

small local force consisting of 18 British residents and 11 police. This force was skilfully entrenched on a kopje having access to a spring. The first attack on the 18th was made by about 60 Boers, who kept up a heavy fire for 8 hours before they drew off. The same party resumed the attack on the 21st October and kept it up the whole day. On the following day the Boers were reinforced by a commando about 600 strong, under Commandant Schippers. Mr. Gostling's small garrison augmented to 41 by the enrolment of a few Afrikanders, continued the fight against these heavy odds during the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th October, being subjected the whole time to a heavy fire from all quarters.

On hearing of the investment of Phillipolis the Commandant of Colesberg despatched, at 11 p.m. on the 20th October, Lieutenant Hauna and 34 men of Nesbitt's Horse, with instructions to relieve the beleaguered garrison. Lieutenant Hanna reached Phillipolis on the 21st and posted picquets guarding the waterworks and covering the road from Springfontein, but he was ignorant of the overwhelming number of the enemy in the neighbourhood. Early on the 22nd his picquets were heavily attacked and forced to surrender, but Lieutenant Hanna himself and six men succeeded in joining the defending force. In the meantime arrangements were made by Lieut.-General Kelly-Kenny for the despatch of two columns to relieve Phillipolis, Lieut.-Colonel White's column moving from Bethulie, and Lieut.-Colonel Barker's from Jagersfontein.

Lieut.-Colonel White's column moved from Bethulie to Prior's Siding, where they arrived early on the 21st October, the Infantry and supplies by rail, and the mounted troops and transport wagons by road. Without any delay the force started at 10 a.m., and reached Osfontein, 8 miles east of Phillipolis about 5 p.m., after a march of 16 miles through a very difficult and rough country. The gun and transport teams were much exhausted. At Osfontein the sound of Lieut.-Colonel Barker's guns were audible, so Lieut.-Colonel White sent forward the Yeomanry under Lieut.-Colonel Wentworth-Forbes. This force, which had left Bethulie at 6.30 p.m. on the 23rd October, reached Phillipolis at 6.15 p.m. on the 24th, a remarkable performance as the horses thus covered 50 miles in 26 hours. Lieut.-Colonel Forbes found the actual town in occupation of the enemy who retired on his approach. Meanwhile, Lieut.-Colonel Barker left Jagersfontein with his column at 5.15 a.m. on the 24th October, and arrived, without opposition, about 2 miles north of Phillipolis about 5 p.m.; he succeeded in dislodging the enemy, and the town was entered by the combined forces the following morning. The casualties amongst the garrison and Nesbitt's Horse amounted to three men killed and 12 men wounded. There were no casualties in the relieving columns.

21. Again, at Jacobsdal, on the 25th October, the treacherous part played by some of the inhabitants in admitting the Boers into their houses during the night led to the temporary occupation of that town. The Boers opened fire at daybreak on the garrison, and 14 men were killed and 13 wounded, nearly all belonging to the Cape Town Highlanders and Cape Artillery. On the news reaching the Modder River post, troops were at once detached to Jacobsdal and drove the Boers off. The houses of the treacherous inhabitants were destroyed; in three of them were found large stores of soft-nosed bullets. In this engagement the Boer Commandant Bosman was killed.

22. On the 26th October, Koffyfontein, an

important mining centre, was attacked and gallantly defended by Captain Robertson,\* who had organized a defence chiefly from town guards of British mining people and the police. Sir Charles Parsons from Honeynest Kloof, with Settle's mounted troops, relieved the town, on the 3rd November, without opposition.

23. Anticipating that more mounted troops would be required in the Orange River Colony, and anxious that our Cavalry should not be exposed longer than necessary to the horse sickness, which usually rages in the eastern parts of the Transvaal in the summer months, I had issued orders, at the end of September, for Lieut.-General French to make the command at Barberton over to Major-General Stephenson, and to proceed himself with all available troops *via* Carolina, Ermelo, and Bethel to Heidelberg. French accordingly left Barberton on the 2nd and 3rd October for Machadodorp, where he remained until the 13th, when he moved off in the direction of Carolina, having started off Mahon's Brigade the day before.

By the evening of the same day French had crossed the Komati River, and occupied the high ground six miles north of Carolina. Mahon, who had been specially charged to direct his march so as to guard the right flank of the division, became heavily engaged near Geluk (143) with a body of 1,100 men (including the Carolina and Ermelo commandos) with four guns. Although hardly pressed, Mahon succeeded in holding his own until French came to his assistance, when the Boers were driven back in three bodies in a south-easterly direction, having sustained some loss.

Marching by moonlight, on the early morning of the 14th, French occupied Carolina without opposition, the Carabiniers capturing a convoy of the enemy on the way.

24. French left Carolina on the 16th October, and, moving by Ermelo, reached Bethel on the 20th October. The enemy offered a stubborn resistance throughout the march, at times attacking the column from all sides. They were especially bold round Ermelo, but the opposition diminished as our troops approached Bethel. The Ermelo, Standerton, Bethel, and part of the Middelburg commandos were engaged in these operations. Heidelberg was reached on the 26th October.

All the Cavalry regiments in turn, and on different occasions, got to close quarters with the Boers during this march, and it is beyond doubt that the latter suffered heavily from our shell and pom-pom fire. Over 60 prisoners fell into French's hands, and throughout the march very large quantities of cattle, forage, and ammunition were captured.

French reported that it had been established on reliable authority that the Boers, in many cases, fought in our uniforms, and that armed Kaffirs were to be seen in their ranks, while on occasions our wounded were killed by the enemy. Our casualties between the 13th and 26th

\* Assistant Resident Magistrate, and late of the Kimberley Light Horse.

† French's force consisted of—

Gordon's Brigade—The Carabiniers, Royal Scots Greys, Inniskilling Dragoons, "T" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery; and section Field Troop, Royal Engineers.

Mahon's Brigade—8th Hussars, 14th Hussars, "M" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery; and section Field Troop, Royal Engineers.

Dickson's Brigade—7th Dragoon Guards, Lumaden's Horse, Imperial Guides, "Q" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery; and section Field Troop, Royal Engineers.

Infantry—half 1st Bn. Suffolk Regiment.