CHAPTER XVI.

LORD ROBERTS SEIZES THE WATERWORKS, DESPATCHES FRENCH TO THABANCHU, AND BY AN ACTION AT KAREE SIDING IS ENABLED TO RESTORE THE RAILWAY BRIDGE NORTHWARDS OVER THE MODDER.*

On the 13th March, the date of his arrival at Bloemfontein, Lord Roberts found that the supply of pure water, which the town obtained from waterworks on the Modder, twenty-one miles east of Bloemfontein, had been cut off. The army was compelled to draw water from the old wells in the town, which had long been out of use. Thus it was most important to obtain possession of the waterworks as early as possible. Major C. G. Amphlett, with three companies of mounted infantry, was at once sent to occupy them. He was to leave half a company at Boesman's Kop as a connecting post with Headquarters. On the 15th Lord Roberts learned that the commandos facing Gatacre and Clements had retired, and that it was believed they were to concentrate at Dewetsdorp. Subsequent reports stated that these commandos had broken up into small parties, and that their wagons were making their way along the Basuto border.

The actual movements of the burghers will be given more in detail later. For the present it will be enough to say that on evacuating their position south of the Orange river, the commandos from the neighbourhood of Colesberg went north-east, and near Smithfield joined with those from the Stormberg district. In all, they numbered about six thousand men, nearly

* See map No. 35.
all mounted, and with them were more than seven hundred wagons. The Generals in command were Grobelaar, Lemmer and Olivier. It was obvious that any actual or potential concentration at Dewetsdorp threatened the security of the connection with the waterworks, and that it was well to cover the occupation by a detachment stronger than Amphlett's. There were, moreover, other reasons why as effective and as mobile a body as possible should be sent into the district between Bloemfontein and the Caledon.

In the first place, on the 15th of March Lord Roberts had issued the following proclamation:—

PROCLAMATION III. OF 15TH MARCH, 1900.

To the Burghers of the Orange Free State.

In continuation of the proclamation which I issued when the British troops under my command entered the Orange Free State, in which I warned all Burghers to desist from any further hostility, and undertook that those of them who might so desist and were staying in their homes and quietly pursuing their ordinary occupations, would not be made to suffer in their persons or property on account of their having taken up arms in obedience to the order of their Government, I now make known to all Burghers that I have been authorised by the Government of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen to offer the following terms to those of them who have been engaged in the present war:—

All Burghers who have not taken a prominent part in the policy which has led to the war between Her Majesty and the Orange Free State, or commanded any forces of the Republics or commandeered or used violence to any British subjects, and who are willing to lay down their arms at once and to bind themselves by an oath to abstain from further participation in the war, will be given passes to allow them to return to their homes and will not be made prisoners of war nor will their property be taken from them.

ROBERTS, Field Marshal,
Commanding in Chief Her Majesty's Forces in South Africa.

Government House,
Bloemfontein,
15th March, 1900.

Now though there was no doubt that many would be willing to lay down their arms if these conditions became known to them, it was difficult to ensure that the proclamation would reach them. To spread the news of peace throughout the south-east
LORD ROBERTS SEIZES THE WATERWORKS.

of the Free State, and open it up as a source of supplies; to protect the waterworks; and to intercept, if possible, such of the Colesberg and Stormberg commandos as had not yet crossed the Bloemfontein—Ladybrand road, Lord Roberts sent into the Ladybrand district a flying column, 1,700 strong, under Lieut.-General French. As the news from the Basuto border was that the commandos were breaking up, it was hoped that French’s appearance would induce all who had not already done so to start for their homes. The composition of the flying column will be more conveniently detailed in the next chapter.*

