

Station, Lieutenant-Colonel Wing at Vlaklaagte, General Spens at Kaffir's Kraal, and the remainder of the troops at Standerton.

The movement had met with a considerable amount of success, 134 unwounded prisoners being brought into the railway line.

Lieutenant-Colonel Williams' column was then broken up at Standerton, the oversea Colonials of which it was composed having completed their period of service in South Africa, and Colonel Allenby's column was also detached from Major-General Hamilton's force to operate in the vicinity of Villiersdorp. These withdrawals, however, were compensated for by the arrival at Greylingstad, from Botha's Pass, of the columns under Colonels Rimington, Nixon, and Garratt, which, together with Lieutenant-Colonel Lawley's column from Springs, were placed temporarily at Major-General Hamilton's disposal.

Preparations were then made for a northward sweep of columns from a general line Waterval Station—Witpoort (74)—Nigel Mine, up to the section of the Delagoa Bay Railway between Bronkhorst Spruit and Groot Olifant's River Station. The columns destined for this movement were disposed in the preparatory position from right to left in the following order:—Colonel Mackenzie, General Spens, Lieutenant-Colonel Garratt, Colonel Nixon, Colonel Rimington, Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable R. T. Lawley, whilst the Scots Greys were moved out from Irene towards Witpoort (64) to close in upon the left flank of the other columns as they marched north.

The advance was commenced on the 18th April, and it terminated on the 20th upon the eastern railway line, which had been temporarily strengthened by five armoured trains and 800 infantry drawn from the garrisons of Pretoria and Middelburg. It was not successful, three prisoners only being taken. On the 19th April the Boers, who were under the command of General Alberts, were unfortunately successful in breaking out at a point on the extreme left of the line, which had been insufficiently guarded. General Alberts then moved rapidly south, past Springs, and having crossed the Standerton Railway near Heidelberg, made good his escape to the Zuikerboschrand.

For some days it was uncertain if the whole of the enemy had vacated the central area to the east of Springs, and on the 22nd April Colonels Rimington, Nixon, and Lawley were detached into the angle marked by Springs, Pretoria, and Bronkhorst Spruit to ascertain if the whole district was now clear. Finding no trace of the Boers in this direction, Major-General Bruce Hamilton then moved back south with the whole of his columns to the Heidelberg Railway.

During the progress of the operations just described, the troops under Colonel Park and Lieutenant-Colonel Wing were employed in strengthening the chain of Constabulary posts between Val and Groot Olifant's River Stations.

From the different points reached upon the Heidelberg—Greylingstad line the columns under Colonels Rimington, Nixon, and Lawley marched west to Klip River Station to disperse some parties of Boers who were causing trouble near the railway and to the south of Johannesburg. Colonel Garratt moved simultaneously to Heidelberg, Brigadier-General Spens and Colonel Mackenzie to Greylingstad, and Lieutenant-Colonel Wing to Val Station, whilst Colonel Park returned north to Middelburg to resume operations in his own district.

Subsequently, between the 8th and 13th May, the columns under Colonel Park and Lieutenant-

Colonel Urmston; together with a detachment of the National Scouts, operated from Belfast and Lydenburg against Muller's commando in the hills round Dullstroom. Scattered bands of the enemy were encountered by our troops who, as a result of much desultory fighting, captured 35 prisoners and 350 cattle. On the 13th Colonel Park returned to Belfast.

3. In the Northern Transvaal Lieutenant-Colonel Colenbrander has carried out some successful operations against General Beyers, who, on the 5th April, was encamped on the southern slopes of the hills close to Malipspoort, a pass through the range of mountains about 23 miles to the south-east of Pietersburg. Colonel Colenbrander, who, on the 5th April, had returned to Pietersburg from the relief of Fort Edward, determined if possible to surround and capture General Beyers' laager, and he accordingly despatched, on the night of the 6th, two parties; of 400 men each, under General Celliers (National Scouts), and Captain McQueen (Steinacker's Horse), to make a wide detour by Chunespoort to Pylkop to block the only two roads open to the Boers to the south-east and south-west. A third party, under Captain Lyle (1st Kitchener's Fighting Scouts), moved on the night of the 6th along the tops of the hills to the west of the poort to block all possible exits in that direction; whilst Colonel Colenbrander himself, with the 2nd Inniskilling Fusiliers and the remainder of his mounted men, left Pietersburg on the night of the 7th to make a direct attack upon the poort from the north.

This attack was delivered on the morning of the 8th, and after severe fighting, extending over two days, in which, I regret to say, Lieutenant-Colonel A. J. Murray, commanding 2nd Inniskilling Fusiliers, was dangerously wounded; resulted in the flight of the Boers in a south-easterly direction. Here it was hoped that their line of retreat would be intercepted by the parties which had marched round by Pylkop; but the failure of Captain McQueen to reach the exact position assigned to him, enabled General Beyers with the majority of his followers to make good his escape towards Haenertsburg. Everything, however, which they possessed was left in our hands by the Boers, who abandoned at Malipspoort the whole of their laager, wagons, and camp equipment. Nine of their number killed, and 11 wounded were also left upon the field, and 108 unwounded prisoners, most of whom were driven by Colonel Colenbrander's men against the party advancing under Captain Lyle from the west, were compelled to lay down their arms and surrender.

Colonel Colenbrander's subsequent pursuit of General Beyers in the direction of Oud Agatha, after this highly successful engagement, was unfortunately marred by a mishap to a small mounted force under Captain Blaine (1st Kitchener's Fighting Scouts); who, pushing on too eagerly into most difficult country, fell into a cleverly arranged ambushade from which he only extricated his men with a loss of six killed, one officer and 11 men wounded, and 30 taken prisoners.

Finding that General Beyers' followers had, for the time being, dispersed, Lieutenant-Colonel Colenbrander then returned with his whole force to the immediate vicinity of Pietersburg.

On the 23rd April, Mr. Reitz arrived at Pietersburg from Pretoria, and on the 24th he again left the former place, under safe conduct, to hold a meeting of General Beyers' men in connection with the appointment of delegates to proceed to Vereeniging.