CHAPTER XI

ORANGE RIVER COLONY, S.—MAJOR-GENERALS BRUCE-HAMILTON AND C. KNOX—JULY

GREAT success having attended the construction of the line of defensible posts extending across the Orange River Colony, from Jacobsdal to Ladybrand, a gradual development of the blockhouse system was kept up in order to maintain the security of traffic and form a barrier to the encroachment of roving bands. A continuous line of blockhouses at intervals of a mile apart, following the course of the river from Aliwal North to Bethulie, and running from thence along the railway via Stormberg, Rosmead, Nauwpoort Junction, de Aar, to Kimberley was commenced in July, and another (starting northward from Frederickstad to the source of the Mooi River, Breedt's Nek along the Magaliesberg) for the purpose of maintaining the connection with the garrison at Commando Nek was begun at the same time by two battalions under the command of Colonel Mackenzie, Suffolk Regiment. Colonel Pilkington, with the South African Constabulary, engaged in like activities to the east of the Pretoria-Vereeniging line, his line of posts extending from Eerste Fabriken, by Springs and Heidelberg, to the Vaal River. It was thus hoped that between the Vaal and Modder Rivers, by means of a converging number of columns, the Boers would be swept from all sides against the British barriers and driven to surrender. To this end the two forces of Generals Bruce-Hamilton and C. Knox were operating in the Orange River Colony during the last half of July.

The former had thus disposed his troops. At Jacobsdal and Luckkoff were Colonels Williams and Dawkins respectively, and moving on Edenburg via Wepener, were Colonels Rochfort and Du Moulin. Edenburg was reached on the 17th of July, after which all the columns were moved west of the railway, to act as a support to the barrier of police posts along the Modder from Bloemfontein to Jacobsdal, garrisoned by South African Constabulary, and also as stops to the enemy when pressed southward from the Vaal River. To Colonel Rochfort was allotted the region around Petrusburg; farther west (at Blauwbank and Negdraai Drifts on the Riet River) came Colonel Williams, while the line of the Orange River (between Norval's Pont and Ramah) was guarded by the columns of Colonels Du Moulin and Dawkins. Colonel Roch-
Orange River Colony (South)

fort very speedily reaped the reward of many days and nights of vigilance. Rumour told of a burgher gang under Commandant Myburg which, with a view to rushing into the Cape Colony, was encamped on the Riet, and to defeat this programme he made an arrangement as smart as it was successful. On the night of the 27th of July, acting in concert with Colonel Lowry Cole (who was under his orders in the vicinity), he marched in the small hours to the spot—between Dassiespoort and Jagersfontein Drift—where the laager had been located. Dawn found the enemy surrounded. There was the usual rush, and roar, and scrimmage, in the course of which Myburg was dangerously wounded. The commandant was secured, together with his Field-Cornet, Kock, twenty-four of his men, 100 of his horses, and many carts. Not less energetic was Captain Going with a detachment of Mounted Infantry, who at the same time was engaging Van den Bergs' gang in a laager close by. A few days later (on the 30th) more prisoners and stock were secured in the regions of Fauresmith by the combined efforts of Majors Bogle Smith and Damant.

Meanwhile, from the 1st to the middle of July, General C. Knox's columns (Pilcher and Thorneycroft) secured the country between Brandfort, Senekal, and the Basutoland border, and, finding but few of the enemy, Colonel Pilcher betook himself to Thabanchu, while Colonel Thorneycroft went to Ladybrand. After the 17th the troops, divided in four small columns and sprayed fan-like, were sweeping toward the Orange, in search of straggling marauders, Colonel Pilcher's troops, under Major Kean and Colonel Taylor, moving via Reddersburg and Dewetsdorp, upon Bethulie (reached 26th July); while Colonel Thorneycroft's columns (under Major Copeman and Colonel Minchin) marched by the Smithfield Commissie Drift, and Wepener Rouxville roads, to Aliwal North, where they arrived on 28th. A not insignificant haul was the result of this sweep, for, though little opposition was encountered, some prisoners, 2300 horses, 1800 cattle, and 126 vehicles were secured. These troops, at the end of the month, extended their operations to the west of the line, into the area between the railway and the Philippolis-Fauresmith Road; and, while Colonel Thorneycroft, from Aliwal North, passed via Jagersfontein Road Station and Kruger's Siding towards Jagersfontein, Colonel Pilcher marched West from Bethulie along the right bank of the Orange, to Philippolis and northwards to Fauresmith. All the troops of General Knox had reached the Fauresmith-Edenburg Road by the 8th of August, Colonel Thorneycroft plus 28 prisoners, 1000 horses, 69 waggons, and much stock. They then were marched south of the Riet River to act in conjunction with General Bruce-Hamilton's columns.

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These columns, in August (minus that of Major Damant detached to help in General Knox’s operations of that period), continued, in various portions of the south-west of the Orange River Colony, to harass the commandos of Hertzog, Lategan, and Nieuwhoudt. A brilliant surprise was prepared by Colonel Lowry Cole for Hertzog on the night of the 24th. The enemy—his laager sheltered by a protecting kloof—was reported to be comfortably ensconced near Vaalhoek. Consequently the British band, marching in the small hours and with the utmost secrecy via Liebenberg’s Pass, Slaght-kraals, and Nitkomst, came at dawn to a point which commanded the guerilla’s lair. The success of the manoeuvre was complete—there was the usual roar and rampage, the usual scurry and hurry, the ringing of rifles and of hoofs, and, finally, 14 prisoners, 29 rifles, 54 saddles, 43 horses, and all the goods and chattels of the foe were secured. The remainder of Hertzog’s crew of eighty bolted towards Zootenberg.

ORANGE RIVER COLONY, N.—MAJOR-GENERAL ELLIOT

While the sweeping operations were taking place in the south of the Orange River Colony, General Elliot pursued his activities in the north of it. From Springfield Drift on the Wilge River, his three columns (under Brigadier-General Broadwood, Lieutenant-Colonel De Lisle, and Colonel Bethune) moved between the Wilge River and Liebenberg’s Vlei, while General Rundle’s force acted in co-operation to the east of the Wilge. Beyond a rush on the rearguard of the central column—De Lisle’s—shortly after it had left Reitz, little opposition was met with. The troops then moved towards Heilbron, the right column (Broadwood’s) passing through Frankfort. During this march some brilliant episodes made the 12th of July eventful. In the first place Colonel Harrison, who had energetically been hunting the enemy for some time past, planned a night excursion which was so successfully carried forward that his 300 Imperial Yeomanry returned with 12 prisoners, 9 carts, and 60 horses! In the second, General Broadwood, warily backing on Reitz to discover if the enemy, according to custom, had sought refuge by closing in behind the line of march of the troops, had some exciting and profitable adventures. He, indeed, almost landed the big fish, Steyn, in the net which hauled in a shoal of government officials of the late Free State. General Broadwood’s plan was to surround the town of Reitz before daybreak, but owing to the necessity of making a forced march of thirty miles to rear of the other two columns and the unavoidable delay occasioned by loss of touch by a connecting file during the night, three-quarters of an hour were lost, and the troops, instead of approaching the town at their ease,
Orange River Colony (North)

