

horses (most of the latter of no practical value as remounts).

The columns co-operating on the flanks also met with a very fair measure of success.

Working from Winburg, Lieutenant-Colonel Barker reached Kaffir's Kop, 22 miles west of Bethlehem, on the 26th of November. Here he learnt that a number of Boers had passed round General Broadwood's left flank in the direction of Wonderkop. Colonel Barker at once moved in pursuit by Rexford and Wonderkop upon Uintsjeshoek, and, engaging the enemy frequently, inflicted considerable damage.

Colonel Rimington left Frankfort on the 27th November, and on the following day effected a junction with Kitchener's Fighting Scouts, under Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson, at Jagersrust, 25 miles south-west of Frankfort. From the latter place, the combined force moved on to Tochtetry, the advanced troops pursuing scattered parties of the enemy who retired rapidly whenever our men approached. These tactics, as it subsequently appeared, were intended as a mask for a sudden attack upon Colonel Rimington's baggage and rear guard by a force under De Wet. The attack was promptly and gallantly repulsed. Field Cornet Klopper and 2 burghers were killed, 4 were wounded, and 13 prisoners remained in our hands.

Our casualties in this engagement included Lieutenant Oliver, Inniskilling Dragoons, who was killed in a dashing charge upon the enemy.

Colonel Rimington halted after the fight at Victoria Spruit, and then, seeing no further opportunity of engaging the enemy, moved back with his troops in the direction of Heilbron.

In the districts of the Orange River Colony, south of the Bloemfontein—Ladybrand line, the several groups of columns under Major-General U. Knox and Colonel Rochfort have continued to harass and pursue the scattered fragments of the commandoes under Brand, Ackerman, and Coetzee, which still haunt this country.

The work has necessarily been of an uneventful and uninteresting nature, but has been well carried out, and over 170 prisoners have been taken by the columns since the date of my last despatch.

West of the railway, and south of the Modder River, the country continues practically clear of the enemy, whilst north of the Modder satisfactory progress has been made under cover of Colonel Henry's column, in clearing the country and establishing a line of constabulary posts between Boshof and Bultfontein.

At the date of my last despatch, the columns under Colonel Pulteney and Lieutenant-Colonel Garratt were still operating in the Vryheid district; Brigadier-General Plumer was searching the country between Wakkerstroom and Piet Retief; and Lieutenant-Colonel Colville at Mahamba Drift on the Assegai River, near Piet Retief, was watching for straggling parties who might seek to escape through Swaziland. Whilst in these positions, some excellent work was done by these columns.

On the 8th of November, Colonel Colville reported that a detached force of the 26th Mounted Infantry Battalion, under Major Wiggin, had successfully surrounded a laager and captured 14 prisoners (including Landdrost Kelly and Field Cornet van Rooijen), at a farm 8 miles south of Mahamba, and at dawn on the 16th at Plat Nek, within the Swaziland border, another detached force—under the same officer—effected a further capture of 12 prisoners, 19 wagons with teams, and a number of Krupp cartridges.

Between the 8th and 20th of November, Brigadier-General Plumer, working both north

and south of the Wakkerstroom—Piet Retief line of blockhouses, inflicted considerable loss on the enemy.

On the 20th of November, having been joined by Colonel Pulteney from Vryheid, he turned north in the direction of Brereton, to endeavour to act in co-operation, when opportunity offered, with General Bruce Hamilton's contemplated advance upon Ermelo; but finding this for some time impossible owing to the swollen rivers and spruits which barred his way, he turned south-west to search the Randberg and neighbourhood for scattered parties believed to be lurking in that broken country.

At the beginning of December Colonel Garratt was ordered to march through Newcastle to Botha's Pass in the Drakensberg, and from here will cover the construction of a contemplated chain of blockhouses to be pushed out westwards.

Colonel Garratt's place in the Vryheid district, where the Boers are not aggressive, has been taken by a small column under Lieutenant-Colonel Chapman, who is now moving up from Babanango.

Since the date of my last despatch, the central districts of Cape Colony have been kept clear of the enemy, who have confined their operations to the Barkly East district and the country to the west and north of the Cape Town—De Aar line.

In the former of these two areas, Colonels Monro and Scobell have operated together against Myburg Fouché, and Wessels, who, constantly pursued and engaged by our columns, have wandered about in the Drakensberg to the south of Jamestown, and between Barkly East and Maclear. In the many skirmishes which have from time to time taken place, the Boers have suffered considerable losses, and devote the whole of their energies to avoiding our columns.

In the neighbourhood of Philipstown, Lieutenant-Colonel Hunter Weston has been employed in chasing an isolated party of Boers, about 100 strong, under Naude, who seem to have crossed into Cape Colony on the 22nd of November, probably near Zand Drift, and who have now taken refuge in the Karee Kloof hills to the north-west of Philipstown.

To the west of the main line of railway, the remainder of General French's columns, acting under the orders of Major-General Stephenson, have continued their operations against the Boers under Maritz, Theron, Lcuw, Smit, and other leaders of less importance, whose followers are now widely dispersed between a line Picquetberg—Sutherland—Carnarvon and the frontier of German South-West Africa. Our forces acting against the enemy in this vast extent of country were disposed on the 1st of December as follows:—Colonel Crabbe's column at Lambert's Bay; Major-General Stephenson, with Lieutenant-Colonel Kavanagh, at Clanwilliam; Lieutenant-Colonel Capper at Picquetberg; Captain Wormald at Wagon Drift, 30 miles north of Ceres; Major Lund to the south (south) west of Sutherland; and Lieutenant-Colonel Doran between the latter place and Matjesfontein.

Since the beginning of this month, our columns have again pressed the enemy further north towards Van Rhynsdorp, and Colonel Doran is advancing upon Tontelboschkolk, 100 miles north of Sutherland, to strike at a considerable gathering of Boers under Maritz assembled in that neighbourhood.

The Boer casualties reported by General French in this area during the past month have amounted to 29 killed, 21 wounded, and 45 prisoners.