

further objective, he turned back in a south-easterly direction to Waterval (68).

On the 29th September he moved to Kwaggafontein (924), and here on the 30th heard of the attack on Colonel Kekewich's camp at Moedwill. On receipt of this intelligence he at once sent Colonel Williams's column to Hartebeestfontein (514) to support Colonel Kekewich, following himself as soon as possible with the remainder of his force. By the 2nd October General Fetherstonhaugh had concentrated the whole of his troops at Moedwill, but he was unable to obtain any definite news of the enemy, who seemed to have scattered, after their unsuccessful attack, amongst the farms on both sides of the Rustenburg-Zeerust road. Between the 2nd and 6th he executed reconnaissances to the west in the hopes of being able to gain touch with Generals Delarey and Kemp, but failing to learn their whereabouts moved south on the latter date to Kosterfontein (292) on his way towards Tafel Kop. On the departure of General Fetherstonhaugh for the south, Lieut.-Colonel Wyllie moved east through Magato's Nek to refit his column and draw supplies from Rustenburg.

Lord Methuen reached Zeerust on the 9th September after a series of sharp encounters with the enemy in the neighbourhood of the Marico Valley. The Boers had shown great boldness in these attacks, and persistently followed his rearguard up to Zeerust.

Two days later Lord Methuen returned to Mafeking, and he utilised the remainder of the month in refitting his troops and in passing convoys into Lichtenburg and Zeerust, preparatory to a fresh movement to the east. This contemplated advance had the double object of completing the collection of the ripening crops in the Marico District, and establishing a line of blockhouses between Zeerust and the lead mines.

On the 2nd October his column marched from Mafeking to commence work, and on the 4th Lord Methuen had reached a line Wonderfontein (41)—Kleinfontein (76)—Waterkloof (148), from which points he is now moving south upon Bokkraal (300), carefully clearing the country of all scattered bands. An affair of patrols at Wilgeboom Spruit (276) on the 4th October, resulted in five burghers being killed.

Operations on the Vaal.

6. Great progress has been made during the past month in clearing the enemy from both banks of the Vaal River. The line of blockhouses from Kopjes Station to Potchefstroom, which was commenced in the first week of September by the 2nd Bn. Scots Guards and 1st Bn. Oxfordshire Light Infantry, has been completed; Heilbron has been similarly connected with Frankfort, and, east and west of Vereeniging, the drifts over the Vaal have been permanently occupied by detachments of the Railway Pioneer Regiment under Lieut.-Colonel Capper.

To prevent any interruption of this work, and to cover its completion, the columns under Lieut.-Colonels Byng and Dawkins were brought up from the south of Orange River Colony on the 10th September to Vrededorp Road Station. From this point they moved out into the area round Reitzburg—Venterskroon—Parys, where a considerable number of Boers were taken as they sought to escape from the tract of country gradually being enclosed by the blockhouse line. Many of these prisoners who had fled south from the Losberg and Gatsrand were found lurking in the bed of the Vaal River, near Rensburg Drift.

Having thoroughly searched and cleared the ground between Parys and Reitzburg, Colonel Byng marched west to Coal Mine Drift, where he heard of the assembly at Bothaville of some 500 Boers, most of whom had left the area then being included within our blockhouse system. He proceeded at once in that direction with the idea of attacking, but found as he advanced that the enemy only broke up into small parties and dispersed in the country lying between the Rhenoster and Valsch rivers. He accordingly moved back with Lieut.-Colonel Dawkins along the Valsch River to Kroonstad, where they arrived on the 3rd October, having captured 81 prisoners of war since leaving Vrededorp.

To work in co-operation with our troops to the south, Major-General Mildmay Willson organised a small force under Lieut.-Colonel Hicks, 2nd Bn. Royal Dublin Fusiliers, which consisted of 250 Mounted Infantry, two field guns, and five companies of Infantry. This column, which assembled at Banks Station, moved thence on the 17th September for the country lying between the Gatsrand and the Vaal, where it was employed in establishing and provisioning Constabulary posts, and in hunting small parties of Boer snipers. 26 prisoners were taken, and on the 29th September the force returned to Potchefstroom. From there the column moved to Venterskroon, and on the 8th October Lieut.-Colonel Hicks reported by runner from Buffelshoek that the South African Constabulary troops, acting in co-operation with his column, had captured Field-Cornets George Hall and Van der Venter, 16 burghers, and a 7-pr. gun, which had been taken some weeks ago from their post at Houtkop.

Colonel Rimington's Operations in Northern Orange River Colony.

7. On the 10th September, Colonel Rimington's Column, which had marched north from Kroonstad, was at Leenwfontein, 6 miles south of Heilbron. From here, on the 14th, he made a night march on Anderkant (292), where he surprised and captured 6 Boers, 6 wagons, 9 Cape carts, and a number of horses and mules. On the 20th he was at Jakhal's Kop, south of the Heilbron-Frankfort Road, and on the 22nd marched thence to the junction of the Vaal and Wilge rivers, where he overtook Strydom's Commando, and secured 13 prisoners, 18 wagons, 17 Cape carts, 2 Scotch carts, 1,180 cattle, and 40 horses. Colonel Rimington then returned to Heilbron, and on the 28th marched to Oploop, between the Klip and Wilge rivers, watching for an opportunity of co-operation with Sir Henry Rawlinson's Column, which was then assisting the Constabulary to the north of the Vaal. On the 2nd October his chance came, and he captured 24 prisoners and 2,000 cattle, 30 horses, 14 loaded wagons, 22 Cape carts, and 20 mules, all belonging to Buys' Commando, which had been driven south of the river by Sir Henry Rawlinson's advance from Heidelberg.

On the 3rd October, Colonel Rimington was at De Rust on Venter's Spruit, and on the 7th he entered Standerton to draw supplies preparatory to moving south of De Lange's Drift to co-operate with Brigadier-General Broadwood and Colonel De Lisle from Harrismith.

As it had been intended to reinforce Colonel Rimington by the column under Lieut.-Colonel Wilson (Kitchener's Fighting Scouts), which had been refitted at Kroonstad after its return from the Senekal district, the latter Officer was ordered to leave Kroonstad for Heilbron on 1st October. He crossed the Rhenoster River at dawn on the 4th, and almost immediately afterwards a portion of his command was attacked at