

enterprising officer also succeeded in cutting the enemy's telegraph and telephone wires in both directions. Eleven locomotives, 20 carriages, and 140 trucks were captured at the Bloemfontein Railway Station, the Boers not having had time to remove them. The acquisition of this amount of rolling stock will greatly facilitate the reopening of railway communication with Cape Colony, in spite of the fact that the bridges at Norval's Pont and Bethulie were blown up by the enemy when they withdrew to the north side of the Orange River.

Yesterday I issued an Army Order\* thanking the troops under my command for their conduct during the operations which resulted in the relief of Kimberley and Ladysmith, the surrender of Cronje, the capture of a large number of prisoners, and the occupation of Bloemfontein. A copy of this Order is appended, and I trust that your Lordship will agree with me in thinking that by their spirit and endurance the soldiers and sailors serving in South Africa have worthily upheld the traditions of Her Majesty's forces.

In Natal events of the highest importance have occurred since I last addressed your Lordship. On 28th February I received a telegram from General Sir Redvers Buller informing me that Major-General Hart was not strong enough on 24th February to take the entrenchments commanding the passage of the Langerwachte Spruit. Sir Redvers Buller had therefore determined to make use of another passage which had been discovered below the Falls.

\* Army Orders, South Africa.

Bloemfontein, 14th March, 1900.

It affords the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief the greatest pleasure in congratulating the Army in South Africa on the various events that have occurred during the past few weeks, and he would specially offer his sincere thanks to that portion of the Army which, under his immediate command, have taken part in the operations resulting yesterday in the capture of Bloemfontein.

On the 12th February this force crossed the boundary which divided the Orange Free State from British territory. Three days later Kimberley was relieved. On the 15th day the bulk of the Boer Army in this State, under one of their most trusted Generals, were made prisoners. On the 17th day the news of the relief of Ladysmith was received, and on the 18th March, 29 days from the commencement of the operations, the capital of the Orange Free State was occupied.

This is a record of which any Army may well be proud—a record which could not have been achieved except by earnest, well-disciplined men, determined to do their duty and to surmount whatever difficulties or dangers might be encountered.

Exposed to extreme heat by day, bivouacking under heavy rain, marching long distances (not infrequently with reduced rations), the endurance, cheerfulness, and gallantry displayed by all ranks are beyond praise, and Lord Roberts feels sure that neither Her Majesty the Queen nor the British Nation will be unmindful of the efforts made by this force to uphold the honour of their country.

The Field-Marshal desires especially to refer to the fortitude and heroic spirit with which the wounded have borne their sufferings. Owing to the great extent of country over which modern battles have to be fought it is not always possible to afford immediate aid to those who are struck down; many hours have, indeed, at times elapsed before some of the wounded could be attended to, but not a word of murmur or complaint has been uttered, and the anxiety of all, when succour came, was that their comrades should be cared for first.

In assuring every Officer and man how much he appreciates their efforts in the past Lord Roberts is confident that, in the future, they will continue to show the same resolution and soldierly qualities, and to lay down their lives if need be (as so many brave men have already done) in order to ensure that the war in South Africa may be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

By Order,

W. F. KELLY, Major-General,  
Deputy-Adjutant-General, for Chief of the Staff.

Finding that he could make a practicable approach to this passage, he recrossed men and guns and took up the pontoon bridge which he caused to be relaid at the new site. The troops meanwhile bivouacked behind hastily constructed shelter trenches, where they were harassed by the enemy's rifle and artillery fire.

On the 27th February Major-General Barton, with two battalions of the 6th Brigade and the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, crept  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles down the river bank, and ascending an almost precipitous cliff, 500 feet high, assaulted and occupied the top of Pieter's Hill. This to some extent turned the enemy's left, and enabled Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Warren, with the 4th Brigade under Colonel Norcott and the 11th Brigade under Colonel Kitchener, to assail the main position, which was carried by the 1st Battalion South Lancashire Regiment, 2nd Battalion East Surrey Regiment, and 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade about sunset. Sixty prisoners were captured, and the enemy scattered in all directions.

On the evening of the 28th February Major-General Lord Dundonald with the Natal Carbineers and a composite Cavalry Regiment entered Ladysmith, the country between that place and Pieter's Hill being found to be clear of the enemy. The next day Sir Redvers Buller moved his head-quarters to Nelthorpe.

On 2nd March 73 wagon loads of supplies entered Ladysmith, the first seven containing hospital comforts. On the same date Sir Redvers Buller telegraphed to the effect that there was no prospect of the enemy making any further stand up to Laing's Nek, as the whole district was clear of them except at the top of Van Reenen's Pass, where a few wagons were visible. The last train load of Boers had left Modderspruit at noon on 1st March and the bridge had afterwards been blown up. They had abandoned vast quantities of ammunition and stores of every description, including tools, tents, and individual necessaries.

The troops employed in the relief of Ladysmith wanted a week's rest, as well as new clothes and boots; those forming the Ladysmith garrison required a fortnight's rest, food, and exercise.

As it was most desirable to strengthen the force in Cape Colony operating by the eastern railway line in the direction of Stormberg, especially in view of my advance on Bloemfontein, I requested Sir Redvers Buller to despatch one infantry division from Durban to East London, with its brigade division of field artillery, should it be possible to spare the latter, and with any mounted troops that he could dispense with.

On the 5th March Sir Redvers Buller telegraphed that he was prepared to send me the 5th Division, under Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Warren, and two squadrons of the 14th Hussars, the third squadron being already with the force in the Orange Free State. He remarked that the Ladysmith garrison would take some time to regain its fitness for field service. He proposed to reoccupy Dundee and Newcastle. The railway from Ladysmith to Van Reenen's Pass was practically complete as far as the Reversing Station, but above that point considerably damaged. The pass itself was held by a small party of the enemy who had entrenched themselves. The other passes were not entrenched, and it was doubtful whether they were occupied. The only organized body of the enemy to be heard of in Natal was about