

larger area of country. The work of the Constabulary, as they moved the blockhouses to the new line, has been covered and secured by the simultaneous advance of the troops under Lieut.-Colonels Hackett Thompson, Bewicke Copley, and Sir H. Rawlinson who operated respectively from Bronkhorst Spruit, Springs, and Heidelberg.

As the majority of the Boers in this district had accompanied General Botha towards the Natal frontier, few of them were seen by the northern and central columns, but Sir Henry Rawlinson, to whom was assigned the task of clearing the front of the Constabulary between the Standerton line and the Vaal River, came in contact with several parties of the enemy which he chased westwards towards Barnard's Kop, and southwards over the Vaal into Orange River Colony.

On the 3rd October, Sir H. Rawlinson marched into Greylingstad, whence he organised a night patrol to Barnard's Kop, which resulted in the capture of three armed burghers. On the evening of the 4th, he again left Greylingstad for Watervalshoek (204), where the laagers of Field-Cornets Hans Botha and Pretorius were reported to be. The former of these was successfully surprised at daybreak on the 5th near Kaffir Spruit (199), 7 prisoners, 20 horses, 12 wagons, 12 Cape carts, and 650 cattle being captured. The other laager had already moved east before the advance of the Constabulary posts, and though Sir Henry Rawlinson followed it for some distance, he was unable to add to his captures.

Operations on the Pietersburg Line.

4. No events of importance have occurred in the Northern Transvaal during the past few weeks. Since the train-wrecking incident of the 31st of August, the Pietersburg line has been undisturbed, and General Beyer's wandering bands have kept to the hills to the west of the railway, avoiding as usual contact with our troops.

Two columns have remained in this district in observation of the enemy, one under Colonel Colenbrander acting from Warmbaths, and the other under Lieut.-Colonel Wood, who has taken Lieut.-Colonel Grenfell's place, from Nylstroom.

Night raids and long-distance marches have from time to time been undertaken when opportunity presented, and a certain number of prisoners (including Captain M. Coetzee, the leader of Beyer's Scouts) have been brought in by our troops.

Operations in the South-Western Transvaal.

5. At the date of my last despatch, the situation in the South-Western Transvaal was briefly as follows:—General Fetherstonhaugh and Colonel Kekewich completing their search for the dismounted stragglers of Kemp's force, to the south-west of Olifant's Nek. Colonel Allenby from Rustenburg, and Brigadier-General Gilbert Hamilton on their march to Pretoria and Klerksdorp respectively, and Lord Methuen's troops approaching Zeerust from the Marico Valley.

On the 11th of September, Brigadier-General Hamilton reported from Cyferkuil (47) as he approached Klerksdorp, that he had captured near Geduld (158) a Boer convoy, with 25 prisoners, 140 horses, 7 wagons, and 520 cattle.

General Fetherstonhaugh continued to search the kloofs round Leeuwfontein (339) for some days, and then on the 12th of September moved by Tafel Kop on Ventersdorp, to replenish his supplies. At Tafel Kop, he learnt that Kemp,

who had escaped from our cordon in a north-easterly direction, was already working his way back to the south again, as our troops withdrew.

Colonel Kekewich, after assisting General Fetherstonhaugh in his operations to the south-west of Olifant's Nek, returned to Naauwpoort (214) with the prisoners taken. He again left Naauwpoort on the 13th of September, and passing through Olifant's Nek, turned east to operate on the northern slopes of the Magaliesberg. On the 15th he reached Oorzaak (568), from which place he operated in conjunction with Colonel Mackenzie (1st Bn. Suffolk Regiment), who was then employed in constructing blockhouses to the south of the range between Naauwpoort (214) and Olifant's Nek. A careful search of the slopes and summits of the hills resulted in the capture of Field-Cornet Klopper, and 36 other prisoners of war. Colonel Kekewich then moved to Roodekoppies (171), whence he returned to Magato's Nek to co-operate once more with General Fetherstonhaugh against Kemp's commando, now reported to be re-assembling in that neighbourhood. On the 24th Colonel Kekewich was at Rietfontein (299). Here he organised a night expedition by Bulhoek (833) and Lamoefontein (357) to Crocodile Drift (266) on the Eland's river, at which place he surrounded and took a Boer laager, under Acting-Commandant van Rooijan, with 35 prisoners, 15 horses, 5 wagons, and several hundred cattle. Colonel Kekewich then moved to Waterval (596), whence on the 26th he marched to Lindley's Poort (102). Kemp's men on this date were reported to be on the Toelani River.

Being unable, however, to gain touch with the enemy, Colonel Kekewich on the 29th turned east to Moedwill (639), where at dawn on the following morning his camp was heavily attacked by a force of at least 1,000 Boers under Generals Delarey and Kemp, who had evidently followed up our column from the valley of the Toelani. The attack which lasted from 4.45 a.m. till 6.15 a.m. being delivered upon three sides of our camp with great vigour and a lavish expenditure of ammunition, was quickly repulsed after severe fighting, in which all ranks displayed great gallantry, the conduct of the 1st Bn. Derbyshire Regiment being especially distinguished. The enemy foiled in their attempt to rush the position were compelled to fall back, and they apparently retired in a northerly and north-westerly direction.

Our losses in this action were severe, 1 officer and 31 men being killed, and 26 officers, including Colonel Kekewich, and 127 men wounded. To give some idea of the severity of the fire to which the troops were subjected it may be mentioned that 3 piquets were practically annihilated, and that out of a party of 12 men of the Derbyshire Regiment which was guarding a drift, 8 men were killed and 4 wounded.

Upon Colonel Kekewich being incapacitated by wounds the command of the column was temporarily assumed by Lieut.-Colonel Wylly, Derbyshire Regiment. I am glad, however, to report that Colonel Kekewich has this day been able to resume his work.

In the meantime General Fetherstonhaugh had again left Ventersdorp, marching north on the 21st September to resume operations in conjunction with Colonel Kekewich. Moving by Tafel Kop he was engaged on the 24th at Doornkom (896) with a number of Boers whom he drove in the direction of the Toelani Valley. On the following day he captured a position on Winkelhoek (280), driving the enemy towards Doornkloof (591); then failing to find any