

17th Lancers compelled them to break off the engagement.

After this encounter Smuts rapidly continued his movement to the south for several days. The pursuit, however, was never relaxed, and the troops under Lieut.-Colonels Gorringe, Doran, and Scobbel responded cheerfully to the great exertions demanded of them. The enemy's route lay through Paling Kloof, Bankview (18 miles N.N.E. of Bedford) to Mount Prospect, and thence across the Mancazana at Koonap's Drift, along the Fish River to a point near Sheldon Station, where they crossed the Port Elizabeth line to the west on the night of the 27th September. Lieut.-Colonel Gorringe next engaged him at Oud Murazie in the Zuurberg Mountains, and here succeeded in dividing his force, driving one-half south towards Glen Connor, and the other west towards Darlington. The Boers subsequently re-united at Diep Drift, 10 miles south of Darlington, but again attacked on the 3rd October by Colonel Gorringe, were driven north, with a loss of three men killed and five wounded. Our columns in close contact still maintain the pursuit in this direction.

In the north-eastern portion of Cape Colony the operations against Myburg and Fouché, the latter of whom has recrossed the Orange River, have been continued by the columns under Colonel Mouro, Colonel Pilcher, and Lieut.-Colonel Western; Major-General Hart, with Lieut.-Colonel Hon. A. D. Murray's troops and the Connaught Rangers remaining in observation of the river line between Bethulie and Herschel.

On the 10th September an attack upon Ladygrey was easily driven off. On the 15th, Colonel Pilcher's columns were south and west of Jamestown, Lieut.-Colonel Western between Jamestown and Ladygrey, and Colonel Monro to the north of Dordrecht. Smuts with his column had already gone south, but about 400 Boers, most of whom had returned from the Transkei, remained scattered in small parties throughout the district.

Early on the 20th September a determined effort was made by Commandant Kruitinger near Quaggafontein, north of Herschel, to force a passage over the Orange River at a point covered by 80 men of Lovat's Scouts under Lieut.-Colonel Hon. A. D. Murray. The attempted crossing failed, but the loss sustained by our small force was very heavy, Lieut.-Colonel Murray, his Adjutant and 16 men being killed, and 1 Officer and 35 men wounded. I much deplore the death of Lieut.-Colonel Murray, an Officer of great promise, who has led Lovat's Scouts with gallantry and distinction throughout the campaign.

At the end of September, Colonels Monro and Pilcher were watching the passes over the Drakensberg, across which most of the enemy had again withdrawn into the Transkei, and Lieut.-Colonel Western was near Ladygrey. From these positions Colonel Pilcher and Lieut.-Colonel Western were recalled to the south-eastern portion of the Orange River Colony; Colonel Monro, supported by local troops, being in charge of this area.

In the southern sphere of operations, it will be remembered that early in September Commandant Scheepers had made several unsuccessful attempts to cross to the west of the Cape Town-De Aar line near Matjesfontein. On the evening of the 9th September, General Beatson, who was directing the operations in this district, hearing that a party of the enemy had outspanned at Driefontein about 12 miles east of Laingsburg, despatched Colonel Crabbe's column on a

night march from his camp at Waggon Drift. At daybreak of the 10th, Colonel Crabbe completely surprised the Boers: under Commandant Van der Merwe. During the short resistance offered by the enemy, Commandant Van der Merwe and one of his followers were killed, and several burghers were wounded. 37 prisoners (including Field-Cornet Du Plessis), together with a good deal of ammunition and equipment, were captured. After this blow to his detachment, Scheepers turned east, and, passing to the south of Ladismith and Oudtshoorn, reached Klip Drift with the remainder of his commando on the 20th. From this point he took a northerly direction, closely pursued by the columns under Colonels Crabbe, Atherton, and Major Kavanagh.

After constant changes of direction, Scheepers narrowly escaped capture on the 5th October, at Adam's Kraal, 20 miles S.S.W. of Ladismith, where he was successfully attacked by Major Kavanagh.

On the 8th September, Commandant Theron was moving rapidly west from the direction of Willowmore, with the apparent intention of joining Scheepers. On approaching Heidelberg and Swellendam, however, he suddenly turned north-west and, making for the railway, crossed to the north of the line between Triangle and Touw's River Stations. After passing the railway, Theron was opposed by a force under Lieut.-Colonel Capper, who pursued him into the northern portion of the Ceres District. The troops under Lieut.-Colonels Alexander and Wyndham joined in the pursuit, and Theron was driven well away to the north-west, after which our columns moved back to the railway line to co-operate once more in the chase after Scheepers.

In the Philipstown and Hanover districts, small columns under Lieut.-Colonel Sprot and Major Lund have had frequent encounters with parties of Lategan's men, who reappeared once more to the south of the Orange River. Field-Cornet Louw, an influential rebel, and seven of his followers were captured by Major Lund on the 23rd September.

I must also make allusion to a very gallant stand made on the 17th September by nine men of the 3rd Bn. Grenadier Guards, under Lieutenant M. Gurdon-Rebow, who found themselves attacked by some 30 to 40 of the enemy near Cyferkuil, 10 miles north of Riet Siding. A summons to surrender was refused, and it was not until Lieutenant Gurdon-Rebow and one man had been killed and two others dangerously wounded, as the result of 3 hours' fighting, that the remaining men were overpowered and captured. The serjeant of the patrol was drowned in a gallant attempt to cross the Carolus River in search of help.

12. Throughout the period covered by this despatch, the movements of our columns have been somewhat impeded by the prevalence of rinderpest amongst the cattle. This first made its appearance on the Thabanchu line 3 months ago. For some time it was kept more or less under control, but in spite of every exertion the disease has now spread, and is likely to make itself felt in every district in turn. It is consequently necessary to inoculate all cattle, a process which throws them out of work for a fortnight or more, and considerably reduces the efficiency of the ox transport for at least a month. The bulk of our oxen have been, or are now being, subjected to this treatment, but some time must elapse before its effects on the whole transport will have completely passed off, and very considerable losses must occur meanwhile.