

war correspondent in Natal of a leading English newspaper, and one which is strongly on the side of the English Government, gives it as his opinion that, "situated as we are, one Boer is worth ten men in the attacking force." He is by no means the only expert who has said this. Military men of undoubted standing and ability have said as much to me here personally.

Indignation has been expressed at my telegram of the 23rd February, in which I give as my reasons for expecting that Cronje would surrender with his army that our forces were five to one. Did my critics imagine that nearly 5,000 mounted Boers, splendidly armed and led by a man like Cronje, would not only be defeated, but surrounded and captured in their own country by a force of anything like equal numbers? As a matter of fact, my telegram erred in one respect: I should have said something like eight to one instead of five to one. This cannot be gainsaid. I have the list of the regiments under Lord Roberts as I dictate this. When I telegraphed to you that I believed Cronje would surrender I was making a forecast which I had to justify, and I gave my reason for making it.

Now for the British losses: They were 9,660 on the last day of January; on the 23rd February they were 12,000; on the 28th February they were 15,000; by the 7th March they were estimated at over 15,600; and on the 15th March the official return showed them to be 15,900. The fighting between the 28th February and the 15th March was not very severe, except on one day near Bloemfontein. My estimate of 15,000, therefore, on the 28th February was amply borne out. Of course, I included deaths from disease, but not men sick in hospital or invalided home.

One writer seriously complains that I telegraphed on the 21st February, "There are great hopes siege of Ladysmith will soon be given up," suggesting that the words "given up" meant something derogatory to the probable success of our arms. I need not take up your time by showing that besiegers do not "give up" a siege until it has become hopeless, or their own situation untenable. What I anticipated on the 21st February was exactly what took place on the 28th February. The truth is I underestimated our losses more than once. The Suffolk Regiment, when defeated near Colesberg, lost 145 men, not 100, as I telegraphed. At Rensburg (10th to 13th February) we lost 350, not 200, as I telegraphed. The losses suffered by Lord Roberts at Paardeburg and the neighbourhood, in the fighting from the 16th to the 27th February, were—killed, 243; total casualties, 1,548. General Buller lost 5,617 men in his various attempts to relieve Ladysmith: here are the figures,—

				Killed.			Total Casualties.
Colenso ...	...	...	...	136	...	...	1,125
Potgieters	...	...	...	25	...	...	374
Spionkop	...	...	...	273	...	...	1,729
Pieters, &c.	...	...	...	311	...	...	2,389
Totals ...	...	...	...	745	...	...	5,617

As to my statement about the danger and pressure of the garrison at Ladysmith, the following paragraph, cut from the *Daily News* just after the relief, is merely one of a number which justify my view:—

It appears from the reports of our correspondent at Ladysmith that the relief of that town was even more necessary at the moment it took place than we had had reason to suppose. The garrison were without mealies, bread, biscuits, or meal. They seem to have latterly chiefly lived on horse-soup. Supplies sufficient for only four days' full rations remained, and a week would have seen them face to face with starvation. The saving of the town was therefore a very narrow thing indeed; and, whilst we may take all the more pride in the heroism which maintained the defence under such conditions, we may certainly consider ourselves fortunate that Lord Roberts's success in the Free State induced the Boers to leave before Sir Redvers such a rearguard only as he was able, by a fortnight's stiff fighting in that most difficult country, to overcome.

Another critic, who is pleased to bracket me with Dr. Leyds, accuses me of gloating over British disasters. In the week ending 16th December the British forces in South Africa undoubtedly suffered three of the most unmistakable, and, in the matter of generalship, humiliating, defeats endured by our arms during this century. In these three battles we lost nearly 3,000 men without inflicting any compensating loss on the enemy, and the feeling here over them was one of shame and grief. These three disasters were thus described in my telegrams: "11th December, 1899: Gatacre repulsed with serious loss Stormberg. Our loss about 700." "13th December, 1899: Methuen's attack repulsed with loss Monday." "16th December, 1899: Buller's attack repulsed with loss eleven guns."

Again, let any one compare the few dry, colourless words in which I described the disastrous fiasco at Spionkop with the account of this same melancholy business in the despatches of Generals Buller and Warren, and the covering despatch of Field-Marshal Lord Roberts. Lord Roberts's scathing comments on Spionkop and Stormberg have been the sensation not only of England but of Europe, and Lord Roberts is not prone to exaggerate. As to Magersfontein, you probably know what public opinion is on that.

A Napier newspaper states that the London *Daily Telegraph* had contradicted one of my statements, and observes, "Our London contemporary must have been falling foul of him in connection with his egotistic self-sufficiency." This is untrue. Neither the *Daily Telegraph* nor any other London paper has referred to the subject. From the same article I gather that this newspaper considers my inaccuracy proved because Joubert admitted that 3,000 Boers were "disabled at Spionkop." This is pure fiction, and the Boer official statement (for what it is worth) of their loss at Spionkop is the following: "Pretoria, 29th January.—Official returns give the Boer losses at the battle of Spionkop as 53 killed and 120 wounded.—REUTER." The same article in the Napier newspaper stated that Cronje had lost 8,000 men during the war, and had lost from 4,000 to 5,000 killed and wounded during the fighting just before his surrender to Lord Roberts. The truth is that there is not a military writer here who has not noticed the extraordinary small-