

DIARY

OF EVENTS THAT OCCURRED AT THE TOWN OF

POTCHEFSTROOM,

TRANSVAAL,

DURING THE RISING OF

THE BOERS

AGAINST THE

BRITISH GOVERNMENT,

Commencing on the 15th December, 1880.

LONDON :

THE CROWN PRINTING COMPANY, LD., Crown Court, Milton Street, E.C.

DIARY.

Wednesday, 15th December, 1880.—Was this morning at the North end of Potchefstroom. Was informed about 11 o'clock a.m. that a large body of mounted and armed men were approaching the town by the Heidelberg and Pretoria roads. At 1 o'clock p.m. saw twelve mounted men pass in a body, two of whom were armed with rifles. Went to the Willow Bank Mill, and saw a large body of mounted men coming along the Heidelberg road; these formed as they came in sight an extended semi-circular line, and halted about half-a-mile from the bridge over Mooi River. Eight of them then advanced to the bridge, and dismounting on the town side of the river, took possession of the bridge; the main body then moved forward in double file, and on reaching the bridge increased their pace, and proceeded townwards at a hand gallop. As they thus passed the mill, I observed that every man was armed with a rifle; the number, which I carefully counted, was 570, exclusive of a few black servants, who were unarmed.

I knew several of the armed men to be Boers living

in this neighbourhood; some of them shouted to me as they passed to "get my gun and come on," meaning that I should join them. Made provision for the safety of my family as arranged in case of probable disturbance, and with field glass viewed the movements of the Boers from the top story of the mill. The first body of twelve rode straight into the town, just drawing rein at the house of the ex-president Pretorius for a few seconds; the main body halted opposite Pretorius's house, and extending to the right, formed a semi-circle overlooking the town; after remaining thus for some time, they dismounted and remained standing beside their horses for perhaps an hour, then a portion of them mounted and proceeded into town, the remainder after a short time off-saddled and turned their horses to graze in the close vicinity.

At 3 o'clock p.m. I walked into town with a couple of friends, thus passing through a portion of the men. I spoke with some that I knew, and asked them their object. Was told by some that they were going to proclaim and establish their own government, and that Potchefstroom was to be its seat, and the capital of the Republic; met with no incivility, but some with whom I was acquainted avoided me. Proceeded to the town and passed through Church Street, observed that a large crowd of armed men were congregated at the printing-office next to the Royal Hotel, proceeded across the Market Square to the Criterion Hotel, observed that men—mounted and armed—were riding backward and forward in the streets as far as the

Market Square, and that at each crossing or corner a squad of armed men was grouped; saw one or two cases of persons being obstructed in passing along and entering their houses, but no case in which violence was used.

Considerable excitement amongst the inhabitants. Slept at the Royal Hotel.

Thursday, 16th December, 1880.—Rose early, found matters *in statu quo*, crowd still round printing-office, mounted men patrolling streets, &c. Breakfasted about 9 o'clock a.m.; while at breakfast saw the mail coach driven to the hotel to take up passengers for Kimberley, saw passengers Dr. Jolivet (R. C. Bishop)—Mr. Knoep, and M. Beauvais (a young Frenchman)—get into the coach. Just as the coach was about to start, a mounted man galloped up the street, shouting that a shot had been fired and a man wounded; immediately, several armed men, some mounted, some on foot, surrounded the coach, roughly ordered the passengers to alight, and the coachman to take out the horses; they obeyed, and were considerably hustled in doing so. The coach agent, Mr. Faure, protested against the coach being stopped, and was struck violently on the mouth by one of the armed men. Mr. Young, the owner of the Royal Hotel, who was assisting the Bishop (an elderly man) to alight, was also struck with the butt of a rifle on the back of the neck, from which blow he suffered greatly for some days. While this was going on violent language and gesticulations were used by the Boers; cries of "shoot them" were heard, and rifles

were repeatedly presented at the persons of unarmed men.

After this, things seemed quieter for half-an-hour, when, about 10 o'clock, I suddenly heard the rapid discharge of firearms, the reports seeming to come from the neighbourhood of the military camp on the West side of the town, and almost immediately followed by similar reports in the neighbourhood of *Market Square*.

I subsequently heard that a party of armed Boers had crossed the lines marked out by the military, and declining to stand when challenged, were fired upon, one of them being wounded in the arm.

At this time a number of persons, myself included, were standing on the pavement in front of the *Royal Hotel*. Mr. *Jacobus J. Scheepers* came from the printing-office, and informing us that he was a Commandant in the Boer army, ordered us at once to go away from there, and said that five minutes only would be allowed us. On being asked where we were to go to, he replied, "All that are for Her Majesty's Government had better go to the camp and those that are for us must come to the printing-office." On its being pointed out to him that to reach the camp we should have to pass through a heavy fire then going on, we were told, that was our own look out—they, (i.e.) the Boers, would provide no escort. We said that we were unarmed and non-combatants; his reply was that they "recognised no neutrals."

The majority of the persons then went down the

street, and, as we afterwards learned, took refuge in different houses and stores in Church Street. Mr. Young declared that he would remain by his property; myself and the three coach passengers remained at the hotel, and retiring inside, shut the front doors, the passengers retired to their private rooms and continued there the rest of the day. Mr. Young and myself remained in the front apartments of the hotel. All the servants, white and black, male and female, deserted the hotel at the first sound of firing, with the exception of one Kaffir boy named *Omfiaan*, who said "*it was no use being afraid, and that he would stick to the Boers.*"

During this time matters in other parts of the town had assumed a serious aspect. Most of the inhabitants were in their own dwellings; but some, not so fortunate, were in the streets, and exposed to the violence of the Boers.

On the previous evening, before any collision had occurred between the troops and the Boers, outrages were perpetrated on some of the inhabitants. Mr. W. Smart, the manager of the Standard Bank here, was returning from a visit to Captain Falls, at the Llandrost's office, when he was seized by a party of sixty or seventy Boers, deprived of his revolver, and conducted to a narrow street. He was here forced to sit the whole night in the rain, close to a hedge, surrounded by at least one hundred Boers. On attempting to rise from the cramped position he was repeatedly forced down, and was only released late in the morning. The Boers seized the horses belonging to the Volun-

teers, stabled at the Criterion Hotel, and also all the horses belonging to the inhabitants that they could lay hands on. A portion of the latter were, however, returned to their owners subsequently, after having been ridden nearly to death. The draught oxen belonging to the camp, 116 in number, and three spans of mules grazing on the town commonage, were seized and carried off by the Boers. The whole of this day a continued fire of rifles was kept up, relieved at intervals by the boom of a cannon from the fort. A good sprinkling of rifle-bullets found their way to our neighbourhood, but no shells or cannon-balls were thrown near us. Firing was kept up at intervals during the night, and was renewed vigorously on the morning of

Friday, 17th December, 1880, the greater part of the firing being between the Boers posted at the north and south corners of the market-square, and the Llandrost's office, which was garrisoned by about twenty men of the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers, under Captain Falls, and about twenty Volunteers, under Captain P. Raaff, C.M.G.; Major Clark, Her Majesty's Special Commissioner, being in command.

In the early part of this day, Mr. Young was informed by one of his servants (a portion of whom had returned to duty) that a number of Boers had mounted to the forage-loft and were helping themselves to the oatsheaves. On Mr. Young proceeding to the spot he found the report correct, and on his remonstrating was told by their officer that they were acting under the

orders of the Commandant-General, P. A. Cronje, and that he—Mr. Young—had better go inside the house if he valued his safety or his life. They continued to remove the forage at intervals until they had taken the whole (about six hundred sheaves); took possession of the stable for the use of their horses, removing the post-horses and those belonging to travellers and impressing them for their own service.

