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METHUEN'S THIRD BATTLE WITHIN A WEEK FOUGHT ON MODDER RIVER

British Forces Advancing to the Relief of Kimberley Have a Ten Hours' Engagement, Which Is Styled by the Commander as "The Bloodiest Battle of the Century."

LONDON, Nov. 29.—The War Office has received the following dispatch from General Buller:

"CAPE TOWN, Tuesday, Nov. 28.—General Methuen reports:

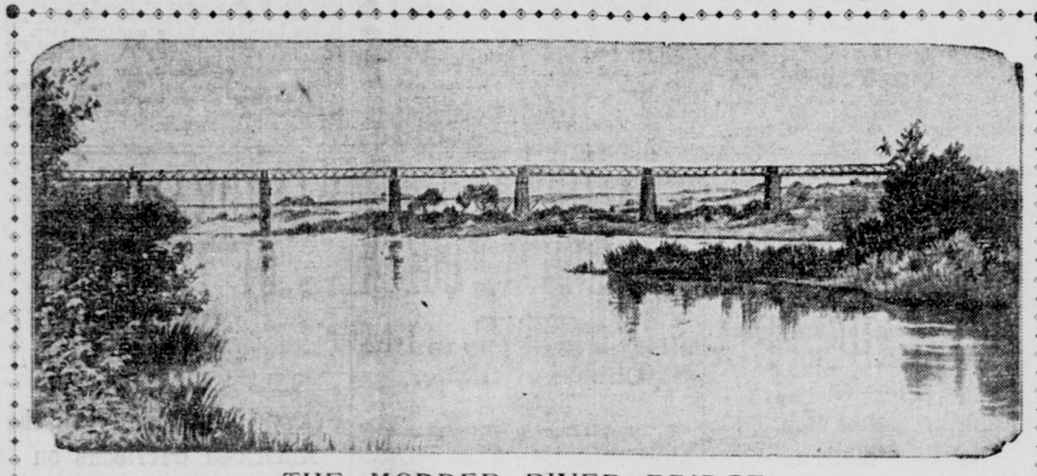
"'MODDER RIVER, Tuesday, Nov. 28.—Reconnoitered at 5 A. M. enemy's position on Modder River and found them strongly entrenched and concealed. No means of outflanking, the river being full. The action commenced at 5:30 with artillery, mounted infantry, cavalry and guards on the right. The Ninth Brigade on the left attacked the position in widely extended formation at 6:30 and, supported by the artillery, found itself in front of the whole Boer force, 8000 strong, with two large guns, four Krupps, etc.

"'The naval brigade rendered great assistance from the railway.

"'After desperate, hard fighting, which lasted ten hours, our men, without water or food, and in the burning sun, made the enemy quit his position.

"'General Pole-Carew was successful in getting a small party across the river, gallantly assisted by 300 Sappers.

"'I speak in terms of high praise of the conduct of all who were engaged in one of the hardest and most trying sights in the annals of the British army. If I can mention one arm particularly, it is two batteries of artillery.'"

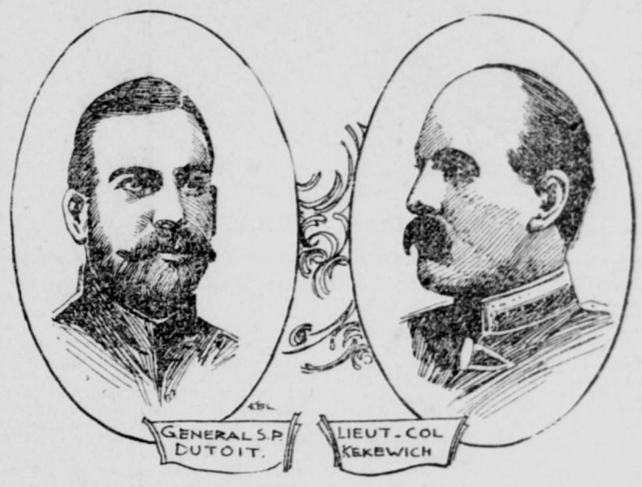


THE MODDER RIVER BRIDGE.

