

lines, holding De Wet's Boers, who made repeated attempts to break out of the circle of troops. From various positions behind rocks and dongas the Boers kept up a vigorous fusillade, hoping to find a weak spot in the line. Simultaneously others charged, but again and again were the Boers repulsed, leaving dead, wounded and prisoners in the hands of the British. Continuing, this dispatch says that on the night of the 7th—

the conflict ebbed and swelled over an area of 40 to 50 miles, in which the long-hunted, harassed and desperate men endeavored to find outlets. The Boers at one spot got within 30 yards of the British firing line, but the barbed wire balked the burghers and forced them to retreat. The firing never ceased. Aided by the electric searchlights, the British harrowed the surrounding territory with shrapnel, shells and Maxim bullets. In the northern section the Boers made a desperate effort to break through. Collecting a number of cattle, the Boers drove them down on the British lines. Bending low in their saddles, they rode among the cattle, making it impossible to distinguish them in the darkness. The British pickets opened a terrible fire and the Boers were met everywhere with a hail of bullets. A long line of flame ran up and down the firing line, nearly 30 miles long, as the armored trains flashed their searchlights over miles of country. The reports of the quick-firing guns along the entrenched line and the booming of the field guns and pom-poms sounded deep amid the sharp crackling of the musketry, while Heilbron fort contributed to the din with the deep roar of its naval gun. This lasted for 20 minutes. Then gradually the rattle died down until only the crack of single shots was heard, and at last all was quiet again. The Boers' attempt to break the British circle had failed. A few of them succeeded in crossing the line, and among them was Gen. De Wet.

The Boers' side of this battle story is of course at present unobtainable. If nothing else stood in the way the British censorship would.

Owing to this censorship all newspaper information regarding the trial of the Boer prisoner of war, Commandant Kritzinger, who, like Scheepers (pp. 664, 668) is accused of crimes against the laws of war, has been suppressed. Through the war secretary, however, in the House of Commons on the 17th, it transpired that the trial had begun on the 15th.

Not only was the British movement of the 7th for the capture of De Wet a gigantic failure, but a similar trap on a much smaller scale, laid on the

12th by a party of Boers for a detachment of British, resulted in routing the latter with comparatively heavy loss. The scene of this affair was on the Klip river south of Johannesburg. The British detachment, consisting of 150 mounted infantrymen, surrounded a farmhouse where they had been told that Boers were in hiding. One Boer broke away from the house and was pursued by the British, who had not followed him far when the party of Boers opened fire upon them from three sides. They fell back, finally reaching the cover of one of the British block houses, but their loss in the fight was 12 killed, including the major in command, and over 40 wounded.

Spain is disturbed again (p. 89) by riots at Barcelona, reported as labor riots but probably more or less political in character, since Barcelona lies in Catalonian territory and among the Catalan inhabitants a strong secession spirit survives. It is estimated that in consequence of labor strikes 80,000 persons are out of employment in Barcelona. Martial law has been proclaimed, and on the 17th ten persons were killed and 65 wounded in encounters between strikers and Spanish troops. All the newspapers of the city are "tied up" by strikers. Similar encounters on the 18th resulted in further casualties. The reported cause of the strike is a demand for a nine-hour work day, which the large employers have refused. Since the street fighting the captain general of the province of Barcelona has formally urged the employers to concede the demand. But all news regarding this disturbance must be taken with caution, as the Spanish government has established a censorship, which is calculated to discredit every report, official and unofficial.

In the United States the most important political event of the week is the passage in the lower house of Congress by a unanimous vote, of a bill unconditionally repealing the war taxes which were put in force July 1, 1898. It is estimated that if this repealing bill becomes law, the Federal revenues will be thereby reduced by about \$77,000,000.

But the importance of this event depends rather more upon the manner in which the bill was carried through the House than upon its ef-

fect upon public revenues; for its passage was secured by the most extreme instance of the recent tendency of the House to abandon deliberation and automatically to confirm the reports of committees. The bill was not allowed to be subject to amendment, and it was not debated. The ways and means committee had decided to recommend the bill. But the protection elements on the majority side of the House feared that in its passage amendments repealing the protective tariff on products of trusts would be offered, and that Republican members whose constituencies are opposed to protecting the trusts any longer would be forced to support these amendments. For that reason a rule of procedure was brought in which allowed two days for debate but prohibited all amendments except such as might be offered by the ways and means committee. The anti-trust Republicans had been induced to support this rule. The Democrats denounced it as a "gag" rule. When the previous question on its adoption had been moved by the Republican leader, Mr. Dalzell, a motion to recommit the rule was made by the Democratic leader, Mr. Richardson, and that motion being decided by the speaker to be out of order while the previous question was before the House (thus overruling Speaker Reed, Republican, but following Speaker Crisp, Democrat), the test of strength came on the vote upon an appeal from this decision. The decision was sustained by 165 to 123, and thereupon the rule was adopted by 158 to 120. It was at this point that the course was taken by the Democrats which resulted in exposing the non-deliberate character of the whole proceeding. Mr. Richardson, addressing the chair, said:

I rise to make a request for unanimous consent. In view of the fact we are not permitted to amend the pending bill and in view of the fact that two days' debate is absolutely fruitless under this rule, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be put upon its passage now.

One objection would have frustrated Mr. Richardson's tactics, but the Republicans could not very graciously object to the immediate passage of a bill which their own committee had prepared and with which they were so well satisfied as to forbid even the consideration of amendments. So no objection came, and the bill passed without debate and without dissent. Though no debate took place permission was given the members to print