

HUNDREDS OF FREE STATERS HAVE LAID DOWN THEIR ARMS



BOUND FOR THE PRISON HULKS.

[From the Sphere.]

THE PICTURE SHOWS SOME CAPTURED BOERS BEING CARRIED UNDER ESCORT TO THE RAILROAD STATION FOR SHIPMENT TO CAPE TOWN, WHENCE THEY WILL BE SENT TO THE PRISON SHIP IN SIMONS BAY. BUT ONE VESSEL, THE PENELOPÉ, WAS EMPLOYED IN THIS SERVICE UP TO THE TIME OF THE CAPTURE OF GENERAL CRONJE'S FORCE.

Relief of Mafeking Appears to Be Near at Hand.

MUCH FIGHTING YET BEFORE THE BRITISH

Boers Fortifying Passes on the Frontier of the Transvaal.

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LONDON, March 19.—Remarkable quiet has fallen upon the whole field of



SOUNDING THE ALARM IN MAFEKING.

[From the Daily Graphic, after a photograph.]

DIXON'S HOTEL IN MAFEKING IS THE GREAT PLACE OF RENDEZVOUS FOR THE OFFICERS AND MEN WHEN NOT ON DUTY IN THE TRENCHES. WHEN OCCASION ARISES, HOWEVER, A FEW BLASTS BY COLONEL BADEN-POWELL'S BUGLER SOON EMPTY IT AND SEND THE MEN IN A HURRY TO THEIR POSTS.



COLONEL PLUMER, IN COMMAND OF THE BRITISH FORCES AT MAFEKING.

war in South Africa, except in the neighborhood of Mafeking. News as to that long-besieged little town is somewhat conflicting. It is reported by one dispatch that Colonel Plumer has advanced, repairing the line as far as Pitsani, and that a patrol has pushed down within fourteen miles of Mafeking. The relief of the town seems to be near at hand.

The southern part of the Free State is rapidly falling into British hands. The burghers are reported to be surrendering by hundreds at Bloemfontein and in smaller numbers elsewhere.

A message from Natal states that no important move has been made for about ten days. The passes in the Drakensberg into Free State have been found to be held in strength by the Boers, who are intrenching there, as well as along the Biggarsberg and further back on the line of Vaal River.

I have heard much talk about the war collapsing, and some papers have even gone so far as to print headlines predicting an immediate end to the struggle. That, however, is not the idea held by military men here. One and all concur in agreeing that so far as the Orange Free State is concerned the campaign is at an end, but those who know the country predict that England has by no means finished with the Transvaal. I can give you the best idea of what military experts think by quoting one of them, who says:

"After all, we have up to date captured no guns beyond the very few which Cronje had. The Boers have in a wonderful way been able to withdraw all their heavy artillery, and that they took so much pains to do so is distinct proof that they propose later on to use them against us. The moment that the English get into the Transvaal they will be in a country which will once again be suitable to Boer tactics, and no one knows that better than Roberts. That 'Bobs' will come out all right is without doubt, but there will be plenty more fighting between now and the time at which the English army reaches Pretoria."

AMAZON CORPS FORMED BY WOMEN OF THE TRANSVAAL

Two Thousand Wives and Daughters of Burghers to Fight in Defense of Their Country.

LONDON, March 18.—A dispatch to the Daily News from Bloemfontein, dated Friday, March 16, says: "Events have occurred which induce some to predict that the war will last only so long as it takes to march to Pretoria. The educated Boers, even of the Transvaal, are ready to accept the inevitable."

"I am told that a corps of 2000 women has been formed at Pretoria. It is called the Amazon corps. All the members are unmarried in kilts and are armed."

The relief of Mafeking is not yet announced, but it is extremely probable that this is already accomplished by Colonel Plumer's advance. Lady Charles Benteck, at Cape Town, has received a telegram from her husband in Mafeking, dated March 12, saying that he expected to join her shortly. The actual relief movements have not been publicly developed in detail, but it seems that Lord Methuen started only very recently and is rather engaged in dispersing the Boers of the district than aiming at actual relief. Colonel Peckham has dispersed 500 Boers at Fourteen Streams. Lord Roberts probably ascertained from Mr. Frazer, the new Mayor of Bloemfontein, before dispatching General Pole-Carew southward that, in all likelihood, the railway was clear. The next move will be to collect at Bloemfontein by railway sufficient stores for the immediate army Lord Roberts will have when the Orange River forces have joined him. This will probably occur in from two to three weeks. Therefore the next important operations may be expected in Natal.