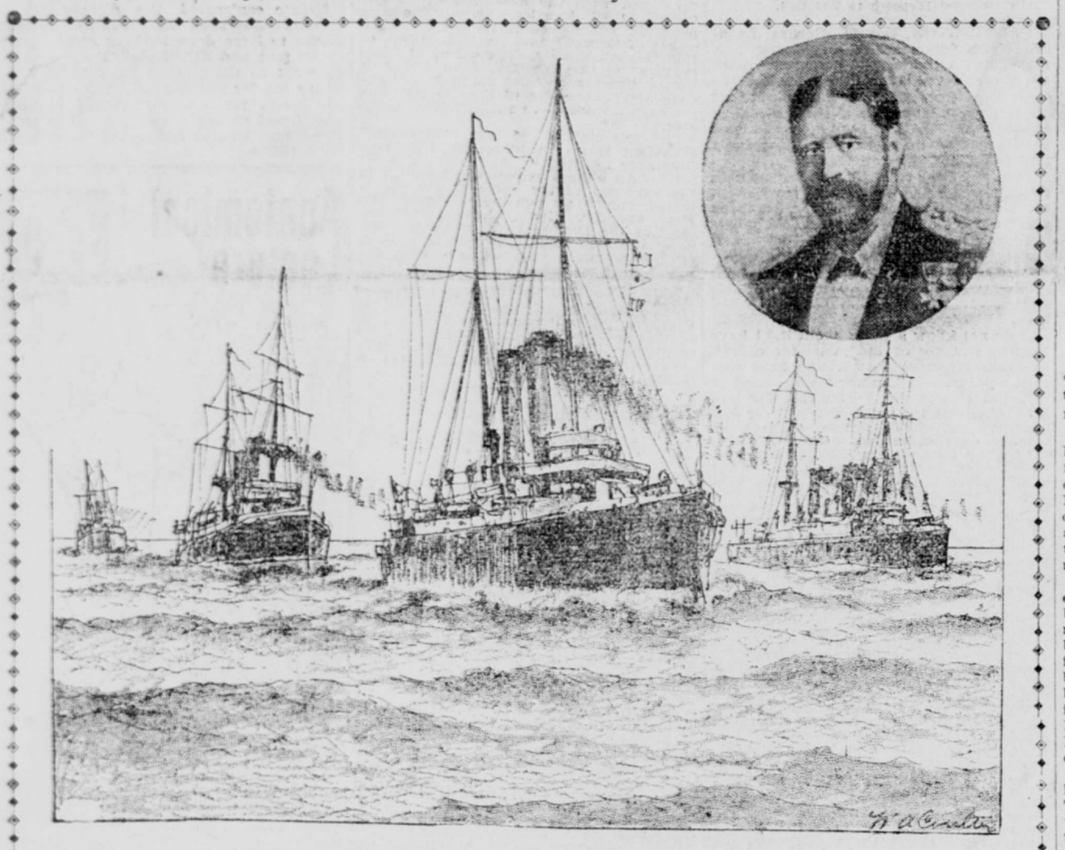
The bridge over the Modder River, where Lord Methuen's battle of Tuesday was fought, is twenty-four miles below Kimberley on the western line of the railroad which runs from Cape Town, via De Aar, Kimberley and Mafeking, to Bulawayo. It was destroyed by the Boers soon after their investment of Kimberley, but as Lord Methuen's column is fully equipped for repairing such railroad bridges as have been destroyed on his line of advance it will only be a question of a few days after he forces the passage of the river before he can take his armored and supply trains over and continue his advance. Then will come the last stage of the movement, the advance on Spytfontein, thirteen miles farther on, where the Boers are prepared to make another stand.

LONDON, Nov. 29.—A special dispatch from Windsor says that General Methuen's dispatch to the Queen after the battle of Modder River says:

"The battle was the bloodiest of the century. The British shelled the enemy out of the trenches and then charged. The result was terrible."



Boer and British Commanders at Kimberley.



THE SPECIAL SERVICE SQUADRON.

This squadron consists of four of the best cruisers in the British navy, and is ready for any emergency, observation or war, as the case may be. The leading vessel, the St. George, flies the flag of Commodore E. S. Poe, who commands the squadron, and is a first-class cruiser of 7700 tons. The other three are the Minerva, Cambrian and Juno, all steaming over nineteen knots and carrying formidable armaments.

LONDON, Nov. 30.—London had a shock last night. In the midst of rejoicing over Lord Methuen's great victory at Modder River late editions of the evening papers came out with placards of big, black type, "Surrender of Ladysmith."

The revulsion of feeling was only momentary. Thousands who eagerly bought papers soon found out that the reported surrender was contained in a very circumstantial agency dispatch from The Hague, Dr. Leyd's headquarters. Inquiry at the War Office elicited the information that no dispatch containing such news had been received.