The officers, also, on this day commenced ordering liquors and other refreshments to be supplied for their use, in some cases giving no acknowledgment, in others a commandeering order, as they term it, compelling its delivery by their force. This practice they continued from this time forward.

Through the whole of this day hostilities were actively carried on between the Llandrost's office and the Boers, the force of the latter having been augmented by three hundred additional men from the north-western side of the district, who arrived in the night of the 16th-17th.

A strong fire was also kept up by a small number of men of the 21st R.S.F., who occupied the prison, but without much effect on the Boers, who were sheltered by the intervening houses and trees. Numbers of the Boers entered the hotel and demanded liquor, some paying for what they had, and some insolently refusing to do so.

We now began to experience great difficulty in obtaining food supplies, all places of business being quite inaccessible to us; but we managed to make

shift with the few stores in the hotel. This was aggravated by the Commandants and other officers of the Boers insisting on being supplied with meals, sometimes for themselves alone, and at others for a troop of six or eight followers as well.

On this day a printed paper was sparingly circulated purporting to be a proclamation of the establishment of a provisional Republican Government, signed by a triad of Boers (Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert), asserted to have been elected by a meeting of Boers held in the country. A number of these papers were, as we were afterwards informed, introduced into Pretoria—which was beleagured by the Boers—by the following device. A milch cow, found grazing outside the town, was caught, a red flag tied to her horns, and a bundle of the papers to her tail. She was then driven towards the town, a couple of blank charges fired at her rear assisting her progress. Making towards her stall and calf as directed by nature, she carried the bundle triumphantly to its destination, no doubt much to the amusement and edification of the Pretorians, who would certainly be edified by the contents of the papers, and doubtless greatly amused by the *very appropriate* mode of their transmission.

The Boers, towards evening, were evidently becoming enraged at the heroic and persistent defence of Major Clark and the handful of men at the Llandrost's office. Not a Boer dared show himself without a certainty of a bullet coming into his close proximity, and loud were their boastings and vaunts of storming

the place and setting it on fire. The former they never attempted, but by the help of the occupants of the adjacent houses they crept stealthily to the side of the building and endeavoured to fire the thatch, but this evening without success. Firing continued the whole night, with little cessation, to the morning of

Saturday, 18th December, 1880.—This morning strenuous efforts were made by a party of young Boers, under D. van Graan, to fire the thatch of the Llandrost's office, and by dint of throwing petroleum or parafine on the roof they at last succeeded in igniting it. Finding this to be the case, Major Clark was compelled to surrender, the only alternative being to be burnt alive.

During this gallant defence, the party in the Court-house could receive no assistance from the fort, it being closely invested by overwhelming numbers, and it being impracticable to bring the artillery to bear in support on account of the large number of peaceable inhabitants, families, &c., residing in the houses in the immediate neighbourhood. The only cases in which the cannon were available were those in which the Boers had occupied houses on the west side of the town for offensive purposes on the fort; here the shells were of some service.

Van Graan was this morning wounded by a rifle-bullet in the side, but is recovering. The loss of the Boers up to date must have been heavy, although it is closely concealed. Their loss is certainly much more than they assert. The casualties in the Court-house

were—Killed: Captain Falls, 21st R.S.F.; Woods, —, a volunteer, Raaf's Corps. Wounded: two privates, 21st R.S.F.; Mr. Hale, a non-combatant. The prisoners were marched through the streets to the residence and stores of Chevalier O. Forssman, opposite the Royal Hotel, the house and stores being forced and taken possession of for the purposes of a prison, although under the protection of the Portuguese consular flag, which was hauled down and allowed to trail in the mud, where it remained for days, the excuse for this indignity being the alleged presence of the Chevalier and the ladies of his family in the fort, where it was said they had sought safety.

Major Clark was incarcerated in the front rooms of the Royal Hotel, which were seized for the purpose, an armed guard of six men being placed over him, the guard occupying the drawing-room, much to the detriment of the handsome furniture, through their uncleanly habits, notably those of smoking vile tobacco and spitting recklessly about. Thus the Major was confined to one small bedroom at the end of the suite, and the intolerable heat of the weather must have made his situation extremely trying.

Major Clark was asked a few questions by one of the Boer commandants, and the spectacle of a British officer being rudely interrogated by an unlettered and uncouth Boer would have been ridiculous had it not been so extremely painful.

Mr. Young was now ordered to supply the officers and wounded with food, which service he undertook

with alacrity, although the difficulty of obtaining supplies had increased, and it was now become next to impossible. On his representation, however, the Boers allowed him to obtain a supply of beef from their commissariat, and with the assistance of friends, and great exertion on his part, he managed to supply them with wholesome food. The number of prisoners was, however, still further augmented by the seizure of several of the inhabitants of the town on various pretexts, and the back premises of the hotel were seized and used for the purpose of confining some of them, together with ladies and children.

The whole of the premises were now in the Boers' occupation, and the task of supplying this large number with the necessaries of life, and at the same time of meeting the oppressive and insolent demands of the Boers at the risk of having the place sacked, became almost beyond his power.

The Boers now became exceedingly turbulent, the trifling success of having reduced a thatched shanty, defended by a handful of men, rendering them more boastful and overbearing than before. It was on this day that, regardless of the public notification of their leaders that "The persons and property of the inhabitants would be protected," the stores of the Criterion Hotel, those of Schikkerling, Pitt, Seorgie and Co., and others, were forced and sacked, sometimes under the pretext of obtaining blankets for the men, and sometimes with no pretext at all. Many private houses were entered, and clothes, and other articles of

value, looted or stolen. Quantities of goods, such as coffee, clothing, saddlery, boots, &c., were requisitioned by the commandants from the storekeepers, and on the inquiry being made—"Who is to pay for these things?" the answer was, "We don't know; they are for the use of the army." Choice liquors, such as champagne, German and English ale, French brandy, &c. (expensive things in the interior of South Africa), were ordered peremptorily, and drank by the Boer officers, most of whom never tasted better tipples than Cape smoke in their lives!

The men now got quarrelsome and boisterous, insulting everyone they met, and becoming insubordinate to their own officers. They roamed the streets and made their way into private dwellings, each one with a rifle, loaded and cocked, in his hand, insulting and sometimes striking—often threatening to shoot—unarmed and peaceable people, both English and other nationalities. At this time no man's life was safe for a moment, and there was imminent risk of the worst forms of violence. The leaders, seeing that all control was being lost over the men, took the wise precaution, on

Sunday, 19th December, 1880, of prohibiting the sale or gift of intoxicating liquors to the men without order from a commandant. This proved the salvation of the inhabitants from further violence and the preservation of the authority of the officers, which was in many cases openly defied by the men. The remainder of the day passed quietly, hostilities being tacitly suspended

on both sides from respect for the day. It was this day reported by the Boers that a contingent of 600 men had arrived from the Free State on the previous evening, and 600 of their own men from the camp at Heidelberg. Thus, according to their account, their force now consisted of about 2,100 men, all told, viz. :—

First arrival	..	..	..	570
Evening of 16th	..	..	..	300
From Free States	..	..	..	600
„ Heidelberg	..	..	..	600
Total	..	..	..	2,070

