CHAPTER XIII

NATAL AND THE EASTERN TRANSVAAL—SEPTEMBER 1901

At this time the war entered on a new phase. The Boer generals felt the necessity of tiding over the 15th of the month, the date fixed by the Proclamation of the 7th August as the limit of time within which, by voluntarily surrendering, the leaders might avoid certain penalties threatened by that proclamation. And by dint of unusual activity they succeeded. There were few surrenders, it is true, but the tactics adopted by the enemy cost them, in the end, more heavily than their previous evasive methods. They broke out in the Ermelo and Vryheid districts about the middle of the month. Their harassing rushes and their escape into the Ermelo district had been difficult to arrest owing to the unfinished state of the blockhouse line then being built from Wakkerstroom to Piet Retief by the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards and 2nd Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment under General Bullock. At Belfast, on the 16th, the garrison was attacked by Grobelaar and 100 men evidently in need of supplies. They were handsomely repulsed, and only one of the garrison was wounded; but bullets that fell in the refuge camp caused the death of a woman.

General Lyttelton had now assumed command in Natal in place of General Hildyard, who, after a long spell of brilliant service, had gone home on leave. The new chief at once turned his attention to the rumour of assembling commandos, and to frustrate concentration Major Gough's Mounted Infantry with Colonel Stewart and the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles moved from Dundee to De Jager's Drift. Meanwhile Pulteney's troops were at Volksrust, and those of Garratt moving, via Wakkerstroom, on Utrecht.

The enemy were reported to be near Scheepers Nek. Colonel Stewart and Major Gough, on the 17th, decided to push on towards Blood River to get in touch with them, the last marching about an hour in advance of the first. Major Gough, as he neared the river, sent a message requesting Colonel Stewart to remain at Rooi Kop, in readiness to support him should he hear the sound of guns in action. Half-an-hour later, seeing Gough's men galloping towards Blood River Poort, the Colonel pressed forward his mounted men in support. It was then he heard that the Major had met with a reverse—a serious reverse. Quickly appreciating the ticklish position in which he himself was placed—it being imperative to protect not only his own guns but Major Gough's baggage at Rooi Kop—he decided to retire to De Jager's Drift and thus cover Dundee, which, as it turned out, was menaced by a gang of great strength. The tale of the misfortune to so magnificent an officer as Major Gough is hard to write, for a series of services more gallant and brilliant than his it is scarcely possible to find. The circumstances were these. With characteristic dash he no sooner "spotted" the enemy than he pressed forward to seize a ridge which appeared to command their position. He had galloped into a well-arranged ambush. Instead of 300 as he supposed, there
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were 1000 Boers in front of him, and these speedily overwhelmed his right flank and assailed his guns from the rear. There was fighting of the hottest description at very close quarters, in which Lieutenant Lambton, 1st Durham Light Infantry, and Lieutenant Blewett, 1st Rifle Brigade, with great bravery sacrificed their lives; but the gallant little force (consisting of two guns 69th Battery R.F.A. and three companies of mounted infantry), terribly outnumbered, was eventually captured. The breech-blocks and the sights of the guns were destroyed before they fell into the enemy's hands. The circumstances of the capture of Second Lieutenant Stormonth-Darling (2nd Scottish Rifles) serve to show the manner of the British repulse. He commanded the escort to the guns, and in spite of the Boers being upon him continued to fire and encourage his men till he was overpowered and the rifle snatched from his hands. Major Gough and Captain Craeport, Royal Irish Rifles, escaped during the night and joined Colonel Stewart at De Jager's Drift.

Captain Mildmay, 3rd Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps, and 14 men were killed in action. Captain Dick, 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers, was severely wounded.

Lieutenant Furnell, 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers, Lieutenant Lambton, Durham Light Infantry, Lieutenant Price-Davis, King's Royal Rifle Corps, and about 25 men were wounded, and 5 officers and 150 men made prisoners.

Troops were at once concentrated on the threatened point, and the Boers—said to be commanded by the Bothas, Opperman, Britz, and Henderson—finding the line of the Buffalo bristling with British, were forced to seek access to Natal by a wider détour to the south. This led them to the fortified posts of Itala and Fort Prospect, north-west of Melmoth, on the Zululand frontier. At Itala the garrison consisted of two guns of the 69th Battery R.F.A. and 300 men of the 5th Division Mounted Infantry under Colonel A. J. Chapman, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. At midnight of the 26th, Botha, Scholtz, Opperman, Potgieter, and their following of some 1500 men, in groups, began an attack on this post from west, south-east, and north.