were forced to gallop straight at it. The result was that, owing to the fatigue of the horses, the biggest prize, Steyn, got safely away; but his departure was ignominious. Seizing the first pony he could find, coatless, bootless—a dilapidated picture of embarrassed somnolence—he made off, carrying with him just his skin and his beard, but leaving behind £11,500 (mostly in Orange Free State notes), 800 sovereigns, and £32 in his waistcoat pocket, his official papers (some remarkable and enlightening correspondence with the leaders of the Transvaal Boers), his guerilla government officials, together with Generals A. P. Cronje and T. B. Wessels, Commandant Davel and Field-Cornet Steyn (his brother). Pursuit on jaded horses was useless, therefore General Broadwood had to rest content with the magnificent results he had already obtained. He then returned to join his brigade—skirmishing by the way, but suffering only two casualties—and took his place in General Elliot's line after having, during the short period of absence, covered sixty miles of country. General Elliot, with only three of his force wounded, reached the railway via Heilbron on the 16th of July without further adventure, his total haul being 8 Boers killed and wounded, 61 prisoners, 4000 horses, 3600 cattle, 3400 rounds of ammunition, and many vehicles!

Before proceeding further, it is interesting to inspect the following letters found in Steyn's baggage, as they serve to throw light on the situation at this time from the Boer point of view:

From State Secretary Reitz, dated May 10, 1901, to Steyn

"Meeting held of Transvaal Government with Commandant Botha, Commandant Viljoen, and General J. C. Smuts, considered condition of our country and following facts:

"First.—Numbers of our Burghers are continually surrendering. This means more and more to unsuccessful termination, as Government and officials left without Burghers entails heavy responsibility on Government.

"Secondly.—Supply of ammunition so nearly exhausted that we shall be unable to engage enemy in another big fight, we shall be brought to a state of helpless flight unable to protect stock. In immediate future we shall be unable to feed our commandos.

"Thirdly.—On account of above, Government becoming weaker, losing support, becoming disorganised.

"Fourthly.—Not only our nation will be destroyed, but it will also be considered that leaders have erred, and all hope of continuation of national sentiment will be lost.

"Fifthly.—Hitherto nation and Government awaited result European complications and mission of our deputation. Government feel most strongly their duty obtain definite assurances.

"Having considered above points Government has determined—

1. To obtain permission to send messenger to President Kruger point out terrible condition country.

2. If request refused we will ask for armistice to obtain opinion both nations of future policy to put an end to present state of affairs. We leave it to you to suggest other solutions, but you must carefully consider that this Government is convinced that the time has passed for us to let matters drift on as at present, and that the time has come to take the final step." Usual ending. (Signed) "Reitz."

Presidents Steyn's reply (dated 15th May) acknowledges receipt of letter; continues letter:
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"Great blow to me. Month ago discussed matters with your Government, agreed not to ask for armistice until things reached utmost extremity. Shall we obtain armistice? I think nothing has happened entitle us to armistice to obtain opinion of our nations. It is true Boksburg commando lost bager; General Viljoen was obliged to burn his, and blow up his Long Tom; but in spite of this we have not come to last extremity.

"Free State been four months without cannon. I also know of men laying down their arms, officers becoming cowardly. Our ammunition has long been scarce enough, still [some] left to continue. You ask what prospect of successful termination. I ask what chance was there for two small Republics when they declared war against mighty power of England? You will answer, We have trusted in God's help and foreign intervention. What reason have we for refusing to place further reliance on God? I have seen last European papers; I firmly believe complications will take place in Europe within next few months, which will gain our good fortune. Knowing leaders of our deputation, I cannot believe they would sit here without hope of intervention, knowing how we struggle and strive, for I know they love their Fatherland sufficiently to frankly ask the British to end the war if in their opinion intervention is hopeless. The fact that these men remain in Europe convinces me that our case is not hopeless. When armistice comes I shall ask opinion of my nation. If they refuse to give in their determination will be mine also. I do not approve of sending messenger to Europe, it shows our hand. I am deeply hurt you having taken this determination without asking my advice and have acted so hurriedly. If you have not despatched messenger do not do so until I can call my advisers. I have sent for General De Wet; he will be here next week. I will then send you opinion.

"In your letter you say you are afraid your officers will be left alone on commando.

"Here officers may surrender, but Burgers will remain steadfast. I must point out that the Orange Free State has not only spent blood and money, but will have lost its freedom by trying to help the sister Republic, and all reliance of one Afrikander on another will be destroyed for ever. It is ridiculous to think that when flooded with seum of Europe, Afrikander spirit will remain. If we wish to remain a nation now is the time to struggle. Hope you received Natal newspaper, stating Milner going nominally on leave; truth being he not allowed a free hand. In later English paper I have seen Kitchener and he cannot pull together.

"I enclose cutting Natal Witness—Public mind in England getting very uneasy about South Africa. There are possibilities which we are not at liberty to mention, and would, if we were, we could not (sic)."

"All these things convince me we shall be destroying all hope for our nation if we now surrender. Brothers, stand fast—take courage to your disheartened Burgers. I have received verbal information that Commandant Hausbroek had engagement with English, drove them back three times. As soon as I can call a council I will send a reply; do not take any further steps till you have heard from me." Usual ending follows.

(Signed) "STEYN."

Further activities were pursued between the 16th and 24th of the month, when the troops were concentrated at Klerksdorp, activities which had the twofold object of intercepting Boers who might be fleeing before General Fetherstonhaugh’s force (which was sweeping the area between Lichtenburg and Klerksdorp), and of taking up assigned positions for the contemplated drive southward from the line of the Vaal to the Modder. Here again the force marched not empty-handed, 15 prisoners, 120 horses, 25 cases of dynamite, stock, vehicles, and ammunition being the prizes of numerous smartly-executed surprise visits by patrols. Viewing the number of captures in the way of horses, it seemed difficult to comprehend why more mobility could not be secured to the troops, but in reality only 20 per cent. of the prizes were fit for remount purposes, the remainder being brood mares, foals, &c.

While General Elliot was placing his force in the position above
Orange River Colony (North)

described, precautionary measures had to be taken against a recrudescence of mischief in the direction of Kimberley. Report spoke of a contemplated reinforcement of the guerillas in the Cape Colony by recruits from the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal. General Smuts was associated with the movement, and the swelling hordes were to join and pass through Hoopstad on their career of devastation. Accordingly Colonel Henry, who was moving between Bloemhof and Christiana, was appointed to keep an eye on the Hoopstad district. On the 16th of July he crossed the Vaal at a point some twenty-three miles south-west of Hoopstad, and promptly secured some prisoners, waggons, and horses that were doubtless about to form part of the reinforced commando. On the 24th, in this district, he was joined by Major Paris, R.M.A., with the Kimberley column, which he had summoned from Warrenton. This officer on the way had come in collision with some 150 of the enemy, and had succeeded, through the gallantry of Dennison’s Scouts, in routing them from a strong position. The day after, effecting a junction with Colonel Henry’s force, he again came on the enemy under Commandants Badenhorst and Erasmus, and Field-Cornet Van Aswegan. The Boers were in some strength, but Major Paris’s little force (consisting of 230 mounted men, 2 guns, a pom-pom, and 30 infantry, carried in carts) was equal to the occasion. The Boers were surrounded and attacked from three sides, and after a running fight, in which the 74th Squadron Imperial Yeomanry, the Kimberley Light Horse, and Dennison’s Scouts distinguished themselves, the enemy dispersed with amazing celerity, leaving seven burghers on the field and their field-cornet a prisoner. One of the British party was killed and three were wounded.

