had done so, those who were absent had not been out of their thoughts. (Cheers.) He was sure that those within the hall who would appreciate the toast most would be the men who were receiving this great welcome. These men knew better than any of the rest what those who went to fill their places had to do. The new contingent were fulfilling the same duties that their guests went through and were maintaining the same good reputation, doing the same work, and meeting with the same dangers; and therefore he felt there would be no heartier responders to the toast than those whom it was a pride and a pleasure to welcome in their midst. (Cheers.) As one who had something to do with the raising of both contingents, it was only right that he should point out the different conditions in which they went to South Africa. Early in 1900 the first contingent spent well-nigh three months within that hospitable county town, and underwent training during that time before leaving; but the members of the second contingent were shipped almost immediately to the front. It was, however, a source of satisfaction and pleasure to tell them that his son, who commanded the second draft, was well satisfied with those sent out. (Cheers.) His son told them they were as keen as mustard, and he was satisfied that they would maintain the character and reputation that had been established by those who were home. He would take the swiftest means of conveying to his son what had taken place that day, and ask him to say how enthusiastically his name and those of the men serving under him had been received in the centre of his native county. (Cheers.) All at Montrave longed indeed to have him home once more, but they felt that in the circumstances he was doing his duty, and that was everything that parents or relations could wish. (Cheers.) He again thanked them for the enthusiastic way in which they had honoured the toast, and on Sir John concluding

ing the company again rose and sang "For he's a jolly good fellow," a cheer being given for Lieutenant Harry Gilmour.

Sheriff Armour, in the absence of Sheriff Kincaid Mackenzie, proposed "The Chairman," whom they all recognised as one of Fife's most distinguished sons. (Loud applause.)

Lord Elgin replied, and the proceedings, which were most enthusiastic throughout, then terminated.

Mr Philip Sulley recited a poem, composed by himself, entitled "Welcome home, 20th Company I. Y."

APPENDIX II.

(FROM "DUNDEE ADVERTISER" OF 27TH JULY, 1901.)

PRESENTATION OF WAR MEDALS BY THE KING.

The officers and men of the various regiments of Yeomanry, to the number of about 3000, were massed on the Horse Guards Parade yesterday morning to receive their medals for the South African war campaign at the hands of the King. Unfortunately, a heavy downpour of rain was experienced soon after the men paraded. Among those present was a representative contingent of Fife and Forfar men—41 in all. The majority of these travelled south by the 9.40 train from Edinburgh on Thursday night, arriving at London about seven o'clock yesterday morning. They proceeded at once to their rendezvous, Albany Barracks, Regent's Park, the headquarters of one of the regiments of Household Cavalry, and there they were joined by others of the detachment, who had previously come to town. Soon after breakfast the men fell in, and the

full roll of those present was as follows:—Captain Purvis, Lieutenant Simpson, Lieutenant Pullar, Surgeon-Captain Dewar, Lieutenant Burton Stewart, Veterinary-Lieutenant Young, Sergeant-Major Simpson, Quartermaster S. Brown, Farrier-Sergeant Spreull, Sergeants Lumsden, Nicholson, and Thoms, Corporals Bonthrone, Bowman, Campbell, Cargill, Hunter, Shiell, and Shields; Privates Ainslie, Almond, Anderson, Baird, Clacher, Findlay, Haig, Milliken, M'Grady, Mitchell, Playfair, Scott, Sinclair, Stephen, Stratton, Stewart, Sturrock, Westland, Pople, Rintoul; Shoeing-Smith Craigon, Trumpeter M'Dougall. All the officers and men were in khaki. Shortly after nine o'clock they mounted two large covered brakes and drove off through the deluge by way of Oxford Street to St James's Park. As the hour of the ceremony drew near the scene had the elements of a striking spectacular display, but much of the effect was lost owing to the gloomy weather that prevailed. A considerable crowd of spectators, soaked, but still interested, fringed the parade ground and the Mall, and there were onlookers at all the windows of the Government buildings around. Near the centre of the parade, and in line with the Whitehall entrance, a handsome canopy had been erected over a large platform laid with red cloth, and here assembled one by one a distinguished company of army notabilities in full uniform, including Mr Brodrick, the Secretary for War; Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief; Sir Evelyn Wood, Sir Mansfield Clarke, and others. The yeomen were drawn up in companies facing the royal dais—an imposing array of khaki, touched here and there with the uniforms of officers who have rejoined their own regiments, and by civilians who no longer own their war paint, and had to appear in the humdrum garb of everyday life. The ground was held by a strong body of the Foot Guards wearing their capes, and a number of the Guards' regimental bands were posted at several points. Time hung rather heavily until the arrival of the King and Queen, prompt, as usual, to the appointed hour. Half-past eleven had just struck when the red cloaks and gleaming helmets of the mounted escort appeared

