

WITH THE BOYS IN EGYPT.

The following is an account of a brush with the Turks written by Mr A. Richardson:—

"It is now three weeks ago since the Turks showed up. For a fortnight our Brigade was kept busy, taking it in turns, with the 1st Light Horse Brigade, to keep in touch with the Turks, who were gradually moving up, until on the last stunt out we ran into them at —. We were busy all day, firing being pretty brisk at times, and returned to camp at dusk. We turned in after a good 'tuck in,' and settled down for a good sleep, but our expectations in this direction were shattered at about 1.30 a.m., when they hauled us out to 'stand to,' saddled up, and all set to move. We had a bit more snooze, and moved off at 3.30 a.m. We hadn't got far away from camp when we heard the sound of rifle fire, and we knew then that there would be something doing, and sure enough, by daylight some scrap was on. The Turks had brought up a couple of Mountain Batteries, and were putting the shells in thick and heavy, but didn't do much damage. We, the Wellington Regiment, were reserve regiment at the start, and were behind a big sand hill with our horses and those of the rest of the Brigade. The Turks, however, were making the pace pretty hot, and the 'Kangs' had to fall back a bit. This is where Wellington came into it. We advanced in rushes across about half a mile of sand, and blazed away for about half an hour. By this time the 'Kangs' had got out of it, and we fell back to a new position, and stayed there all day, with bullets flying about everywhere. In fact, the whole of our camp was under fire, owing to the high positions occupied by the Turks' rear line, who could see down on the camp, but they were a long way back, and only one or two bullets took effect. By the afternoon our heads had things well in hand, and the New Zealand Mounted Brigade coming up from Hill 70, caught their flank, and things for Joe Turk were not so bright, and by nightfall the N.Z. Brigade had 100 prisoners on hand, while our battery had put one of theirs out of action. Things were quiet during the night, and we had orders for no firing of any sort, but fixed bayonets, in case of an attack.

At four the next morning we advanced with fixed bayonets. The Turks kept up a brisk fire while we were crossing the flat, but couldn't get on to us, as we were well extended, and there was plenty of cover to be had, and when we rushed the first small ridge the Turks there threw up the sponge. There were still two further ridges, however, to take, each about half a mile apart, but Joe had had enough of green dates and bad water, and was waving his white flag, for all he was worth. We took over 700 prisoners, camels, horses, and all sorts of gear, and also the mountain battery which I mentioned, in less than half an hour. Our led horses were then brought up to us, and we set off to —. The Turks, however, held us up with heavy machine gun and artillery fire, and we waited for reinforcements, and set out again after midday. The Turks, however, had machine guns here by the score, and we had to let go for the time. The Regiment lost two of its best men here, viz., our doctor and his assistant, Sergeant Moseley. They were badly wounded while doing first aid work under fire. The Doctor has since died, and the Sergeant is not expected to live, and the Regiment as a whole had a lot of time for both of them. Several of our chaps were wounded here.

"We had two days in camp, and then we were off looking for slather again, and I tell you we got it properly. The Turks had imshed right back on Ber-el-ab, but their rearguard was nearer this way, and they had the range of every ridge and gully. Our chaps attacked the enemy, who fell back for at least two miles, and then started to show his cards by opening fire with two 4.7 Howitzers, and right out after our battery. Our horses were along with the Battery, and the first shell to take effect got more of our horses than the Battery. We soon had them out of it, but we were feeding up at the time, nose bags on and bit out, and she was a hell of a scuffle for a bit. By the time I had my four set they had lobbed three more shells over, but nearer the battery, and putting a gun out of action (slightly only). Their horses went in all directions, but were soon rounded up, and we were set again, but of course further back. The guns then started shelling our chaps on the ridges, and every machine gun they had was going strong.

Our chaps hung on, however, until the Australians on the left had got out of it, and we then brought up our horses to them. This was accomplished without any casualties, but our troop and squadron had a number of casualties previously. Every sixth officer but one was wounded. Our troop officer was pretty badly hit, and also three chaps in the troop were wounded. We stayed out this way for three days more, but did not do any attacking, as the Turks were going for their lives as it was, and accounted for their stubborn rear-guard actions. We took prisoners every day. I think this will finish Turkey for a bit now. His total prisoners, killed, etc., amount to over 5000, while our casualties do not go more than 500. This includes Australians, New Zealanders, Scotties, and Tommies, and luckily the big majority were only slightly wounded. The Turks got their biggest bump when they attacked Mohammedieh on the coast, our monitors absolutely shattering them. Guns were captured here also. All through the fighting our officers were perfect, and cool as cucumbers throughout, while General Royston, in charge of the Brigade, was out on his own. On the first morning of the attack seven Taubes were flying over the scene of the fighting, dropping bombs for all they were worth. Only one of the Taubes spotted us, and made a big miss when she let go with her bomb, but we were lucky, as we were a big target, and did not feel too happy when they were flying over us."

The pencil of the censor here stops the story of the fight.

SIX O'CLOCK CLOSING PETITION

In reply to many enquiries received in regard to the early closing petition now circulating in the Dominion, we wish to state that this petition is organised by the N.Z. Alliance. The Secretary of the Alliance is writing to every Union asking for their assistance, and each Union must decide for itself if it is able to assist the Alliance in canvassing for signatures.

The N.Z. Executive of the W.C.T.U. decided that as Unions are in recess it would be impossible for them to organise a third petition before Convention meets.