The day after Pole-Carew’s interview with Lord Roberts (i.e., on March 18th), it assembled with five days’ supplies at Springfield Farm, eight miles east of Bloemfontein, and bivouacked at Boesman’s Kop that night. The next day French crossed the Modder, and halted about six miles east of the river. Meanwhile, further reports had come to Headquarters as to the movements of the Colesberg and Stormberg commandos, and an orderly from Bloemfontein reached French at 7 a.m. on the 20th with information that these commandos were moving by the Wepener—Ladybrand road, and would probably arrive at Ladybrand that afternoon. The column continued its march at 9 a.m., and met no enemy except a few men who fired at a flanking patrol near Israel’s Poort. At Thabanchu the Landrost came out to receive the troops, and the attitude of the inhabitants of the town was apparently friendly. At 1 p.m. the main body bivouacked on a slope two miles west of the town. A guard of a squadron of cavalry and one section Royal Horse artillery was placed in charge of the town and detachments were posted to hold the Neks on the two roads leading to Ladybrand and on the road to Dewetsdorp.

The following orders were issued confidentially at 4.30 p.m. on the 20th for the next day:

1. A considerable force of Boers (some 3,000 or 4,000) with guns, are reported moving on the Wepener—Ladybrand road. At ordinary rate of march they should reach Ladybrand this afternoon.

* See page 275.
“2. The detachments (one squadron cavalry, two companies mounted infantry and two machine guns) under Lieut.-Colonel Pilcher will march at 6 a.m. to-morrow for Newberry’s Flour Mills on the Leeuw river. A defensive position will be occupied near the Mills to prevent enemy getting supplies, and reconnaissances pushed towards Wepener—Ladybrand road, especially towards Commissie Poort, with the object of discovering whether any movement of the enemy is in progress in the direction of Ladybrand, and if he is getting supplies from the Mills.

“Report by helio and through relay posts. Supplies for two days to be taken on horses. 5 per cent. led horses.

“By Order,

D. Haig, Lient.-Colonel, A.A.G.”

Lieut.-Colonel T. D. Pilcher, with about two hundred men marched from Thabanchu at 6 a.m. on the 21st; he reached the Mills, twenty-one miles distant, at about 4.30 p.m., and to secure them entrenched a strong position. From information gathered that day, he reported that General Grobelaar was at Ladybrand, that the enemy’s main body was on the way to Clocolan, and that a detachment, apparently a flank guard, was at Modder Poort. This message was received at Thabanchu shortly before midnight on the 21st of March. Communications by telegraph and signal were opened with Bloemfontein on the 21st, and on the 22nd with Pilcher’s force. During the next four days Lieut.-Colonel Pilcher strengthened the ground he occupied, and reconnoitred actively in all directions. On March 26th, having strong reasons for wishing to arrest the Landrost of Ladybrand, and having been led to believe that the task would not be difficult, he marched, with a hundred men and a Maxim, upon the village, which is eighteen miles from the Mills, and about forty miles from Thabanchu. When he drew near to Ladybrand, he posted half his men and the Maxim in reserve, and entered it with the remainder. He was received with open arms by the inhabitants. He then arrested the Landrost and a Field Cornet, and had just obtained, with some difficulty, a conveyance in which to transport them, when he was told that about a thousand Boers were rapidly approaching. He succeeded in carrying off his prisoners and in withdrawing safely, pursued by the fire of the Boers and of the inhabitants, who had now
exchanged the white flag, with which they originally welcomed him, for rifles. His retreat was covered by the Maxim gun. The Boers did not pursue, and Lieut.-Colonel Pilcher reached the Mills that evening, with the loss of one man wounded and a sergeant and four men missing.

Meanwhile the late invaders of Cape Colony had carried out their march from the south unmolested. The Colesberg commandos had started from the neighbourhood of Norval's Pont on the evening of the 12th March, and, leaving four hundred mounted men to demonstrate along the northern bank and cover their retirement, moved in the direction of Smithfield, in order to join the Stormberg commandos from Bethulie. These, sending their wagons on ahead, evacuated Bethulie on the 14th. The two forces eventually joined hands about the Commissie Drift just east of Smithfield.

