

driven from their position, but were rallied and reoccupied it; 2nd Lieutenant R. E. Reade, 1st Bn. King's Royal Rifle Corps, rendering himself conspicuous by his gallant service at this period.

At 5 p.m., Lieut.-Colonel C. W. Park arrived at Wagon Hill with three companies 1st Bn. Devonshire Regiment, which I had ordered up as a reinforcement, and was at once directed by Colonel Hamilton to turn the enemy off the ridge with the bayonet. The Devons dashed forward and gained a position under cover within 50 yards of the enemy. Here a fire fight ensued, but the Devons were not to be denied, and, eventually, cheering as they pushed from point to point, they drove the enemy not only off the plateau but cleared every Boer out of the lower slopes and the dongas surrounding the position. Lieut.-Colonel Park went into action with four Officers, but he alone remained untouched at the close. The total loss of the Devons was nearly 28 per cent. of those engaged, and the men fired only 12 rounds per rifle. Captain A. Menzies, 1st Bn. Manchester Regiment, with a few of his men, accompanied the Devons throughout. He also was wounded.

I desire to draw special attention to the gallantry displayed by all ranks of the Imperial Light Horse, some of whom were within 100 yards of the enemy for 15 hours exposed to a deadly fire. Their losses were terribly heavy, but never for one moment did any of them waver or cease to show a fine example of courage and determination to all who came in contact with them.

I have already mentioned that about 3 a.m., the south-east end of Cæsar's Camp was also attacked, as well as the pickets of the Natal Volunteers in the thorn scrub to the north of that hill. During the darkness the enemy succeeded in establishing themselves on part of that end of Cæsar's Camp, but the precise details of what occurred have not been made clear, as nearly all the defenders of this portion have been killed. It is believed, however, that taking advantage of a general similarity of dress to that of the Natal Volunteers and Police, and many of them having a perfect command of the English language, the Boers succeeded in deceiving the pickets as to their identity, and were thus able to effect a surprise. As already stated, I sent the 53rd Battery, Royal Field Artillery, under Major A. J. Abdy, to Colonel Royston, Commanding Natal Volunteers; and these guns, most ably handled, came into action on the Klip River flats, and, though exposed to the fire of several Boer guns (including a 6-inch Creusot gun on Bulwana Mountain), to which they had no means of replying, shelled the south-east portion of Cæsar's Camp with great effect, and inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy. The 2nd Bn. Gordon Highlanders and 2nd Bn. Rifle Brigade were sent to Lieut.-Colonel A. E. R. Curran, who was in command here, and were gradually pushed into the fight, company by company, wherever their services were most required. Gradually the Boers were pushed back over the crest line, but held on most stubbornly to the slopes, being continually reinforced or relieved from the dongas below and from the adjacent hills, whence a fire of very great intensity was kept up, while the whole of the plateau was swept by the Boer long-range guns from distant eminences. At last, after 15 hours of stubborn resistance by our men, and of continual effort on the part of the Boers, the enemy were driven off at all points during the same storm in which Wagon Hill was also

cleared as already described, their retreat being hastened by the heavy fire poured on them as they retired.

Another attack was made before dawn on the 6th January on Observation Hill West, occupied by $\frac{1}{2}$ battalion 1st Bn. Devonshire Regiment, under Major M. C. Curry. The enemy gained some dead ground near our works during the darkness, and at 9.30 a.m., and again at a later hour, they attempted to storm the works under cover of the fire of these men and of guns and rifles from all the surrounding kopjes. These, however, were repelled with no great difficulty by the wing 1st Bn. Devonshire Regiment, and the Artillery allotted to this portion of the defence, consisting of Royal Field Artillery and naval guns. The enemy, however, held on to the dead ground originally occupied all day, and only withdrew during the storm in the afternoon. The remainder of Section "B" and the whole of Section "A" of the defences were subjected to a heavy fire of guns and rifles all day, but no other attempt to press home an attack was made on these portions of our line.

Our losses, I regret to say, were very heavy, consisting of 14 Officers and 135 non-commissioned officers and men killed, and 31 Officers and 244 men wounded. I have not been able to ascertain the actual loss to the Boers, but 79 bodies found within our lines were returned to them next day for burial, and native spies report that their total casualties could not be less than 700.

35. On 8th January a thanksgiving service in commemoration of the repulse of the enemy on 6th idem was held by Archdeacon Barker, and very largely attended by such officers and men as could be spared from duty. From this time until the end of the siege, no further effort to carry Ladysmith by assault was made by the Boers, whose attention was fully occupied by the various attacks made by Sir Redvers Buller on the line of the Tugela, though the town and camps were exposed to a daily bombardment from the enemy's guns, and skirmishing between our outposts and those of the Boers went on all day and every day, and caused us small but continuous losses. During this period I shall only refer to a night enterprise undertaken by 2nd Lieutenant H. C. W. Theobald, and 15 non-commissioned officers and men, 1st Bn. Gloucestershire Regiment. The object was to set fire to the abbatis which the enemy had constructed at the foot of Gun Hill, and was carried out in a manner reflecting credit on the young Officer in command, and without loss; while creating a considerable scare among the Boers who fired heavily in the darkness for a considerable time.

36. On 1st March I sent Colonel W. G. Knox, with the 1st Bn. Liverpool Regiment, 1st Bn. Devonshire Regiment, 2nd Bn. Gordon Highlanders, 5th Dragoon Guards, and the 53rd and 67th Batteries, Royal Field Artillery, to move out along the Newcastle Road to harass as much as possible the enemy whom we could see retiring before the successful advance of Sir Redvers Buller's force. Colonel Knox carried Long Hill and Pepworth Hill and opened fire with his guns on Modder Spruit Railway Station and the large Boer camp there, which the enemy at once evacuated. Both men and horses were too weak for rapid or prolonged operations, but several of the enemy's camps were captured, and the force returned after having very successfully carried out their object to as great a distance as their weakness permitted them to pur-