Brigadier-General Gilbert Hamilton’s column was also on the track of the raiders, he having moved from Klerksdorp to Wolmaranstad (on the 21st) in order to fulfil his share of the hunt. At Wolmaranstad he remained not long inactive, for the news of slinking Boers in the neighbouring kopjes came to his ears, and he quickly determined on a surprise visit to their haunts. The dawn of the 26th found Commandant Potgieter and his hardy crew surrounded in their laager at Blinklip, and General Hamilton, at the cost of only two men wounded, succeeded in putting eleven Boers out of action and securing ten more, together with waggons, horses, and supplies.

Farther to the east on the line of the Vaal, Colonel Western—who also had been at Klerksdorp—spent his time in reconnoitring along both banks of the river to Venterskroom and back to Coalmine Drift, where he was in a position to join the columns of Colonel Henry and General Elliot, which were ranging themselves in readiness for the main sweep south from the Vaal, on the west of the main line.
General Elliot’s force was now swelled by the column—from Klerksdorp—of Colonel Sir H. Rawlinson, and that—from Reitzburg—of Colonel Garratt. From these three columns he organised a fourth, consisting of 1st Dragoon Guards and two guns under Colonel Owen.

Of Colonel Garratt’s movements prior to his operations in connection with General Elliot at the end of July, a word must be said. On the 9th of July he moved to the junction of the Wilge and Vaal Rivers in order to demonstrate to the west of General Bullock, upon the right flank of General Elliot’s troops as they marched through Frankfort and Heilbron to the railway. Here, on the right bank of the Vaal, he came on a Boer laager, captured it, and made several prisoners. Later on, on the 21st, having filled up with supplies, his mounted troops chased two Boer convoys which were trekking on either bank of the Vaal near Lindique Drift, and succeeded in securing twenty-five Dutchmen, together with their waggons, carts, and cattle. Eleven of the enemy were killed and wounded in the fray. Smuts was engaged on the following day, but he and his gang fled to the hills, whence it was impossible to dislodge them. Finally, with the assistance of Colonel Rawlinson from the north and General Cunningham from Vereening, the Boers were routed from their snug positions and forced to take to the plains. Eighteen, however, were captured, and more waggons, horses, and cattle. Colonel Garratt then took up his assigned position on General Elliot’s left.

To better understand the comprehensive nature of the general sweep which followed, reference to a map is now desirable. In General Elliot’s position on the 29th of July we have the Vaal River at our back, the main railway line on our left, the Kimberley-Mafeking line on our right. The various columns were disposed so that the right rested on the Vaal south of Wolmaranstad, and the left (Rawlinson) at Vrededorp. On the extreme right came Colonel Henry at Hoopstad; in rear of the left on a wide front came Colonel Garratt, for the purpose of netting fugitives who might break north. In due time, as stops on the east (simultaneously with the advance of Colonel Rawlinson), issued Major Pine Coffin and Colonel Barker (from Kroonstad and Vet River Stations respectively), and as stop on the west (to carry on and lengthen, as it were, Colonel Henry’s right arm) came General Plumer, in the region between Boshof and Modder River Station.

All the bristles being prepared, the great military broom commenced operations on the 29th of July. The events of the end of the month would make a volume of adventure of themselves. A night march by General Broadwood to Bothaville—which was found deserted—caused the fleeing Boers to rush helter-skelter into the
MAJOR-GENERAL WALTER KITCHENER.

Photo London Stereoscopic Co.
Orange River Colony (North)

net spread for them by Colonel de Lisle, who, with his smart South Australians, had the satisfaction of taking possession of eighteen prisoners and twelve waggons. A grand raid on a farmhouse on the 30th of July was accomplished by Colonel Lowe and the 7th Dragoon Guards, who, as reward of their enterprise, secured eleven armed prisoners, together with their rifles, bandoliers, and horses.

Then, on the 2nd of August, followed a smart capture of a laager near Graspan by some of Colonel Owen’s men (King’s Dragoon Guards) under Captain Quicke. This distinguished and now deeply lamented officer pursued the convoy for fourteen miles, and though he had but seven men with him succeeded in capturing it, though a large force of the enemy was at hand! His “bag” consisted of 4000 cattle and 65 waggons. A dashing affray also took place between 200 South Australians (under Major Shea, 15th Bengal Lancers) and Smuts’ commando near Vet River. The Colonials, splendidly led by Major Shea, Captain Watt, and Lieutenant M. Farlane, surrounded the farm in the dead of night, and pressing forward on foot, with fixed bayonets, made a rush on the commando. But the Boers had enmeshed their stronghold with a wire network which served to delay the troops, during which period most of the hostile gang were able to escape. But five fell, and eleven were secured, including Field-Cornet Wolmarans of

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*July 29, 1901—General Elliot’s Sweep S. of the Vaal*
The Transvaal War

Potchefstroom, who was taken by gallant Shea himself. On the following day (3rd) General Broadwood swept up 7 waggons and 2000 cattle, while Colonel Lowe, after undertaking an eighteen-mile march, surprised a laager, secured 13 of its inhabitants, 86 waggons, and 56 horses. Tremendous hauls on the 6th and 7th of August put Colonel Lisle in possession of 40 prisoners, 147 waggons, 600 horses, and 2000 cattle; and on the 8th Colonel Henry and Lieutenant-Colonel Carr-Ellison (commanding 250 of the 4th Imperial Yeomanry) succeeded in capturing two laagers and a goodly knot of prisoners.

Meanwhile General Plumer, moving from the Modder River Station on the 4th, had proceeded to effect a junction with Colonel Henry. (How General Plumer came to be at Modder River at this period must be explained. After his return from Carolina to Bloemfontein in the second week of July, he had moved via Bains Vlei, Kruger's Drift, Poplar Grove, Koodooorsrand, and Pandamfontein, skirmishing often by the way, and reaching Modder River plus 11 prisoners, 200 cattle, and 62 horses.) Here his troops, divided in two columns under Colonels Colvin and Sir John Jarvis, completed the encircling cordon to the west. During the movement, Sir John Jarvis, be it noted, after a twenty-five mile march, succeeded in securing, near Botha's Hoek, 15 Boers.

The details of General Elliot's march are full of savour, of heroism, and of activity; but the story of swoops, surprises, and surrenders of raiders would outrun the limits of a volume. It is only possible therefore to record the results, which, early in August, showed that 17 Boers had been killed and wounded and 326 captured; 2600 horses, 20,000 cattle, 377 waggons, 371 other vehicles, and 12,500 rounds of ammunition had also been secured.