The cavalry brigade which Lord Roberts has sent to Thaba Nchu, thirty-five miles east of Bloemfontein, is designed to cut off some 2000 Boers who are escaping from the southward. The Boers are reported to have destroyed the railways in the neighborhood of Kroonstadt.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY IN SOUTH AFRICA.

CAPE TOWN (Sunday), March 18.—St. Patrick's day was celebrated with extraordinary enthusiasm throughout South Africa. In a message to Irishmen of Cape Town, the Queen said:

"I have always felt confident that the spirit, courage and allegiance which have distinguished the Irish soldiers in the face of the enemy would not be spared by their brethren in the colony in support of the authority of my Government."

On the initiative of Lord Roberts, a newspaper has been started at Bloemfontein for the edification of the troops. Rudyard Kipling contributed to the inaugural edition yesterday the following lines:

O, Terrence dear, and did you hear,
The news that's going round?
The Shamrock's Erin's badge by law,
Wherever her sons are found,
From Bloemfontein to Bally Bank
'Tis ordered by the Queen
We've won our right in open fight—
The wearing of the green.

The Mafeking relief column, Colonels Drummond and Peadman commanding, had a sharp engagement at Fourteen Streams. The British succeeded in driving the Boers off. They had only a few casualties.

The mounted force from Kimberley, proceeding to the relief of Mafeking, has arrived at Warrenton. As the force neared Windsorton the Boers evacuated the town, blowing up the bridge.

It is reported that the rebels who refused to accompany the Transvaalers when the latter vacated Taung and Vryburg are preparing to trek into Damaraland on the approach of the British, but that Hottentot chiefs are getting ready to bar their escape.

SPENCER WILKINSON ON PROBABLE MOVEMENTS.

LONDON, March 19.—Spencer Wilkinson in the Morning Post says: "Probably Mafeking will be relieved by the approach of Colonel Plumer before Lord Methuen, who seem engaged in the work of clearing the country north of Kimberley, can arrive."

"The pacification of the Free State is progressing satisfactorily. Ultimately there will arise, probably, among the Transvaal Boers a strong peace party, who will point to the condition of affairs at Bloemfontein as evidence that in the British province of Pretoria life may be tolerable."

"It must not be too readily assumed that Lord Roberts will continue his advance by a direct line to Johannesburg and Pretoria. There are other routes with advantages that may be worthy of consideration. According to Winston Churchill there are 14,000 Boers with twenty guns in the Biggarsburg range. They will have to be caught sooner or later. The British troops are anxious to try and the feeling is general that before long they will be permitted to do so."

AMERICAN REPLY SATISFACTORY TO THE TRANSVAAL

LONDON, March 19.—The Times correspondent at Lourenzo Marques, telegraphing under date of March 16, says: "State Secretary Reitz of the Transvaal, in the course of an interview, said that the Government considers the American reply highly satisfactory, and that the United States will bring such pressure to bear as will result in a settlement agreeable to the people of the two republics. While admitting the seriousness of the situation, Mr. Reitz says he is convinced that the burghers of both republics will enthusiastically defend the independence of the Transvaal to the last."

ENGLAND READY TO DEAL WITH PORTUGAL

LONDON, March 19.—Mr. Trohane sends to the London papers a letter he has received from the secretary of the Delagoa Bay railroad arbitration tribunal, which is to the effect that the award will probably be officially proclaimed in about a month. The Standard, commenting editorially upon this communication from the Admran advocate, says:

"When this protracted arbitration has been settled we shall be in a position to deal with Portugal on the entire subject, and we may possibly secure for the Anglified Transvaal improved commercial facilities. It would be a welcome coincidence if the award should coincide with Lord Roberts' arrival at Pretoria."

BOER DESERTERS SURRENDER GUNS TO BRITISH OFFICERS

Lord Roberts Reports the Delivery of Small Cannon to the Commandants at Belmont and Colenso.

LONDON, March 18.—The War Office has the following dispatch from Field Marshal Lord Roberts, dated Bloemfontein, Sunday, March 18:

"The Guards Brigade returned yesterday from Norval's Pont. Several burghers have laid down their arms to General Pole-Carew at Edenburg and elsewhere."

"The officer commanding at Belmont reports that some deserters have come in with a Maxim, a nine-pounder and another gun. Another nine-pounder has been brought into Colesberg. The cavalry brigade has gone to Thalla Nohu in order to reassure the inhabitants of that district and to distribute copies of the proclamation to the people of the Free State. These proclamations are being eagerly sought after."

