

Campbell at Rooikraal, and the flying column was broken up, the 4th Mounted Infantry returning to Colonel Park.

From Rooikraal Major-General Kitchener and Colonel Campbell moved south by Blinkwater (41) to the railway, and Colonel Park proceeded through Roos Senekal towards Witpoort (26). On the 4th September both General Kitchener and Colonel Campbell were refitting their columns at Wonderfontein, and on the 8th September Colonel Park reached Bankfontein (234) 5 miles north-east of Middelburg. The result of the operations of these three columns during the period here referred to has been 16 Boers killed, 53 prisoners, 22 voluntary surrenders and 2,072 cattle, 76 horses, 60 wagons, and 24 carts captured. Colonel Park also found a 15-pr. gun and 3 Maxims, which had been destroyed by the enemy.

Between the 8th and 14th August, on which latter date he returned to Carolina, Colonel Benson operated between that town and Ermelo. On the 15th he left Carolina for Nootgedacht (178) with the intention of surprising a Boer laager reported to be at Warmbaths, 34 miles north-east of Carolina. At Nootgedacht he dropped his wagons, and he then made a long night march which terminated with the complete surprise and surrender of the enemy's camp. Two of the Boers were killed, and 32 prisoners, 500 cattle, and 110 horses were captured. The prisoners included C. Breytenbach, Captain of Scouts for the Carolina district, and Mr. De Villiers, father-in-law of Mr. Schalk Burger. In this, as in other enterprises undertaken by Colonel Benson, the greatest credit was due to Lieut.-Colonel Wools Sampson, whose careful leading across the veldt, for 34 miles on a dark night, contributed materially to the success achieved. The majority of the prisoners were captured by the Eastern Transvaal Scouts, who were well directed in the attack by Major Young. At the conclusion of this successful operation Colonel Benson returned to Carolina.

An incident then occurred which pointed to a considerable gathering of Boers in the upper part of the Bronkhorst Spruit valley. On 17th August a force of the South African Constabulary and Morley's Scouts, which had been patrolling under Captain Wood, South African Constabulary, in front of the Constabulary posts to the south of Bronkhorst Spruit Station, unexpectedly came upon and attacked a greatly superior Boer force which was halted at Middelburg (487), 23 miles south of the railway. The enemy, who were subsequently reported to have numbered 800, were completely surprised by the sudden rush of our men. Twenty-three Boers were killed, 11 were taken prisoners, a large number were wounded, and all their horses stampeded. Our success, however, was rather short-lived. Discovering that the force by which they had been attacked was a small one, the enemy rallied, assumed the offensive, and drove our men back, after a hand-to-hand fight, in the direction of Bronkhorst Spruit. In the retirement the Boers were able to recover the 11 prisoners who had been taken from them, and to capture 14 of our men, including Captain Moyley, of Morley's Scouts, who was dangerously wounded. Our other casualties were 1 man killed and 5 men wounded.

On receipt of the news of this affair, Lieut.-Colonel Bewicke-Copley, whose column was at Springs, was ordered to make a forced march on Middelburg (487) and to endeavour to get touch with the command to which Captain Woods had been engaged. He left Springs on 18th August, and on the 19th reached the scene of

the encounter, where he learned that the enemy's laager had already moved away in a south-easterly direction. A few Boers who still hovered about the neighbourhood were dispersed, and Colonel Bewicke-Copley then moved to Olifantsfontein (138) and sent in his wagons to bring out further supplies from Springs.

Colonel Benson had already been ordered to move west in consequence of reports of this Boer concentration, but some delay occurred owing to a misapprehension as to the urgency of his orders. He left Carolina on 21st August, moving west by Vaalbank to Middlekraal (298), then turned north to Roodeport (8) to draw supplies from Middelburg, and on the 28th pushed on west again towards Brakfontein (126) near the sources of the Wilge River. To co-operate with him in this locality Lieut.-Colonel Bewicke-Copley was again ordered to move east from Olifantsfontein to Springs. At dawn on the 31st August Lieut.-Colonel Bewicke-Copley occupied Haverklip and Brakfontein after a night march of 20 miles, and at once became engaged with 450 Boers, whom he drove back with loss. Seven prisoners (including Lieutenant Roos, Staats Artillery, who was dangerously wounded), 2 wagons, 21 horses, and 95 cattle remained in Colonel Bewicke-Copley's hands. On 30th August Colonel Benson reached Rietvlei (169), and there learnt that the enemy had gone south towards the upper part of the Waterval valley. He, therefore, left his wagons and made a night march upon Kroomdraai (100) where he overtook and captured a small laager with 14 prisoners (two of whom were wounded), 12 wagons, 17 Cape carts, 80 horses, 514 cattle, 11 mules, and some supplies. Amongst the prisoners were T. Beesters, late Landdrost of Heidelberg, and Brink, a member of the Special Government Court for the trial of prisoners.

As the majority of the Boers had escaped south-east and further pursuit was useless, Colonel Benson then marched on 6th September to Witbank Station on the Delagoa line, whilst on the 4th Lieut.-Colonel Bewicke-Copley returned to Springs.

Operations of Lieutenant-Colonel Colville's Column.

14. After the operations near Watervalshoek, north of Greylingstad, the columns under Lieut.-Colonel Colville and Lieut.-Colonel Stewart marched back to Standerton, where the latter, on 10th August, entrained for Dundee to reinforce the troops on the north-east frontier of Natal. Colonel Colville left Standerton again on 15th August and, crossing the Klip River at Kaffir's Kraal (211), marched by the west of Gembokhoekberg to Brakpan (423), 18 miles south-east of Vrede, where he established an entrenched camp. On the 20th with his mounted troops and guns he searched the Upper Klip Valley, and then crossed the Drakensberg into Natal by Muller's Pass, taking into Newcastle a quantity of captured stock and several prisoners. He returned to Brakpan by Botha's Pass, and thence moved back to De Lange's Drift, near Standerton. During these operations, Colonel Colville's men were constantly sniped at by parties of Boers under Mou'nan and other local leaders, who frequent this district. Colonel Colville, who had several casualties in his force, returned to Standerton on 6th September.

Natal Frontier.

15. Persistent reports in the second week of August of a concentration of Boers in the districts to the east of Vryheid and Utrecht seemed to point to the possibility of trouble on the frontiers of Natal, and it was therefore arranged that Lieut.-General Sir H. Hildyard's command