This force was certainly further increased by small parties that had continued to arrive, so that their entire force could not have been far short of 2,500 men. A portion of the Free State men, however (as we hear), disgusted with their cool reception by their Transvaal brethren, or afraid of consequences from the action of their own Government, returned home on

Monday, 20th December, 1880, leaving a part of their number, most of whom are well known here as residents of the Cronstadt and Winburg districts. Some of the inhabitants having been secluded in their houses since the morning of the 16th, have become straightened for food, and venturing into the streets with the object of obtaining supplies, have been arrested by the Boers and brought to the head-quarters office, which has now been placed at the Central Chambers, next door to where the prisoners are confined. N.B.—This position is

well chosen, as the vicinity of the prisoners protects from the fire of the fort. The persons arrested were asked their reason for secluding themselves in their houses; the natural answer, "to avoid danger," did not seem to give satisfaction, as the Boers were aware that the British commander on the approach of the Boers counselled that course; it was evident that the feeling of the Boer authorities was in favor of the inhabitants exposing themselves to the insults of their men, the danger of the cross-fire, and placing implicit reliance on the Boers for protection; however, after some delay, a limited number of passports were issued for persons to pass from certain houses to others within a very small area under stringent conditions, the object being to prevent possible communication with the outside world.

In consequence of this *liberal* concession a number of the regular boarders and frequenters of the Royal Hotel were enabled to come to their meals, much to the satisfaction of all concerned, but sorely to the distress of the proprietor, who had to put forth fresh exertions when nearly spent to meet the ever-increasing calls upon him, the facilities for obtaining supplies being rather worse than before, and the staff of servants incomplete and disorganised. Dixon Young proved however to be *there*, and though often discouraged, never beaten. Of the 80 to 100 mouths to be fed daily under these adverse circumstances no man could say that "he went empty away," the prisoners and wounded being served and cared for first, before each meal was served to the public.

The whole force of the Boers was now devoted to the reduction of the prison and fort. To obtain a point from which to direct their fire on the fort the Boers had occupied the house of the Rev. Mr. Jooste, but a few well directed shells soon dislodged them from this position. To take any fortified position by storm is not their "forte," and in spite of their overwhelming numbers no attempt of the kind was made. The fort and prison held them at bay.

Tuesday, 21st December, 1880.—As before, desultory firing on both sides. This evening the garrison of the prison running short of provisions, evacuated it, and retired on the fort without loss.

Wednesday, 22nd December, 1880.—In the early morning, the Boers having discovered that the prison was evacuated, attempted to occupy it, but a shell from the fort having informed them that they were in danger, the attempt was relinquished, and has not been again renewed. A meeting of the inhabitants was called at 12 o'clock by order of the military general, J. Kock; it was attended by a large number, the Boer sympathisers only speaking and voting. Daniel Petersen was elected field cornet and Franz Joubert assistant field cornet. It was announced that the district commandant nominated by the Krijgsraad was Piet Bezuidenhout, the man whose wagon was rescued from the sheriff when under attachment for arrear taxes. The field cornets were authorised to grant passes and protection to open stores, subject to confirmation by the Krijgsraad; it was further announced that the water

(which had been cut off to prevent the fort obtaining a supply) would be allowed to flow into the town as far as the old Market Square. The meeting showed boisterous, forced feeling on part of some, constraint and mistrust on part of majority.

While the meeting was being held the horses belonging to the fort were turned loose to save fodder, and were captured by the Boers, 49 in all.

The rest of the day was spent by the Boers in trying the paces and qualities of the captured horses in the streets. Mr. Goetz, Llandrost, has been apprehended in his house and placed in strict confinement in Forssman's house. Major Clark was removed to the same house yesterday. Mr. Krogh, Llandrost, of Christiana, also arrested. Commandeering of goods, liquors, &c. going on as before, but "more so."

Thursday, December, 23rd, 1880.—Boers engaged in making trenches in neighbourhood of Dr. Portman's house. Desultory firing still continues. Paul Kruger here; second proclamation issued throwing blame of rising on Sir Owen Lanyon, publishing report of action between Boers and English troops in district of Middelburg; said, 100 soldiers and their colonel killed, 50 wounded, and 100 prisoners; great rejoicing among Boers. A post was this day despatched to Cronstadt with the printed proclamations of the Boers and a few letters. Mr. Green, contractor, was sent in charge under leave for three days, with pledge to return; he, however, remained in Cronstadt, and refusing to allow the cart and horses to return, has incurred the resentment of the Boers.

Friday, 24th December, 1880. — Desultory firing still proceeding. Boers have placed a double chain of outposts round the town. No casualties reported. In the evening, Christmas Eve, the worthy host of the "Royal" entertained his friends as usual, but we missed that genial manner so peculiarly his own, thus showing that even his buoyant spirits were somewhat depressed. Still a gallant endeavour was made to forget our surrounding difficulties and only remember the "Eve," with its associations dear to all of us. The only toast proposed was by our host, "Absent friends and poor and distressed brethren," which was drunk in silence but deeply felt. All was done that could possibly be managed to make the prisoners in our neighbourhood feel that they were not forgotten. We retired at 10 o'clock p.m. and on the morning of

Saturday, 25th December, 1880, Christmas Day, dawned upon us dull and showery. Thoughts of other times depressed to a certain extent our spirits, still we cheered each other as best we could, and in the usual good old style greeted heartily, and "cribbed, cabined, and confined" as we are, all managed by the skilful arrangement of our host pleasantly and quietly to pass the day.

Sixteen of the prisoners (privates of the 21st R.S.F.) were on this day released and sent under escort to the Orange Free State on condition of neutrality in the present conflict. Mr. G. Coulson and Mr. Young handsomely presented them with comforts for the road. The Boer authorities having made them doff their

uniform and dress in civilian costume of cotton cora, also presented them with a sovereign a piece, rather a poor provision for a march of 500 miles to Maritzburg, but still kindly meant. On this day of "peace and goodwill," we were sorry to learn that a native named Carolus was shot by the Boers as a spy. He was subjected to some kind of trial by the Krijgsraad the particulars of which we have not learned, and being condemned to death was conducted to the vlei at the back of the hotel and executed. No firing on this day on either side.

Sunday, 26th December, 1880.—The position in *statu quo*.

The sanitary state of the town causes apprehension, the slaughtering of cattle without proper conveniences and the accumulation of offal in the heart of the town causes a sickly and unbearable stench, and unless measures are soon taken to remove the decomposing animal matter grave fears are entertained of the advent of a serious epidemic. At the best of times a little low fever prevails in the wet season, and the continued rain and intense heat, combined with the circumstances mentioned, must tend to aggravate the evil.

During this night heard outpost firing and an occasional shell from the fort.

Monday, 27th December, 1880.—Several ladies and children, who had taken refuge in the military camp at the commencement of hostilities, were to-day allowed (under a white flag) to return to their abodes in the town. They were strictly examined by the Boer

authorities but not much information was elicited. We are glad to learn that the health of the camp is good and think that its gallant defenders are cheery and in good spirits. We regret to hear that a son of Mr. A. McIntyre, who was in the camp with his mother, was shot.

Tuesday, 28th December, 1880.—Continued firing as usual, effect not known to us. Boers keep all operations a profound secret as far as practicable; many rumours rife, but nothing that can be verified. Consultations held daily between the Boer leaders. Office of the Board of Executors and Trust Company now head quarters.

