

Charles Knox and all serving with him, especially on the Australian and other mounted troops under Colonel Le Gallais and Lieut.-Colonel De Lisle, who must have felt themselves amply rewarded for the perseverance and energy they had displayed during the preceding weeks which had been most harassing for all concerned. One 12-pr. of "Q" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, and one 15-pr. of the 14th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, were recaptured. Four Krupp guns, one pompom, one Maxim, all the enemy's ammunition and wagons, and 100 prisoners were taken, and 25 dead and 30 wounded Boers were left on the field. Amongst the wounded was De Villiers, Steyn's secretary, and amongst the dead a Boer doctor, with the red cross on his arm, a rifle in his hand, and a bandolier half emptied. Ex-President Steyn and De Wet were both present at the beginning of the engagement, but made a hurried retreat early in the day. Our casualties were three Officers and seven men killed, and seven Officers and 27 men wounded.

Amongst the killed, I deeply regret to say, was Colonel Le Gallais, 8th Hussars, a most gallant and capable leader, whose place it will be very difficult to fill; and amongst the wounded Lieut.-Colonel W. Ross, Durham Light Infantry, who had done extremely good work throughout the campaign with the Mounted Infantry.

The advanced troops of Charles Knox's column under De Lisle reached Kroonstad on the 8th November to refit and obtain supplies, and were followed in the course of a day or two by the rest of the force.

15. From information which had reached me from various sources, I had for some time been aware that there was likely to be a recrudescence of Boer activity in the southern part of the Orange River Colony. Their stock of ammunition was running short, their numbers were considerably reduced, supplies were not over plentiful, and they hoped that if they could only show themselves south of the Orange River, they would be able to induce many of the disloyal inhabitants of Cape Colony to join their ranks and also replenish their stores.

The news that the Boers intended to move to the south caused a general feeling of unrest throughout Cape Colony, and the prisoners of war at Cape Town were firmly convinced that the time of their captivity was drawing to an end.

16. Up to the middle of October, Steyn and De Wet had been loath to leave the valley of the Vaal, trusting that some fortunate combination of circumstances would admit of their acting in communication with Botha and Delarey, and making a successful attack on Johannesburg or Pretoria.

The decisive victory of Charles Knox crushed these hopes; so soon as they could collect their scattered forces, they hurried south to join Harsbruk and Hertzog, who had already given us considerable trouble on the line of railway between Bloemfontein and the Orange River, and amongst the small towns lying to the west of that line.

17. So many troops had been required for the extended operations in the Transvaal that the southern part of the Orange River Colony had to be very lightly held, and it was not easy, on account of the great distances to be traversed, to increase the strength of Lieut.-General Kelly-Kenny's command on short notice. As mentioned, however, in my last despatch, the Highland Brigade had already been sent to Bloemfontein on receipt of the news that Wepener had been temporarily occupied by the Boers, and was followed by a few companies of Volunteers which had been withdrawn from their battalions

in the hope that it would be possible to let them return to England at an early date.

On the 27th and 29th October, the 3rd Cavalry Brigade left Kroonstad for the south, and at the same time the 3rd Bn. Grenadier Guards were despatched from Pretoria, and the 1st Bn. Coldstream Guards from Heidelberg, followed on the 7th November by the 1st Bn. Scots Guards.

18. Meanwhile Kelly-Kenny had recalled Lieut.-Colonel White's column* from the Smithfield direction, and formed a second column,† under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Barker, R.A.

Before, however, these troops could be available the south-west of the Orange River Colony became the scene of renewed hostilities. Jagersfontein was attacked by the Boers on the 16th October. The garrison was under the command of Major King-Hall, and consisted of two companies of the 2nd Bn. Seaforth Highlanders, two guns, and 100 Town Guard and Police. This force was divided into two parties, one holding two forts to the south of the town, the other a range of kopjes to the north, with a reserve in the town. At daybreak the Boers opened fire from the north-east of the town, and almost simultaneously the reserves in the town were subjected to a heavy fire from the houses. About 25 Boers under cover of the night, and aided by the treachery of the inhabitants, had managed to evade the picquets and gain entrance to the town, and at daylight, reinforced by sympathisers, both men and women, were in position to open fire in perfect security from the houses. The garrison, under these trying circumstances, were ably handled and behaved very well. After two hours' fighting they drove the Boers from the town and its vicinity, but not, unfortunately, until they had succeeded in releasing the prisoners confined in the gaol. The Boer loss was heavy, including Commandant Visser and about 27 men being killed. Our casualties were nine men killed, and one Officer and 11 men wounded.

19. Fauresmith, in the same neighbourhood, was attacked on the 19th October. The garrison was under the command of Captain Stewart, 2nd Bn. Seaforth Highlanders, and consisting of one Officer and 20 men of the 30th Company, Imperial Yeomanry, a company of the 2nd Bn. Seaforth Highlanders (117 strong), and a small Town Guard composed of 17 civilians. The configuration of the ground made the place not an easy one to hold against the enemy, but a satisfactory scheme of defence was arranged by holding the large and very rough kopje to the south-east of the town with the Seaforth Highlanders, the Imperial Yeomanry being placed on a low ridge on the northern side, and the Town Guard occupying two houses to the west of the town. About 4.15 a.m. a determined assault on the defences was made by some 400 Boers, who first pushed forward against the kopje held by the Seaforths, where some of the enemy were killed within 10 yards of the picquets. By 6.30 a.m. the Seaforths had cleared this kopje, and by 8.30 a.m. the enemy had been repulsed on all sides, and had retired in a southerly direction. Our casualties were three men killed, and an Officer and 5 men wounded.

20. Between the 18th and 24th October, Phillipolis was almost daily attacked by the Boers, and gallantly defended by the Resident Magistrate, Mr. Gostling, who had organized a

* Two Field guns, one pompom, four companies of Yeomanry, two companies Royal Irish Rifles.

† Two Field guns, one pompom, two companies Irish Yeomanry, one company Mounted Infantry, two companies Seaforth Highlanders.