General Elliot, on the conclusion of his operations between the Vaal and the Modder, withdrew his columns to east and west to the railway to refit. He himself reached Truter's Drift on the 9th of August. General Plumer returned to Modder River Station; Colonel Henry moved back to Boshof, and from thence to Luckhoff, where he operated during August; and Colonels Rawlinson and Western betook themselves to Glen and Bloemfontein respectively. General Elliot's programme was now to prepare at Glen for a fresh advance to the north-east, of a line Ladybrand, Sannah's Post, Glen. But of this anon.

ORANGE RIVER COLONY, E.—LIEUTENANT-GENERAL
SIR L. RUNDLE

General Rundle, as we know, had marched north from Harrismith simultaneously with General Elliot's advance from Springfield Drift
Orange River Colony (East)

on the 4th of July. Till the 12th, the force, marching in three columns, moved uneventfully to the line Tafel Kop-Maidstone-Dric-spruit. But, on the 12th, the very day that Colonel Harrison in one place and General Broadwood in another were trouncing the enemy and putting them to flight, the Imperial Yeomanry came in for some exciting experiences. It so happened that forty men of the Yeomanry under Lieutenant Edgell left Colonel Harley's (centre) column to communicate with that of General Campbell (right). Promptly Commandant Charles Botha got wind of the movement of the small party and attacked them. But the plucky band, though young Edgell, the sergeant, and four men were wounded at the first volley, held their own, and finally the enemy was routed, leaving their leader dead on the field.

The following account of a yeoman's experiences serves to show how Charles Botha met his death: it fails, however, to describe the gallantry and resource of Corporal F. M. Grove, 53rd Company Imperial Yeomanry, who, when the officer and sergeant were wounded, took command, fortified a post, and kept off the Boers till relief came:—

"The 12th of July I shall never forget. It was the worst day I have ever had. We had reached camp and had done a good day's work, having captured tons of mealies. It was found that we could not heliograph to Rundle, who was sixteen miles on our right; so they had to send a despatch, and our lieutenant with forty men had to take it. As we were rounding Bothasberg we came face to face with fifty or sixty Boers. There was absolutely no cover, and as it was too late to dismount there was only one thing to do—to charge. That we did, splitting them in all directions. Had we been a cavalry regiment with swords and known how to use them, we could have cut them to pieces. Our lieutenant, the Hon. Wyatt Edgell, led us, whip in hand, and was the first to go down with a bullet in his leg just above the knee. Shots were coming like hail. Charles Botha, who was at the head of the command, was kept shouting, 'Surrender! surrender!' but he was shot dead with one bullet behind the ear and another in the shoulder. Six of his men stuck to him like glue, but he was too big for them to get away, being about six feet one inch in height and weighing seventeen stone. It is a marvel to me that we were not annihilated. We built a breastwork of stones, being fired on all the time. When it was dark the guide made his way back to camp for help, but the groans of the wounded throughout the night were horrible. In the morning we were relieved, and the Boers came out under a flag of truce for half-an-hour to bury their dead. We went to Vrede next, and after a day's rest left that place in a shocking state. We killed thousands of sheep and put them in every house. The stench in a week will be horrible; it is to prevent the Boers from returning."

The following day, in order to clear the line of advance from Boers who were scurrying eastwards, General Rundle directed Colonel Harley to close towards General Campbell in order to strengthen the right flank, and on the 14th the hills south-east of Vrede were occupied, and communication with Colonel Rim-ington (who had marched to the latter place to catch the scattered hordes that might be pushed towards him) was established. General Rundle, with his own and Colonel Rimington's prizes, proceeded over the Klip River to Standerton and was joined by Colonel Reay (left), who had crossed the Vaal at Robert's Drift.
The Transvaal War

His total haul, irrespective of the prisoners handed over by Colonel Rimington, amounted to 13 prisoners, 7000 horses, 35 vehicles, and 1000 tons of forage. Twelve Boers were killed and wounded. The British force lost four men, while one officer and fifteen men were wounded. From Standerton, having refilled with supplies, General Rundle marched south on the 20th. Starting from Bothaeburg, south-west of Vrede, he moved to Witkoppsies, some thirty miles south-west of that town, and finally secured the hilly country lying between the Natal border and the Vrede-Harrismith Road. The Boers, gnome-like, popped and "potted" from their hiding-places, but cautiously kept from open battle; nevertheless, General Rundle returned to Harrismith with 6 prisoners, 3590 horses, 679 trek oxen, and 4760 cattle. Twelve Boers during the march had been killed and wounded.

On the 8th of August General Campbell marched with a column (Grenadier Guards, Leinster Regiment, 1st Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, and four guns and a pom-pom) through Retief's Nek in connection with a movement of General Elliot's, which should have driven the enemy into the Brandwater Basin, where General Campbell would have secured them; but the Boers knowingly made for the north, and thus General Campbell's captures were limited to waggons, carts, and horses. Colonel Harley meanwhile was employed in escorting supplies from Harrismith to Bethlehem, which at this date became the centre for a new column under Brigadier-General Sir John Dartnell. This force consisted of two regiments of Imperial Light Horse, specially equipped to ensure increased mobility.

ORANGE RIVER COLONY, N.—COLONEL RIMINGTON—BRIGADIER-GENERAL BULLOCK—BRIGADIER-GENERAL SPENS

Of Colonel Rimington's activities prior to his meeting with General Rundle we barely know the outline. On the 13th of July his troops displayed an immense amount of dash in a smart set-to with some Boers who, with their convoy, were on the north-east of Gambokshoekberg. The enemy's rearguard covering the march was forced from its position by the rapid rush of the mounted troops, who scattered the band, killed six of the foe, took ten prisoners, and 2000 head of cattle, which prizes were handed over to General Rundle on the occasion of the meeting near Vrede, of which we know. His hands free, Colonel Rimington then proceeded from Vrede to Heilbron, skirmishing by the way. From this time till August he operated in the triangle between Heilbron, Lindsley, and Kroonstad, engaging in the same energetic system of night marching and surprise which was being everywhere vigorously
Transvaal (South-West)
carried forward, with first-rate results. Fourteen Boers killed, 36 prisoners, 24 voluntary surrenders, 68 ox-waggons, 52 vehicles, 5300 cattle was an excellent sum-total to bear witness to the work accomplished at that time.

General Bullock meanwhile, in July, had been sweeping the neighbourhood of Villiersdorp and Cornelia for the purpose of brushing Boers into the arms of General Elliot during the move of that officer from Springfield to Heilbron. But these wary Dutchmen were wide-awake and not to be entrapped. He therefore returned to Heidelberg, where General Spens took over command. Flying columns under Colonel Jenner and Major Gough now went to work with a will, and each column had the satisfaction of arriving at Heilbron in August, having captured a convoy apiece with the total loss of one man killed and four wounded. In the course of General Spens' sweep from Heidelberg to Heilbron his troops brought in 42 prisoners, 110 carts, 5600 cattle, and the supplies before named. In August he left Heilbron and renewed his activities in the direction of Kroonstad.