"Lord Methuen reached Warrenton on March 16. He was in time to prevent the deviation bridge from being completely destroyed and to secure the pontoon on the Vaal."

"English mail was dispatched from here by rail yesterday and to-morrow the regular service with Cape Town will be reopened."

"Mafeking reports that all was well on March 16."

A dispatch to the Daily Mail from Bloemfontein, dated Friday, March 16, says: "We are getting rifles surrendered faster than a factory could turn them out. It is quite certain that if a British official can reach the northern laagers with Lord Roberts' proclamation the whole Boer population will declare for peace."

"All along the Free State Railway, from Springfontein to Bloemfontein, at every station, Boers are coming in to surrender Mausers, Martins and pistols. Before the police headquarters here there is a long line of burghers who are giving up their arms. Five hundred have already done so. Throughout the country 200 rifles, etc., were handed in to-day. Each man, in handing in his arms, signs, 'under oath, a declaration not to take up arms against the British Government during the present war, nor furnish assistance or information about the British forces to the republican forces, but to remain quietly at home until the war is over.'"

A dispatch to the Times from Ladysmith, dated Sunday, March 18, says: "Our advanced camp is on Sundays River, two miles north of Elandsplaagte. The Boers hold two positions on the Biggarsburg range, about ten miles north. The strongest is on the Newcastle road, where several guns have already been mounted and where they are digging extensive trenches. The second position, which is on the Dundee road, is not so strong."

QUARTER RATIONS FOR MAFEKING'S GARRISON.

LOURENZO MARQUES, March 18.—A dispatch from Mafeking, dated Saturday, March 10, says: "The garrison is holding its own. We have heard numerous rumors that the siege will be raised, but so far that is not the case. We are pegging along on quarter rations, supplemented by the occasional capture of cattle. Our home-made gun erratically bombards the Boer trenches."

"Horrible stories are current that the Boers are inflicting nameless tortures upon captive native runners. These may not be true, but are tending to inflame native passions to such an extent that it may soon be impossible to hold the natives in check."

"owing to the Boers having deliberately bombarded the native stadt, which is full of women and children, Colonel Baden-Powell has armed the natives, but he has only allowed them to act on the defensive, although they have clamored to be allowed to go out and attack at the point of assault. They will be prevented as long as possible from inflicting reprisals on the Boers."

PATRIOTIC ENTHUSIASM AT PRETORIA.

NEW YORK, March 19.—The Sun has the following from Pretoria, March 15, via Lourenzo Marques, March 13: There is a large number of Boers on the western border of the Transvaal, in the neighborhood of Mafeking, and that town is surrounded by a very strong cordon, through which, the Boers say, it is impossible for the British to break. The Federal forces are disputing with the greatest vigor an attempted advance toward the Transvaal of a British force from Kimberley.

Advices from the Boer headquarters in the Biggarsburg range are to the effect that everything is quiet at the Natal front. The Boer scouts have ascertained that there are no British troops within twenty miles of Glencoe. The Boer position in the Biggarsburg range is formidably intrenched, and all the passages into the Orange Free State from Natal are strongly fortified.

Despite the reverses which have recently befallen the Federal forces patriotic enthusiasm here and elsewhere in the Transvaal runs high. The manner in which both the Transvaal and Free State Boers rally round their flags is remarkable.

PRETORIA, March 17 (via Lourenzo Marques, March 15).—The gold output during February from company mines on the Rand, which are now being worked by the Government, was 97,700 ounces. The railway between Bloemfontein and Kroonstad has been destroyed. The British officers at Bloemfontein have shifted their quarters to new large buildings north of the town.

WEBSTER DAVIS SAYS THE BOERS WANT PEACE.

LONDON, March 19.—The Naples correspondent of the Daily Mail telegraphs an interview he has had with Webster Davis, United States Assistant Secretary of the Interior. According to this Mr. Webster said:

"When I left Pretoria the Boers were becoming desirous of peace. President Kruger and General Joubert were the strongest opponents of the peace party, but they were becoming exceedingly unpopular. I do not believe the Boers will resist much longer."

The correspondent says Mr. Davis declined to speak regarding his mission, but the general belief in Naples is that he is bearing peace terms and a request for American mediation.

BOER LOSSES AS REPORTED FROM PRETORIA.

PRETORIA, Friday, March 16.—The chief of the intelligence department, Molengraaf, announced that the Federal losses prior to the relief of Kimberley and Ladysmith were: Killed, 677; wounded, 2123. Accidents, sickness and other disabling causes, he asserts, bring the total to 4581.