Wednesday, 29th December, 1880.—We learn that the non-arrival of the Cronstadt mail, which should have been here some days since, is owing to the defection of Mr. Green, who faithfully promised to return within three days. We suppose from his previous action Mr. G. must have had a recurrence of funk fever. A Mr. van der Linde, an inhabitant of the town, was to-day charged before the Krijgsraad with treachery to the Boer cause, condemned to death, and shot. Certain religious formalities were gone through previous to the execution, which in the opinion of most, including Mr. Young (who was present), tended simply to prolong the poor man's agony.

Thursday, 30th December, 1880.—It was omitted to be mentioned that on the 26th inst. the body of Capt. A. L. Falls, 21st R.S.F., which had been temporarily interred at the back of the Court House was

exhumed and placed in a coffin by some of the English inhabitants. The body was examined and identified by Mr. Young and Mr. Smart, and was then buried in the garden of the Standard Bank by permission of the manager, Mr. Smart, Mr. James Donald, and others.

Friday, 31st December, 1880.—Rapid and continued firing the greater part of the day. Many of the Boers have received permission to go to their homes to spend the New Year's Day.

Saturday, 1st January, 1881.—On this New Year's Day, at early morn, an attempt was made by the Boers to use an old cannon against the fort, but in consequence of the defective practice (owing, according to some reports, to the bad state of the gun, and according to others, to the ignorance of the gunners) it was soon given up, each erratic and misdirected shot making "old Greitje," as the cannon was named, cant over backwards, and giving cause at each discharge for loud ironical cheers and laughter from the garrison of the fort, which could be plainly heard within the Boer lines, and evidently hurt their feelings.

After the morning's diversion the Boers held singing meetings and some kind of religious services at the Wesleyan chapel and the Llandrost's office; these services were repeated on the following day,

Sunday, 2nd January, 1881, on which day hostilities were again suspended.

Monday, 3rd January, 1881.—This morning people were surprised to hear that another change in the pass system was announced, all passes granted previously were

declared null and void, and the new passes issued to replace them made more stringent and granted more sparingly than before; much vexatious annoyance was caused by persons being stopped on frivolous pretences and conducted to the Krijgsraad office, there to await some hours the grant of a pass to go a few hundred yards.

Tuesday, 4th January, 1881.—To-day Grietje again made her bow to the public (the wrong way), but proving to be in no better form than before, and not seeming equal to making the acquaintance of her aristocratic relatives the other side of the wall, who made one or two pressing overtures for greater intimacy, she retired abruptly in the middle of the first scene.

Wednesday, 5th January, 1881.—To-day the Krijgsraad made a demand on the merchants of the town for the supply of various articles of consumption and other goods for the use of the Boer army, said demand to be complied with within six weeks from date. The value of the goods demanded would be about £10,000 sterling. There being no stocks in the town (all having been requisitioned or commandeered by order or without order of the Commandants), the merchants agreed to order the quantity required from their agents, supporters or principals in Natal and the Cape Colony. These orders, stating for what purpose the goods were required, were allowed to pass through the post, which is strictly scrutinized, and *will doubtless be promptly executed* by the parties to whom they are addressed.

Thursday, 6th January, 1881.—This day was marked

by an appalling tragedy, the trial, condemnation, and immediate execution of Christian Woite. Christian O. Woite was a native of Spriemburg, Prussia, of respectable parentage, and fair middle-class education. He had been living some years in Cape Colony, where he married, and came to the Transvaal some six years since to settle, and at the time of his death was the father of nine children, the eldest of whom is a youth 19 years of age. Although not a regularly qualified medical practitioner, he had great experience and knowledge of the treatment of diseases incident to South African life, and possessed a wide-spread and well-earned reputation for his successful treatment of many difficult cases in this country. His name and character were well known and thoroughly appreciated in this district. The proceedings of the Krijgsraad on his trial were kept profoundly secret, but enough has been gathered to lead to the conclusion that the accusation against him was that of being in the confidence of the Government, and of having supplied information to its officials of the proceedings at the last meeting held by the Boers, and the plans for rising and defying the Government, which have since been attempted. Woite's son Wilhelm was also included in this charge. The course of the evidence is not at present known, but the Krijgsraad pronounced him guilty of the charge, and to the astonishment and horror of all, condemned him to be shot, two hours only being allowed between sentence and execution. The son, Wilhelm, was acquitted and discharged. On its becoming known

that Woite was condemned, a memorial was hastily got up among his countrymen, the Germans, resident in this town, representing his nationality, and praying for a commutation of the sentence. Through the short time to elapse, the difficulty of communication in the town, and other causes, but few signatures were affixed. The Krijgsraad refused to entertain the memorial. His wife and family were allowed access to him for a brief parting interview, over the heart-rending and agonizing nature of which a veil must be drawn. There are scenes in human life and suffering that, though not beyond the deepest yearning sympathy, are beyond its adequate expression.

At 2 o'clock p.m. the victim was conveyed, handcuffed, and under a strong guard, to the vlei below the Royal Hotel, towards the river, where a grave had been dug; a large number of the Boers, armed, with their Commandants, surrounded the painful scene. The Rev. B. Kohler, of the Berlin mission in this town, Woite's countryman, next-door neighbour and friend offered a short but impressive prayer. On the conclusion of this, the firing party consisting of eight men, which had been previously stationed in readiness, received the fatal signal; Woite gave one convulsive bound upwards and fell with three bullets in the breast and one in the forehead. Thus perished, miserably, Christian Woite in the prime of life (he was 42 years of age), leaving a widow and nine children. Will the country under whose ægis he lived, and in serving which he died, forget or forgive the act thus perpetrated?

On the wall of the cell in which Woite was confined previous to his execution, the following words were found written in his native language—German :—

“I trust in Jesus; I have given myself into his hands. I am glad to die; in Christ I shall live, C. O. Woite. In a little while I shall be no more seen. I go to the Father.”

The brave Christian spirit in which he met his death, calmly and composedly, furnishes the best evidence of a mind at peace with itself, and untainted by conscious crime. The scene was witnessed by the Rev. B. Kohler, Mr. Young and others; the former had the body subsequently removed and buried in deceased’s own garden, where it was formerly his wont to spend the long summer evenings, when peace ruled in the land, and “none dared to make afraid.” A good many cannon shots were fired from the fort this afternoon, with the intention and effect of stopping the Boers’ work in the trenches.

Friday, 7th January, 1881.—This day the “pride of the Boers,” Grietje, was sent to Rustenburg under charge of Franz Joubert, assistant Field-cornet, with intent to demolish the little party of 60 or 70 men of the R.S.F. entrenched there, and defying their might, or failing that of frightening them. Strong escort with cannon. Occasional firing during day and night.

Saturday, 8th January, 1881.—Two ladies, Miss Malan and Miss Watt, were allowed to come into the Boer lines from the fort this morning; one has been committed to the care of the Rev. Maury (Dopper) and

one to that of Mr. W. Cameron, for safe keeping. They are in good health to all appearance.

Sunday, 9th January, 1881.—Quiet, as usual on this day.

Monday, 10th January, 1881.—The pass system has to-day again been changed, all previous passes cancelled, and Franz Steinhobel, a man formerly clerk to J. W. Lake & Co., appointed Field-cornet, with power to issue passes, for one day only, within close limits in the town, on payment for each pass of sixpence sterling. Several persons passing from house to house have been arrested, being in ignorance of this new regulation, and fined in sums varying from five to ten shillings.

The ladies received on Saturday from the fort, and who had been employed previous to the rising as lady teachers in the Government Aided School, were examined by the Krijgsraad and then sent away from the town under guard. It is reported that a pledge was exacted from them never to resume teaching in the Transvaal.

