

Henry's Corps of Mounted Infantry, and the West Australian Mounted Infantry.

39. I have already mentioned that, concurrently with the advance along the Delagoa Bay railway, I organized flying columns for the purpose of pursuing and dispersing the enemy's commandoes which were carrying on a desultory warfare north and south of the Vaal. In addition to the force operating north of Pretoria, under Paget, whose march to Warm Baths Station and thence to Hebron, has been described in paragraphs 30 and 31, a column under Clements* was formed at Commando Nek. The duty assigned to this column was to bring under control the Rustenburg and Heckpoort districts, and to clear the country of marauders between Krugersdorp and Johannesburg. Another column under Hart was concentrated at Krugersdorp.† The area allotted to this force stretched from the Vaal to Krugersdorp, including Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom, and Ventersdorp. A third column under Lord Methuen had its head-quarters at Mafeking.‡ Its sphere of action was the Lichtenburg district as far east as Tafel Kop and Rustenburg, and thence up to the left bank of Crocodile River below its junction with Elands River.

In the north-east angle of the Orange River Colony, Rundle in command of the 8th Division formed two columns, one under Boyes§ based on Vrede, and the other under Campbell|| based on Harrismith. In the centre of the colony, and east of the railway, Hunter had under his orders Macdonald's column¶ based on Heilbron, and Bruce Hamilton's** column based on Kroonstad. A third column†† under Major-General C. E. Knox was also based on Kroonstad for operations between that town and the Vaal.

40. As regards the operations of the columns in the Transvaal, there is not much that calls for special mention. Clements moved west from Commando Nek into the Heckpoort district and encountered the enemy under Delarey on the 9th September at Hartebeestfontein, his Mounted Infantry clearing the Witwatersberg Range. The next day he again engaged the Boer commando, which suffered considerable

loss, our own casualties being two men killed and 14 wounded. On the 12th September Delarey fell back on Rustenburg through Oliphant's Nek.

On the 29th August, Lieutenant-Colonel Bradley, Commanding the 2nd Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment, attacked and dispersed a body of the enemy at Modderfontein, 25 miles south of Krugersdorp, and two days later Hart drove off a Boer detachment which was attempting to destroy the main of the Johannesburg waterworks, 10 miles south-west of the town. From the 4th September to the 7th September, he pursued small parties of the enemy to the south-west of Krugersdorp, Commandant Theron being among the killed in one of the skirmishes which took place. On the 11th September, Hart occupied Potchefstroom by a forced march, his mounted troops having covered 45 miles, and his Infantry 35 miles, without halting for more than a few hours. The Boers were completely taken by surprise and suffered heavy loss, our only casualty being one Officer killed. On the 30th September, after an absence of 33 days, General Hart returned to Krugersdorp. During that time he had marched 310 miles, and had been almost constantly in touch with the enemy. The Boers suffered considerably in the succession of skirmishes. 96 prisoners were taken, and his column captured 2,720 head of cattle, 3,281 sheep, 129 horses, ponies, and mules; 67 wagons and carts, and large quantities of supplies. Our casualties were not heavy, namely, three killed, 24 wounded, and three missing.

41. To the west of the Transvaal, Carrington engaged the Lichtenburg Commando near Ottoshoop on the 20th and 21st August. Lord Methuen reached Zeerust on the 22nd and Ottoshoop on the 25th. Thence he marched with his own and Carrington's columns to Mafeking, arriving there on the 28th. On the latter date, as Carrington's services were required in Rhodesia, I directed him to proceed with his staff to Salisbury, and placed Major-General C. W. H. Douglas in command of Mafeking and the adjacent district. Lord Methuen's flying column was in readiness to move on the 7th September. He proposed first to clear the country round Jacobsdal and Zeerust, and afterwards to march south towards Schweizer-Reneke, on Hart's River, the garrison at that place being threatened by a local rising of the inhabitants of the Bloemhof district. A second small column was placed at Douglas's disposal for operations in the Lichtenburg district, and a garrison was detailed for Mafeking consisting of 400 mounted troops and 800 Infantry with four Field guns. On the 9th September, Lord Methuen moved on a laager under Commandant Vermaas at Melopo Oog, 10 miles south-east of Ottoshoop, and completely dispersed the Boers, taking 30 of them prisoners and seizing 22 wagons and 40,000 rounds of rifle ammunition. On the 11th September, Douglas was attacked on the road from Ottoshoop to Lichtenburg, but drove off the enemy, capturing a large quantity of grain and other stores. He was again engaged the following day, when 39 prisoners, 10 wagons, and a considerable number of sheep and oxen fell into his hands.

On the morning of the 19th, Lord Methuen, while marching from Jachskraal towards Schweizer-Reneke, heard of a Boer convoy moving in his vicinity. He pursued and dispersed it, capturing a 15-pr. gun which had

* The 8th Battery, Royal Field Artillery; 2nd Bn. Northumberland Fusiliers, 2nd Bn. Worcestershire Regiment, 1st Bn. Border Regiment, 2nd Bn. Yorkshire Light Infantry, and 900 mounted troops, under Brigadier-General Ridley.

† The 28th Battery, Royal Field Artillery; 2nd Bn. South Wales Borderers, 2nd Bn. Royal Dublin Fusiliers, a wing of the 2nd Bn. Somersetshire Light Infantry, 400 Yeomanry, and one 4.7-inch naval gun.

‡ The 4th Battery Royal Field Artillery; four guns of the 88th Battery, Royal Field Artillery; a section of the 37th Howitzer Battery, New Zealand Battery, six pompoms, four battalions of Imperial Yeomanry, under Lord Chesham; Australian Bushmen, 1st Bn. Northumberland Fusiliers, 1st Bn. Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, and 2nd Bn. Northamptonshire Regiment.

§ The 11th Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry, 1st Bn. South Staffordshire Regiment, 2nd Bn. Royal West Kent Regiment, 2nd Bn. Manchester Regiment, and seven Field guns.

|| Three companies of Imperial Yeomanry, Driscoll's Scouts, 2nd Bn. Grenadier Guards, 2nd Bn. Scots Guards, 1st Bn. Leicestershire Regiment, with six Field guns and one 5-inch gun.

¶ The 2nd Bn. Black Watch, 2nd Bn. Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Bn. Highland Light Infantry, with 900 men and 12 Field guns, one 5-inch gun, and one pompom.

** The 76th Battery, Royal Field Artillery; 2nd Bn. Bedfordshire Regiment, 1st Bn. Royal Sussex Regiment, 1st Bn. Cameron Highlanders, with 700 mounted men, under Lieutenant-Colonel Ross.

†† The 17th Battery Royal Field Artillery; 300 Imperial Yeomanry, and Mounted Infantry, 1st Bn. Oxfordshire Light Infantry, and 3rd Bn. Royal Scots.