The retreating commandos had not much to fear from the south, for their wagons had covered a long distance from the Orange river by the 14th March, while the British troops were still on the Cape Colony side of the stream. The only danger was that of being cut off by a column from Bloemfontein before they succeeded in passing to the northward of the Thabanchu—Ladybrand road, where they would be in safety. Their object, therefore, was to move their convoy rapidly by a route as remote as possible from Bloemfontein. They decided that it should work up the Basuto border via Wepener. With numerous drifts to cross, and an indifferent road some 140 miles long, there was no time to waste if they were to preserve their 750 ox wagons. For the driving of these a thousand Kaffirs were employed, and the burghers from the outset formed an effective screen moving wide to north, south and west of the convoy, which covered some fifteen miles of road. Cyclists did most of the orderly duty, keeping up communication between the different parts of the column. The march of the convoy began at 2 a.m. each day and continued till 5 a.m., when, after resting for two hours, the journey was continued till 11 a.m. In the afternoon they did another stage, from 2 until 5, and one more in the evening from 7 until 9.30 or 10 p.m. A remarkable feature of the trek was
the rapidity with which the order to inspan was carried out. According to Boer accounts, in fifteen minutes from the time that the order was given for the collection of horses, mules and oxen, everything was ready and the march had been resumed. This retreat was most successfully accomplished under conditions of very great difficulty. But few wagons broke down, and notwithstanding the wretched tracks and difficult drifts which had to be passed, the losses in oxen and horses were light. Soon after the convoy started from Commissie Drift, most of the mounted men left it and went to Leeuwkop, evidently in order to watch any movement from Bloemfontein. Here President Steyn met and addressed them, encouraging them to carry on hostilities. They rested their horses there for a day and a half before returning to the convoy, which had continued on its way. The long column of wagons crossed the Caledon at Jammersberg bridge, close to Wepener, and as announced by Lieut.-Colonel Pilcher, was trekking from Commissie Poort (west of Maseru) to Ladybrand on the 21st and on the 22nd towards Clocolan.

Various reports of the proceedings of the commandos and of the convoy had reached Headquarters. The movement of wagons from Bethulie and Norval's Pont had been noted on the 13th, and on the 15th news was received that a considerable number of the Colesberg and Stormberg commandos had gone to their homes, and that the remainder were making northwards intending to unite at Dewetsdorp. Information continued to come in to the effect that the enemy had been seen in small bodies, and on the 18th the impression at Headquarters was that the commandos had broken up into such parties. It was not till the 18th that the Commander-in-Chief obtained accurate knowledge about the huge convoy of wagons. On that day it was believed to have set out from Smithfield on the 17th, and on the 20th it was definitely ascertained to be at Bokpoort, eighteen miles from Wepener. On the same day General French, at Thabanchu, was informed of the news which had reached Lord Roberts.*

* See page 261.
When Lieut.-Colonel Pilcher reported the presence of the Boers about Commissie Poort and Ladybrand on the 21st of March, General French at Thabanchu was forty miles distant. The enemy was known to be at least six thousand strong, so that any aggressive action, with horses such as the cavalry had, could not be attempted, and it was evident that the convoy of wagons had already passed. This large detachment of burghers, although they doubtless shared in the present depression caused by the successes of the main British army, had suffered no demoralising defeat, and it was at all events possible that, as soon as they were aware of the presence of such a small isolated column, they might attack it. Apart from the news of this march gained by General French on the spot, later information as to the enemy’s real strength had by this date reached Headquarters. If the southern commandos had at one time dispersed, as previously supposed, it was evident that they were once more concentrated in greatly superior numbers. On the 28th, by Lord Roberts’ orders, Lieut.-Colonel Pilcher’s party was recalled from the Mills to Thabanchu, where it arrived on the morning of the 29th March.