Tuesday, 11th January, 1881.—Desultory firing is occasionally indulged in, and has got to be so much a matter of course as not to attract much attention. A new source of revenue has been discovered by the rulers: persons guilty of the offence of entering the Krijgsraad or other offices without doffing their hats, or too hastily resuming them on leaving, are fined for disrespect, the fines varying from one shilling to (in one case) thirty-seven pounds ten shillings, or, (as the Boers say) five hundred rix dollars. This will no doubt

cheer the heart of the Treasurer, whose office must be a sinecure, although the device of commandeering money in various sums from the inhabitants has been freely resorted to.

Wednesday, 12th January, 1881.—The garrison of the fort have now worked a trench up to the town magazine building, and having loop-holed the walls, now command the street down the south side of the Market and Church Squares. The effect of this new position was seen this morning, the Boers having had two men killed and three wounded in the upper end of that street.

Thursday, 13th January, 1881.—Yesterday and to-day the Krijgsraad has been sitting, and some of the state prisoners and prisoners of war have been brought up for examination and trial. Mr. A. M. Goetz, the Llandrost of Potchefstroom, and Mr. Richard Impey his clerk and Public Prosecutor, were admitted to bail, the former in sureties for £5,000, the latter £3,000, to appear when called upon. On the former leaving the office, Mr. Young placed his carriage at his disposal to convey himself and Mrs. Goetz to their home. Several of the volunteers of Raaf's corps were then tried, and although prisoners of war, were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment with hard labour, ranging from three to twelve months. We are surprised to learn that it is the intention of the Boers to put these men to work in their trenches under fire from the fort. The weather is extremely hot and sultry, with every indication of rain.

Friday, 14th January, 1881.—This day, "Greitje" returned from Rustenburg. It is reported by the Boers themselves that they could effect nothing against the little garrison there, not even to the extent of frightening them, which had been in the innocence of their hearts surely calculated on. One Boer is reported to have been killed while working the gun. This afternoon, while a few shots were being exchanged with the fort, a number of gentlemen were on the "stoep" of the Royal Hotel; a stray bullet found its way from the fort to their midst, wounding a gentleman named Austen in the leg, above the knee. It was, however, merely a flesh wound, and he is progressing favorably. A good deal of firing towards evening.

Saturday, 15th January, 1881.—Brisk firing in the early morning, but effect not known.

Sunday, 16th January, 1881.—Yesterday a mail arrived from the Free State confirming news of reinforcements on the way. We are surprised that the Boers have allowed this intelligence to become known, as it has had a very depressing effect on their party.

Monday, 17th January, 1881.—This morning a letter was forwarded to the fort, under white flag, from Mr. B. Palmer to his wife, requesting her to come from the fort, and assuring her safety; she came accordingly. We hear that all is well in camp, with the exception of a little low fever, same as that prevailing in town.

Tuesday, 18th January, 1881.—A good deal of artillery and rifle practice to-day. A ruse was attempted yesterday by conveying a note surreptitiously into the

fort, informing them that reinforcements were near, and that on a given signal of two cannon shots they were to sally, and effect a junction with the advancing force. This evening the signal was given, but the proverb of "old birds, &c." proved still to hold good; whether the sweet voice of Greitje was too well known, or the lines of advance too improbable, cannot be told, but the effect of the ruse was to bring a heavy fire on to the real, would-be advancing, Boer force, causing them to accomplish a *masterly (!)* retreat in *very* extended order.

Wednesday 19th January, 1881.—Again news, via the Free State, with additional intelligence of detail and rapid progress of the British forces.

Thursday, 20th January, 1881.—Two drafts of men announced by the Boers as being ordered to Heidelberg (25 and 55 men), demonstratively bidding farewell to friends.

Friday, 21st January, 1881.—Men for Heidelberg not yet left; supposed cause of delay, want of a waggon to convey baggage, &c. Many remarks by Boer sympathizers, that if the garrison of the fort were to make a *sortie* there is a very poor force to oppose them. The change from extreme reticence to great though clumsily veiled confidence is singular. Austen's wound nearly healed; he thinks of endeavouring to get home to-day. Expresses himself as much indebted to the care and attention of the doctor (Mahler), and especially grateful for the kindness and thoughtful care of his host, Mr. Young, who has spared no trouble to

facilitate his recovery, and also to the gentlemen resident in the hotel for their kind attention in watching and visiting him.

Great indignation felt and expressed at the action of the Boers in compelling the prisoners of war to work every night in the trenches exposed to the fire of the fort. *Refinement of cruelty.*

Saturday, 22nd January, 1881.—All quiet until about 12 o'clock, when the rapid discharge of cannon, accompanied by heavy musketry firing, intimated to us that something unusual was occurring. We learn that a sortie has been made from the fort, the entrenchment of the Boers captured, and about twenty Boers killed and wounded. Three Boers (two of whom were wounded) were taken prisoners, the rest fled. The military retired again to the fort. The consternation of the Boers in the streets was great on the commencement of the firing; they very much resembled a crowd of sheep rudely disturbed by a wild animal, running hither and thither in a purposeless manner, and having to be urged by threats from their leaders to leave their cover, and go to the support of their comrades. About 2 o'clock, another sally was made from the fort, and again they had it all their own way. They returned to fort with another Boer prisoner, The last action was carried on while a smart thunder shower was falling. An exchange of prisoners took place this afternoon, when the four Boers, two of whom were wounded, were exchanged for the two wounded men of the 21st (who are now nearly

well), one sergeant 21st, and one volunteer. On the exchange taking place, one of the released prisoners, named Bouwer, a pleasant communicative young man, informed us, that at the time he was taken, in the first sortie, every man of his comrades, in his vicinity, was killed or wounded, and that he surrendered when the soldiers were within five yards of him advancing with fixed bayonets; he says that the number of killed and wounded on the Boer side, that he saw, was not less than fifteen; thus the current report among the Boers of "one man killed and two wounded," looks very like a whale. The prisoners were treated with the greatest courtesy in the fort, and speak in high terms of the urbanity and consideration shewn them by officers and men. They were also much pleased with a present made them by the Colonel, on leaving, of a tin of preserved beef and some biscuits, which will be quite a treat for them, living as they are on the coarse, poor beef of the Boer Commissariat, with not even bread to qualify it.

Sunday, 23rd January, 1881.—A sharp skirmish took place in the night or early morning. The firing sounded so loud in the town as almost to induce the belief that the fighting was in the streets. We hear this morning of two Boers wounded, one seriously.

A number of wounded prisoners have been brought in from the north-east to-day. This is the body of wounded taken at Bronkerst Spruit, between Middelburg and Pretoria, where the Boers treacherously way laid a small body of the 94th regiment on the line of march.

On the arrival of this party, Messrs. Smart, Young and Acutt went to the spot at which they were and requested permission to send the men some refreshments. This was peremptorily refused by Buskes, the secretary to the *Krijgsraad*, who arrogates to himself the entire control of everything, from a sixpenny pass to a military movement. However, through the greater humanity of Mr. Scheepers, these gentlemen were allowed to send the poor fellows some wine and fruit, for which they expressed their gratitude by waving their hands at the windows.

