

A LOST LEGIONARY
IN
SOUTH AFRICA



BY

COL. G. HAMILTON-BROWNE
(MAORI BROWNE)

W7

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A LOST LEGIONARY IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY

Colonel G. HAMILTON-BROWNE
"MAORI BROWNE"

Late Commandant in Colonial Forces



ILLUSTRATED BY S. VALDA

LONDON

T. WERNER LAURIE

CLIFFORD'S INN

[1912]

THIS WORK IS
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY OLD COMRADES
OFFICERS AND MEN
OF H.M. 24TH REGIMENT, THE 3RD NATAL NATIVE
CONTINGENT, THE PIETERMARITZBURG CARBINEERS, AND THE
NATAL MOUNTED POLICE, WHOSE BONES LIE BURIED
BENEATH THE SHADOW OF ISANDLWANA WHERE
LOSING ALL SAVE THEIR HONOUR, THEY
FELL FIGHTING BRAVELY FOR
QUEEN AND FLAG ON THE
22ND OF JANUARY
1879

"Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die,
Though every soldier knew
Someone had blundered."

TENNYSON.

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" But I've cut my cake, so I can't complain,
And I've only myself to blame,
Ah ! that was always their tune at home,
And here it is just the same.
Of the seed I've sown in pleasure,
The harvest I'm reaping in pain ;
Could I put my life a few years back,
Would I live that life again ?

Would I ? Of course I would !
What glorious days they were !
It sometimes seems the dream of a dream,
That life could have been so fair.
A sweet but if a short time back,
While now, if one can call
This life, I almost doubt at times
If it's worth the living at all.

One of these poets, which is it ?
Somewhere or another, sings,
That the crown of a sorrow's sorrow
Is remembering happier things.
What the crown of a sorrow's sorrow
May be, I know not ; but this I know,
It lightens the years that are now
Sometimes, to think of the years ago."

A. LINDSEY GORDON.

PREFACE

BEFORE saying anything about this present work I think it is my bounden duty to tender my hearty and sincere thanks to the innumerable critics, both British and Colonial, who so unanimously reviewed my first attempt at literature, *With the Lost Legion in New Zealand*, with a kindness that has greatly surprised me and in a manner, so obviously to myself, closing their eyes to the manifold faults in the work and most probably actuated by their sportsmanlike wishes to help a worn-out old war dog along the rough road of his declining years, have held out a helping hand, tried to lighten his swag and cheer him along the line of march by making the most of the few good things in his book and treating with leniency its many failings. I hereby again gratefully thank the members of the Press and many of my old comrades for their generous sympathy and warm support.

Much against my inclination I have written the present work in my own name, for no real Lost Legionary ever wishes to blow his own trumpet or pose as a hero even should he have done deeds worthy to be so styled, and I have certainly no right to the appellation. I must therefore apologize for the frequent appearance of the big capital

"I," but this must occur when a man writes about events in which he has taken a hand. Again I have tried to eliminate as much as possible accounts of petty skirmishes and cattle-raiding excursions that are so frequent in savage warfare and have contented myself by trying to make the book entertaining without thrilling my readers with bloody happenings many of which had better be forgotten.

My frail bark is launched and must sink or swim on its own merits and if it does the former I can only hope it will go down with colours flying, after having, as Umvubie would say, a good fight first.

A LOST LEGIONARY IN SOUTH AFRICA

PART I

CHAPTER I

BABY FARMING OFF CAPE HORN

ONE fine day towards the end of April, in the year of Our Lord 1877, two men might have been seen walking down Queen Street, Auckland, New Zealand, towards the wharf, and as one of them is the author of this book, in whose pages the name of the other frequently occurs, let me introduce myself and companion to you. I had three months previous to that date turned thirty years of age, stood just over 5ft. 7in. in my bare feet, with a chest measuring over 40 inches in circumference and limbs of almost too great a magnitude for my size yet withal, when in good health, which I was not at that moment, as active as a cat and capable of undergoing any amount of exertion and hardship. As for my face, well you must judge that for yourself. Look at the portrait in the book, knock off some thirty-four years, allow for the wear and tear of over thirty strenuous years of South African frontier life, many of which have been passed in warfare, and there you are.