The advance post of 80 men was first rushed, and many of the party were killed or forced to surrender, while others succeeded in escaping down the hill to assist in the fighting that was to come. For nineteen hours without intermission the enemy continued to assail the camp, though doggedly kept at bay by the defenders. The whole area was swept by blasts of bullets, and the British force at last, foodless and waterless, were confronted with the fear that even the ammunition might not hold out. The guns, under Lieutenant Herbert, R.F.A., which had been valuable during the night while the moon gave light and the shadows shelter, became in the daytime targets for the foe, and consequently when Lieutenant Herbert and four gunners were wounded the rest were ordered to take cover. But fortunately young Trousdale, after both his men were killed, pluckily stuck to his Maxim and worked like a Trojan. At last under cover of dusk the enemy, repulsed on all sides, withdrew in a north-easterly direction, taking with them, assisted by natives, their wounded and dead in great numbers. Many deeds of gallantry were performed, and Lieutenant Lefroy, 1st Battalion Dublin Fusiliers, who with Lieutenant Kane at first rumour of assault was sent to occupy the highest point of the Itala a mile from the camp, distinguished himself by shooting with his revolver Commandant H. J. Potgieter. Commandant Scholtz and about 270 Boers were also killed during the vigorous repulse. The British lost a smart officer, Lieutenant Kane (South Lancashire Regiment), and 21 men killed: 5 officers and 54 men
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wounded. Colonel Chapman, owing to the complete exhaustion of his force and lack of ammunition, then decided to evacuate Itala, leaving Lieutenant Hislop and twenty unarmed men and Chief Veterinary Surgeon Probyn to look after the wounded. Lieutenant Fielding (R.A.M.C.), who early in the day had valiantly gone up hill to attend the wounded in the advance post, had been captured, but was subsequently released and came into camp after the column had marched off to M'Kandhla. This place was reached without molestation.

At Fort Prospect the British post was equally tenaciously held by thirty-five men of the 5th Division Mounted Infantry and fifty-one men of the Durham Artillery Militia under the command of Captain C. A. Rowley, 2nd Battalion Dorsetshire Regiment, who contrived with the small force at his disposal to send the 500 attacking Boers to the right-about with considerable aplomb.

He, fortunately, was warned as to the coming commandos, and made haste to prepare for them a warm welcome; providing also extra food, water, and ammunition for his men in the trenches. At 4.30 A.M. the Boers made a violent lunge on the west and north of the position, directing the main fury of their attack at the two laagers held by the Durham Company of Artillery. They penetrated the wire around the laagers and got to within twenty yards of the defenders, but Lieutenant R. G. M. Johnson and his splendid companions were too much for them, and finally the Boers were driven off. They then fought wildly in the rear of the camp, but again met with the same dogged resistance. The defence lasted about thirteen hours and reflected credit on all concerned, especially on Captain Rowley, whose foresight had averted great loss of life. In addition to the splendid work done by the Militia Artillery and the Dorsetshire Regiment, the Zululand Native Police distinguished themselves. Gallantly led by Sergeant Gambi, thirteen of them came four miles from their own post to reinforce the garrison. The British loss was only 1 killed and 8 wounded, a small total considering the thirteen hours' risk run by the little party.

The necessity of combing this difficult and at times almost impenetrable country of Boers caused General Lyttelton to direct a movement which occupied the tempestuous close of September and the early days of October, in which Generals Bruce-Hamilton, Clements, and Walter Kitchener vigorously engaged. Despite the unfavourable elements they succeeded, if not in striking them when concentrated, at least in forcing the Boers gradually to retreat north to Boschoek, Kromellenbog, and Leeuwnek. Here they were held for a time by General Kitchener, but on the night of the 5th of October, at the cost of their baggage and waggons, they succeeded in rushing round the left flank and retreating in the direction of Piet Retief. General Kitchener followed and had a smart engagement with the rearguard, which—in a strong position—covered the flight of the main body.

