

northern crests; the 4th Brigade occupied a position about half-way up between the Gombo Spruit and the Nek, and two batteries of Royal Field Artillery were, with some difficulty, got into position between the brigades.

13. The whole country is thick bush intersected by deep dongas studded with precipitous kopjes dividing large underfeatures of the Cingolo and Monte Cristo Hills.

14. On the 18th the 2nd Cavalry Brigade moved forward along the eastern slopes of Cingolo and the 2nd Brigade crossed the Nek and assaulted Monte Cristo, the steep crags of which were brilliantly carried after considerable resistance by the West Yorkshire and Queen's Regiments. Captain T. H. Berney, West Yorkshire Regiment, a most gallant Officer, led the assault and was the first man up. He was, I regret to say, shot through the head as he got to the top. As soon as Monte Cristo was gained General Lyttelton advanced the 4th Brigade, and the Rifle Brigade worked forward along the western slopes of Monte Cristo to the back of the left of the enemy's position, and General Warren throwing the 6th Brigade forward, the position was well carried by the Royal Scots Fusiliers and abandoned precipitately by the enemy, who left a large quantity of material, many dead and wounded, and a few prisoners behind.

15. Through this attack, which was made in echelon from the right, the naval guns, under Captain Jones, R.N., and Royal Artillery, under Colonel Parsons, R.A., rendered the greatest possible service, shelling the successive positions till the Infantry closed on them.

16. By half-past four we had taken the main position and had three brigades and two batteries right across its centre, but there was a very strong position on Hlangweni Mountain facing us, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to our front, and on our right the river bank, a very difficult country.

17. The troops wanted water, roads had to be made, and owing to the nature of the country, intercommunication between units was very difficult. The troops, therefore, bivouacked as they stood, the rest of the force and the guns being brought up during the night.

18. On the 19th, General Hart advanced from Chieveley on Colenso, and the 2nd and 5th Divisions moved forward up the south bank of the Tugela against Hlangweni, which was taken by the 6th Brigade; our heavy guns moved to the northern end of Monte Cristo. The enemy made considerable opposition, but was gradually forced back.

19. On the 20th, we found that the enemy had, during the night, abandoned all his positions south of the Tugela, and also his main position in Colenso. We occupied Hlangweni, and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry swam the river, and entered the Colenso position, but were driven out.

20. On the 21st we threw a bridge across the Tugela (the river was very rapid, the bridge 98 yards long), and after a rather severe opposition from the north, the Colenso position was occupied by General Coke and the 10th Brigade.

21. On the 22nd, the 11th Brigade, supported by the 2nd Division, took possession of the hills which covered the railway bridge over Onderbrook Spruit, and commanded the country between that and Langerwachte Spruit. The fighting was very severe. Our principal objective was a long hog-backed hill running north and south, which completely commands the valley of the Langerwachte Spruit. It was taken, but our men were driven off by severe

enfilade and reverse fire; they managed, however, to get and retain a lodgment at the south end, which, though it did not give us the hill, completely denied it to the enemy.

22. The fire, which made the hill untenable, came from some sangars on a low ridge, the continuation of and about 150 yards in front of the right of the hill we had taken in the Onderbrook Valley. These were taken, but were found untenable, as they were exposed to enfilade and reverse fire from some sangars about 1,200 yards off, and 500 yards in front of our left; these were then taken, but could not be held, as they were completely commanded by the slopes of Grobelaar's Hill, about 1,400 yards to the west.

23. This rendered it impossible for us to obtain full command of the Onderbrook Valley, but at the end of the day we had obtained a footing upon the two most important hills in it, and had made these positions as secure as was possible against enfilade fire by hastily-erected sangars and traverses.

24. The positions thus won, after hard fighting, covered the line of railway across Onderbrook Spruit up to the Langerwachte Valley. This valley is full of dongas and small isolated kopjes, more or less covered with bush; in fact, an ideal place for the methods of defence employed by the enemy. Its eastern side is closed by a high steep hill, which was evidently the enemy's main position, and which was very strongly fortified and protected by extremely strong flank defences.

25. It was now clear that this hill must be taken before we could advance further. During the night of the 22nd, the 11th Brigade were relieved in the positions about Onderbrook by the 2nd Brigade and two battalions of the 6th Brigade, and the sangars were improved as much as was possible.

26. But, even then, the men had to lie crouched on the hill sides, sheltered by hastily-piled stones, with an active keen-sighted enemy within 150 yards of one flank and 500 yards of the other. During the day the front line could scarcely move, for anyone who exposed himself was shot. They were under constant fire, both rifle and artillery, both night and day, and they were three times heavily attacked; but for 5 days and nights they unflinchingly maintained this position. It was wonderful!

27. During the afternoon of the 22nd and morning of the 23rd, the enemy's positions near the Langerwachte, and all the dongas leading thereto, were thoroughly searched by shell fire, and on the afternoon of the 23rd, General Hart advanced with the 5th Brigade, supported by two battalions of the 4th Brigade, to attack the position east of the spruit.

28. It had been my intention that this attack should be made by five battalions, but the advance up the railway was necessarily slow, and, in some places, the enemy brought a heavy fire upon it, both rifle and Maxim-Nordenfolt, causing many casualties and checking the advance considerably. It was getting late, and General Hart attacked the hill when two battalions only were up, thinking his supports would follow. For the reason I have mentioned, the supports arrived but slowly, and the attack was made by two battalions, supported by a  $\frac{1}{2}$  battalion only—the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Connaught Rangers, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

29. The attack was delivered with the utmost gallantry, but the men failed to reach the top of the hill. The regiments suffered severely, but their loss was not unproductive, their gal-