My companion, by name Edward Quin, called himself, and in reality was my servant but there were bonds that tied us together far stronger and more lasting than any services received or wages paid could forge. *Par exemple*, we both came from the same county, a very strong tie to an Irishman, and although Quin had not been born on my father's estate, still as he put it, "he had seen dayloight, for the first toime, so moighty adjacent to it, that the short intervaneing distance made no matter." Again, just before he joined me, I had done him a trivial service, which he, with the warm-hearted gratitude of the true Irish peasant, God bless them, magnified to an enormous extent, and although he had repaid by faithful service and devoted attachment, the trifling obligation, ten thousand times over, still the simple fellow fancied he was my debtor. Stronger, however, than all these put together, was the fact, that for many a year we had fought side by side, we had looked after one another when wounded, we had shared one another's meagre rations, but above and beyond all we had suffered hunger, thirst, cold and privation equally in company and neither master nor man had ever heard the other grumble or repine. This being so, no matter how wide apart we were separated by the difference of birth, education, religion and what the world calls social position, we were comrades in every sense of the word, and the love of man for man surpasses that of the love of man for woman. Such was the case with Quin and myself, though the innate good breeding and tact of my humble mate never permitted him to take any liberty with me, more than

is usual for a trusty old family servant to take with an indulgent master. In person he stood over five feet eleven in height, was broad in the shoulder and narrow in the flank and was some three or four years older than myself, while both of us, in our own individual ways, were as reckless a pair of blades as ever Old Ireland has produced.

Well here we were proceeding to the wharf, for the purpose of looking at the ships, for we were Homeward Bound. You good people who live at Home, know but little what the meaning of the word Homeward Bound conveys to the world wanderer; and I'll be shot if I can tell you, anyhow, such feelings we possessed as, leaning on Quin's arm, we descended Queen Street and reached the wharf. I was in no ways fit, having some time previously got in the way of a bullet, and although convalescent, was under the doctors' orders to go home and knew they were quite right in sending me. On reaching the quay, I found two vessels that, having completed their lading, were getting ready for sea and looked them over, so as to make my choice as to which should have the honour of conveying Cæsar and his fortunes; there being no direct steam communication, at that time, between New Zealand and England.

One of these vessels was a very smart-looking, full-rigged, clipper-built ship, of some six hundred tons; the other a bluff-bowed old bark, about the same tonnage, which looked as if she had been built by the mile, cut off by the foot and then the ends boxed in. Of course I chose the clipper and stepping aboard was accosted by a man who, informing me he was chief mate, asked me my business and

on being told I was a prospective passenger showed me into the cuddy, which I found to be a comfortable little saloon with the usual so-called state rooms, *i.e.*, square boxes of cabins, opening out of it. One of these I entered and found it furnished with two wooden bunks, placed one above the other, and these were all the necessities, provided by the ship-owners. As the ship (the *Electric*) was advertised to sail only one day after the bark I determined to take passage in her, so without making any further inquiries, which was very foolish on my part, I went straight to the shipping office, paid our passage money and then visited an outfitter, to whom I gave instructions to rig up our state room in a comfortable manner. As only two days intervened before the ship sailed and I had many things to attend to I did not again go on board until the hour advertised for the departure; reaching the wharf, just as the dock hands were beginning to cast off our moorings and the tug was alongside to pick up our hawser. As I passed along the gang plank the mate informed me the skipper was on board and that we should get under way at once, so I went into the cuddy to see that Quin had fixed up our cabin to my satisfaction. The good ship *Electric*, was a poop-built vessel, with the door of the cuddy opening out on the main deck and on my entering the saloon, I was struck dumb and nearly fainted, to find it overrun with children of a tender age. Troth they were everywhere, on the deck, on the settees, crawling out of the state-room doors, and among them were many women, and a sky-pilot or two, all in tears, taking leave of one another. The

howling of some of the kids was excruciating, and on my getting hold of the far from clean-looking steward he informed me, to my horror, that three of the females and thirteen of the piccaninnies were to be my fellow-passengers.

Oh ye gods of war, why had ye suffered your poor votary to land himself in such a mess? Only fancy, ye modern day sybarites, you who grumble at the fancied hardships you have to undergo on board a ten thousand ton mail boat, just think how you would have liked to contemplate a fourteen thousand mile trip, having to double Cape Horn in the depths of winter, cooped up in the tiny saloon, of a small six hundred ton wind-jammer, in company with three lachrymose women and thirteen squawking children? Augh, my heart was dark, very dark indeed. However, nothing could be done, the tug had hold of us, the last moorings had been let go and as soon as we were clear of the land we sheeted home the topsails, manned the halyards and bore away for the Horn. Nor were my misgivings to prove wrong, for I may here state that under no other circumstances, during my somewhat hard life, have I ever had to endure such misery as I underwent during that wretched voyage. The ship was a very good one of its kind and the crew were above the average of the class of men usually to be found in the fo'castle of a wool ship of that epoch. I had paid the full price for a first-class cabin passage and expected to receive the usual first-class fare, such as fresh meat, mutton, pork, poultry, etc., but there were neither pigs, sheep nor poultry on board, and although I messed with the captain and his mate,

