

The Morning Astorian.

VOL. L.

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SOUTH AFRICA IS A MYSTERY

Dispatch From Roberts Yesterday
Reports Situation "Unchanged"

RECONNOISSANCE BY FRENCH

Methuen's Infantry Gain a Slight
Victory Over the Boers in
Vicinity of Colenso.

LONDON, Jan. 28, 4:30 a. m.—The only news issued by the war office during the night is a dispatch from Lord Roberts, dated yesterday (Saturday), stating that the situation is unchanged, and that General French reports a reconnaissance of the enemy's position on Thursday, when he found the Boers strongly posted at Pietfontein.

Maps do not show any such place in the region of General French's operations and it is probable that Pietfontein, ten miles north of Colenso, is the place alluded to.

A special dispatch from Colenso, dated Wednesday, January 24, says that Commandant Lucas Meiers' commando was surprised and surrounded by a strong body of General Methuen's infantry, killing and wounding 23 and capturing 15.

WARREN REPORTED CRUSHED.

BERLIN, Jan. 27.—It is said that the German foreign office has confirmation of the report that General Warren's division has been crushed.

BERLIN STORY DENIED.

Abandonment of Spionkop Still Remains a Deep Mystery.

LONDON, Jan. 27.—The war office has no news of the catastrophe to Buller's force reported from Berlin, and discredits the story. Neither has the war office any explanation, at least for publication, of the abandonment of Spionkop, and there are no advances in this connection from British sources. The evacuation is today regarded as not so serious as at first thought, and commentators are abusing the military authorities both at the front and at home for publishing hasty accounts of an incomplete, half-understood operation, thus alternately thrilling and depressing the nation.

The afternoon papers describe the general's dispatch as unpleasant reading, mortifying to national pride and damaging to the country's prestige, and scathingly denouncing the gazetting at the present time of reports which, the St. James Gazette says, "display academic frivolity not uncommonly found in combination with conceit and practical incapacity."

The Gazette sums up its position as follows: "These dispatches show the folly which has prevailed throughout the period of the campaign, and which has exacted its usual tithe of lives and men."

"There are signs of important movements developing in the north of Cape Colony."

"General French has succeeded in getting in touch with General Gatacre, possibly prearranging a combination of the two columns and commencement of a concentration of forces which is believed to be the ground work of Lord Roberts' plan of campaign."

"The war office announces that the casualties reported by Buller yesterday occurred in the battalions of General Lyttleton's brigade, which, so far as known at the war office, was not engaged in the capture or defense of Spionkop. It appears, therefore, that they are additional to the considerable casualties which Buller has reported as having occurred at Spionkop."

BRITISH AGAIN TRAPPED.

BERLIN, Jan. 27.—Some of the papers here claim to have a telegram from Pretoria saying that Gen. Warren was enticed into Spionkop, where the Boers fell upon him; that 17 of his cannon were captured and that Buller's hasty retreat over the Tugela river alone can save him.

The alleged Pretoria telegram adds that the British losses were 800 men killed and 1,500 wounded. The dispatch comes through Brussels, and does not receive much credence in this city.

BULLER'S FAILURE BELIEVED.

NEW YORK, Jan. 27.—Dispatches from London say that the military experts, newspapers and people in the streets take a gloomy view of the situation on the Tugela, it being the general belief that Buller's flanking movement has failed as completely as his frontal movement of last month. The idea prevails that the war office has had news which it is keeping from the public, and that the list of casualties which was given out yesterday does not cover the losses of General Warren from "the annoying fire," spoken of by General Buller.

Since the flanking movement began January 10, General Buller has reported 60 killed and 598 wounded and 60 missing. It is remembered how his casualty list grew from day to day after the defeat last month, and it is feared the losses of the past few days have been frightful. Buller is criticized for the form of his message, which reads as though he was trying to saddle the blame for defeat upon Warren.