TRANSVAAL, S.W.—OPERATIONS OF GENERAL FETHERSTONHAUGH—CLEARING THE MAGALIESBERG—JULY

In July Major-General Fetherstonhaugh's force (in four columns, under Brigadier-General Dixon and Colonels Sir H. Rawlinson, E. Williams, and Hickie) operated from the Magaliesberg to Zeerust (reached on the 10th), and from thence back to Klerksdorp. The early part of the march was highly eventful, particularly for Colonels Williams and Hickie, who were repeatedly assailed by the enemy from almost inaccessible hiding-places. They nevertheless assisted in producing excellent results, and Roberts' and Kitchener's Horse highly distinguished themselves. In the end 13 Boers were killed and wounded, 26 were taken prisoners, 47 voluntarily surrendered, and 13 burghers, who had been imprisoned by their own men, were released. Waggons and cattle in plenty were secured. Nearer Zeerust all seemed placid; farmsteads and agriculture showed little sign of a state of war. On the return movement (begun on the 12th) General Fetherstonhaugh marched his right centre column through Lichtenburg, his own three columns being on the right, and that of General Dixon on the left. Thus the enemy, fighting continually, was driven day by day before him towards the region shortly to be swept by General Elliot's fan of troops. Large quantities of stores (unearthed from caves in the hills or discovered bricked up in the houses) were destroyed, 10 Boers were killed or wounded, and 22 prisoners taken. Klerksdorp was reached on the 21st of July after a particularly
The Transvaal War

hard march, in which Colonel Hickie's column especially suffered from the scarcity of water in the district. General Dixon ere this had returned to Krugersdorp. General Fetherstonhaugh, after a brief rest, set out on the 27th along the Taung-Vryburg line, where the enemy was reported to be active. On his right now moved Lord Methuen (from Lichtenburg), while Colonel Von Donop of Lord Methuen's force swept from Kraaipan and Geysdorp on the west of the hills, and Colonel Scott with a small column co-operated from Vryburg. The area was soon denuded of foodstuffs, and 58 prisoners of war were taken. Six of the enemy were killed.

While these energetic movements were going forward General Gilbert Hamilton was scouring the Klerksdorp Ventersdorp district, and Colonel Allenby was searching some almost unassailable positions round the Magaliesberg. His columns nevertheless scored some successes. On the daybreak of the 9th of July they surprised some Boers who were laagered at Zeekoehoek, and though many of them made good their escape to the hills, their field-cornet and twelve comrades were seized. On the 11th the enemy was again discovered in an almost inaccessible position on the Magaliesberg, but what the mounted men failed to accomplish the artillery achieved, and soon the mountain heights were ablaze with the flames of the burning laager and two waggons of dynamite and ammunition which had been blown up.

Later, in conjunction with Colonel Kekewich (who at Krugersdorp had taken over command of General Dixon's column), Colonel Allenby set about a further clearance of the Magaliesberg passes; but by the 7th of August the whole region had become too hot for the Boers' liking, and they evacuated it, enabling the British to occupy Breedt's Nek and establish a post on the summit. To thoroughly protect this favourite haunt of the Boers from their future visits two other columns were also engaged. Major-General Barton moved with a force from Pretoria to west of Commando Nek, clearing the country of supplies and establishing the network of posts to be occupied by the South African Constabulary, while Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Basing (with the Royal Dragoons, two guns and a pom-pom) covered the construction of the Frederikstad-Breedt Nek line of blockhouses, and kept up communication from thence to General Barton's column.

TRANSAAL, E.—LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR BINDON BLOOD

General Viljoen's commando being still to the fore, north of the Delagoa line, the operations of July were mainly directed against him. General Blood, taking command of General Babington's column, and followed by General W. Kitchener, moved on the
Transvaal (East)

10th of July from Springs to Middelburg. Here, later, he was joined by Colonel Campbell, who had been engaged in conducting a reconnaissance north of the line from Elands River Station towards Wagen Drift. Though the utmost energy and activity prevailed on all sides, the results were disappointing. Owing to the vast expanse of country and the Boers’ intimate acquaintance with all its nooks and crannies, they were able to play the game of hide-and-seek with impunity, taking care never to be caught in the open, and to avoid every chance of a collision.

Colonel Benson in his operations, however, had better luck. Moving from Dullstroom on the 9th of July, with Colonel Park on his right, he soon managed to discover the whereabouts of Viljoen’s commando. Promptly the Dutchman was routed from his position at Middlekraal by the 2nd Scottish Horse, a glorious set of “irregulars,” many of them hailing from Australia, who were first and foremost in every “ticklish” exploit. Indeed there was no end of their pluck; and on this occasion a mere handful of them, under their smart leaders Major Murray and Captain Lindley, contrived to keep at bay the hostile herd till the arrival of supports. Having dispersed the guerillas, Colonel Benson dealt in an equally effective manner with Muller’s men on the west, a party of raiders who were now driven north from the neighbourhood of Witpoort. Reports presently said that Viljoen was still lingering somewhere in the west, consequently the 18th Mounted Infantry pushed off in pursuit, and succeeded in catching and capturing the tail of his convoy and some fifteen waggons. While the Colonel moved his main body—on the 11th—in the direction of Paardekloop, the 2nd Scottish Horse circled around towards the Tautesberg, unearthing and capturing prisoners and horses by the way and discovering vehicles hidden in the kloofs, which Viljoen had evidently deposited there for a “rainy day.” This notable leader was discovered on the 15th of July at Laatstedrift, on the right bank of the Olifant River, whither Colonel Benson had moved after the arrival of a convoy brought by General Spens from the railway to Brinkwater. An inspiring feature of this discovery was the wonderful tenacity of Lieutenant Kelly of the Scottish Horse, who, though wounded in the stomach at the onset, had no sooner located the enemy than he crawled under heavy fire to inform the officer commanding! A smart engagement followed—an engagement creditable to both sides—and after some close fighting both the enemy’s flanks were turned, and they were sent scuttling across the river into the thick bush country on the west. In the course of these varied operations 20 Boers were captured and 17 killed or wounded; 110 horses, 64 waggons, and a large quantity of ammunition were secured. More prisoners had also been seized by General Spens
in the course of his move with the convoy to Brinkwater and back to Middelburg, where he arrived on the 20th. Soon after this date he proceeded to take command of another column.

