

tain") which formed a salient in the centre of the alignment and guns were also mounted on the Leeuw Kopje at the northern end, and on "The Seven Kopjes" at the southern end.

On the 6th March I gave orders for an attack on the enemy's position early the following morning. The Cavalry Division, with Alderson's and Ridley's Brigades of Mounted Infantry and seven batteries of Horse Artillery, was directed to march at 2 A.M., its object being to circle round the left flank of the Boers, to take their line of entrenchments in reverse, and moving eventually to the river near Poplar Grove to cut off their line of retreat. The 6th Division under Lieutenant-General Kelly-Kenny, with its Brigade Division of Field Artillery, one howitzer battery, and Martyr's Mounted Infantry, was to follow the route taken by the Cavalry until reaching a point south-east of "The Seven Kopjes." It was then to drive the enemy from these kopjes, and afterwards move to the north in the direction of "Table Mountain."

In the attack on "Table Mountain" the 6th Division was to be assisted by Flint's Brigade Division of Field Artillery, four 4.7-inch naval guns, Le Gallais' Brigade of Mounted Infantry, and the Guards Brigade. This latter force was to concentrate at daybreak near a small kopje and farm distant 2 miles to the east of Ofontein Farm, where my head-quarters had been established. "Table Mountain" being the key of the enemy's position, I anticipated that the Boers would retire to the river as soon as it was occupied by our troops.

The 14th Brigade of the 7th Division, with its Brigade Division of Field Artillery, Nesbitt's Horse, and the New South Wales and Queensland Mounted Infantry, was ordered to march eastward along the south bank of the river for the purpose of threatening the enemy, distracting attention from the main attack on "Table Mountain," and assisting the Cavalry in preventing the Boers from crossing the river at the Poplar Grove Drift. The 9th Division, with three Naval 12-pounders, and Mounted Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonels De Lisle and Henry, was instructed to act in a similar manner on the north bank of the river, and to drive the enemy from the Leeuw Kopje, which formed the northern extremity of their defensive position.

On the 7th March the operations were carried out in accordance with the above scheme, but the 6th Division made too wide a detour to the south, the result being that, before it approached "The Seven Kopjes," the Boers had been dislodged by the Horse Artillery fire in reverse, coupled with the well-aimed shell-fire of the 4.7-inch Naval guns in front, while the turning movement of the Cavalry and Horse Artillery, in conjunction with the advance of the 9th Division and 1st and 14th Brigades, caused the enemy to evacuate "Table Mountain" and the Leeuw Kopje without offering any serious opposition. Long distances had, however, to be traversed by the troops, the ground was heavy owing to the recent rain, and the Cavalry and Artillery horses were in very poor condition. Moreover, the Boers displayed such skill in delaying the pursuit of the Cavalry Division, that they succeeded in taking away with them almost all their guns and wagons, and it was not until the evening that the main body of the force reached Poplar Grove, to which I had ordered the baggage to be transferred as soon as I perceived that the enemy were in full retreat.

Had the Cavalry, Horse Artillery, and Mounted Infantry been able to move more rapidly, they would undoubtedly have intercepted the enemy's line of retreat, and I should have had the satisfaction of capturing their guns, wagons, and supplies, as well as a large number of prisoners. The failure to effect this object was the more mortifying when I learnt the next day on good authority that the Presidents of the Orange Free State and South African Republic had been present during the engagement, and had strongly urged the Boers to continue their resistance. Their appeals to the burghers were, however, unavailing, as the Boer forces were quite broken, and refused to fight any longer.

In the course of the afternoon the Russian and Dutch Military Attachés with the Transvaal Government, Lieutenant-Colonel Gourko and Lieutenant Thomson, who were accompanying the enemy, claimed our protection, the horses in the cart in which they were travelling having been killed by shell fire.

One Krupp gun and six ox wagons were captured during the day, and a large quantity of rifle ammunition was afterwards found in the deserted trenches. The casualties during the day were not heavy, and were confined almost entirely to the Cavalry Division. They consisted of 2 Officers (Lieutenant Keswick, 12th Lancers; Lieutenant Frieslich, 1st Grahamstown Volunteers) and 2 men killed, 3 Officers and 46 men wounded, and one man missing.

On the 8th and 9th of March the force halted at Poplar Grove, but on the latter date the 1st Cavalry Brigade and the 6th Infantry Division moved 8 miles eastward to Waaihoek, on the road to Abraham's Kraal.

On the 9th I issued orders for the advance of the force in three columns on Bloemfontein. The left column, under Lieutenant-General French, consisted of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, Alderson's Mounted Infantry, and the 6th Division. The centre column, which I accompanied, comprised the 9th Division, the Brigade of Guards, the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, Martyr's and Le Gallais' Mounted Infantry, the 65th Howitzer Battery, four 6-inch howitzers, the Naval Brigade, the ammunition reserve, the Supply Park, and the 7th Field Company, Royal Engineers. The right column, under Lieutenant-General Tucker, included the 7th Division, the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, and Ridley's Brigade of Mounted Infantry. The left column was to march by the northern road, through Baberspan, Doornboom, and Venter's Vlei, to Leeuwborg; on the railway line, about 15 miles south of Bloemfontein; the centre by the middle road through Driefontein, Assvogel Kop, and Venter's Vlei to Leeuwborg; and the right column through Petrusburg, Driekop, and Panfontein or Weltevradé to Venter's Vlei, the distance being, in each case, covered in four marches, with halts at the places mentioned.

It should here be explained that my reason for not proposing to use the northern and most direct road beyond Baberspan was, that I had good reason to believe that the enemy expected us to advance by that road, and were ready to oppose us in a strong entrenched position which they had prepared in the vicinity of Bainsvlei.

On the 10th the movement was begun as ordered, and the right column occupied Petrusburg without opposition. The left column found the enemy holding several kopjes behind Abraham's Kraal, and endeavoured to turn their left flank by moving to the south. The Boers,