On the 11th the enemy was moving through Swaziland by Mahamba, and this news caused Colonel Colville adroitly to arrange a plan which resulted in the intercepting of a convoy belonging to the Ermelo and Amsterdam commandos. The Colonel's column at the time was covering the construction, by General Bullock's troops, of the blockhouse line from Wakkerstroom. He pushed on hurriedly from Piet Retief and pounced on the Boers' much needed convoy, harassing Botha and his burghers, who scurried to escape before the British advance. By now the blockhouse line was sufficiently advanced to be a serious impediment to the enemy's movements: it not only forced him to abandon his waggons but also the two guns of 69th Battery which were lost during Gough's reverse at Blood River Poort.
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Brigadier-General Reeves (temporarily commanding in the absence of General Blood, who had left for India), with Colonels Park and Benson, continued to operate north and south of the Delagoa Railway. Colonel Benson, on the 10th, made a splendid march on an extremely dark night and surprised a party of Boers at Pullen's Hope (south of Middelburg), where he took 33 prisoners, 73 horses, together with cattle-carts and ammunition. On the 15th he, with two squadrons of the 2nd Scottish Horse and 19th Battalion Mounted Infantry, repeated his adventurous tactics, again surrounded and surprised the enemy at Tweefontein, and, though some made good their escape, added 10 Boers to his roll of prisoners and 250 oxen to his herd of cattle. Still indefatigable, he and his doughty band on the 17th, after a forty miles' march from Carolina, fell on the foe. The early mist was lifting round two laagers full of slumbering Boers at Middeldrift and Busby, when with a rush and a yell the British troops covered the scene. The usual rout, the usual stampede, and finally 54 prisoners—among them P. Botha, late Landdrost of Pretoria, and Commandant Nieuwhondt were captured, together with vehicles, horses, and cattle. Colonel Benson then pushed on and on—a triumphal progress—for he gleaned Boers wherever he went; 12 on the 28th near Bethel, and 7 early in October at Driefontein, in addition to horses, mules, and cattle, thus compelling those who evaded him to scuttle north denuded and demoralised. In the course of their chasing, this intrepid British band covered over fifty miles in nineteen hours. The Boers seldom spent a night in one place, and saddled up regularly at 3 A.M. in readiness for flight, therefore the captures made were the result not only of alertness and dash, but of indomitable perseverance.

Colonel Park had been engaging in like adventures, and had taken many prisoners. With six companies of Mounted Infantry and two companies of the Manchester Regiment, he began October by a search between Kruger's Post and Ohrigstad. He secured some armed burghers, and destroyed such ammunition and forage as could not be removed. On his return journey he came in collision with Viljoen at Rustplaats, and after an engagement covering hours the Boers withdrew. On the 7th of October he attacked a party of Boers at a farm at Rosenkrans, captured their ammunition, mealies, and waggons, but not their persons.

The Constabulary posts running from Eerste Fabriken, vid Springs and Heidelberg, to the Vaal River were pushed forward by Colonel Pilkington (S.A. Constabulary) to the line Wilge River Station, Greylingstad, and the junction of Kalk Spruit with the Vaal, thus enabling a more vast tract of country to be cleared. Sir Henry Rawlinson cleared the front of the Constabulary between Standerton and the Vaal River with increasing vigour, chasing Boers westward and southward before him. On the 3rd of October, at Greylingstad, he organised a night patrol to Barnard's Kop, which resulted in the capture of three armed burghers, and subsequently, on the 5th, he surprised Field-Cornet Botha at Kaffir Spruit, captured 7 of his men, 20 of his carts, and 250 cattle. Pretorius, whose laager was near by, though followed with zest, made good his escape. Colonels Hacket Thompson and Bewicke Copley also engaged in the work of protecting the Constabulary, but came in collision with few of the enemy, who were now moving south.
Transvaal (West)

Lord Methuen may be said to have carried on existence to a rippling accompaniment of Boer bullets. All along the Marico valley to Zeerust his rearguard was followed and engagements were frequent. September was spent in passing convoys from Lichtenburg and Zeerust and preparing for an advance to cover the collection of ripening corn in the Marico district, the establishment of a line of blockhouses between Zeerust and the lead mines, and the clearance of the country of scattered bands. On the 4th of October an affair of patrols at Witgeboom Spruit resulted in five burghers being killed.

General Fetherstonhaugh and Colonel Kekewich continued to hunt dismounted stragglers of Kemp's force south-west of Olfant's Nek. Kemp had escaped the British cordon towards the north-east, and was said to be about to work his way south. Colonel Kekewich, after depositing his prisoners at Nauwpoort, left there on the 13th of September to clear the northern slopes of the Magaliesberg. He operated for some days in conjunction with Colonel Mackenzie (1st Battalion Suffolk Regiment), who was employed in the construction of blockhouses south of the Magaliesberg, and removed from the creeks and crannies of the hills various impediments, in the form of Field-Cornet Klopper and thirty-six of his countrymen. After this haul of prisoners, Colonel Keke- wich returned to Magato Nek to co-operate with General Fetherstonhaugh against Kemp's party, who were reported to be hanging about the Toelani River. On the 24th, by the way, he surrounded the laager of one Van Rooijan at Crocodile Drift (Elands River), and secured the commandant and thirty-five of his gang. Kemp, as yet, was not to be found. But he was not long inactive. At dawn on 29th, he and Delarey (who had evidently followed Colonel Keke- wich from the Valley of the Toelani) made a lunge at the British camp near Moedwill. From three sides they, some 1200 of them, turned a blizzard of lead on Colonel Kekewich's force.