Monday, 24th January, 1881.—The prisoners brought in yesterday have to-day been forwarded to Vaal river with the view of liberating them in the Free State. On its becoming known that a master mason was among the prisoners in the person of one of the sergeants, a subscription was hastily raised among the B.B., and a purse of seventeen pounds contributed and presented to him by Bro. G. Coulson, for his use and that of his friends. Another subscription was also made by the inhabitants, and the money entrusted to one of their party for providing necessaries for the road, &c. They expressed themselves as very grateful, gave three cheers for Potchefstroom, and marched out of the town singing—

“For they are jolly good fellows.”

As they passed the hotel, some exclaimed, “That is the Right Royal Hotel,” “We shall never forget Mr. Young and the Royal,” “God bless him.”

Tuesday, 25th January, 1881.—To-day the Boers have increased their force by the addition of about two hundred men, drawn from the outside laagers. They have strengthened the parties in the trenches, and have sent "Greitje" to the west side of the fort. Numbers of grain-bags have been sent from the town to the trenches, and have been filled and placed to form breastworks. The condemned volunteers have been forced to do this work, and have placed the sand-bags in some cases full in view of the fort. They have not been fired upon, the fort evidently understanding the position. Scarcely a shot has been fired during this day.

Wednesday, 26th January, 1881.—Hendrik Theron, formerly an inhabitant of this town, arrived here from Natal. Reported publicly that troops were arriving, and proceeding from coast to frontier. Arrested by Krijgsraad, and imprisoned. Some news circulated by Theron appears in newspapers received by post, and issued by authority of Krijgsraad.

An armed Boer entered the premises of the Standard Bank, and frightened and insulted the ladies in the dwelling-house attached, in the absence of the gentlemen of the house. On the gentlemen residing there *returning home*, the intruder was discovered in the garden, where he had secreted himself, and seized by Messrs. Smart, Palmer, and Zeiler, and marched to the Krijgsraad office, duly taken in charge, and imprisoned to await examination. Everything very quiet between belligerents.

Thursday, 27th January, 1881.—The Boer who committed the offence yesterday at the Standard Bank has been examined by the Krijgsraad. Evidence was taken. Accused pleaded intoxication. Sentenced to pay a fine of £3 10s., or eight days' hard labour. Has no cash, so has to undergo sentence. This must be remarked as the first Boer apprehended by Englishmen under this *regime*; the captors unarmed, the captive armed with loaded rifle.

Young Combrink, son-in-law of Willem Botha, shot through the head at midday; was in the second trench when shot.

Most of the inhabitants of the town have been today commanded to do personal service on Monday next, or to pay fines or war contributions from ten pounds upwards. Much indignation. Mr. M. D. O. Erasmus has been appointed by the Krijgsraad one of three commissioners to assess the inhabitants in money contributions towards the expenses of the war—Kleuver and Zeiler the other two commissioners. Erasmus is a contractor for food supplies to the British military forces.

Friday, 28th January, 1881.—Action of Mr. Erasmus severely criticised by English section of inhabitants. He is now despised and shunned by all.

Saturday, 29th January, 1881.—Inhabitants assessed in money fines have, many of them, written to Krijgsraad representing that, under the circumstances—“complete cessation of all business and employment,” it is impossible for them to pay the fines, and that, as

subjects of Her Majesty of England, they decline to take up arms.

Sunday, 30th January, 1881.—All quiet. No hostilities.

Monday, 31st January, 1881.—Inhabitants appeared in answer to notice of assessment at Krijgsraad office. Those from whom personal service was demanded were told to present themselves at the Llandrost's office; those from whom money alone was required, at the Krijgsraad office. No answer was as yet given to their protest. The former section, on appearing at the Llandrost's office, were received by Commandant M. Wolmarans, who requested them to make their own election; those holding to their allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain to step on one side, the remainder, willing to serve the Republic, on the other. Out of an assemblage of nearly two hundred persons but seventeen stepped to the front, and, declaring themselves British subjects, declined to serve the enemies of Great Britain. These were then told that they might remain at their homes peaceably on paying fines varying in amount, but that in case of any disturbances among them they would be sent into the besieged fort.

Tuesday, 1st February, 1881.—A young man, named W. Cowell, brought in to-day, captured in the country, accused of being a spy, and of having brought despatches from Pretoria intended for the fort here.

Wednesday, 2nd February, 1881.—Cowell examined by Krijgsraad, evidence not very clear; he has been sent to Heidelberg for further examination.

This young man was brought up in the family of Mr. M. W. Pretorius, ex President, and now a member of the Triumvirate; was supposed to be in Pretorius' confidence; he acknowledges having been in Pretoria.

Thursday, 3rd February, 1881.—A little rapid firing and a small artillery duel of about six shots a side.

Lagrange, a man from Wonderfontein, was this morning shot through the brain by a rifle bullet—remainder of day passed quietly.

Friday, 4th February, 1881.—Flag of truce sent up by Boers to fort this morning; messenger sent with letters supposed to have been intercepted between here and Pretoria,—tenor of letters supposed to be to effect, that Commander of fort is instructed to surrender if provisions fail, but to spike guns thoroughly before doing so.—Message of Boer General here accompanied letters that, "if guns were spiked lives of garrison would not be guaranteed in case of surrender." Answer of British Commander that there was plenty of work for the guns before they were spiked, that he had no immediate intention of surrendering, and when he had he should know how to arrange terms.

This afternoon Mr. Young's third son, Andrew—who has been suffering for long months under a wasting disease—expired; much sympathy felt for the bereaved parents.

Saturday, 5th February, 1881.—This morning at 10 o'clock firing recommenced between the fort and the Boers; some effect produced among the Boers, but to what extent we cannot precisely ascertain. Dr. Mahler,

a non-combatant, and medical officer of the Boers, suffered compound fracture of left forefinger from piece of shell, necessitating amputation.

At 11 o'clock Mr. Young's child was buried in the garden attached to the hotel; Mr. Cawood, Wesleyan Minister, reading the burial service, a few friends attending; thus the remains of the poor child were temporarily deposited in unconsecrated ground amid the rolling sound of cannon and reverberating peals of musketry. Just previous to the funeral a ball passed through the roof of the hotel and lodged in the rafters at the back, causing much trepidation in the poor mourners gathered together in the rooms below, with sad hearts awaiting the interment of their beloved one.

Firing has continued at intervals during the day, though "Greitje" has not spoken since this morning. We hear she is disabled, but do not know the cause. Many conflicting rumours have been current respecting the advance of *Government* troops and engagements between them and the Boers, but we cannot find that any of these rumours have substantial foundation. A memorial was yesterday sent in to the Krijgsraad, signed by a large number of the townspeople, requesting that Mr. W. A. Smith, who has been more than seven weeks in confinement, be either brought to trial or released on bail, securities being offered to any amount required.

This morning Mr. Smith was examined by the Krijgsraad, no accusation being made against him except that his name was mentioned in Woite's notes

as having been present at one of the Boer meetings. He was released on bail—himself in £500, and two sureties of £500 each. Messrs. G. H. Coulson and G. Siddle were sureties.

Sunday, 6th February, 1881.—Quiet as usual.

Monday, 7th February, 1881.—The week was commenced with a little sharp rifle practice at daylight, and a shot or two from the cannon; result—two Boers slightly wounded. The roof of Dempers' house penetrated by a shell, which has rather spoiled its appearance; the house was unoccupied.

Tuesday, 8th February, 1881.—Pass granted to C. Shepherd to proceed to Free State with waggons, preparing to communicate with our friends there. Hostilities only manifested by an occasional shot,—the Boers are continuing to practice the plan of keeping under cover.

