

same time, a considerable mounted force round over Nicholson's Nek to cut the enemy's line of retreat and endeavour to capture his laagers. To gain these objects I employed the entire force assembled at Ladysmith. 200 Natal Mounted Volunteers were sent out the evening before to hold Lombard's Kop and Bulwana Mountain. The 5th Lancers, 19th Hussars, and the remainder of the Natal Mounted Volunteers were ordered to move out, under Major-General French, at 3 a.m. on 30th October, cross Lombard's Nek and the Modder Spruit and cover my right flank during the operations. A Brigade Division of Royal Field Artillery, the Natal Field Battery, 1st and 2nd Bns. King's Royal Rifle Corps, 1st Bn. Leicestershire Regiment, 1st Bn. Liverpool Regiment, and 2nd Bn. Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the whole under Colonel Grimwood, King's Royal Rifle Corps, were detailed for the attack on Long Hill (moving at night so as to be ready to commence the attack at dawn. An Infantry Brigade, under Colonel Ian Hamilton, C.B., D.S.O., consisting of 2nd Bn. Gordon Highlanders, 1st Bn. Manchester Regiment, 1st Bn. Devonshire Regiment, and 2nd Bn. Rifle Brigade, together with the Divisional Troops, consisting of a Brigade Division, Royal Artillery, 5th Dragoon Guards, 18th Hussars, Imperial Light Horse, and two companies, Mounted Infantry, were directed to rendezvous at the railway crossing on the Newcastle Road, and proceed to take up a position under cover of Limit Hill. This latter Brigade Division was directed, in the first instance, to assist in shelling Long Hill, the Infantry being intended for the attack on Pepworth's Hill. To cover my left flank and open a way for the action of the Cavalry after the position had been carried, No. 10 Mountain Battery, the 1st Bn. Royal Irish Fusiliers, and the 1st Bn. Gloucestershire Regiment, the whole under Lieut.-Colonel F. Carleton, Royal Irish Fusiliers, with Major W. Adye, D.A.A.G., for Intelligence, as Staff Officer and Guide, were directed to fall in at 11 p.m., on 29th October, and make a night march up Bell's Spruit to seize as strong a position as could be obtained towards Nicholson's Nek; if possible, the Nek itself.

7. The troops moved out in accordance with these instructions. The mounted troops, under General French, passed between Lombard's Kop and Bulwana Mountain, but failed to penetrate further than the line of kopjes north-east of the Nek, where at daybreak they came under the fire of the enemy's guns and rifles. They held the enemy in check here but could not advance further. The Infantry Brigade, under Colonel Grimwood, reached their appointed position, and the Artillery opened on Long Hill, which, however, was found to have been evacuated by the enemy during the night. At this moment Colonel Grimwood's force was attacked by guns and mounted infantry in large numbers from beyond the Modder Spruit, and had to change front to the right to meet this development, as the Cavalry, having been unable to get beyond the kopjes north-east of Lombard's Nek, were not in a position to cover that flank. Gradually the enemy's numbers increased, and made continual efforts to turn both flanks of the position occupied by Colonel Grimwood's force, necessitating a constant prolongation of his fighting line, and thus using up his supports and reserves, which, by 10 a.m., had all been absorbed in the firing line. Meanwhile artillery fire had been opened by the enemy from Pepworth Hill, one of the guns employed being a

15-cm. gun, throwing a shell of about 100lbs. weight, which commenced firing on the town of Ladysmith at a range of 8,000 yards. These guns were silenced by our Field Artillery, which also drove the enemy from the crest of Pepworth Hill. It was now about 8 a.m. At this period Major-General French reported that he was holding his position with difficulty against superior forces of the enemy, and I detached the 5th Dragoon Guards and 18th Hussars, under Brigadier-General Brocklehurst, to his assistance; the 69th and 21st Field Batteries being also moved to his support, and with this assistance he easily held his own till the end of the action. Of the remaining batteries, the 13th and 53rd were engaged in supporting Colonel Grimwood's force, while the 42nd and 67th were still firing on Pepworth Hill, from which the enemy had reopened fire, while he had also brought fresh guns on to Long Hill.

8. About 10 a.m. I withdrew the Manchester Regiment from Colonel Hamilton's force, and placed it in a position to support Colonel Grimwood. The fight now became stationary, our troops holding their positions without any great difficulty, but being unable to advance. The Boers on the other hand, were unable to make any headway. This condition of affairs continued until 11.30 a.m., when, finding that there was little prospect of bringing the engagement to a decisive issue, I determined to withdraw my troops. I accordingly moved the 2nd Bn. Gordon Highlanders from my left to a strong position on Flag Hill, and sent Major-General Sir A. Hunter, K.C.B., my Chief of Staff, to arrange a retirement in echelon from the left, covered by the fire of our Artillery. This was most successfully carried out, the Artillery advancing in the most gallant manner, and covering the Infantry movement with the greatest skill and coolness.

9. Meanwhile the Naval Brigade landed from H.M.S. "Powerful," which had reached Ladysmith that morning, under Captain Hon. H. Lambton, R.N., had moved out with their long 12-pr. guns on improvised field mountings, drawn by oxen, and had engaged the enemy's artillery on Pepworth Hill, directing their special attention to the heavy gun mounted there, which they temporarily silenced. The enemy did not follow up our retirement, and the whole force employed on this side returned to camp at 1.30 p.m.

10. Turning now to this force, consisting of No. 10 Mountain Battery, Royal Irish Fusiliers, and the Gloucestershire Regiment, under Lieut.-Colonel F. Carleton, Royal Irish Fusiliers, which proceeded by a night march up Bell's Spruit towards Nicholson's Nek to cover my left flank, I regret that, owing to the circumstances about to be related, I have no official report of their movements. My information has been obtained from subordinate Officers, who, being severely wounded, were sent into my camp here by General Joubert. From this information it appears that the force moved off, as ordered, at 11 p.m. on 29th October, and proceeded for some distance without seeing signs of the enemy. When passing along the foot of a steep hill, known as Cainguba, stones were suddenly rolled down on them and some shots were fired. The Infantry at once fixed bayonets and carried the hill without difficulty, but unfortunately both the Mountain Battery mules and those carrying the Infantry ammunition took fright and stampeded. Mules carrying two guns eventually returned to camp, one was retained with the