The Derbyshire Regiment, with 1 ½ companies, held the drift to left of the camp. The mounted troops (Imperial Yeomanry and Scottish Horse) extended round the right and front of the camp, and joined up with the Infantry outpost on the drift. Firing was heard at 4.40 A.M. on the north-west, and subsequently it was found that a patrol going out from the southerly piquet, furnished by the Devonshire Imperial Yeomanry, had been attacked. Then closer and closer came the enemy upon the Yeomanry piquet. Every gallant fellow dropped. Soon the Boers were established to east of the river and commenced an attack on another Imperial Yeomanry piquet. The officer in command fell, and nearly all his men around him. The enemy, ensconced in the broken and bushy ground near the bed of the river, continued the aggressive, while all in camp rushed to reinforce the piquets except a small party of the Derbyshire Regiment, which remained to guard ammunition, &c., the Boers having annihilated two piquets. The Boers now pushed up the river, outflanking the Derbyshire piquet holding the main drift, and, in spite of really superb resistance, occupied the position. For this reason: but one man of the gallant number remained whole! The camp now was flooded with bullets, and all ranks under various officers made for the open, while the guns strove to keep the enemy, indistinguishable from British in the dusk of the morning, at a distance. Captain Watson, Adjutant Scottish Horse, who was mortally wounded, announced the arrival towards the east of the enemy, whereupon Major Watts with a strong body of the Derbyshire Regiment moved out to confront
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them, while Major Browne (Border Regiment) with a number of men—servants, cooks, orderlies, and any one who came to hand—prepared with fixed bayonets to charge the enemy in the bushes. The Boers had given up the east, however, and continued to file from the north till the Imperial Yeomanry and Scottish Horse, under Captains Rattray, Dick Cunyngham, and Mackenzie, joined in the general advance and threatened to outflank them; then, seeing their danger, they fled to their horses and galloped madly to the north, under fire of the British guns. Colonel Duff, with two squadrons, had been prepared for pursuit, but owing to the heavy losses sustained, especially among the horses, the project was impossible.

This fierce, determined, carefully-planned attack lasted two hours, and the success of the repulse was mainly due to the amazing gallantry of all ranks, especially of the 1st Battalion Derbyshire Regiment. Some brilliant deeds were done, notably by 2nd Lieutenant Mills, whose splendid disregard of danger cost him his life; Lieutenant Persse (7th Imperial Yeomanry), who fought persistently at his post though wounded in three places; and by Captains Dick Cunyngham and Rattray, and Lieutenants Symonds, Rattray, Cameron, Loring, and Stuart-Wortley, of the Scottish Horse. A fine officer, Captain Laird, R.F.A., was among the killed, and Lieutenant Duval was wounded, and Captain Wheeler escaped merely by a miracle. The medical officers, Major Lavie (R.A.M.C.) and Mr. Kidd, Civil Surgeon, pursued their deeds of mercy, utterly regardless of their lives and of their own wounds. The Colonel, himself wounded, paid dearly for his triumph. Of his force 1 officer and 31 men were killed; 127 men were wounded and 26 officers, among whom were:


Royal Artillery.—Captain Baldwin.

1st Derby Regiment.—Captain Keller, Captain Anley.

Imperial Yeomanry.—Captain Seymour, Lieutenant Whyte.

Out of a party of twelve of the Derbyshire Regiment which was guarding a drift, 8 were killed and 4 wounded; and some idea of the severity of the fire and the doggedness of the fight may be gained by the fact that three piquets were practically annihilated, thus enabling their comrades to get under arms.

Among others of the Scottish Horse whose persistent and gallant services contributed to Lord Methuen's success, may be mentioned Captains Field and Ian Mackenzie, and young Lieutenant Jardine, who was wounded.

Command of the column was afterwards temporarily assumed by Colonel Wylly (Derbyshire Regiment), but Colonel Kekewicb, recovered, soon returned to duty.

General Fetherstonhaugh had meanwhile driven before him many Boers. On the 21st he captured a position at Winkelhoek, and after searching further turned back to Waterval and thence to Kwaggafontein. On hearing of the Moddwill fight he sent Colonel Williams to Colonel Kekewicb's support, and followed himself with all haste. But of course the Boers had flown, scattering among the farms in the Rustenburg Zeerust road. General Fetherstonhaugh finally moved south, and Colonel Wylly to Rustenburg.
THE GALLANT BUGLER OF FORT ITALA

Drawing by R. Caton Woodville
Operations on the Vaal

OPERATIONS ON THE VAAL

By October the line of blockhouses from Kopjes Station to Potchefstroom was built by the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards and 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry, and that between Heilbron and Frankfontein occupied by the Railway Pioneer Regiment under Colonel Capper. Meanwhile Colonels Byng and Dawkins (from the south of Orange Colony) chased and ran down Boers as they sought to escape the blockhouse cordon, and thus thoroughly cleared the region. Colonel Byng made an effort to attack a concentration of 300 he had heard of at Bothaville, but on his approach they dispersed into the river valleys. Still, in the course of their operations and the return along the Valsch River to Kroonstad, &c., Colonels Byng and Dawkins secured eighty-one prisoners of war.