The new British reverse is likely to have a disheartening effect upon the beleaguered garrison of Ladysmith, but for whom the campaign would have been conducted on a very different plan. Letters written when the siege of Ladysmith began were very sanguine. A letter written about the middle of December said the besieged had rations for six weeks, and according to all reports, the food question must be pressing. The latest message from Ladysmith reported 12 deaths in one day from enteric fever and dysentery.

Lord Roberts at Cape Town has been almost forgotten in the excitement over the fighting at the Tugela. Roberts is in no way responsible for the operations for the relief of Ladysmith, for they have been conducted under advice from the war office in London. It was said some time ago that Roberts favored leaving Ladysmith to its fate and marching on to Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State. It is understood that Roberts' advice indicates there will be fighting in the western district soon, the British armies having been reinforced and the plight of Kimberley being urgent.

NEWS CONCEALED.

LONDON, Jan. 27.—The defense committee of the war office met this afternoon, Lord Salisbury presiding. There are reiterated rumors that the gravest kind of news from Natal is being concealed by the war office. It is even said that Buller's forces are in full retreat.

MAPEKING RELIEVED.

LOURENCO MARQUEZ, Jan. 27.—It is reported on good Transvaal authority that Mafeking was relieved on January 23.

NO REPORT FROM SPIONKOP.

LONDON, Jan. 27.—It is impossible to confirm or deny the reports, as the officials maintain silence as to the rumors. They say they have nothing for publication. It is evident, however, from the war office announcements, that the casualties reported by Buller occurred in Lyttleton's brigade, which apparently was not engaged at Spionkop, and that there has been severe fighting not yet reported.

Sir Michael Hick-Beach, chancellor of the exchequer, came to London purposely to attend the defense committee meeting, and Joseph Chamberlain, secretary of state for the colonies, gave up other engagements for the same reason. Lord Wolseley, commander-in-chief of the forces, was also present at the meeting of the committee.

LOYAL INDIAN SUBJECTS.

Large Meeting in Calcutta Expresses Sympathy and Contributions for South African War.

CALCUTTA, Jan. 27.—A monster meeting of Hindus and Mohammedans today passed a resolution expressing unswerving loyalty and attachment to the British throne. The meeting also subscribed 63,000 rupees toward the Mansion House fund for the relief of the families of victims in the South African war.

TO FILL ROBERTS' PLACE.

SALT LAKE, Jan. 27.—Governor Wells has published a proclamation calling an election to be held Monday, April 2, for the purpose of electing a representative in congress to fill the vacancy caused by the exclusion of Brigham H. Roberts.

TERRIFIC BOER FIRE.

BOER CAMP, Modderspruit, Upper Tugela, Jan. 23.—The British are now endeavoring to force, with 40,000 troops, the Spionkop route to Ladysmith. The firing on General Botha's position yesterday was terrific. The grass was fired, rocks dislodged and trenches pierced, but the battle was practically one-sided, the federals only firing 30 shots. A ball from a shell landed in General Botha's pocket. The only Boer casualties were some horses wounded.

The firing ceased at dark, but was resumed this morning in the vicinity of Ladysmith and here, but up to noon it lacked vigor.

"BILLIE" ORDERED OUT.

CHICAGO, Jan. 27.—By an almost unanimous vote of the Old Tippecanoe Club of Chicago, Senator Mason was today requested to at once resign his seat in the United States senate and the secretary of the club was instructed to strike his name from the roll of the honorary members of the organization.

MINGLING OF THE AUBURN AND GRAY

Native Sons, Daughters and
Pioneers Have a Good Time.

GOV. GEER HITS A HAPPY VEIN

Entertains Assemblage With An
Interesting Address—Distinguished
Guests Attend Reception.

An informal reception was given last night by the local Native Sons and Daughters to fellow members from outside cabins and to the pioneers. It was a most enjoyable affair.