Wednesday, 9th February, 1881.—Shepherd left to-day after a compulsory residence here of six weeks; he carries our best wishes with him. Restrictions as to passes have been increased; no passes are now granted further south or west than Market Square. Not a shot fired to-day.

Mr. James Gray and Mr. Roscher arrived from Ventersdorp; report that commandeering goods is carried on there to a great extent. Gie, ex-post contractor, is field-cornet there for the Boers, and making himself very disagreeable to inhabitants.

Thursday, 10th February, 1881.—A number of the English inhabitants have to-day received orders to

serve personally; to appear to-morrow. A kaffir was taken prisoner to-day, accused of having been to, and come from, the fort. It appears that the Boers in the trenches nearest the fort have observed the loose leaves or shucks of green mealies thrown away out of the fort, and have redoubled their vigilance to find how they got there. Some people said they must have been *grown in the fort*, but others maintain that they had been conveyed there from the town. The kaffir says that a gentleman gave him the mealies and a letter which he took to the fort; he named various people as being the person, notably Mr. G. Siddle, Mr. van Alphen, Mr. du Saar and others. On being confronted with these persons, however, he could not identify them. He was then punished with twenty-five lashes, in the midst of receiving which he said that Terblanz was the man. There being no one of that name in the town, this did not lead to the identification of the required person. He was then confronted with some of the townspeople, but failed to recognise the person.

Friday, 11th February, 1881.—A large number of the English inhabitants had to appear before the Krijgsraad this morning for the kaffir to look at, but he failed again to point out the offender. Authentic account of the battle at Lange's Nek received here in the *Natal Mercury* of the 1st February. We are rejoiced to see that British honour was upheld.

Saturday, 12th February, 1881.—Many conflicting rumours of affairs on Natal border. Nothing certain

but that British reinforcements rapidly advancing. Five cows and a calf and two oxen reported to have been captured by the garrison of the fort last night. Capture not observed by vigilant Boers until too late.

Sunday, 13th February, 1881.—Day of rest. Various reports from Heidelberg. Several men arrived from Joubert's column without passes. Left for home in Maquassie without leave. Fieldcornet in charge of guard at bridge, north end, accompanied them, taking French leave, having been refused leave of absence to see a sick child.

Monday, 14th February, 1881.—Everything very quiet; not a shot fired to-day.

Tuesday, 15th February, 1881.—The combatants roused up this afternoon, and a sharp interchange of compliments took place. The Boers placed a quantity of bales of wool as a protection to the men engaged in making a new embrasure for their cannon. Having pressed all the town native servants, they placed them here and endeavoured to carry on the work under the shelter of the wool. The cannon in the fort made short work of the wool, scattering it in all directions, two of the natives badly wounded and one killed. Inhabitants much inconvenienced by pressing of native servants. On protesting, were told that if servants did not appear to work their masters would be commandeered.

Wednesday 16th February, 1881.—Boers persisting in endeavouring to carry out work with aid of natives; another native killed, and one wounded. The troop of cattle belonging to Boers returning from grazing this

afternoon, a small portion strayed towards the fort. A shell was thrown between them and the guard, hastening the progress of the cattle one way, and the guard the other; the guard called for assistance by repeated shots, but were not supported. On the cattle nearing the fort a smart fire was kept up on the Boer lines, thus diverting their attention. Twelve head of cattle are reported to have been driven into the fort, thus increasing their stock of provisions again.

Many reports current respecting operations by the advancing British forces, but none reliable. All papers and other intelligence carefully shut out, except such as is favorable to the Boers. Currently reported, on supposed good authority, that a large number of Free State Boers, about 600 or 700, are expected to join the Transvaal Boers about the 23rd inst., being the anniversary of the independence of the Free State. Four men arrived from Bloemfontein, supposed to bring despatches to this effect, received with sensation by the Boers.

Thursday 17th February, 1881.—A little firing during last night. The Boers continue to force natives to work in exposed positions; two more wounded this morning.

Friday, 18th February, 1881.—Sortie made this evening from fort, reached as far as P. Pretorius' kraal, seized five sheep and retired. These foraging parties seem to be a favourite pastime of the besieged; they generally take the course towards the mealie fields at the south end of the town, where the green

corn cobs are in good order; the besieging force in the Boer trenches seems to be powerless to prevent these sallies.

Saturday, 19th February, 1881.—Another sally made from fort, reached as far as the prison, where six men of the Boers were on guard; five of them bolted, the sixth was caught by the soldiers, who took away his gun and umbrella (with which weapons he was armed) and set him free; they then took off a few sheets of iron from the prison roof, which they doubtless required, and took them to the fort unmolested.

Sunday, 20th February, 1881.—All quiet. One kaffir killed in trenches last night.

Monday, 21st February, 1881.—A good deal of vexation caused to those Boers sensitive to ridicule by a stake planted between the fort and prison clothed as a female scarecrow, and holding expanded above its head the umbrella taken from the Boer in the prison. The remarks are characteristic: *De rooijes verspot ons, Hulle houl ons voor oude vrouwen, verdoom'd*. The body of a Boer reported to have been found near the river south of the town, shot through the chest, body not identified.

Tuesday, 22nd February, 1881.—Free State and Heidelberg posts arrived—no news promulgated, no papers arrived. This argues unfavourably for the Boers. We gather from various sources that British troops have massed at the Drakensberg, and a few skirmishes have taken place; we also hear that a large number of additional troops are expected from India shortly.

Mr. Young, who has been ill for the last fortnight, sitting up to-day, much better. Captain Raaff (prisoner) reported seedy. No news about meeting of Free State Volksraad.

Wednesday, 23rd February, 1881.—Boers continue to send prisoners of war and native servants to work in trenches. Two of the latter wounded to-day.

Thursday, 24th February, 1881.—To-day the effect of the cowardly action of the Boers in placing the prisoners of war to work in dangerous positions in the trenches has been fully shown. A young married man, named Frederick Finlay, who was taken prisoner as a volunteer belonging to Captain Raaff's corps, and who was sentenced by the Krijgsraad to twelve months' hard labour, was working at the end of the trench on the north side of the fort, when a shell struck the embankment and exploded in his face, carrying away the upper portion of his skull and lodging several bullets in his chest, shoulders, and neck; of course death was instantaneous. The body was brought to the town at sunset. The deceased leaves a widow and two young children, who have been under the surveillance of the police since his arrest. The agony of the poor woman on receiving the intelligence was truly distressing to witness.

Friday, 25th February, 1881.—The body of F. Finlay was interred at 12 o'clock in the garden at the back of the English Episcopal church; the whole of the English inhabitants remaining in the town, together with the volunteers now prisoners to the Boers, attended

the funeral; these, together with the armed guard on duty with the prisoners, formed an imposing cavalcade. The Boer authorities refused to allow the customary three volleys to be fired over the grave. The Rev. Mr. Richardson delivered a very impressive address at the conclusion of the burial service, which evoked great emotion from those present. Intense suppressed feeling could be seen in the faces of all.

Saturday, 26th February, 1881.—Free State post to hand, but no papers. We are informed that the action of the O.F.S. Volksraad tends towards neutrality, but no vote has yet been taken on the appeal of the Transvaal agitators. A good deal of feeling among Boers in Kroonstadt and Winburg districts in favor of active partizanship with the Transvaal against English.

Every opportunity seems to be taken to annoy and provoke English town residents for the purpose of exacting fines.

Sunday, 27th February, 1881.—All quiet.

