

sively used roads leading up from the bush veldt to the high veldt. In this action I had to deplore the loss of Lieutenant-Colonel G. E. Lloyd, D.S.O., Commanding 1st Battalion West Riding Regiment, who fell whilst gallantly leading his men.

On the 3rd December, a convoy proceeding from Pretoria to Rustenburg was resolutely attacked by a much superior force of Boers who, in spite of the very gallant stand made by the escort, seized and destroyed half of the wagons composing the convoy.

On the 1st December, I had ordered Major-General Clements to move out from Krugersdorp to clear the Hekpoort Valley, south of the Magaliesberg, and to break up Delarey's commando, which was known to be on the slopes of these mountains. Brigadier-General Broadwood (12th Lancers), who had been operating to the south of Olifant's Nek with the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, was ordered north to keep the Rustenburg road open, and now proceeded to clear the northern side of the Magaliesberg. Meanwhile Beyers, with 1,500 men, had been moving south from Warmbaths, to co-operate with Delarey, and leaving his wagons north of the mountains, and evading Broadwood's troops, he passed through Breed's Nek and joined Delarey on the 12th December, 1900.

General Clements' force, which had encamped immediately south of Nooitgedacht Pass, was attacked before daylight on the 13th, by the combined forces of Delarey and Beyers.

As already reported, four companies of the Northumberland Fusiliers, who were holding the ridges overlooking the camp, were surrounded and captured by the enemy. The loss of this outpost rendered the camp untenable, and though the Boers suffered heavy loss in pressing home their attack, General Clements found himself obliged to fall back on Commando Nek. Lieutenant-Colonel N. Legge (20th Hussars), a valuable leader of mounted troops, I regret to say, fell early in this action.

I at once despatched Brigadier-General Alderson (Royal West Kent Regiment) with 750 Mounted Infantry, and "J" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, followed subsequently by the 1st Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, to reinforce General Clements. I also strengthened the Krugersdorp line by the 4th Cavalry Brigade from Heidelberg, and a battalion of Infantry from the south.

5. As it was now most desirable to act with vigour against the enemy in the western portion of the Transvaal, I placed Lieutenant-General French in command of the troops operating both south and north of the Magaliesberg. He at once organized a strong mounted force under Brigadier-General Gordon at Krugersdorp, which acting in conjunction with General Clements' troops from Commando Nek, after defeating the enemy at Thorndale, in the Hekpoort Valley, on the 19th December, drove him westward. A few days later, General French having ordered Brigadier-General Broadwood to bring the 2nd Cavalry Brigade south of the Magaliesberg to join in his sweep westward, moved on Ventersdorp on a wide front, and cleared the country up to the line Olifant's Nek — Ventersdorp — Klerksdorp. Meanwhile General Clements, moving north through Olifant's Nek, had effected a junction with General Paget from Haman's Kraal, and acting together freed the Rustenburg district of the enemy.

Subsequent operations were undertaken by General French against Beyer's commando, which, passing round his right flank, had reappeared to the south of the Witwatersberg. The result of

these movements was to drive Beyer's force eastward, the enemy to the number of about 1,400 men with several guns crossing the Pretoria—Elandsfontein line on the 12th January.

6. Considerable enterprise and initiative had been shown by the enemy along the eastern line, beyond Middleburg, resulting in the capture during the night of 29th December of our post at Helvetia, near Machadodorp. Encouraged by this success, the enemy under Commandant-General Louis Botha, with Commandant B. Viljoen and Commandant Grobelaar, planned and carried out with great boldness night attacks on Belfast, Dalmanutha, Machadodorp and several other smaller posts on the eastern line, which delivered simultaneously soon after midnight on the 7th January, were everywhere repulsed. At Belfast the enemy were especially determined in the manner in which they attempted to rush the works held by the garrison, and were much favoured by a dense mist, which screened their advance to close quarters.

7. From information received and since confirmed, it has transpired that the enemy's general plans at the end of 1900 were that Hertzog should proceed to Lambert's Bay, as indeed he did, and there meet a ship which the burghers were told was bringing mercenaries, guns, and ammunition from Europe, while De Wet was to proceed south by De Aar, and join hands with Hertzog in a combined attack upon Cape Town. When Commandant-General Botha had heard that this concentration had been successfully effected, he was to enter Natal with a picked force of 5,000 mounted men, and make for Durban.

8. In conformity with this plan, a considerable concentration of Boers, under Commandant-General Louis Botha and Generals T. Smuts, G. Spruyt, and C. Botha, had taken place in Ermelo, Carolina, and Bethel, which districts constituted large depôts of supply for the enemy's forces. I therefore deemed it most necessary to sweep the country between the Delagoa Bay and Natal railway lines, and with this object in view, the following columns were concentrated as under:—

Brigadier-General Alderson, Mooi Plains, 502.  
Colonel E. Knox (18th Hussars), Bapsfontein, 177.

Lieutenant-Colonel Allenby (6th Dragoons), and Lieutenant-Colonel Pulteney (Scots Guards), Puitfontein, 124.

Brigadier-General Dartnell (Commandant of Volunteers, Natal), Springs.

I entrusted the general execution of the movement to Lieutenant-General French.

These columns were to be reinforced as they moved forward by a column from Grey'sstad, under Lieutenant-Colonel Colville (Rifle Brigade), on the right, and on the left by a small column from Middleburg, under Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, 1st Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps, and a strong force under Major-General Smith-Dorrien, from Wonderfontein, marching on Carolina.

Towards the latter part of January, Major-General Paget and Brigadier-General Plumer, whose troops I had sent to reinforce the Pretoria—Middleburg section of the eastern line in consequence of Beyer's westward move, had done good work in clearing the country round Balmoral and Brugspruit, which facilitated the subsequent advance of the column from Middleburg.

General French's column marched eastward on the 28th January, and on the following day he, with Colonel Knox, Lieutenant-Colonels Allenby and Pulteney, forced Beyers from strong positions