in the Mall, and ringing cheers (the first signs of enthusiasm) announced the approach of the Royal pair in an open carriage. As their Majesties alighted they were received by the Commander-in-Chief and Mr Brodrick. The royal standard was run up, and the bands played the National Anthem, while the guard of honour and every officer saluted, and the troopers and foot soldiers stood at attention. The King was in military uniform; the Queen, of course, in deep mourning. With them came Princess Victoria, Prince Edward of York, Prince William of Saxe-Weimar, and a number of the officers of the Household. The group thus completed was brilliant and distinguished. As if he feared another deluge, the King lost not a moment in beginning the ceremony of the day. At once the yeomen, in a single unbroken line, began to defile past the King and Queen, the bands meantime striking up selections of military music. The medals were arranged in trays beside the platform in charge of men of the Grenadier Guards, each accompanied by an officer. One was handed to His Majesty, who in turn presented it, while the Queen sat by an interested and sympathetic spectator of the proceedings. It was a simple, and in some respects almost a touching, ceremony. The Yeomanry went by in a seemingly endless procession—hundreds of lithe, strapping, sunburnt fellows, all of whom had had their share of the hardships of the campaign, and many their share in its triumphs and disasters. Several, still on the sick list, were wheeled along in bath chairs, and one or two hobbled up on crutches. For these and others specially brought under his notice the King seemed to have a few kindly words to say. Quite a number of the men were in civilian attire. Some were wearing silk hat and frock coat, others a straw hat or cloth cap. The ceremony lasted about two hours, but by good fortune the rain held off, and the proceedings were carried through without a hitch. At the conclusion the King and Queen were loudly cheered on their return to Marlborough House.

Appendix III.

LIST OF OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND MEN

of the 20th Company VI. Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, enrolled at Cupar, December, 1899, for service in South Africa.

No.	Name and Address.		Note.
	Captain	W. B. Chapell Hodge, Roborough, South Devon.	Late 12th Lancers. Mortally wounded at Cyferfontein, 31st October, 1900; died at Vlakfontein 1st November.
	Lieutenant	R. W. Purvis, Kinaldy, Fife.	Lieutenant S.-E. of Scotland Artillery Militia. Commanded company after Captain Hodge's death; severely wounded in shoulder at Nooitgedacht and invalided home.
	Lieutenant	John Gilmour, Montrave, Leven, Fife.	Lieutenant F. L. H. Commanded company after Nooitgedacht, and remained with the second contingent for three months.
	Lieutenant	J. Simpson, Mawcarse.	Lieutenant F. L. H. Invalided home.
	Lieutenant	W. Burton Stewart, 7 St Colne Street, Edinburgh.	Lieutenant Lothian and Berwickshire Yeomanry Cavalry. Invalided home.
	Vet.-Lieut.	J. M'Lauchlan Young.	Veterinary-Lieutenant F. L. H. Served with 17th and 18th Companies in Free State.