General Beatson meanwhile, on the night of the 7th of July, had done some highly effective work. His surprise visit to the laager of Commandant Trichard, which was located some twenty-five miles north of Middelburg, resulted in the breaking up of the marauding gang and the dispersal of them into the rugged country round Olifant River. The commandant himself merely escaped by "the skin of his teeth." Further pursuit being useless, the General returned to Middelburg and assisted in the hunt for Viljoen, who was not to be caught, however, for he had warily doubled back to his friendly kopjes on the right bank of the Olifant. Returning to Bronkenspruit Station along the Wilge River General Beatson, while searching in all the adjacent kloofs, came on twenty-five waggons containing ammunition and clothing. As the duties of most clearing columns were very much alike, some quotations from an officer's letter may serve to show the nature of the work and of the country to be cleared of Boers and supplies:

"The usual proceeding is as follows: On the first day we occupy the high ridges on each side of one of the huge valleys, or kloofs, as they are called. This the Boers, with the exception of a few 'snipers,' who wound or kill one or two of our advanced scouts, do not attempt to oppose. Then begins the difficulty. From each side the ground slopes down very steeply—in many places it means recourse to hands and knees—for about a mile; then comes a sheer precipice about 100 feet deep, and at the bottom a valley about 100 to 300 yards broad, with a stream in the middle and very thickly wooded. On each side of the main valley the cliffs are broken by smaller kloofs running up them, and they contain any number of caves and huge boulders. On the whole, one of these valleys makes about as difficult a part of country to clear as any you could imagine. The Boers lie hidden among the rocks and in caves, and 'snipe' from them heavily at any man attempting to climb down the precipitous sides. We generally spend a day or two in shelling and advancing as far as the edges of the precipices, and then on the night before we send our infantry down into the valley most of the Boers escape. They dispute every inch of the way until they see that the position is untenable for them. Then off they go."

The writer of the letter mentioned a particular instance of this kind of work, in which the Boer women hung white flags all over their laager, and some Boers took advantage of the fact that the British gunners duly respected the flags to hide among the rocks round the laager, and to "snipe" the troops as they advanced. He continued:

"We slept out at night; it was fearfully cold; we had no blankets, and only half rations. We were ordered on the next morning to get the guns down a long spur jutting out into the valley. This appeared to be impossible, as the ground was fearfully steep and stony, and there was no road. However, with the aid of 50 Highlanders and a lot of rope, we managed to get down after two hours' hard work. The position was a beautiful one, being only 1700 yards from the place occupied by the Boers on the previous day. We would probably have had some casualties from rifle fire, being on exposed ground, but the Boers appeared to have left during the night. Our infantry entered the kloof from both sides, and spent two days in collecting cattle and in blowing up 50,000 rounds of Boer rifle ammunition. The Boer families were brought in, and made more comfortable than they had ever been before. The Boers all say that they do not mind deserting their wives, as they know that we look after them, and make them more comfortable at Middelburg than they were when living on the veldt."
BOERS CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF CUTTING THE TELEGRAPH WIRES

Drawing by Wal Paget
Standerton-Heidelberg

In the course of General Beatson's operations on the 11th of July he had the misfortune to lose his intelligence officer, Lieutenant Anderson, R.E., a brilliant and zealous soldier, who was shot while galloping ahead with an advance party of Victorians and Mounted Infantry in hot chase after a gang of Boers.

With troops refitted, General Kitchener and Colonel Campbell now sped north from Middelburg, bent on getting in touch with the quarry. General Kitchener was successful. At Blaauwbank, on the 29th, a brisk engagement—a brilliant chase by the 19th Hussars, followed by the 18th in support, and a rush with fixed bayonets—resulted in the recapture of the two pom-poms taken from the Victorians on the 11th of June, and the seizure of 32 prisoners and 20 wagons of Viljoen's commando. The commandant himself made haste to withdraw to north and north-west of the Olifant.

On this day (29th) General Sir Bindon Blood, with Colonel Benson's column, moved from Wonderfontein to Carolina. The march was not without incident, for by night, at Mooitlely, the troops of Colonel Benson made a smart swoop upon a Boer laager, and possessed themselves of 17 prisoners, 50 horses, and 10 wagons. A few days later another descent on the marauders in the same neighbourhood swelled the list of captures by 29 prisoners (five of whom were Botha's despatch riders), 70 horses, and 5 carts.

August opened with more surprises, skirmishes, and surrenders in other directions. At Diepkloof, on the Kruis River, General Kitchener, on the 3rd, dispersed a small commando, leaving two dead Boers on the field, and taking 13 prisoners. Colonel Park, between Lydenburg and Dullstroom, had also some exciting tussles, after which he proceeded to scour the country between Roos Senekal and the Tautesberg.

STANDERTON-HEIDELBERG—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL COLVILLE

Lieutenant-Colonel Colville, from Greylingstad, spent the end of July in scouring the district north of the railway line between the Waterval River and Leeuwspruit, and defeating the mischievous activities of gangs under Alberts, Mears, and Pretorius. It must be remembered that these guerilla chiefs were paid £25 a month by the Boer Government for their services, and that they had this to gain and nothing to lose by adhering to their policy of resistance. The Boer Government, according to rumour, had now formed a new seat (its seats were so many and so portable that it is difficult to remember them!) at Watervalshoek, about twenty-six miles north of Greylingstad, consequently it was decided that this hot-bed of
disorder must be assailed without delay. Thereupon, on the 4th of August, three forces were moved out—Colonel Colville's and Colonel Stewart's (Johannesburg Mounted Rifles) to Rooipoort (ten miles west of Bethel), while Colonel Bewicke-Copley marched from Springs towards Watervalshoek. From Rooipoort Colonel Stewart searched the northern road through Drefontein and Saltpeter Krantz, while Colonel Colville exerted his vigilance along the southern route to Watervalshoek. He reaped his reward. At the junction of the Waterval River and Klipspruit he suddenly spied a Boer convoy—the convoy of General Alberts—on the march. Immediately all was excitement. Away went his gallant men, racing and galloping over a good seven miles, never ceasing their rush till the convoy was hounded down, till the whole bunch of guerillas, with 28 loaded waggons, 12 carts, 55 horses, 1400 cattle, and 2000 rounds of ammunition were seized.

Meanwhile, the Boer Government had again vanished into thin air!

Colonels Colville and Stewart moved to Standerton, while Colonel Bewicke-Copley hustled bands of flying Dutchmen, who disappeared into the valley of the Wilge.

CAPE COLONY—JULY

General French, in the middle of July, organised a big combined movement to dislodge the raiders from the Camdeboo Mountains near Graaf Reinet. The activities of the troops, brilliant as they had been, had not entirely purged the Cape Colony of the offensive element, and gangs of guerillas were still popping out here and there, in their mischief assisted by traitors, whose Janus faces it took some time to unmask. General French's efforts were now directed against rebels and raiders, and in a particularly successful series of hunts several Boers were killed and wounded, and 31 prisoners, mostly Cape rebels, were captured.