General Methuen's march from Orange River is a most notable achievement. In the course of a week he has marched his columns nearly fifty miles, fought three battles and won three victories. The fight at Belmont was fierce enough with its deplorable loss to the Guards. The engagement at Enslin or Gras Pan had a melancholy notoriety for the terrible execution wrought among the naval brigade, but the Modder River battle is likely to prove the hardest and bloodiest of the three.

This combat, which lasted for ten hours and was fought by men who had neither food nor drink, under a blazing sun, against a strongly entrenched enemy, possesses features which will make live military history.

After Saturday's battle at Gras Pan General Methuen's force rested on Sunday. It advanced fifteen miles northwest on Monday, and at night the column found itself close to the Modder River and confronted by a Boer army of 8000 men, strongly entrenched.

Early Tuesday morning the attack began. The Boers must have been posted on the north side of the Modder River, which was running at full flood. The British attacked from the south side. As there was no opportunity for outflanking the enemy's position owing to the high water they must have made a front attack and forced the Boers to quit their position by the superiority of their artillery and rifle fire, the retirement being accelerated by the fact that General Pole-Carew probably late in the engagement had succeeded in getting across the river with a force. No pursuit of the enemy appears to have been possible.

There is little doubt that the Boers are taking away their guns and will fight again at Scholtz Kop and Spytfontein, twelve miles to the north.

A fourth battle must almost inevitably take place, but Colonel Kekewich will probably try to attack the enemy in the rear. This engagement must occur to-morrow or Saturday, and if all goes well Kimberley should be relieved by Sunday or Monday.

Nothing is known yet of the casualties at Modder River, but excluding these General Methuen has lost nearly 500 officers and men since he began marching on Kimberley.

Including prisoners now in Pretoria the British losses under all heads since the war began make an aggregate of 3000.

The Daily Mail says it discredits the report that Ladysmith has fallen, and says it was circulated last night by Laffans' News Agency in a dispatch from The Hague, and had no foundation.

The absence of news from Natal for three days seems to point to the fact that the Boers are in force on Tugela River and that General Buller wishes to keep his dispositions absolutely secret until he can strike a blow. This is likely to prove a difficult task, as the river lies before him with its bridges broken down and its stream in flood. The British column now numbers 18,000, of which considerable force was as far north as Frere on Sunday. No further news of General Gatacre's advance on the Cape Colony invaders have been received.

WORSE NEWS FROM METHUEN IS EXPECTED

LONDON, Nov. 30.—The military expert of the London Morning Post writes for to-day's (Thursday's) issue the following review of the situation in South Africa:

"It is clear that the keenest fighter in Lord Methuen's division will have had his fill before Kimberley is relieved. It is difficult to comprehend the extent of the Modder River fight from the brief terms of Lord Methuen's dispatch. Certain facts are given. The river was in flood and the bridge, we presume, was the only means of crossing it.

"We must suppose that the Boers elected to defend the southern approach to the bridge and that they fought with the river behind them, and consequently with but one line of retreat and that they were intrenched with both flanks on the river banks. The ground at the Modder River bridge is higher on the northern side, it is possible that on this high ground the Boers posted large guns and even the Krupps mentioned in Lord Methuen's dispatch.

"He describes the fight as one of the hardest in the annals of the British army. That must serve to prepare for the cost at which the fight has been won. It seems that it has been won, though the dispatch does not enlarge on the results of the victory and refrains scrupulously from referring to a victory at all.

"The intelligence as to the movements of the Boers on the western border gives the somewhat disquieting inference that the force which General Methuen met at Gras Pan was not that which he defeated two days before at Belmont, but a detachment from the investment of Kimberley.

"Consequently the enemy can never be effectively beaten, since our force is not sufficient to outflank him in the field, and he will merely move back after each day's fight, showing his teeth as he goes.

"From Natal there is a complete silence, but an echo of its necessity comes through reports of transports diverted to Durban. This is sufficient testimony to General Buller's views on the situation in Natal. It may be considered as grave as one has courage to regard it."

BOERS DRAW LINES OF INVESTMENT CLOSER

LONDON, Nov. 29.—The Standard publishes the following from Ladysmith, dated Tuesday, November 21:

"Last Saturday I had a whole sackful of my correspondence returned to me, showing the difficulty of communicating with the outside world.

