

enemy, capturing 26 prisoners, 31 wagons, and 90 rifles. On the 1st September, he attacked the Boers near Rooikop, 25 miles east of Pienaar's River Station, securing seven prisoners, 100 rifles, 40,000 rounds of ammunition, 350 cattle, and three wagons containing supplies. On the 2nd September, he again came into contact with a party of the enemy near Warm Baths Station, seizing a number of cattle and sheep and a large amount of supplies. On reaching Warm Baths Station, Plumer assumed command of Baden-Powell's troops, the latter Officer having proceeded on leave. On the 3rd September, during an attack which the Boers made on a kopje held by our troops near Warm Baths Station, Commandant Piet Cronje was killed and the enemy driven off with heavy loss. On the 7th September, Paget fell back with his whole force to Pienaar's River Station, and thence marched in the direction of Hebron, 16 miles north-west of Pretoria. He arrived there on the 14th, having captured on the way 10 prisoners and 2,000 head of cattle.

32. In paragraphs 7 to 10, I described Hunter's operations in the Orange River Colony up to the 6th August. On the 10th August, Hunter* left Bethlehem for Kroonstad. He reached Lindley the following day, and was then directed to move on Heilbron, so as to guard against any attempt on the part of General Olivier, who was then in the vicinity of Frankfort, to effect a junction with De Wet's commando at Reitzburg. Sending into Kroonstad his sick and the cattle and sheep which had been captured in Brandwater Basin, Hunter marched north and reached the Rhenoster River on the 13th. On crossing the river next morning, he found the enemy, 1,800 with six guns, under Generals Frohnemann and Olivier, holding a strong position across the road at Witpoort, 12 miles south of Heilbron. After an engagement, which lasted from 11 A.M. until 5 P.M., the position was occupied by our troops, the enemy retiring to the north-east. Our casualties amounted to one Officer and three men killed, and one Officer and 40 men wounded. On the 15th August, Hunter entered Heilbron unopposed, and, on the 20th, Bruce Hamilton's Brigade arrived at Kroonstad.

33. As soon as the troops engaged in the pursuit of De Wet became available for operations elsewhere, I redistributed the field army with the object, first, of advancing along the Delagoa Bay Railway to Komati Poort, and, secondly, of forming flying columns to pursue and disperse the scattered Boer commandoes which were carrying on a guerilla warfare both in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. As regards the first objective, the military situation was as follows:—On 15th August, Sir Redvers Buller's force† reached Twyfelaar. French‡ was in command at Middelburg. On the 18th August, the Mounted Infantry were holding the line stretching from Wonderfontein to Doornkop, 12 miles north of Middelburg, and French's Cavalry was distributed between Wonderfontein and Twyfelaar. On that date French rejoined his two Cavalry brigades. On the 21st, Buller marched to Van Wyk's Vlei, 15 miles south-east of Belfast, and two

days later the 11th Division, under Pole-Carew, was concentrated at Wonderfontein. Buller met with some opposition on the 23rd in the neighbourhood of Van Wyk's Vlei, and towards evening two companies of the 1st Battalion Liverpool Regiment entered by mistake a hollow, out of sight of the main body, where they came under a heavy fire, losing 10 men killed, and one Officer and 45 men wounded. The other casualties on this occasion were one man killed, and three Officers and four men wounded. On the 24th August, I left Pretoria for Wonderfontein, and on the 25th proceeded to Belfast, which had been occupied the previous day by the 11th Division. Some opposition was encountered, our casualties amounting to one man killed, and one Officer and 14 men wounded. As soon as I arrived, it became apparent to me that we were already in touch with a part of the Boer main position. This position, as far as could be ascertained, extended from the neighbourhood of Swartz Kopjes on the north to Dalmanutha on the south, a distance of some 20 miles. It was furnished with a numerous artillery, including two 6-inch guns, and was entrenched at various points of importance. My first idea was to hold the enemy in front with the 11th Division, whilst Buller and French turned their left from the south. On consultation, however, with General Buller, it seemed that the ground was not favourable to a turning movement from this quarter, and I therefore decided to contain the enemy's front by the 18th Brigade and turn his right flank with the Guards Brigade, assisted by General French and Colonel Henry's Mounted Infantry. With this object French moved, on the 26th, from Geluk, 12 miles south of Belfast, and passing to the west of the town reached Lakenvlei, 6 miles to its north on the evening of this day. Pole-Carew, with the 11th Division, endeavoured to advance along the Lydenburg road in his support, but came under so heavy a shell and rifle fire that he made but little progress. Buller, whose Artillery was engaged throughout the day, pushed back the Boers, who were holding a series of strong positions to the south-east of Belfast, to within 4 miles of the railway between that town and Dalmanutha. Our casualties on this date amounted to five men killed, and two Officers and 56 men wounded. On the 27th, French advanced 8 miles further north, and drove the enemy from Swartz Kopjes. From this position he threatened the enemy's line of retreat, although he could hardly yet be said to have turned their right flank. Meanwhile, however, General Buller was able to take more decisive action at the other extremity of the Boer line of defence. At Bergendal, 3 miles south-east of Belfast, the Boers had established a very strong position on a low rocky kopje, and in some farm buildings and plantations, which formed the key to that portion of the main position. The kopje was heavily entrenched, and was garrisoned by the Z.A.R. Police with a pompom. The ground, which sloped gently away in all directions, afforded no cover. Buller attacked this post early in the day, and after some hard fighting it was carried very gallantly by the 2nd Battalion Rifle Brigade, supported by the 1st Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. The brunt of the action fell to the former battalion, which lost heavily, our casualties being one Officer and 13 men killed, and seven Officers and 57 men wounded. 19 Boers were taken prisoners; 20 of their dead

* Three battalions of the Highland Brigade, a wing of the 2nd Bn. Bedfordshire Regiment, two companies of the Imperial Yeomanry, Lovat's Scouts, one 6-inch gun, and 14 field guns.

† Lyttelton's Division, and two Cavalry Brigades, under Brocklehurst and Dundonald.

‡ 1st and 4th Cavalry Brigades, Hutton's Mounted Infantry, and the 11th Division.