LIST OF OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND MEN—*continued.*

No.	Name and Address.		Note.
9230	Trooper	G. H. Almond, Musselburgh.	Was innoculated, and invalided home for enteric.
9132	Trooper	C. W. Anderson, Ceres.	Original member F. L. H. Farmer; invalided home—eyesight gave way.
9167	Trooper	J. W. Baird, Dundee.	Johannesburg uitlander; returned to civil life in South Africa.
9168	Trooper	F. F. Barnardo, Bournemouth.	Doctor in Edinburgh Infirmary; invalided home.
9234	Trooper	C. Bayne, Edinburgh.	Obtained an appointment in the post office in Pretoria.
9166	Trooper	J. Bell, Kirkcaldy.	Acted as engine-driver for some time during the war.
9222	Trooper	William Bell, Brechin.	Batman to S.S.M. Simpson; returned with com-
9171	Trooper	W. A. Berwick, Elie.	Invalided home. [pany.
9241	Trooper	J. Beveridge, Aberdeen.	Injured by horse and invalided home.
9151	Trooper	J. Bonthrone, Falkland.	Wounded while driving a train on Potchefstroom line taken by De Wet; obtained good appointment on the railway.
9235	Trooper	B. W. Braes, Linlithgow.	Servant to Lieutenant Purvis; returned home with him.
9175	Trooper	J. Brodie, Dalkeith.	Employed on police force, General Clements' column.
9216	Trooper	D. Bucher, Leith.	Returned with company.

No.	Name and Address.		Note.
9224	Trooper	J. W. Campbell.	Promoted corporal; and afterwards lieutenant in Scottish Horse.
9211	Trooper	J. T. Carnegie, Pitcorthie.	Acted as galloper to Colonel Ovens' Border Regiment during latter part of company's service.
9170	Trooper	F. Chevally.	Invalided home.
9147	Trooper	A. Clacher, Leuchars.	A farmer.
9180	Trooper	C. Clarke, Anstruther.	One of the company cooks; a baker; invalided.
9239	Trooper	P. Craigon, Perth.	One of the company farriers; invalided.
9208	Trooper	W. C. Cunningham, Glasgow.	Joined police at Potchefstroom; received commission in Yeomanry.
9155	Trooper	M. R. Dawson, Dundee.	Invalided.
9206	Trooper	T. F. Dewar, Arbroath.	Surgeon-Captain F. L. H. Acted as medical officer to 17th and 18th Companies and also in hospitals.
9243	Trooper	J. M. Dugdale, Cumberland.	Groom to Captain Purvis.
9150	Trooper	A. Elder, Cupar.	After leaving company entered railway service.
9157	Trooper	J. Fenwick, St Michael's.	Servant to Veterinary-Lieutenant Young.
9182	Trooper	J. C. Findlay, Dundee.	Invalided home after twelve months' service.
9210	Trooper	R. Fleming, Pittenweem.	Entered railway service.
9225	Trooper	J. F. Forbes, Liberton.	Invalided.

LIST OF OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND MEN—*continued.*

No.	Name and Address.		Note.
9230	Trooper	G. H. Almond, Musselburgh.	Was innoculated, and invalided home for enteric.
9132	Trooper	C. W. Anderson, Ceres.	Original member F. L. H. Farmer; invalided home—eyesight gave way.
9167	Trooper	J. W. Baird, Dundee.	Johannesburg uitlander; returned to civil life in South Africa.
9168	Trooper	F. F. Barnardo, Bournemouth.	Doctor in Edinburgh Infirmary; invalided home.
9234	Trooper	C. Bayne, Edinburgh.	Obtained an appointment in the post office in Pretoria.
9166	Trooper	J. Bell, Kirkcaldy.	Acted as engine-driver for some time during the war.
9222	Trooper	William Bell, Brechin.	Batman to S.S.M. Simpson; returned with com-
9171	Trooper	W. A. Berwick, Elie.	Invalided home. [pany.
9241	Trooper	J. Beveridge, Aberdeen.	Injured by horse and invalided home.
9151	Trooper	J. Bonthrone, Falkland.	Wounded while driving a train on Potchefstroom line taken by De Wet; obtained good appointment on the railway.
9235	Trooper	B. W. Braes, Linlithgow.	Servant to Lieutenant Purvis; returned home with him.
9175	Trooper	J. Brodie, Dalkeith.	Employed on police force, General Clements' column.
9216	Trooper	D. Bucher, Leith.	Returned with company.