Soon after De Wet had allowed his burghers to disperse to their homes on the occupation of Bloemfontein, a Council of War was summoned. It was held at Kroonstad on the 17th March, and the Presidents and many officers of both Republics attended it in order to decide on their future course of action. President Steyn discussed the situation, and stated that he had ascertained from reliable sources that if they could continue the struggle for another six or eight weeks, Russian action against India would compel England to make peace in South Africa. He exhorted the officers present to do all in their power to instil courage into the burghers, and to induce them again to take the field. Then Generals Joubert, De Wet, and Botha spoke, and it was unanimously resolved that, although Bloemfontein had been occupied by the British, the burghers should not sacrifice the independence of the two Republics, but should continue hostilities. In the course of the discussion which followed, General De la Rey attributed their previous failures...
to the large size of the commandos. President Kruger agreed that the forces should be divided into several flying columns, of which he proposed that one should go towards Bloemfontein and entice the enemy out of it, while another should pass Bloemfontein and collect and bring up the commandos which still remained in the southern part of the Free State. It was also resolved that, as soon as the commandos were concentrated, the whole should be organised in various bodies, which, moving out in different directions, were to endeavour to cut the enemy's communications. These parties should be without wagons, should not occupy positions and await attack, but should act aggressively. It was further agreed that the Commandants of districts should order their Field Cornets to appoint to every twenty-five men a corporal, who would be held responsible that his section was equipped with necessaries and ammunition.

Reports sent by Liebenberg from Britstown and by Steenkamp from Prieska were read, and in view of the importance of cutting the British communications in the neighbourhood of Victoria West, it was decided to send the money and ammunition asked for by these Generals via Klerksdorp and the Vaal river. General Du Toit at Fourteen Streams was to furnish an escort to the ammunition, which General Steenkamp was to meet half way and conduct to Prieska.

Among those present no voice was raised against carrying on the war to the bitter end, but there was evident anxiety as to the willingness of the burghers again to take the field. The Presidents feared the effect of Lord Roberts' proclamation, and that same day President Steyn issued the following manifesto, sending it by despatch riders and by telegraph all through the country:

From State President.

At a full meeting of the Council of War, at which were present Presidents Kruger and Steyn, Commandant General Joubert, Chief Commandant C. R. De Wet, and thirty Commandants and fighting Generals of the Transvaal, Free State, and Colony, it was resolved that taking into consideration the difficult circumstances under which the country is suffering, although Bloemfontein is occupied by the enemy our independence must still be prized, and the Government must still be supported with all strength and power; and
considering the willingness of the burghers, who are coming in from all sides and with fresh courage, all officers in both States are notified that strong and active measures will be taken to fight the enemy in every possible way, and for that purpose to call up all officers and burghers in terms of martial law. Encourage then all the burghers to continue the fight. All officers and burghers here are full of courage and hope, determined to fight to the end. Fresh military plans have been made and with God's help we hope to win our cause. From the north and north-west a large laager will be formed here in the course of a couple of days, and from all other parts we hear of burghers who are hastening here, whilst from Europe and the Colony our news is no less favourable. Bring it home to the burghers everywhere that the proclamation spread by the English Field-Marshal, Lord Roberts, is a subterfuge to cause the burghers to forget their duty to their country and people, and to put them off their guard. That this proclamation is unlawful and of no value. A counter-proclamation will be issued before long and published. Those who now lay down their arms make themselves guilty of the blood of their fellow-citizens, and if they do not remain true to their oath and their calling they may have to live through many bitter days of repentance, and will have to give a heavy account to their children and posterity for their lost birthright. Our cause is as justifiable to-day as it was six months ago, and the duty of the burghers to their country is not an iota less. They must thus persevere, in spite of the fine promises of the crafty enemy which will never be fulfilled, and come to our aid.