Several distinguished guests were present including Governor Geer, Grand President Blumauer, Mrs. Robert A. Miller, grand president of the Native Daughters; Colonel Robert A. Miller, editor of the Native Son Magazine, and others.

The evening was taken up with addresses by nearly all the notable present, beginning with a formal address of welcome by Judge Taylor, the presiding officer. This was followed by a clever recitation by Terry McKean, after which Sol. Blumauer, president of the state organization, reviewed the work of the order from its inception to date.

Mrs. Robert A. Miller, grand president of the Native Daughters of Oregon followed with a few brief remarks on the work accomplished by the order. "I believe we can work more effectively and intelligently when we have acquired a knowledge of the early settlement and development of our state," said Mrs. Miller. "So I urge the study of our own history. Recollections, entertainments, lectures and study may be systematically carried on by each cabin; and all these aimed to harmonize with the objects and aims of our order. At present this can only be an initiatory step in a work which I sincerely hope will grow, flourish and expand, until every Native Daughter is thoroughly conversant with the history of her state and feels that she hath done what she could to honor our state."

Referring to the pioneers, Mrs. Miller said: "Aside from the indomitable courage; incarnation of individualism that so marked the pioneers of these Pacific coast states, nothing will live so long in the memory of the survivors of those earlier days as the splendid hospitality and whole-souled companionship, that so marked that era, known as the pioneer period. To keep alive this characteristic of our ancestors is one of the cardinal tenets of our order."

A rag-time selection was then rendered by Reeves Emerson who, by the way, is a grandson of the famous essayist. The little fellow has a good voice and was well received.

GOV. GEER GROWS FUNNY.

Governor Geer was then "introduced" to the assemblage and after a few "well-chosen remarks" about the beautiful ladies and handsome men present, merged into a reminiscent vein. He stated, however, that he "wasn't much flattered over the subject allotted to him—Our Pioneers."

"What do I know about the pioneers?" he asked, affecting indignation. "I'm one of the young ones—a native son. This is a libel on my age."

"Of course, everybody had a good laugh with the governor, and then he continued:

"The first thing I remember of my earlier days, I recollect; the first thing that I recollect was some green apples," and then he told a little story about the apples which was quite amusing.

It required no feat of recollection, he said, to remember the period when sperm candles were a luxury.

"I recall clearly the incident that when I was 18 years of age I read the new testament through by the light of a burning pine knot."

"T-u-t," interrupted Colonel Miller, who was sitting at the left of the speaker and who shook his head dubiously as the governor looked at him inquiringly.

"Well," continued the governor, "I guess that the colonel doesn't doubt that I read by the light of a pine knot, at all, but was thinking about the testament."

Mr. Geer then proceeded to pay a high tribute to the pioneers who traveled the hardships of a remote and unpopulated country, recounting many of the great trials necessarily endured by the early settlers, their struggle with the Indians, and the subsequent ceaseless toil to convert the wooded fastnesses into smiling fields and busy market places. But the governor was in too good spirits last night to dwell long upon the more doleful phases of Oregon history and at this juncture he broke out:

"And do you know, my greatest sympathies have always been for the pioneer mothers, for they not only

had to endure the same hardships the fathers did, but had to endure the father's, too."

Silas B. Smith followed with a half hour of reminiscences, succeeded by a vocal selection by Miss Reba Hobbs, which was excellent and heartily enjoyed.

Colonel Miller was the last on the program to speak. After poking fun at some of the governor's jokes he beseeched Astoria Sons and Daughters to spare no efforts to preserve the old relics and historical treasures of Clatsop county. He felt that there were times when the thoughts of the past should give place to thoughts for the future, for some time the relics we value so lightly will sorely be needed. He believed the pick of humanity came west and that the day would be not long in coming when the great Pacific west would be an empire based upon the greatest civilization of the age.

Dancing and luncheon closed the happy program of the evening.

THE GRIDIRON CLUB.