No.	Name and Address.		Note.
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9211	Trooper	J. T. Carnegie, Pitcorthie.	Acted as galloper to Colonel Ovens' Border Regiment during latter part of company's service.
9170	Trooper	F. Chevally.	Invalided home.
9147	Trooper	A. Clacher, Leuchars.	A farmer.
9180	Trooper	C. Clarke, Anstruther.	One of the company cooks; a baker; invalided.
9239	Trooper	P. Craigon, Perth.	One of the company farriers; invalided.
9208	Trooper	W. C. Cunningham, Glasgow.	Joined police at Potchefstroom; received commission in Yeomanry.
9155	Trooper	M. R. Dawson, Dundee.	Invalided.
9206	Trooper	T. F. Dewar, Arbroath.	Surgeon-Captain F. L. H. Acted as medical officer to 17th and 18th Companies and also in hospitals.
9243	Trooper	J. M. Dugdale, Cumberland.	Groom to Captain Purvis.
9150	Trooper	A. Elder, Cupar.	After leaving company entered railway service.
9157	Trooper	J. Fenwick, St Michael's.	Servant to Veterinary-Lieutenant Young.
9182	Trooper	J. C. Findlay, Dundee.	Invalided home after twelve months' service.
9210	Trooper	R. Fleming, Pittenweem.	Entered railway service.
9225	Trooper	J. F. Forbes, Liberton.	Invalided.

LIST OF OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND MEN—*continued.*

No.	Name and Address.		Note.
9148	Trooper	G. F. Francis, Arbroath.	Original member F. L. H. A farmer.
9153	Trooper	W. Greenhill Gardyne, Finavon, Forfar.	Received a commission and appointment as railway staff officer.
9141	Trooper	G. Gibb, Thornton.	A farmer. Wounded at Nooitgedacht.
9183	Trooper	A. Gordon, Aberdeen.	Invalided home.
9178	Trooper	H. P. Gordon, Brechin.	Had served in Matabeleland; was promoted sergeant, and returned with company.
9244	Trooper	J. C. Gordon, Edinburgh.	Returned with company.
9186	Trooper	A. A. Graham, Kirkcaldy.	Injured by fall from his horse after twelve months' service.
9152	Trooper	A. D. Grant, Aboyne.	Killed at Nooitgedacht.
9215	Trooper	J. C. Guthrie, Stirling.	Obtained commission in Royal Garrison Artillery.
9161	Trooper	R. P. Haig, Rumbling Bridge.	Wounded at Nooitgedacht, and rejoined.
9187	Trooper	J. R. Haines, Llandilo.	Had served in Welsh Fusiliers; taken part in Zulu war; orderly to O.C. Company; remained in South Africa.
9214	Trooper	T. S. Happer, Duns.	Invalided home.
9232	Trooper	J. H. Harper.	Servant to Lieutenant Simpson; invalided home.
9169	Trooper	G. Henrie, Cornhill-on-Tweed.	Groom to Lieutenant Gilmour.
9218	Trooper	A. L. M. Honeyman, Coupar Angus.	Promoted corporal; returned with company; now a farmer in Orange River Colony.