Whilst this cloud was gathering at Kroonstad the attention of the British Headquarters Staff was directed to the railway line northward, and to the bridge by which it crossed the Modder. In order to understand the importance of this bridge, it must be realised that carts and wagons were now pouring into Bloemfontein with country produce. They were a tempting prey for mounted raiders; but to the south, east and west there appeared at present to be little danger. The course of the campaign had swept the Boers from the south and west, and as yet French's cavalry, pushed out to Thabanchu with Pilcher close to Ladybrand, seemed an adequate protection for the eastern district and for those passages over the Modder which lay to the north-east between Thabanchu and Bloemfontein. The nature of the ground to the west of the capital made it easy to guard on that side, and Clements was marching up west of the railway line whilst Gatacre's detachments were stretching over all the south-east. To the north, on the other hand, the Modder flowed through a wide plain, and if any parties of raiders should come...
southern of the river they might spread out in all directions and
find rich spoils everywhere. Lord Roberts therefore felt it to be
necessary to hold the line of the Modder, and on March 19th,
the day when the first train passed south (see ante, page 258),
a company of the 2nd Coldstream Guards was sent up by rail
to the Glen, fourteen miles north of Bloemfontein, to protect
the bridge. They arrived just too late, as the enemy had blown
it up during the night of the 18th. The immediate danger of a
raid from the north was thus removed; but it would have
been very unsafe to leave the river in the hands of the Boers
as a screen to cover their movements, and as the bridge must be
restored before an advance to the north, dependent on the railway
for supplies, could be made, its rebuilding by the Royal Engineers
under adequate protection became necessary. Therefore, on the
20th, the 1st battalion Coldstream Guards was sent to the Glen
to reinforce the detachment and on the 22nd the 3rd bat-
talion Grenadier Guards followed it. As yet there were no
mounted troops at this post, and hostile patrols had been re-
ported in the neighbourhood. On the evening of the 23rd,
Boer scouting parties, growing bolder, had fired on and wounded
several officers of the Guards, who had wandered a short distance
to the north of the river, and on the 24th of March the 3rd
cavalry brigade, with O. and R. batteries, Royal Horse artillery
marched to join the Guards battalions at the Glen bridge.
Next morning, the 25th, a squadron from each of the 9th and
the 16th Lancers, were pushed forward to reconnoitre the rail-
way line as far north as Brandfort (eighteen miles), and, if
possible, to search that town. They had nearly reached it
without meeting the enemy, when a heavy fire was opened upon
the cavalry patrols from the kopjes to the east and from the direc-
tion of Brandfort itself. The two squadrons were then attacked
by about four hundred Boers from the town, while the burghers
on the kopjes tried to work round their right flank. As the
enemy pressed on vigorously and were causing some casualties,
the squadron of the 9th Lancers charged, while that of the 16th
Lancers aided it by dismounted fire. The enemy was at once
checked, and the squadrons then retired, rendering each other
mutual support. The Boers followed them for some two miles from Brandfort, and then desisted from further pursuit, though their patrols, evidently supported by a strong force, still showed vigour. The cavalry reached camp about 4 p.m., having had about ten casualties.

This skirmish showed Lord Roberts that the Boers on the right bank of the Modder were in sufficient strength to prevent the restoration of the railway bridge. He decided to drive them away, and to occupy Karee Siding, a little station eight miles north of the Glen, and, as a preliminary measure, ordered Lieut.-General Tucker with his division, the VIIth, and Colonel P. W. J. Le Gallais’ mounted infantry to the Glen, where they bivouacked on both banks of the river. To rid himself of his immediate enemy with the least loss, Lord Roberts, as usual, proposed to employ the mounted arms in a wide turning movement. As usual, also, he wished to keep his plan a secret, and at the same time to have French at hand to execute it. He therefore sanctioned French’s proposal to return from Thabanchu to superintend the remounting of the cavalry, and as soon as the cavalry General arrived at Bloemfontein on the 27th, Lord Roberts unfolded to him his plans for the capture of Karee Siding. Broadwood took over command at Thabanchu.