General Mildmay Willson organised a small smart force, under Colonel Hicks (2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers), consisting of 250 mounted infantry, 2 field guns, and 5 companies of Infantry, to establish and provision constabulary posts and hunt Boer snipers. In the course of their operations and afterwards between Potchefstroom and Venterskroon they, with the assistance of co-operating constabulary troops, secured 42 prisoners (including Field-Cornets George Hall and Vander Venter), and a 7-pounder gun which had been taken from the post at Houtkop.

OPERATIONS IN THE ORANGE RIVER COLONY, N.

Colonel Rimington's column worked incessantly during September, and to good purpose. On the 14th, marching from Leeuffontein (six miles south of Heilbron), they made a surprise visit to a laager, which resulted in the capture of six Boers, waggons, carts, horses, and mules. Later, on the 22nd, still hunting and hustling, he overtook Strydom's commando, made a tremendous haul of impedimenta, and secured thirteen prisoners. He then finished the month by marching to Oploop (between the Klip and Wilge Rivers) to watch for an opportunity to co-operate with Colonel Rawlinson, who, as we know, was aiding the constabulary north of the Vaal, and who, by now, had driven Buy's commando to the south of the river. On this band Colonel Rimington promptly pounced, and October found him enriched by 24 prisoners, 2000 cattle, 30 horses, 14 loaded waggons, 22 Cape carts, and 20 mules. Later, on the 7th, he moved from Standerton (whence he had drawn supplies) to co-operate with General Broadwood and Colonel de Lisle from Harrismith.

To reinforce Colonel Rimington went Colonel Wilson (Kitchener's Fighting Scouts) from Kroonstad to Heilbron on the 1st of October, and scarcely were they under way before they were attacked by the enemy. But the scouts, true to the name they bear, gave such good account of themselves that the enemy scattered, but considerably thinned in their numbers. The troops afterwards covered the line of blockhouses from Heilbron to Frankfort.

MAJOR-GENERAL ELLIOT.—ORANGE RIVER COLONY, E.

On the 10th of September General Elliot started to again sweep and glean in the Wittebergen district. Colonel Barker and Major Pine Coffin operated from Winburg to west of the line of advance. General Campbell remained on
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the Wittebergen slopes, and General Dartnell, with the Imperial Light Horse (from Bethlehem), assisted in blocking the Retief and Stabberts Neck passes. The movement itself commenced in four columns, Lowe and De Lisle in the centre, with Broadwood and Bethune to right and left respectively. In the course of the march Colonel de Lisle brilliantly despatched and ran down a convoy then trekking towards Korannaberg, but not without infinite dash and corresponding fatigue: 15 prisoners, 47 waggons, 22 carts, 250 horses, and 2500 cattle were the prizes of the adventure. Colonel Bethune, too, had his innings, for on the 12th he routed seventy of the bandits from their lair near Wonderkop, and the next night, after an exciting march to Rietolei, caught and again engaged the foe.

Colonel Bethune and his Brigade Staff

The combined movement continued to yield good results. The mountain kloofs disgorged large quantities of supplies and vehicles, and from these regions General Campbell ferreted out seventeen Boers. The hunters held their lives in their hands, for the game of hide-and-seek had to be played with desperate men sniping from every coign of vantage. In consequence of the development of events connected with General Botha's enterprise in Natal, some of the troops of General Elliot pushed north from Harrismith. General Dartnell with the 2nd Imperial Light Horse had preceded them, and he, together with Colonel Bethune and 600 men, moved on to Eshowe in Zululand. From Harrismith towards the frontier, near Vrede, Colonel de Lisle and General Broadwood marched at the end of the month, and their presence soon warned the Boers, who had been contemplating encroachments into Natal, to take themselves off. On the 5th of October an effort was made to get in touch with them, but they were far too knowing to be entrapped.

While these operations had been going forward, General Rundle had been
Orange River Colony

doing his share, passing supplies into Bethlehem and generally blocking the
passes leading to Natal, and relieving garrisons on the line which had
hitherto been furnished by the Natal command. The 1st Imperial Light
Horse, under Colonel Briggs, acting independently from Bethlehem after
the departure of General Dartnell for Zululand, came in for some thrilling
experiences. This excellent force was well suited for exploits of a daring
kind and long-distance raids such as had to be undertaken. On the 28th
they made a circuitous night march of thirty-eight miles from Bethlehem,
and dawn found them surrounding the town of Reitz. It was a brilliantly
conceived and brilliantly carried out affair, and the prize of twenty-one
prisoners (including Landdrost Piet de Villiers), nine Cape carts, two
wagons, twenty-four horses, 250 cattle, and some ammunition, was well
deserved. The Boers, on Colonel Briggs' way back, made many night
attempts at reprisals, but the Imperial Light Horse was not to be caught
napping.