No.	Name and Address.		Note.
9174	Trooper	D. C. Jeffrey, Aberdeen.	Returned with company.
9134	Trooper	G. P. Law, Ceres.	Original member F. L. H. Farmer.
9219	Trooper	C. J. Lennox, Lochee.	Invalided home.
9184	Trooper	D. T. Low, Arbroath.	Orderly to Dr Dewar.
9181	Trooper	R. Mathieson, Anstruther.	Company cook.
9221	Trooper	R. P. Matheson, Edinburgh.	Rancher in Texas. Received commission in Yeomanry, and remained in South Africa.
9205	Trooper	T. S. Matthew, Edinburgh.	Killed at Nooitgedacht.
9201	Trooper	R. Martin, Edinburgh.	Invalided home after ten months' service.
9164	Trooper	J. C. Milliken, Dundee.	Volunteer; invalided home—rheumatic fever.
9196	Trooper	William Miller, Edinburgh.	Invalided home.
9228	Trooper	H. S. Minto, Crieff.	Medical student. Wounded at Hekpoort; invalided home.
9197	Trooper	H. B. Mudge, Devonshire.	Killed at Nooitgedacht.
9203	Trooper	C. W. Mundell, Lairg, Sutherlandshire.	Farmer. Wounded at Skeerpoort; invalided home.
9209	Trooper	R. G. Macdonald, Keith.	Veterinary student. Wounded near Potchefstroom and invalided home.
9154	Trooper	W. W. H. M'Grady, Arbroath.	Invalided home with rheumatism.
9177	Trooper	E. A. M'Grady, Arbroath.	Died of enteric fever at Reitfontein, December 16th, 1900.

LIST OF OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND MEN—*continued.*

No.	Name and Address.		Note.
9220	Trooper	J. St C. M'Gregor, London.	Invalided home; received commission in Yeomanry, and returned to South Africa with second contingent.
9212	Trooper	D. M'Nab, Dunfermline.	Returned with Lieutenant Simpson.
9202	Trooper	J. J. Nicol, Tomintoul.	Returned with company.
9204	Trooper	C. J. Wedderburn Ogilvy, Ruthven, Meigle.	Died on s.s. *Cymric* off Las Palmas; buried at sea.
9123	Trooper	R. Orchison, Cupar.	Original member F. L. H.
9136	Trooper	W. J. Pople, Perth.	Invalided home.
9240	Trooper	H. L. Playfair, Coupar Angus.	Invalided home; rejoined, and returned with company.
9207	Trooper	W. Prentice, Edinburgh.	Mortally wounded at Reitvlei, 28th February, 1901; died in Johannesburg, 6th June, 1901.
9190	Trooper	W. Renny, Broughty Ferry.	Lieutenant in Submarine Miners (Tay Division R. E.) Died of enteric at Krugersdorp, 16th August, 1900.
9229	Trooper	J. Reid, Peterhead.	Invalided home; returned with second contingent.
9131	Trooper	W. Rintoul, Blebo.	Original member F. L. H. Farmer; returned with company.
9200	Trooper	J. M. Ritchie, Turriff.	Invalided home; returned with second contingent.
9160	Trooper	J. C. Robb, Arbroath.	Returned with company.

No.	Name and Address.		Note.
9198	Trooper	A. Ross, Turriff.	Servant to Captain Gilmour; remained with him till he returned; went back to South Africa and joined Natal police.
9149	Trooper	J. Sempill, Brechin.	Promoted corporal; slightly wounded by cartridge exploding in camp fire; invalided home after twelve months.
9227	Trooper	A. Shiell, Brechin.	Lieutenant in 2nd V.B. Royal Highlanders. Volunteer; promoted corporal; returned with company; went back to South Africa with commission in Fincastle's Horse.
9217	Trooper	J. B. Shields, Tranent.	Medical student. Invalided home.
9192	Trooper	G. M. Sinclair, Edinburgh.	Invalided.
9194	Trooper	J. Sinclair, Cowdenbeath.	Invalided; enteric.
9193	Trooper	J. C. Sim, Inverkeithing.	Invalided.
9124	Trooper	J. Scott, Boarhills.	Original member F. L. H. Invalided.
9158	Trooper	J. G. Scott, Dundee.	Broke collar bone by fall from horse; invalided.
9231	Trooper	J. B. Scott, St Andrews.	Original member F. L. H. Promoted sergeant; returned with company.
9237	Trooper	A. Scott, Tayport.	Farrier to the company, and returned with it.
9223	Trooper	J. P. Stephen, Musselburgh.	Did police and orderly duty with Clements' column.