On the 28th Lieut.-General Tucker was directed by the Commander-in-Chief to dislodge the enemy from Karee Siding, and informed that Lieut.-General French would explain to him how the Field-Marshal thought the operation should be carried out.

The same day the cavalry outposts round Bloemfontein were taken over by Colonel C. P. Ridley’s mounted infantry, while French, with nearly all the mounted men still with Headquarters, marched to the Glen. The wear and tear of war had greatly reduced the strength of the troops concentrated there. The cavalry, which consisted of the Scots Greys, Carabiniers, and 1st Australian Horse of the 1st brigade (Porter), the 9th and 16th Lancers of the 3rd brigade (Gordon), and the 12th Lancers of the 2nd brigade (Broadwood), could only find mounts for 650 men, while the four Horse artillery batteries could bring but
four guns each into the field. There were 880 mounted infantry. The VIIth division numbered 6,400, with twelve Field artillery guns. Throughout the mounted arms the horses were weak and in poor condition.

When French reached the Glen the two Generals settled on the details for the next day. The Boers were known to have entrenched themselves astride of the railway near Karee Siding, about eight miles north of the Glen, on a line of kopjes four or five miles in length. Their main position was on the hills east of the railway; their centre, on the Nek crossed by the line, was not entrenched, but afforded good natural cover; their right rested on Hondenbeck Hill, a kopje about a mile and a half west of the station. French was to swing round to the west and threaten the burghers’ communications north of Karee Siding. Le Gallais’ mounted infantry were to circle eastward and bear upon the Siding. While the mounted troops were working against the enemy’s flanks and rear, the VIIth division, in échelon of brigades, the 14th (Chermside) leading, was to march northwest from its bivouac against the line of kopjes held by the burghers. Soon after 8 a.m. on the 29th the cavalry brigades were set in motion and by 10 a.m. they had occupied Kalkfontein. On learning that this farm was in French’s hands and that Le Gallais, on his side, reported his front to be clear of the enemy, Tucker advanced. His artillery marched behind the leading brigade (14th) of his division. His front and right flank were covered by a mounted infantry detachment of the City Imperial Volunteers, which was later to take its place as escort to the guns, when the arrival of mounted infantry from Le Gallais’ force enabled the City Imperial Volunteers to return to this, their original duty.

About noon French, from the left, informed Tucker that he had turned the enemy’s right flank, and that he was about to halt, covering himself to the eastward with scouts. Le Gallais also reported from the right that about two hundred Boers with a gun were retiring northward before him. The 14th brigade (Chermside) was now moving up the foot-hills east of the railway, and the 15th brigade (Wavell), in échelon to the left
rear, had occupied the kopjes west of the station, when, about 12.40 p.m., shortly after the scouts had announced that there were no burghers on the kopjes south of Karee, fire was suddenly opened on the foremost infantry from north, east and west. The guns first came into action from a Nek about a thousand yards south-west of the station, against Boers visible on Hondenbeck Hill, about 2,300 yards off. On the right the 14th brigade, covered by the fire of the guns, continued its advance, the 2nd Norfolk regiment leading. The enemy fell back, and the Norfolk, with the 1st King's Own Scottish Borderers on their left, halted along a line of kopjes about a mile and a half east of Karee Siding. The two battalions were reinforced by the 2nd Hampshire, while the 2nd Lincoln was held in reserve on the right rear, where it was joined later by a section of field guns which were manhandled up to a steep ridge within short range of the Boer position. Here they gave Chermside's brigade great assistance at a time when all the Boer guns were directed upon it. The burghers held the outlying spurs with skirmishers, and had entrenched themselves on the far side of the summit, some few hundred yards back.