The troops in the Wepener, Dewetsdorp, Bethulie, and Zatron districts
were now sprayed out to catch the dispersed stragglers of Kruitzinger's com-
mando: Colonel Thorneycroft at Quaggafontein, guarding the river south of
Zastron; Lord Basing patrolling from Juriesbaken to Commissie Bridge on the
Caledon; Sir Henry Rawlinson moving south from Elandsberg to Aliwal; and
General Plumer at Smithfield. Major Damant had returned to Springfontein.
General Plumer, from Smithfield, detached Sir John Jervis upon Wepener in
pursuit of guerillas, himself hunting with Colonel Colvin's column along the
Basuto border. On the 15th the force reassembled at Wepener, where they
learned that Kruitzinger had doubled back towards Elandsberg. While
Colonel Colvin scurried thither to co-operate with Colonel Thorneycroft, the
General and Sir J. Jervis moved towards Smithfield. Sir John's men, under
Captain Knight of the Buffs, had an exciting affray on the 19th, and succeeded
in landing big fish, Adjutants Brand and Joubert, and eight prisoners in all.
Colonel Smithson and the 13th Hussars engaged Boers at Lemonfontein on the
11th. They covered eighty miles in two days, surprised the enemy, and
made a splendid haul of prisoners and effects. Colonel Colvin had also his
success, for on the 22nd a party of New Zealanders, under Major Tucker,
engaged the enemy on the Elandsberg and secured Field-Cornets Hugo and
Bothma, and several other prisoners.

Unfortunately the effect of the squeezing operations which were taking
place caused the enemy to be driven to the Thabanchu line, and here, as though
history was bound to repeat itself, the unfortunate U battery met with a
misshap. On the 19th a small force of 160 mounted men under Captain Tufnell,
and two guns of U Battery, R.H.A., under Lieut. Otter-Barry, which had been
detached by the officer commanding at the Bloemfontein Waterworks, were
surrounded and captured at Vlakfontein (eighteen miles south-west of Sanna's
Post) by a superior force under Commandants Coetze and Ackermann.
Lieutenant Barry, R.H.A., lost his life in the gallant defence of his guns. All
efforts were now made to hem the enemy against the Thabanchu line, and
General Plumer and Colonel Rochfort (commanding General Bruce-Hamilton's
force during his absence in Natal) worked hard to this end. It was a question
of fight, fight, fight, and hustle, hustle, hustle on all sides. At the end of the
month (the 29th) Colonel Lowry Cole had the satisfaction of hauling in Com-
mandant Drezer and Field-Cornet Van Vunren, with their followers, whose
laager he had surprised.

At the same time some sharp fighting took place between two hundred
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New Zealanders under Major A. W. Andrews, a smart officer of the Indian Staff Corps, who were holding Mokari Drift on the Caledon, and some 500 or 400 Boers who were in the act of crossing. The Boers, after a severe mauling, fled westward, leaving six dead and seven wounded on the field. Colonel Thornycroft also had had stiff work with a marauding gang near Corunna on the 20th.

After this date the columns on the east of the main line of rail had each assigned to them an area with a centre from which to work. They acted independently, yet as required could combine against any formidable gathering of the enemy. In the south-western portion of the Orange Colony the situation was improving so remarkably that first the columns of Colonels Byng and Dawkins were able to withdraw towards the Vredefort district; then those of Major Damant were removed to Heilbron; while the rest, under Colonel Rochfort, were transferred to the more disturbed area of the east of the railway. Colonel Henry maintained his operations in the district, but the verb "to blockhouse" having been so liberally conjugated throughout the region, his duties were comparatively light.

EVENTS IN CAPE COLONY

The early part of September was spent in chasing Commandant Smuts, who had burst from the Orange Colony into the Jamestown-Dordrecht district. Here he was tackled on the 12th by Colonel Monro, but succeeded in evading our columns. The raiders then rushed in the night across the line towards Tarkastad. To the south in all haste followed Colonels Gorringe and Doran and the 17th Lancers, while the west was guarded (at Cradock) by Colonel Scobell. Smuts, when some eighteen miles north-west of Tarkastad, in desperation decided to attack a squadron of the 17th Lancers under Major Sandeman. These seeing a force dressed in khaki approaching, accepted them as comrades till too late. The enemy was almost upon them before they discovered their mistake. But the "Death or Glory Boys," even in these circumstances, fought valiantly, and though three officers and twenty men fell, and Major Sandeman and thirty men of the squadron were wounded, all brilliantly maintained the traditions of their regiment. The approach of Major Nickalls and another squadron of the Lancers forced the Boers to cease fighting and continue their bolt to the south.