LIST OF OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND MEN—*continued.*

No.	Name and Address.		Note.
9172	Trooper	A. C. Stratton, Rugby.	Invalided home after twelve months.
9137	Trooper	H. Stewart, Cowdenbeath.	Original member F. L. H. Invalided home.
9176	Trooper	J. P. Sturrock, Newport.	Promoted corporal; returned with company.
9238	Trooper	J. A. Sutherland, Markinch.	Company saddler; invalided home.
9140	Trooper	J. Tod, Kirkcaldy.	Invalided home, and has since died in W. Africa.
9242	Trooper	C. Truscott, Cornwall.	Groom to Captain Hodge; returned with company.
9129	Trooper	E. C. Usher, Edinburgh.	Original member F. L. H. Invalided home; has since died.
9144	Trooper	W. Veitch, Edinburgh.	Invalided home after twelve months.
9162	Trooper	F. G. Wacher, London.	Original member F. L. H. Killed at Reitvlei, 28th February, 1901.
9143	Trooper	T. Walker, Auchtermuchty.	Original member F. L. H. Killed at Nooitgedacht, 13th December, 1900.
9159	Trooper	A. T. Wilson, Kirkcaldy.	Killed at Nooitgedacht, 13th December, 1900.
9173	Trooper	A. M. Westlands, Edinburgh.	Left at Cape Town in charge of stores.
9185	Trooper	R. Yeomans, Shrewsbury.	Servant to Lieutenant Gilmour; died of enteric at Pretoria, 24th September, 1900.
9245	Trooper	E. M. Thomson, Wilts.	Joined at Cape Town.
—	Trooper	J. D. Mitchell, Dundee.	Transferred from Rough Riders; wounded at Nooitgedacht.

Appendix IV.

ITINERARY OF 20TH COMPANY VI. BATTALION IMPERIAL YEOMANRY, 1900–1901.

From the Diary of Lieutenant Pullar.

The letter F opposite a date signifies the days on which the Company was engaged with the enemy.

TRANSVAAL.

Date.		Place.	Miles, &c.
1900			
April		Wellington, Paarl, and Worcester -	
May	15	Warrenton - - - - - -	25
	16	Christiana - - - - - -	
	17	Bloemhovel - - - - - -	
	18	Phokwani - - - - - -	25
	19-20	Phokwani - - - - - -	
	21	Taungs - - - - - -	15
	22	Madrid - - - - - -	
	23-26	Vryburg - - - - - -	40
	27	Trafalgar - - - - - -	
	28-29	Hartebeestpan - - - - -	47
	30	Geysdorp - - - - - -	
	31	Barberspan - - - - -	
June	1-2	Barberspan - - - - -	50
	3	Beijesvallei - - - - -	
	4	Kalkspruit - - - - -	
	5-6-7	Lichtenburg - - - - -	12
	8	Potfontein - - - - -	
	9	Ventersdorp - - - - -	45
	10	Night March - - - - -	
	11	Potchefstroom - - - - -	33
	11-24	Potchefstroom (patrols) - - -	
	25	Frederikstadt - - - - -	
	26	Welverdiend - - - - -	42
	27	Bank Station - - - - -	

Date.		Place.	Miles, &c.
June	28	Gemsbokfontein	40
	29	Klip Drift	
	30	Johannesburg (Germiston)	
July	1	Kaalfontein	15
	2	Pretoria	20
	3-4	Pretoria	75
	5	Rietvlei (General Hutton)	
	6	Rietfontein (Bronkhorstspruit)	
	6-11	Rietfontein	
	12-14	Pretorious Farm	F1
	15	Pretoria	
	16-17	Dourdepoort (General Mahon)	F2
	18	Eight miles to Aapres River	
	19	Kameldrift (Pienaarspoort)	F
	20	Kameldrift (Pienaarspoort)	115
	21	Doornkraal	
	22	Doornkraal	F3
	23	Doornkraal	
	24	Bronkhorstspruit Station	
	25	Balmoral	15 F
	26	Balmoral	15
	27	Bronkhorstspruit	
	28	Diamond Hill	50
	29	Erstefabriken	
	30	Pretoria	
	31	Pretoria	
August	1	Horne's Nek	F
	2	Elands Nek	F
	3	Crossed Crocodile River	
	4	Brakspruit	100
	5	Dorzaak Laager	F
	6	Dorzaak	
	7-8	Brakfontein	
	9	Commando Nek (Kekewich joined)	
	10	Commando Nek (Grootplaats)	
	11	Ten miles S.-W. to	
	12	Hartley's Farm and Nek	
	13	Jameson's Kop	55
	14	Jameson's Kop	
	15	Vlakfontein	
	16	Vlakfontein (De Wet)	25 F
	17	Oliphant's Nek and Rustenburg	