The combined commandos of Fouché and Myburg made an unusual demonstration on the 14th of July, and actually attacked the Connaught Rangers, under Major Moore, who, while escorting a convoy, were camped in a position between Aliwal North and Jamestown. It took some hours of determined fighting to beat off the ferocious enemy, who were splendidly posted on high hills, and were only defeated by dusk. Three officers and 17 of our wounded were left to tell the tale of stubborn resistance. The enemy were pursued by Colonel Munro, and caught after a wearing chase south-west of Jamestown. Some of their number were killed and some were forced to retreat upon the "Connaughts," who, as may be imagined, received them in passing with considerable warmth.
Cape Colony—July

By the end of the month, Fouché, owing to the incessant vigilance of Colonel Munro and Major Moore, found the Colony too hot to hold him. He therefore betook himself across the Orange near Aliwal North. But Kruitzinger kept up the excitement by dodging in the mountains south of Cradock. From thence he pounced, on the 21st of July, upon Colonel Crabbe and his column. The sudden outburst of musketry at close quarters, as it were from the bowels of the hills, caused the horses to stampede, and the loss of 200 horses at a critical moment was found to be no trifling matter. A horrible tussle ensued, but luckily at the end of the day Colonel Crabbe was able to withdraw to Mortimer Station with his force, five of whom were wounded.

Colonel Scobell's encounter with the enemy on the 23rd was more happy in its results. He formed part of the cordon which was pushing the enemy towards the Orange, and during the operation the indefatigable Colonel Lukin and 90 Cape Mounted Rifles under Captain Cosgrove made a grand swoop upon Lategan's laager, fought and defeated 150 of the foe, captured 10 prisoners (including a field-cornet, Buys by name) and 105 saddles and horses. But it was what may be called a "touch-and-go" affair, for at one
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time Lieutenant Welby with only twelve men was surrounded by forty Boers, whom he withstood for an hour till rescued. Not less successful were the columns of Colonels Doran and Wyndham and the energetic Captain Lund. (This officer, on the 19th, secured a waggon containing the rifles of Smits' commando.) But such of the enemy as got away now dispersed under cover of darkness into the remote bridle-paths, and bided their time in their well-chosen coigns of vantage, where in ones and twos they were unassailable. General French was therefore obliged to arrange a backward and southward movement of the fan of columns from a line Vlakfontein, Richmond, Middle Mount, Middelburg, Schombie, Steynsburg, Stormberg, so as to force the scattered bands northwards again. From the 29th of July to the 3rd of August was passed in this manoeuvre, wearing but remunerative, for by the end of this time the raiders slipped through the loopholes intentionally made by the columns, which had been ordered to contract their fronts for this purpose, and once more the troops (extended laterally on a line Beaufort West, Pearston, Drennan Station, Cameron's Glen, Cathcart) had the satisfaction of pressing the enemy north towards the line of blockhouses on the Steynsburg-De Aar line. The only big commando that remained south was Scheepers', which a detached force of 10th Hussars, 12th Lancers, and two guns proceeded to chase.

The process of attrition was going forward slowly and surely. The numbers of captures were monthly increasing, but the organised system of intimidation pursued by the Boer leaders against both burghers, who, if left to themselves, would have surrendered, and natives, who went in fear of their lives, and became informants, made the work of settlement exceedingly harassing. In these circumstances, Lord Kitchener "considered it advisable to form some specially mobile columns for independent and rapid action in different parts of the country, generally at some distance from the operations of other troops." These columns were given a free hand in respect to their movements, and acted at any time on intelligence gained by themselves in addition to such as might be received from headquarters.

THE SITUATION—AUGUST

In May Sir Alfred Milner paid a visit to England, and his reception in Great Britain left no doubt in the mind of people at home and abroad regarding the determination of the Government to adhere to their South African policy. The King conferred on him the dignity of a Baron, and both in the City of London and in that of Cape Town there were rejoicings at the honour done to one who had served the cause of Great Britain with such skill and unswerv-
The Situation

ing devotion. In August Lord Milner returned to his duties as High Commissioner for South Africa and Administrator of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, much benefited by the brief rest from his labours.

As it was found necessary to adopt sterner measures to crush the lingering guerilla warfare, Lord Kitchener issued, on the 7th of August, the following Proclamation:

"Whereas the late Orange Free State and the late South African Republic have been annexed to His Majesty's dominions;

And whereas His Majesty's forces are and have for some considerable time been in complete possession of the seats of Government of both the aforesaid territories, with their public offices, and the whole machinery of administration, as well as of all the principal towns and the whole of the railway lines;

And whereas the great majority of the Burghers of the two late Republics, to the number of thirty-five thousand, exclusive of those who have fallen in the war, are now either prisoners or have submitted to His Majesty's Government, and are living peaceably in towns or camps under the control of His Majesty's forces;

And whereas the Burghers of the late Republics still in arms against His Majesty are not only few in numbers, but have lost almost all their guns and munitions of war, and are devoid of regular military organisation, and are therefore unable to carry on regular warfare or to offer any organised resistance to His Majesty's forces in any part of the country;

And whereas those Burghers who are still in arms, though unable to carry on regular warfare, continue to make isolated attacks upon small posts and detachments of His Majesty's forces, to plunder or destroy property, and to damage the railway and telegraph lines, both in the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal and in other portions of His Majesty's South African Dominions;

And whereas the country is thus kept in a state of disturbance, checking the resumption of agricultural and industrial pursuits;

And whereas His Majesty's Government is determined to put an end to a state of things which is aimlessly prolonging bloodshed and destruction and inflicting ruin upon the great majority of the inhabitants, who are anxious to live in peace and to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families;

And whereas it is just to proceed against those still resisting, and especially against those persons who, being in a position of authority, are responsible for the continuance of the present state of lawlessness, and are instigating their fellow-Burghers to continue their hopeless resistance to His Majesty's Government;

Now therefore I, Lord Kitchener, &c., under instructions from His Majesty's Government, proclaim and make known as follows:

All commandants, field cornets, and leaders of armed bands, being Burghers of the late Republics, still engaged in resisting His Majesty's forces, whether in the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal or in any other portion of His Majesty's South African Dominions, and all members of the Governments of the late Orange Free State and the late South African Republic, shall, unless they surrender before the 15th of September next, be permanently banished from South Africa; the cost of the maintenance of the families of all Burghers in the field who shall not have surrendered by 15th September shall be recoverable from such Burghers, and shall be a charge upon their property movable and immovable in the two Colonies."

The Proclamation was the result of correspondence which had taken place between Sir H. E. M'Callum, Governor of Natal, and Mr. Chamberlain. The Governor's telegram, dated 24th July, ran thus:

"I sent you by last mail long minute submitted to Ministers containing following suggestions:

Protracted continuance of hostilities vitally affecting interests of Natal is viewed with grave concern. Raids into the Colony frequently render it impossible for loyalists to return to farms and avocations. Feeling of unrest among natives created by raids, revenue suffering, trade paralysed, railways monopolised by military, towns overcrowded with refugees and persons awaiting return to Transvaal, stock being affected with disease
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due to introduction of captured stock from the new Colonies, famine prices prevailing. Colony still subject to censorship and martial law.

"Under these circumstances Ministers advocate sterner measures to crush present guerilla warfare. They point out that Boers still fighting have little to lose, that their women and children are protected and well treated, and that their farms are safe from confiscation, therefore Boers free from anxiety and encouraged to continue in the field, growing accustomed to life of pillaging and looting, and communicate frequently with refugee camps which thus are source of danger. Those who are not rebels know that if captured they will be treated as prisoners of war and released at the conclusion of hostilities.