An interesting report of the smart engagement was published by the Midland News. The correspondent wrote:—

"Smuts' commando rushed a squadron of the 17th Lancers, under Captain Sandeman, on Tuesday morning, the 17th inst. The squadron was posted at Modderfontein, guarding the southern exit from Elands River Poort, and another pass towards the north-east, known as Evans Hock, to prevent the Boers from coming south-west into the Cradock district. The surprise was due chiefly to the Boers being dressed in khaki, and being thus mistaken for Colonel Gorringe's men, who were expected to arrive from Soude Nek in the course of the day. A mist which hung over the low ground till late that morn—

1 This corps (the 6th New Zealand Mounted Rifles) greatly distinguished itself in many ways. On one occasion (the 16th September) Lieutenant Tudor, with only twelve men, crossed the Caledon and kept in touch with 200 Boers for three days, afterwards holding a position for three hours against fifty Boers with exceptional gallantry. A young hero, Lieutenant Caskey 15th Queensland Imperial Bushmen, lost his life during the dashing exploit. Captains Findlay, The Buffs and Knight with the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, also performed notable service in command of detached troops during this period.
Events in Cape Colony

...ing also favoured the approach of the enemy, as in the case of Colonel Scobell’s capture of Lotter’s commando.

"On receipt of a report that a small picket in advance of the camp had been rushed, a troop quickly mounted and rode towards the poort. The officer in command saw some khaki-clad men about two miles from camp, and thinking they were some of Colonel Gorringe’s column, rode forward to meet them. When about two hundred yards distant, seeing them levelling their rifles, he shouted out, ‘Don’t fire! we are the 17th Lancers.’ The only answer was rapid rifle fire, which emptied several saddles.

"During this time another body of the enemy had worked up the donga running past the camp, and approached it from the rear. These men were dressed in khaki, and were taken for friends. Major Nickalls was encamped at Hoogstude, about three miles distant, and, having been informed of the attack on Captain Sandeman’s camp, he was coming up to its support. Consequently the order was given not to fire on this party.

"The camp was placed on the southern slope of a gentle rise, which is encircled on the west by a spruit running generally north-west, and joining the main river about two miles distant. About three hundred yards from the spruit the ground on which the camp stood rises into a rocky kopje about a hundred yards long at the crest. This was defended with great determination, and most of the casualties occurred here.

"The Boers, too, suffered very severely in the attack on this position, and it was not until the enemy attacked the hill from the rear that any impression seemed to have been made on the defenders. A perfect hail of bullets appears then to have been poured in from the rear, which killed or wounded all of its defenders. Finally Captain Sandeman tried to reach the kraals in the vicinity of the camp, but most of the men with him were shot down, and he himself was wounded.

"The Boers then rushed the camp, but not a single man surrendered, the enemy levelling their rifles and firing on any man they saw.

"On Major Nickalls’s squadron coming up the enemy retired quickly in the direction in which they had come.

"The Boers, on entering the camp, went straight for the supplies, but were able to take away only a few biscuits and hardly any ammunition, the Lancers having emptied their bandoliers, as the hundreds of empty cartridges found on the kopje eloquently testified.

"The enemy’s casualties were extremely heavy. The dead and wounded were carried off by the commando when it retired."

From Bank View to Mount Prospect, then across the Mancazana, along the Fish River and over the Port Elizabeth line near Sheldon Station the raiders went, followed with unrelaxing energy by Colonels Gorringe, Dorau, and Scobell. Colonel Gorringe succeeded in catching them in the Zuurberg Mountains and caused them to split their force in two, one half fleeing south, the other west. Early in October they reunited south of Darlington and were again attacked and trounced by the indefatigable Colonel, who drove them north with the loss of three of their number killed and five wounded.

Meanwhile Myburg and Fouché had been flitting around the northern borders, while Colonels Monro, Pilcher, Western, General Hart, with Colonel Murray’s troops and the Connaught Rangers, guarded the river line from Bethulie to Herschel. The residency at this place was attacked on the 4th, but Major Hook and the local police sent the foe to the right-about with considerable celerity and the loss to them of twenty-nine horses and three men.
The Transvaal War