It was now about 2 p.m. A considerable number of reinforcements, including guns, were seen to join the enemy, and in this part of the field a long fire-fight took place, in which the King's Own Scottish Borderers did good service and lost considerably. After a time the 15th brigade was ordered to push further to the north. In this brigade the Cheshire and East Lancashire were in front, the North Staffordshire was in reserve, while the South Wales Borderers were sent to prolong the left of the 14th brigade. This battalion was exposed to a heavy cross fire from its front and left. During these infantry movements the artillery pushed closer to Karee and once more came into action against the high hill west of the Siding.

Soon after 3 p.m. French resumed his march towards the east, threatening the enemy's line of retreat, and the burghers who faced him began to withdraw. When the 14th brigade was again able to advance, the South Wales Borderers on its
left became separated from it. About 3.30 p.m. Major-General Wavell sent the Cheshire from the 15th brigade to fill the gap thus caused, and these two battalions became a mark for the Boer cross fire. Wavell saw that progress was checked by this cross fire, and to beat it down directed the East Lancashire to carry the south-eastern flank of Hondenbeck Hill, which seemed to be the enemy’s stronghold, and then to push on to the eastern end of the summit.

The officer commanding the East Lancashire, Lieut.-Colonel A. J. A. Wright, ordered forward three of his companies, supported by three more in second line. The remaining company he sent westward to threaten the enemy’s right flank. Under a sharp fusilade, the main body worked across open ground to a deep donga, some five hundred yards from the foot of the ridge they were to attack. From the shelter of this donga they advanced in short rushes, under a hail of fortunately ill-aimed bullets, to within two hundred yards of the base of the hill. They then lay down and fired at the skyline, while the British guns swept the crest and summit of the ridge with shrapnel. The Boers, so well concealed that even at this short distance not one of them could be seen, kept up a hot fire and showed no signs of retiring. At this moment Lieut. E. J. Wolseley dashed forward, and by successive rushes led a section, numbering twenty-three men, towards the ridge, but this gallant, though ill-advised, attempt to storm completely failed. After losing five men killed and ten wounded he was driven back to the donga. The firing line was then reinforced from the supports, bayonets were fixed, and a properly organised advance began. By a series of well-timed rushes the East Lancashire passed over the danger zone between the donga and the foot of the hill. Then followed a steep climb up the boulder-strewn slope, but when the summit was gained it was found that the enemy had disappeared. At the same time the South Wales Borderers swung round to the east, in support of the 14th brigade. The Boers were now everywhere falling back, but the cavalry movement against the enemy’s line of retreat had been checked. The enemy had been seen retiring near the railway to the north-east of the hill
attacked by the East Lancashire, and O. and R. batteries Horse artillery were brought into action. The burghers replied with two heavy pieces from the east of the railway, and a commando lined the hills to keep back the cavalry, which then pushed forward and dismounted to the right and left front of the Horse batteries, where they were forced to remain for the rest of the day.

The main body of the Boers, covered by the fire of their guns and the riflemen, made for Brandfort. Pursuit was out of the question, for the teams of the Horse artillery could hardly move out of a walk, and the cavalry horses were also thoroughly exhausted.

On the eastern flank Colonel Le Gallais' mounted infantry was opposed by a comparatively small force of the enemy, Le Gallais pushed the Boers back some three miles from ridge to ridge, but did not succeed in more than effectually covering the right flank of the 14th brigade. The Boers on this flank made one attempt at a counter-attack, but this was at once brought to a standstill by the fire of the pom-poms.

In the evening the cavalry, which had covered about forty miles of ground during the day, fell back by Karee Siding to their previous bivouac, while the infantry spent the night on the position from which the enemy had been driven, and which he had occupied with about four or five thousand men and four guns.

The British casualties were:

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<th>Killed</th>
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<td>Officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>N.C.O.'s and men</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>155</td>
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Of these losses thirty-six per cent. fell on the King's Own Scottish Borderers. In this battalion one officer was killed and five wounded, one mortally; in the other ranks eleven were killed and fifty-three wounded.

On the 30th the VIIth division remained in bivouac at Karee Siding, while the cavalry division returned to Bloemfontein.