

On the 18th, General Gilbert Hamilton was sharply engaged at Klippan (107), 20 miles south-east of Springs, with a body of Boers which was estimated to number about 500. Upon this occasion, I regret to say, a portion of a squadron of the Scots Greys, detached to one flank, was cut off, surrounded, and partially captured. Our casualties were, Major Feilden and Captain Ussher mortally wounded, Lieutenant Rhodes and two men killed and six wounded. The Boer losses were reported to be eight men killed or wounded, Commandant Van Niekerk being shot in the knee.

After this engagement Brigadier-General Hamilton marched to Nigel Mines, near Heidelberg, where he was joined by the 28th Mounted Infantry, and he then returned to Springs, which he is now using as a base of operations in his continued search for this gathering of the enemy.

To the north of the Delagoa line, Major-General Fetherstonhaugh, who has had at his disposal the columns under Colonel Park and Lieutenant-Colonels Urmston and E. Williams, has undertaken some combined operations which have met with a considerable measure of success. On the 7th February the situation in this district was as follows:—Colonel Park, who had moved south from Lydenburg, and Lieutenant-Colonel Urmston at Belfast; Lieutenant-Colonel E. Williams at Middelburg; and the bulk of the Boer forces, under Muller, Trichardt, and Hindon, in and about the Bothasberg.

On the 19th, General Fetherstonhaugh commenced his operations by a movement of his three columns from Pan, on the railway line, towards Schietpad (63) in the Bothasberg. A long night march was undertaken to get unperceived within reach of the enemy, and at daylight on the 20th February, our troops under Colonel Park, who was accompanied by 300 of the National Scouts, were completely successful in surprising and rushing two laagers at Nooitgedacht (12) and Grootrietvlei (116). 164 prisoners were taken, of whom 8 were wounded, together with 72 horses, 630 cattle, 7 mules, 10 vehicles, and a quantity of saddlery, ammunition, clothing, and blankets. Amongst the prisoners were Field-Cornets Du Toit, G. Joubert, H. De Jager, and Lieutenant A. J. Viljoen. Hindon and Trichardt unfortunately escaped from the laagers before the latter were captured. Colonel Park then returned with our columns to Pan Station, where he arrived on the 22nd February.

About this date it was ascertained that the members of the Boer Government, with an escort of 100 men, had left Roos Senekal, moving west with an ultimate intention of proceeding by a circuitous route, north of Pietersburg, to pay a visit to Generals Delarey and Kemp.

On the 20th February, the National Scouts, operating from Godwaan, killed 2 Boers and captured 8 prisoners at Somerset (1340).

On the night of the 21st February, Colonel E. Williams again undertook a night march to Welyverdiend (125) on the southern slopes of the Bothasberg, where he secured 8 prisoners. He then pushed on to Buffelskloof (198), and there captured a laager with 20 additional prisoners, 2 vehicles, and a quantity of provisions.

On the 27th February, a portion of Colonel Park's force was moved by train from Belfast to Bronkhorstspuit station, and on the same day Lieutenant-Colonel Williams' column from the Bothasberg, reached Doornkop (42), 12 miles N.N.W. of Middelburg.

These movements were made preparatory to a descent upon Langkloof (95), (near the junction of the Olifant and Wilge Rivers), which was

timed to coincide with the expected arrival there of the members of the Boer Government as they journeyed to the west.

It was anticipated that by dawn on the 28th, Colonels Park and Williams could be in position to the north-west and north-east respectively of Langkloof, and that they would then close in rapidly upon their objective. Colonel Park; however, was unavoidably prevented from reaching his assigned position, and was unable therefore to co-operate with Colonel Williams, who, after an exceedingly difficult and trying march of 29 miles over a rocky and intersected country, successfully surrounded Langkloof at the appointed hour, only to find that the members of the Boer Government had quitted the neighbourhood for the Pietersburg district on the previous afternoon. Colonel Park, however, met with some little success. Finding that it was out of the question for him to reach his objective in time to co-operate with Colonel Williams, he turned towards the kloofs on the western side of Rhenoster Kop, and there instituted a search which resulted in the capture of 17 prisoners (including a Lieutenant of the Staats Artillerie), 9 horses, 29 oxen, a supply of ammunition, and 14 vehicles.

Our troops then returned to Bronkhorstspuit station, where they were joined by the remainder of Colonel Park's column from Belfast.

2. Since his abortive attack on Pietersburg, described in my last despatch, General Bayers has remained inactive in the Northern Transvaal, and the month, as far as this district is concerned, has passed without incident. The continued prevalence of horse sickness has prevented our troops from pressing the enemy to any great extent.

3. In the South-Western Transvaal on 8th February, Colonel Kekewich and Lieutenant-Colonel Hickie were at Rietvlei (229), 14 miles south-east of Lichtenburg; Lieutenant-Colonel Colenbrander was approaching Tafel Kop (north of Ventersdorp), and Lieutenant-Colonel Von Donop, who had succeeded temporarily to the command of Lord Methuen's mobile troops, was en route from Klerksdorp to Wolmaranstad.

On the 21st February, Lieutenant-Colonel Grenfell, who had returned from leave of absence, took over command of Lieutenant-Colonel Hickie's troops, and on the same day Colonel Kekewich moved south with both columns, through Vaalbank (116), to Hartebeestfontein (624). He reached his destination on the morning of the 25th without encountering any force of the enemy.

On the 10th of February, Colonel Von Donop arrived at Wolmaranstad, which he had been ordered to occupy both as a base for future operations, and to deny its further use as a centre for the enemy. He remained operating in this neighbourhood until the 23rd February, on which date he despatched an empty convoy of over 100 wagons to refill at Klerksdorp, and bring out supplies to him at Wolmaranstad.

The escort of this convoy was composed of the 5th Imperial Yeomanry, three companies of the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, two guns and a pompom, and a few details; the whole under Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. Anderson, of the Imperial Yeomanry.

All went well with the convoy until the early morning of the 25th February, when, as it was moving off, just before daylight, from its bivouac ground near Elandslaagte (488), 10 miles south-west of Klerksdorp, a determined attack was made upon the advanced guard from some dense bush on rising ground to the left of the road to be followed. Only flashes of the enemy's rifles