Everywhere small gangs of Boers made themselves obstreperous, and some made an attempt on Ladygrey, which was promptly repulsed. On the 20th of September, however, Kruitzinger, north of Herschel, endeavoured to force a passage over the Orange, and came into collision with some eighty of Lovat's Scouts under Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. A. D. Murray. The gallant Scotsmen, small in number but large in courage, held on grimly to their post, and the attempt to cross was fiercely resisted, but unhappily with the loss of the brilliant commander, who had led them throughout the campaign with gallantry and distinction. He fell shot through the heart while shouting, "Fix bayonets!" His adjutant, Captain Murray, also fell, and sixteen of his brave men, while one officer and thirty-five men were wounded. A gun was carried off under cover of darkness, but it was promptly followed up and recovered in a smart engagement in which the Boers lost two killed and twenty prisoners. The end of the month, the enemy having withdrawn into the Transkei, was spent by Colonels Monro and Pilcher in watching the passes of the Drakensberg; but later they, with Colonel Western—leaving Colonel Monro and local troops in charge of the area—were recalled to the south-east of the Orange Colony. Commandant Scheepers at this time was making himself obnoxious in the region of the line near Matjiesfontein, and to circumvent him General Beatson despatched Colonel Crabbe's column from Waggion Drift on a night march, which helped materially to break down Scheepers strength. The force completely surprised the enemy under Van der Merwe (in a place where they had outspanned some twelve miles east of Laingsberg), killed the commandant—a sporting youth of eighteen, who was considered by his friends as a De Wet in embryo—and one of his followers, wounded many of the burghers, and took thirty-seven prisoners, including Field-Cornet Du Plessis. This was on the 10th. From that time to the 20th Scheepers was kept on the move, and finally after much veering and dodging reached Klip Drift on the 20th. He continued to evade the pursuing columns of Colonels Crabbe, Atherton, and Major Kavanagh till the 5th of October, when this last officer almost captured him. He was attacked at Adams Kral, twenty miles south-south-west of Ladysmith, and only succeeded in saving himself "by the skin of his teeth."

Commandant Theron, hoping to join Scheepers, was fleeing before Colonel Capper in the Ceres district. This officer was assisted by Colonels Alexander and Wyndham, who, when they had driven the enemy well away to the north-west, continued in the chase after Scheepers.

Colonel Sprot and Major Lund were persistently engaged in tussles with Lategan's gang, which had reappeared south of the Orange, and in a brilliant encounter on the 23rd of September Major Lund succeeded in securing an influential rebel, Louw by name, together with seven of his followers. Colonel Hunter-Weston, in a smart engagement with Lategan, secured Coetzter and other rebels and drove the rest northwards.

Sad was the fate of a gallant fellow, Lieutenant M. Gurdon Rebow, who, with nine men of the 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards, while searching a farm,

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1 Colonel the Hon. Andrew David Murray was the brother of the present Earl of Mansfield, and was born in 1863. He entered the army in 1884 as second lieutenant in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, became lieutenant in 1893, and brevet-major in 1898. He served in the Nile Expedition, 1884-85, with the Soudan Field Force, 1885-86, with the Nile Expedition, 1898, and was present at the battles of Athbara and Omdurman, for which he was mentioned in despatches. He was appointed commander of Lovat's Scouts last year.
Events in Cape Colony

was attacked by the enemy at Cyferkuil, near Riet Siding, on the 17th. Some thirty or forty Dutchmen burst suddenly upon the small party, whose gallant stand against this overwhelming majority was one of the most striking episodes of desperate valor on record. A summons to surrender was refused, and it was not till Gurdon Rebow himself had been shot down and one of his men had been killed and two dangerously wounded that the remaining few Grenadiers, after a fight of three hours, were captured. The sergeant of the patrol lost his life in a gallant effort to swim the Carolus River in search of help.

As a proof of the herculean labours of the columns during this month, in spite of the prevalence of rinderpest among the cattle and the consequent reduction in the efficiency of the ox transport, the sum total of achievement may be quoted: 170 Boers killed, 114 wounded and prisoners, 1385 unwounded prisoners, 393 surrendered burghers, 11,000 horses (practically useless), 41,500 cattle, 798 rifles, 119,000 rounds small arm ammunition, and 770 waggons.

At Pretoria the month closed with the execution of Broeksma, formerly the Public Prosecutor of the Transvaal, whose trial, begun on the 12th of September, lasted three days. He was charged on the four counts of breaking the oath of neutrality, treachery, high treason, and inciting to break the oath of neutrality, and the evidence showed that the police found in his house treasonable pamphlets and documents, including copies of letters addressed to Mr. Steyn, Mr. Reitz, "Dr. Williamson," and Mr. Kruger. Other letters were produced in court which purported to have come from Dr. Krause. On the concluding day of the trial the Crown Prosecutor stated that "Dr. Williamson" was in reality Dr. Leyds. Sundry other burghers and Netherlanders were tried for treachery and on other charges, while some were found guilty of high treason and murder and sentenced to death. This sentence in most cases was commuted to penal servitude for life, or reduced to terms of imprisonment.