Monday, 28th February, 1881.—Boers have commenced a new embrasure, or, as they call it, a fort, on the north-west side of the camp, where they intend placing cannon.

Tuesday, 1st March, 1881.—Boers commandeering grain bags and empty barrels for construction of fort. All the native servants compelled to work at night in the trenches, to the great inconvenience of the townspeople. White flag sent from Fort informing Boer commandant of the death of Mrs. Sketchley, and requesting leave to obtain a coffin from town and to

bury the body in the cemetery. Permission given for coffin, but leave to bury at the spot indicated refused, as it is within the lines of trenches.

Wednesday, 2nd March, 1881.—Coffin sent to fort with wreaths of flowers; all very carefully inspected by Boers to prevent communication; wreaths pulled to pieces to find notes; none found.

Thursday, 3rd March, 1881.—Good deal of firing on both sides. Two natives wounded in the night; one Boer wounded this morning.

Friday, 4th March, 1881.—Much annoyance caused by the continual officious meddling of the police, on any or no prettexts. Mouchards on active duty at the hotels, and, in fact, everywhere. Mr. Moquette, late messenger of the Llandrost's Court, now a prisoner, taken at the surrender of the court-house, has been sentenced by the Krijgsraad to three months' hard labour. The accusation against him was for saying that the death of Finlay was a deliberate murder on the part of the Boers. We quite agree with Mr. Moquette; he bears his sentence like a brave man, loyal to the cause he has espoused; all honour to him. Mr. and Mrs. Forssman applied to come out of the fort; permission refused.

Saturday, 5th March, 1881.—Ladies waited on Krijgsraad to use their influence towards obtaining permission for the Forssman family to come out of the fort. The ladies were Mrs. R. Daly, Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. Rocher, senr., and Mrs. ——. They were received by General (!) P. A. Cronje very coolly, and their

request refused point blank ; Cronje having the additional brutality to add to his remarks in refusing a tirade against women in general, saying that they were at the bottom of all mischief.

Sunday, 6th March, 1881.—As usual.

Monday, 7th March, 1881.—Sharp firing in the morning ; two Boers wounded, a German named Muller mortally wounded in the chest—no hope of his recovery. Rumours that an armistice is contemplated.

Tuesday, 8th March, 1881.—Heidelberg post arrived, confirming intelligence of action at Spitzkop on the Drakensberg. Sir G. P. Colley killed, with about 150 officers and men, part of staff and 45 men 92nd and 58th regiments taken prisoners and sent to Heidelberg.

Wednesday, 9th March, 1881.—Notice issued by Krijgsraad that all loyals will be allowed to leave the town, and that no protection will be ensured after the 11th inst. Many people leaving. The object is to get rid of the people, so as to check the continual communication supposed to be carried on with the fort.

Thursday, 10th March, 1881—Rapid and continued firing by Boers on fort, both with cannon and rifles. The fort does not reply to any great extent.

Friday, 11th March, 1881.—The so-called fort erected by Boers cannonaded from fort, and front wall knocked over, burying old "Greitje."

Saturday, 12th March, 1881.—Messrs. Mollett and Sluymers arrived from Kroonstadt with letter from President Brand to Cronje, and one to Colonel Winsloe.

It is believed that these letters inform them of the commencement of an eight days' armistice, to commence here on the arrival of the provisions for the fort, notice of which Joubert has pledged himself to give at once to all garrisons. Cronje and his advisers refuse to allow the letter to be delivered to Colonel Winsloe.

Sunday, 13th March, 1881.—Free State men again urged delivery of letter to fort, but without effect.

Monday, 14th March, 1881.—Confirmation of news of armistice commencing at Drakensberg 6th March not published by Krijgsraad. D. van Graan again wounded through body and wrist; wounds not considered dangerous.

Tuesday, 15th March, 1881.—Free State deputation left, object not being attained. Most of the loyal inhabitants have left the town, being threatened with being driven out on foot if they did not leave; a few have received special permission to stay.

Wednesday, 16th March, 1881.—Staats Courant issued, in which is published the agreement for an armistice made between Sir Evelyn Wood and P. J. Joubert, showing that our information of the 12th inst. was correct, Joubert binding himself to give all garrisons notice. This has not been done here, as far as our knowledge extends. The *bona fides* of the Boers in this matter is generally doubted.

Thursday, 17th March, 1881.—Continued very heavy rain. This has now been the case for weeks. A good deal of sickness is prevailing in consequence.

Friday, 18th March, 1881.—The remainder of the loyal inhabitants have been forced to leave the town, and have had to do so in spite of the continued down-pour. We hear that those poor people who were driven away at the beginning of the week are still without shelter, on the banks of Loop Sprint and other small rivers, most of the watercourses being quite impassable.

Saturday, 19th March, 1881.—Rumours afloat of a treaty of peace having been signed at the front, not reliable, extremely improbable, and if, as stated by the Boers, granting independence without conditions, utterly and disgustingly shameful and dishonourable to Great Britain.

Sunday, 20th March, 1881.—Intercourse going on between Boer general and camp, terms of capitulation being discussed.

Monday, 21st March, 1881.—Terms of capitulation agreed to between Colonel Winsloe and British officers on one side and General Cronje and officers on other side. Treaty signed at 12 o'clock noon, provides, besieged capitulate with honors of war, leave the fort and country free men, officers retain side arms, all retain personal property, flag remains in hands of British; escort to be provided by Boers to see troops safely to Kroonstadt, O.F.S. Terms eminently favourable to besieged.

Tuesday, 22nd March, 1881.—Preparations being made for evacuation of fort; rumours of peace again afloat.

Wednesday, 23rd March, 1881.—British evacuated fort to-day; marched out to Captain Baillie's estate and camped there to recruit; men look very emaciated. We learn that for three weeks they have been existing on quarter rations of mealies alone, sometimes having to eat them raw in consequence of the drenching rain preventing cooking. *Sickness in the shape of low fever* has prevailed to a great extent in the camp; the loss of men is great. The entire number killed or died of sickness, 20; wounded, 31; and sick, 52; in all, 103 disabled out of about 220 souls who entered the camp on the 15th December. The defence of this place by Colonel Winsloe and his handful of men for this protracted period reflects the highest credit on the *bravery, perseverance, and endurance* of officers and men, and cannot be too highly praised and admired, especially as contrasted with the *irresolution, dilatoriness, incapacity, and general imbecility* of those authorities in England and elsewhere who could and ought to have sent relief long before this.

The reasons for the surrender are sufficiently palpable. The remaining provisions (mealies) were only sufficient for five days' quarter rations, and the large number of sick and wounded could not exist on this coarse food. The Boers endeavoured to exclude Mr. Forssman and his family from the treaty, but were met by Colonel Winsloe, indignantly repudiating such an idea, and threatening to break off negotiations. This brought the Boers to terms, as they were exceedingly anxious to get possession of the camp, their people having

become dispirited, and to a great extent demoralized, many having gone to their homes in defiance of orders.

Friday, 25th March, 1881.—Troops marched for Vaal River to-day.

Saturday, 26th March, 1881.—The two wounded men of the 21st brought from camp to the Boer hospital died yesterday, and were buried in the cemetery with military honours; firing party provided by Boers.

Monday, 27th March, 1881.—It is now certain that peace has been concluded; terms not yet known. Boers do not seem satisfied.

Tuesday, 28th March, 1881.—We learn at last the terms of the disgraceful peace concluded by the Liberal Ministry in England with the Boer leaders. We are one and all ashamed of our nationality; yet the Boers are dissatisfied.