"Ministers believe that excellent effect would be produced if it were made generally known that if Burghers now in the field do not surrender by given date, say, within one month, cost of maintenance of all women and children will be chargeable against immovable property of Burghers in the field; also that Boer generals and leaders in the field should be informed that unless they and their commandos surrender by date specified they will be banished from South Africa for life when captured.

"In making these observations and recommendations Ministers disclaim intention of appearing to reflect on military operations, of which they realise the immense difficulties. They will continue to render the Imperial Government every assistance to secure settlement and pacification."

A telegram followed from Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Kitchener containing the draft of the Proclamation, which was to be issued with the least possible delay. Lord Kitchener was desired before issuing it, however, to communicate its terms to the Governors of Cape Colony and Natal, and ascertain whether their governments agreed to them. The proposal was approved by the Colonial governors, the document received a few emendations, and was issued as above.

There was, naturally, an outcry at all sterner measures that were proposed, by what may be called the "Prolong-the-War Party"—the pro-Boer orators who were daily, by their excited utterances, betraying the Boers into the belief that their showy sympathy would bring about practical results. But in reality the stern measure was intended as a merciful measure to save desperate men from a suicidal policy of resistance to the inevitable, the country from devastation, and women and children from suffering. Their territories were annexed, their leaders, most of them, were exiles or prisoners, hostilities had developed from guerilla warfare to simple brigandage and outrage, and the British were keeping up the supply of troops with the determination of "fighting to a finish." Indeed, by the middle of 1901, there were 138,000 regulars, 58,000 Colonials, 23,000 yeomen, 20,000 militia, and 10,000 volunteers—a total of 250,000 men under arms in South Africa. With this ever-increasing multitude bearing down upon them, the days of the belligerents were numbered, but this they doggedly refused to believe, or, even if they believed the worst, they decided—like the wasp who parts with his sting only to die—on leaving behind them the largest legacy of pain and trouble the circumstances would admit.

The South African Constabulary by the middle of the year had grown into an effective force, and were operating from the vicinity of the railways and occupying fortified posts, and thus rendering themselves exceedingly valuable in checking the efforts of the enemy.
The Situation
to pass through the cordon around the cleared districts. The Boers,
by the loss of their ox-waggons, were seriously impeded in regard
to their supply arrangements, and the series of captures which took
place in all parts of the country made a considerable drain on their
numbers in the field. Still, small gangs of three to four hundred
men roving loosely over the country could, in cases of emergency,
concentrate and cause vast trouble and annoyance and even danger
to the small mobile columns, broken up as they were, in order to
operate over vast areas in search of the scattered hordes.

Viewing the intense labour and increasing strain suffered by the
Commander-in-Chief at this time, it is pleasing to quote the letter of
an officer competent to speak regarding the magnificence of the
steady if slow work that was being accomplished:—

"We are eleven hours a day in the saddle on patrol duty, and good solid work is being
done by mobile columns. You will not get much of our movements through the Press, as
the policy of secrecy is really the only safe one with the Cape Colony now undermined by
rebels from north to south. It would be difficult to over-praise Lord Kitchener for his
remarkable power of self-control and ability to keep his own counsel. His ceaseless efforts
to get the right men into the higher and brigade commands are recognised by all of us who
have suffered in the past from incompetent leaders. In spite of the clap-trap that is being
talked in Parliament by ignorant and vain knights of the shires, I can assure you that a
more humane and pacific general never directed a force on active service, and this testi-
omony is from Boer and British alike."

Considerable stir was created in England among the so-called
humanitarians regarding the mortality of children in the concentra-
tion camps, where the Boer families had of necessity to be housed
and cared for. The mortality was certainly high, but on strict
inquiry it was found that mainly through the ignorance, listlessness,
and idleness of the Boer mothers the sick infants were treated
wrongly or neglected. Dr. Jane Waterston, late President of the
Women's Rand Relief Committee, in a letter to the Cape Times,
with level-headed brevity discussed some points which the Boer
sympathisers had carefully ignored. She pointed out that—

"Ordinary colonial women who have been through the stress and strain of the last two
years are not very favourably impressed by the present stir in England over the assumed
privations of the Boer women and children. If looting, flogging, ruining, and train-wreck-
ing can be dignified by such a name as war, they hold 'that in all matters of supply our
fighting men, who, as well as fighting our battles, guard our women-folk or our sick men,
injured by wounds or disease in our service, come first and foremost; after them come our
own civilian population; and lastly come our prisoners, or those Boers who have surren-
dered or been brought in.'"

Again she said:—

"Large as was the sum collected in Great Britain by voluntary subscriptions, at no
time did the women and children of the loyal colonial refugees of the poorer classes receive
more than mere sustenance. Judging, however, by some of the hysterical whining going
on in England at the present time it would seem as if we might neglect or half starve our
faithful soldiers, and keep our civilian population eating their hearts out here as long as
we fed and pampered people who have not even the grace to say 'thank you' for the care
bestowed on them.
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"As we see it, the problem before our military men is, how to manage, feed, and care for large numbers of women and children, and yet not feed the enemy and so prolong the war, or rather existing brigandage. If the women are left on the farms with food, that food will be promptly handed over to the commandos, who would lightly take it all, and trust to British soft-heartedness not to let their women and children die of starvation, but to replenish all the empty larders by means of scattered convoys, which would give them at the same time grand chances of loot and first-rate practice in sniping. To obviate this the military have had to make up their minds either to let the women and children starve on their farms or else gather them into large concentration camps. This war has been remarkable for two things: first, the small regard that the Boers, from the highest to the lowest, have had for their womankind; and secondly, the great care and consideration the victors have had for the same, very often ungrateful, women.

"It is the fault of the Boer men, not ours, that their women and children are in concentration camps. The task of our pro tem. rulers is not made easier by the fact that no consideration of the stuff on a supply train being partly meant for their own wives and children would hinder Boer husbands and fathers from wrecking the train and destroying the food. They comfort themselves with the thought that the soldiers may have to go on half rations and tighten their belts, but 'these fools of English will serve out as usual the daily ration to the refugee camps.' At present there is the danger that the Boers will awaken up to have a care for their womenfolk, and will go on fighting for some time so as to keep them in comfortable winter quarters at our expense, and thus our women and children will lose a few more of their husbands and fathers."

In corroboration of Dr. Waterston's statements it may also be noted that the Government, while spending hundreds of thousands of pounds monthly on the Boer refugees, had devoted only £50,000 towards the Imperial Relief fund for helping the loyalists.

Naturally, among the British sufferers, the continual attempts to propitiate an irreconcilable enemy were looked upon with disgust and even suspicion, and very rejoiced were they to find that steps were taken to arrest and remove Boer sympathisers in Johannesburg and elsewhere, who were known to be assisting in a widening conspiracy to get surrendered burghers to return to their commandos, and so reproduce a recrudescence of hostilities. On all sides the lying tongues of the Boer party, who had declared war and quitted the field, strove to urge the remnants towards further resistance by declaring that Great Britain was divided against itself, and that it had not sufficient endurance to see the matter through.