Date.	Place.	Miles, &c.
August 18	E. night march to Crocodile River	
19	Roode Kopjes	25 F
20	Zoutpans Drift	
21	North	
22	Zoutpan (Salt Works)	
23	North twelve miles	75
24	Warmbaths	
25	Warmbaths	
26	South to Pienaars River Station	
27	Rosenbloom and Waterval	60
28	Pretoria	
29–Sep. 2	Pretoria	
Sept. 3	Rietfontein (General Clements)	20
4	Skeerpoort	
5	Witwaterberg (F Bulfontein)	F
6	Yeomanry Hill (Hekpoort)	45 F
7-9	Hekpoort	F2
10	Boschfontein	F
11	Zandfontein	40 F
12-18	Hekpoort (patrols)	F4
19-25	Thorndale	
26	Waggonpadspruit	
27	Near Oliphant's Nek	
28	Buffelshoek (Selous River)	60
29	Buffelshoek (patrol)	
30	Oliphant's Nek	
Oct. 1-2	Sterkstroom	18
3	Bethanie (patrol)	10
4	Backfontein	
5	Commando Nek (bridge)	25
6-7	Commando Nek	
8	Rhenosterspruit (south)	
10	Kalkhoeval	45
11-12	Rietfontein (river)	
13	Hartebeestfontein	
14	Pompeon Kraal	
15-17	Damhoek	
18	Boschfontein	
19	Beyond Hekpoort	30
20-28	De Wet's Pass (Blok Kloof)	
29	Hekpoort	
30	Hartley's Nek to store (Boon's)	F
31	Cyferfontein	F
Nov. 1	Vlakfontein	25

Date.	Place.	Miles, &c.
Nov. 2	Leeuwfontein	
3-4	Leeuwfontein (patrols)	F
5	Leeuwfontein	23 F
6	Doornkorn (Klipspruit)	
7	Magato Nek and Leeuwfontein	
8	Elands River	
9	Elandsfontein	27
10	Hartebeestfontein	
11	Vlakfontein	F
12	Krugersdorp	45 F
12-20	Krugersdorp (patrols)	
21	Sterkfontein	F
22	Sterkfontein	F
23	Sterkfontein	56 F
24	Convoy	
25	Rietfontein (84)	
26	Krugersdorp	
27–Dec. 2	Krugersdorp	
Dec. 3	Dwasvlei	
4-5	Skeerpoort	
6	Pompeon Kraal	25
7	Damhoek	
8	Nooitgedacht	F
9	Convoy to Rietfontein	F
10	Convoy returned	F
11-12	Nooitgedacht	15 F
13	Nooitgedacht (fatal 13th) & night march	F
14	Commando Nek	
14-22	Rietfontein	
23	Kalkhoeval (patrol)	
24-27	Rietfontein	
29	Night march	
30-31	Wolhuters Kop	35
1901		
Jany. 1-2	Wolhuters Kop	
3-9	Buffelspoort	
10-18	Breedt Nek	F2
19	Kroom River	
20	Dorzaak	20
21-22	Oliphant's Nek	
23-24	Middlefontein	8 F3
25	Koffyfontein	
26-27	Vlakfontein	8