"The Boers' cannonade continues almost daily, but there have been few casualties. Evidently the object of the enemy is to exhaust the spirits of the British troops by incessant harassing. The prospect of the British advance from the south has impelled the Boers to redouble their efforts. They are mounting more guns and drawing the lines of investment closer."

CASUALTIES AT BELMONT AND BEACON HILL

LONDON, Nov. 29.—A revised list of the British casualties at Belmont shows: Officers killed, 4; wounded, 22; non-commissioned officers and privates killed, 46; wounded, 225, of which number the Guards had 35 killed and 39 wounded.

A revised list of the casualties sustained by General Hildyard's forces at the battle of Beacon Hill shows: Killed, 13; wounded, 64; missing, 1, and prisoners, 8.

FREE STATERS WERE OVERWHELMED BY NUMBERS

PRETORIA, Monday, Nov. 27.—General Dutort reports that the British made a sortie from Kimberley early Saturday morning and fired on the Boers with artillery and infantry in the darkness. The British sortie was where the Bloemhof Boer force was stationed. On our (the Boer) side there were 300 men. General Dutort, who was nine miles off, hastened to the assistance of the Bloemhof contingent with 100 men. Nine burghers were killed, seventeen wounded and there were some missing. The British left on the field a private and a sergeant.

GENERAL LORD METHUEN, in Command of the British Flying Column for the Relief of Kimberley.

It is reported that the British attempted to leave Kimberley on the east side to assist the troops from Belmont.

Commandant Lubbe was slightly wounded. The British have repaired the damage to the railroad.

The Free Staters engaged with the Boers were overwhelmed by numbers, and after a brave stand until the afternoon we were compelled to take up another position on the other side of the railroad. Delarey says it is impossible to give the number of killed and wounded Boers, but the loss is not great.

The Boers had four guns to the British twenty-four. The general says the Free Staters are full of courage.

(The latter part of the foregoing dispatch from "the Free Staters engaged" evidently refers to either the battle of Belmont or the battle of Enstin or Gras Pan.)

VICTORIA INSPECTS THE GRENADIER GUARDS

LONDON, Nov. 29.—Enthusiasm marked the departure to-day of the first detachments of the composite battalion of the Household Cavalry going to South Africa. Surging masses thronged Windsor, cheering and singing, and similar scenes were witnessed in London in spite of the dense fog.

Lord Wolseley bade the Horse Guards (the Blues) farewell at Knights Bridge barracks. He made a speech reminding the men of the grand military deeds of the Blues, saying he was assured they would do their utmost to add to the glory of a regiment of which they were so justly proud, and wishing them godspeed, good luck and a safe return.

Struggling crowds lined the route to the station, incessantly singing and cheering until the cavalrymen were entrained for Southampton, where they embarked on board the transport Maplemore.

There was an interesting ceremony at Windsor to-day, when the Queen inspected the men of the Grenadier Guards, who recently returned from Omdurman, and conversed with the wives and families of the soldiers who have gone to South Africa from the Windsor district. The weather was beautiful. The Queen was accompanied by Princess Henry of Battenberg and Princess Christian.

After an inspection of the troops her Majesty briefly addressed Colonel Hatton, congratulating him on the splendid conduct of the guards in South Africa and expressing deep regret at the losses sustained. Queen Victoria's words were all the more earnest inasmuch as just before her arrival at the barracks she received news of General Methuen's great victory in what another telegram received at the barracks termed the bloodiest battle of the century.

Colonel Hatton thanked the Queen for her kind words and the guards cheered repeatedly.

The wives and families of the soldiers were then grouped in front of the royal carriage and her Majesty sympathetically addressed them, saying how much she felt for them and hoping they would have good acounts of their husbands and fathers. The spectacle was unique. Anxious wives with crowing babies in arms or in baby carriages passed in front of the Queen, who leaned forward, dropping words of sympathy and hope with true womanly tenderness.

JUSTIFICATION OF GREAT BRITAIN'S POLICY

LONDON, Nov. 29.—Addressing a meeting of 7000 people in Leicester this evening, Joseph Chamberlain devoted the greater part of a long speech to a justification of the Government's policy in South Africa and to a refutation of the arguments of the Earl of Kimberley, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and others.

"According to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman," said Mr. Chamberlain, "we ought to have skulked back to our holes when Mr. Kruger refused to listen to our peaceful representations. That would have lost us South Africa, weakened our hold upon India and earned us the contempt of mankind."

He reiterated the war was inevitable, although doubtless Mr. Kruger would have preferred to wait until England was involved with some other power.