The Usual Coarse and Idiotic Anniversary Performance Given Last Night.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27.—The fifteenth annual dinner of the Gridiron Club was given at the Arlington Hotel tonight, and, like its predecessors, was the most successful event of the season.

The club is composed of forty Washington correspondents who each give a number of dinners and make the last Saturday in January a notable occasion, as it is the anniversary of the organization.

The initiation of two members was made the text for the burlesque on imperialism. The club "expanded" for the new members, raised the president to the rank of emperor and "crowned" him. Reports from the colonial governors and vassal states and the conferring of titles were rudely interrupted by "Uncle Sam," who seized the crown and drove the "decorated officials" from the room.

A minstrel show with really new jokes amused the guests, and several songs written for the occasion were given, a verse being allotted to Mr. Bryan, with an allusion to "16 to 1." Bryan was a guest.

LIVER AND HARBOR FUNDS.

Ships Will Continue to Get Up to Portland for at Least Another Year.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27.—Chairman Burton, of the rivers and harbors committee has received from General Wilson, chief of engineers, U. S. A., a statement of the funds available on the first of the year for river and harbor works throughout the country. Among the items mentioned are the following:

Oregon—Port Orford, (Orchard) harbor \$140,850; entrance to Coos bay and harbor \$157,513; Columbia river and Lower Willamette rivers, below Portland, \$140,924; Columbia river below Tongue Point \$111,550.

WASHINGTON—Grays Harbor and bar entrance \$347,940; waterway connecting Puget sound with Lakes Union and Washington, \$170,000.

TO REMAIN AT SAN DIEGO.

SAN DIEGO, Cal., Jan. 27.—Admiral Kruititz has received orders from Washington, directing that the cruiser Philadelphia remain here until further instructions from the navy department. The vessel was expected to leave for Mare Island today.

SUMMING UP THE SITUATION

Sentiment and Theory Too Large—
ly Evident in South Africa.

MILITARY EXPERT'S VIEWS

England Unacquainted With the Power
of Modern Weapons and Failed to
Profit by Santiago Campaign.

(Copyrighted, 1900, Associated Press.) LONDON, Jan. 27.—The week, which opened full of high hopes, is closing gloomily. The result of General Warren's Spionkop action has had almost a more depressing effect than would an out and out reverse, so keen is the realization of feeling after the short-lived jubilation. Death too, has been very busy in high places at home. It is seldom that one week adds such names as John Ruskin, the Duke of Teck, and Richard D. Blackmore to the obituary list. The papers teem with expressions of sorrow, anecdotes and panegyrics of the great apostle of art, who, it is said, thought he inherited a fortune, died a comparatively poor man, living on one pound (\$5) a day, which he characteristically remarked was enough for any man. His dwindling fortune was undoubtedly due to Ruskin's indiscriminate generosity.

An eminent British general, reviewing the situation to a representative of the Associated Press, thus summed it up:

"First of all, we underestimated the enemy. Secondly, we knew nothing of the power of modern weapons when opposed to each other in the hands of tolerably equal forces. Thirdly, we deserted strategy to satisfy sentiment. By that, I mean, Ladysmith and Kimberley appealed to us and we answered as quickly and unthinkingly as does an electric receiver to the transmitter."

"We have learned many things, but chiefly, we have learned that long range guns and rifles minimize tremendously the advantage which formerly accrued to the aggressor. Yet I thoroughly believe, and I am not speaking without experience, that had any Continental nation undertaken the same task with the same force it would by this time have been wiped out."

"There are a lot of things which might have been learned had we but watched your land fighting at Santiago. But we did not. As a result we did not have nippers to cut wire and we knew nothing about Mausers. But the appreciation of our shortcomings only makes us the more determined. It may be six months and it may be a year; but we shall achieve our object."

From the field of party strife and military criticism it is a relief to turn to an extract from a letter of an officer at the front who writes:

"An orderly was bringing some water to a wounded man lying on the

(Continued on page 4.)

Suggestions to Astorians

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