Date.	Place.	Miles, &c.
Jany. 28	Rietfontein N. - - - - - -	
29	Steinkopje - - - - - - -	43 F
30	Krugersdorp - - - - - -	F
31	Wonderfontein - - - - - -	20
February 1	Wonderfontein (Gemsbokfontein) - -	F
2	Gatsrand (night march) - - -	14 F
3	Wonderfontein - - - - - -	
4-8	Roodepoort (Gatsrand) - - -	15
9	Gemsbokfontein - - - - - -	
10	Oberholzer (passed Banks) - -	35
11	Oberholzer - - - - - -	
12	Welverdiend - - - - - -	
13	Kleinfontein - - - - - -	
14	Deelkraal - - - - - - -	F
15	Buffelsdoorn - - - - - -	
16-17	Kraalfontein - - - - - -	
18-19	Doornfontein - - - - - -	65
20	Buffelsdoorn - - - - - -	F
21	Nooitgedacht (Losberg) - - -	F
22	Rooipoort - - - - - - -	
23	Rooipoort (Hartebeestfontein) - -	
24	Potchefstroom - - - - - -	
25	Potchefstroom - - - - - -	
26	Mooi River Bridge - - - -	
27	Witpoort - - - - - - -	30
28	Rietpoort (Mooi River) - - -	F
March 1	Rietvlei (Mooi River) - - - -	F
2	Reitvlei - - - - - - -	
3	Frederikstadt Drift (Mooi River) - -	5
4	Frederikstadt Station - - - -	
5	Kaalplatz (Jew's store) - - -	
6	Nooitgedacht (Losberg) - - -	F
7	Jew's store - - - - - - -	30
8	Potchefstroom - - - - - -	
9-14	Potchefstroom - - - - - -	
15	Potchefstroom (south bridge) - -	
16	Hartebeestpoort - - - - - -	28 F
17	Wonderboom - - - - - -	F
18	Rietpoort (opposite Parys) - - -	F
19	Rietpoort - - - - - - -	F
20	Bronkhorstfontein - - - - -	F
21	Raatskraal - - - - - - -	45 F
22-24	Modderfontein - - - - - -	

Date.		Place.	Miles, &c.	
March	25	Bank Station	10	
	26	Modderfontein	10	
	27	Kaalfontein	56	F
	28	Kaalfontein (Zoekoefontein)		
	29	Zurfontein		
	30	Vereeniging		

Total miles in Transvaal, 2005; engagements, 65.

ORANGE RIVER COLONY.

Date.		Place.	Miles, &c.	
April	5	Bloemfontein	22	
	6	Springfield		
	7	Sanna's Post (Waterworks)		
	8	Thaban'chu	18	
	9-12	Brand's Drift	35	F
	13-14	Allandale		
	15	Korannaberg	30	F
	16	Korannaberg (Bestersflats)		F
	17	Onderkluitze's Kraal		F
	18	Belmont (Monastery Mine)		F
	19	Belmont (Diamond Mine)	60	F
	20	Trommel (Leeuwkop)		F
	21	Trommel		
	22	Bakenfontein (Winburg)	42	
	23	Kaffir Kop		
	24	Night march		
	25	Senekal		F
	26	Dinkerfontein	30	F
	27	Mispa (Blawkop)	40	F
	28	Reitz Farm		F
	29	Reitz	25	
	30	Muller's Rust		F
May	1	Dinkerfontein	52	F
	2-5	Senekal		
	6	Liliefontein	45	F
	7	Liliefontein		F
	8	Spytfontein		F
	9	Ventersburg Road Station		

Date.	Place.	Miles, &c.
May 10-11	Ventersburg Road Station - - -	10
12	Geneva Siding - - - - -	
13	Geneva Siding - - - - -	
14	Roode Bloem - - - - -	85 F
15	Balkfontein - - - - -	F
16	Commando Drift (Vaal) - - -	
17	Wilgelegen - - - - -	
18	Doornkraal - - - - -	F
19	Rietgat - - - - - -	50 F
20	Roodepoort - - - - -	
21	Kopje Allein - - - - -	
22	Virginia Siding - - - - -	24

Total miles in Orange River Colony, 568; engagements, 20
„ Transvaal, - 2005; „ 65

Total trek (excluding patrols), 2573; engagements, 85