Referring to the conditions under which the Gladstone Government granted the convention of 1881, he denied that the grant was made because Mr. Gladstone feared a general Dutch rising.

"The real reason," he asserted, "was because the Gladstone Government believed the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 occurred under a misapprehension of Lord Beaconsfield that a majority of the Boers desired annexation. It was afterward proved that this was not their desire, and the annexation was canceled."

Referring to the basis and conditions of settlement after the war, Mr. Chamberlain said:

"I do not like to divide the skin before I have caught the bear, but I must insist that the Boers, by their own action, have created a clean sheet, upon which we can write what we please, and I feel convinced that our loyal fellow-subjects in Cape Colony and Natal would regard no solution as durable which did not provide beyond the shadow of a doubt for the supremacy of the British flag—the only guarantee of settled peace and the only security for the just treatment of all the races of South Africa."

WITH RHODES' COMPLIMENTS.

LONDON, Nov. 30.—The Daily Telegraph publishes this dispatch from its special correspondent:

KIMBERLEY, Nov. 23.—An armored train making a reconnoissance to-day was fired upon by a Boer gun, but no damage was done. Our artillery replied with shells of De Beers Company's manufacture, marked "With C. J. Rhodes' compliments." Under this fire the enemy fled.

A [illegible], who was a prisoner in the Boer camp for a fortnight and then escaped, states that in the Dromfield fight, besides Commandant Botha, four others were killed on the spot and two died on the road to Boshof. Many Boers have been killed in recent engagements.

NEWS FROM LADYSMITH.

LADYSMITH, Monday, Nov. 29 (by messenger to Moot River).—All here are well and cheerful. The Boers are not shelling to-day and we have no fear that they will attack the town. Our position we have made very strong with redoubts and breastworks, and we look forward confidently to the ultimate result.

CANADIAN TROOPS ARRIVE.

CAPE TOWN, Nov. 29.—The Allan steamer Sardinian, Captain Johnstone, from Montreal October 28 and Quebec October 30, having on board the Canadian contingent for South Africa 1000 strong, has arrived here.

FOUND DEAD IN BED.

Sudden Ending of Former Collector Black.

PORTLAND, Nov. 29.—Thomas J. Black, who was Collector of Customs for this district during the second Cleveland administration, was found dead in his room in the Imperial Hotel this morning. He was apparently in good health when he retired last night.

Mr. Black was an old resident of Oregon, being a merchant at Halsey when appointed to the customs service. Death was due to heart disease.

COLUMBIA LIGHTSHIP DRIFTS ON THE SANDS

The Sea Ran Very Heavy, but All the Men Were Finally Rescued by the Life-Saving Crew.

ASTORIA, Nov. 29.—Lightship No. 50 is ashore just inside McKensie Head, one mile north of the mouth of the river, and it is doubtful if her crew of eight men can be saved. The lightship went adrift Tuesday night, and the tugs Escort and Wallula and the lighthouse tender Manzanita went out after her this morning. She was sighted ten miles off shore, heading in under sail. The Wallula reached her first and brought her nearly to the entrance, when the hawser parted. The Manzanita then took hold of the lightship and started in with her, but the hawser again parted and became tangled in her propeller.

The lightship was in serious danger when the tug Escort went to her assistance late in the afternoon. The lightship was drifting toward the rocks, when the Escort managed to get a hawser to her. The rope failed to hold in the raging sea, but it did not part until the helpless vessel was pulled around the point. When the hawser parted the last time the tug could only watch the lightship going in toward the shore. During this time the Escort stood by until 7 o'clock to-night, and when she left it looked as though the lightship had gone on the sands. The tug Wallula was ready to go out when the Escort came to the dock to-night, but the latter reported that nothing could be done in the darkness. The Wallula will leave early in the morning.

The lightship has a steel bottom and is exceptionally strong, and it is thought that if there are no rocks under her she may stand the buffeting. Captain Howes of the Escort speaks hopefully of the chances of the crew, but all seamen agree that the situation at the best is desperate. The life-saving crew have gone to their assistance.

On board the lightship are Captain Joseph H. Harriman, Second Engineer Lars Hansen and Antone Enberg, Charles Carlson, Gus Johnson, Walter Way, Joe Leonard and Robert Gerlof. All are Astorians.

At 1:30 o'clock this morning the operator at the Cape reports that all the men on the lightship were rescued by the life-saving crew, only one being slightly injured.