still, with the exception of bacon, cheese, salt butter and jam, we had exactly the same provisions as were issued to the crew, so that you may say, we made the voyage on bare navy rations. I should not however have grumbled at this, although I well knew I was being badly swindled, for the salt horse and pork were of good quality, and after a man has been through years of bush fighting and frontier life, with its attendant hardships, he is not, provided he is worth his salt, going to turn up his nose at wholesome though rough fare. The cuddy was also a snug enough place in which to abide, and although I was in bad health and much run down, suffering from an old wound in my chest, still as I was well supplied with books, I should have got on all right, had it not been for my fellow-passengers—three women and thirteen children, the eldest of the latter not being more than ten years of age, while three of them were infants in arms.

Now it turned out, that these three women were widows, who with their families were being shipped home on the cheap, by some goody-goody society who, having more religion in their composition than common sense, had paid intermediate passage fares for them, leaving it in the hands of Providence to look after them *en voyage*. Providence not wishing to be bothered with them, had instigated myself to take passage, without making inquiries, and so shuffling out of His task, had delegated it to Quin and myself. This may be so, but once while off the Horn, on giving one of the widdy women an extra tot of grog, she declared that it was Providence, who had guided us

to ship in the *Electric* for the purpose of looking after herself and her kids. It may be so, though I fancied then, and still believe, the engineering faculty, of our misfortune, to have been Old Nick himself. It also happened, that when the contract aforementioned was made, that the usual intermediate passengers' quarters had been stowed chock full of wool, so that the shipping company (there being no demand at the moment for first-class passages) had put them into the cuddy to live, but allowing them only third-class rations and no attendance whatever.

Very many queer things were done at sea in those days, on board the old wind-jammers, but I have never heard or read of a more heartless, brutal case than the one I am writing about. Just think of the facts. These poor people had their rations served out to them in bulk once a week, and were expected to do everything for themselves, store their rations in their cabins, prepare their food, carry it along the main deck to the galley, which was situated abaft the foremast, and then bring it back again when cooked, the said deck being often flooded with over two feet of icy cold water, which, rushing from side to side, owing to the motion of the rolling, plunging ship, made the journey one of danger, even to a bold hardy man not used to the sea and a matter of utter impossibility for a timid woman. There was no stewardess on board, and the dissolute-looking steward, and the still dirtier cabin-boy, seeing no chance of receiving tips from them at the end of the journey, absolutely refused to render them any service at all; a refusal that was backed up

by the skipper, on the plea, that they were only third-class passengers. All this would have been bad enough had the mothers been capable women but they were far from that, as they were the most lackadaisical, useless bodies it has ever been my hard lot to meet, each and all of them asserting, they had seen better days, and so as to enhance their claims to a spurious gentility, absolutely refused to either help themselves or their wretched offspring. However it was too late for me to make any other arrangements, we were at sea, and I could only hope and trust we should be chased home by a gale of wind, but these hopes were doomed to be quickly shattered, as although we left port with a strong fair wind yet on the second day it drew right ahead, and we were on a bowline, till we weathered the Horn, fifty-seven days after we had left Auckland, during the whole of which time the three ladies, in reduced circumstances, remained in their bunks, leaving it to my servant and myself to wait on them and look after, as best we might, their squealing progeny.

True at times they managed to sing hymns of a doleful nature, but that did not recompense us, and long before we weathered the Horn, King Herod (I mean the one who made a name by infant killing) rose many points in my estimation, as I was sorely tempted to launch an armful or two of howling kids over the lee rail every hour out of the twenty-four. The skipper was a grim old Scotch shell-back who had crawled aft through the horse-pipe, bringing with him neither manners nor conversation; he was, I have no doubt, when sober a good seaman and navigator but was the most

unpleasant table companion I have ever met, as his methods of eating would have disgusted a pig. He was, however, very partial to religion, which he took every night with rum, imbibing them both in equal quantities; as he used, after supper, to sit at the cuddy table with a huge Bible in front of him and a bottle of rum mighty adjacent on the swing tray.

Thus provided, following the text with his finger and spelling out the hard words, he would read, in an audible voice, a verse or two from any chapter at which the book might open and then gravely shaking his head, would absorb a stiff nip of rum and would so continue his devotions and potations until he became as drunk as old Noah (late commander of the Ark) when he would lurch off to his virtuous bunk. It may therefore be easily imagined, that I did not get much pleasure or profit out of this old sea-dog's society and as the continuous yowls of the kids effectually prevented my reading, even when not engaged in feeding or grooming them, and as we were hove to, fore-reaching, off the Horn for twenty-one days, with everything smothered in ice, I may be forgiven, by even the tenderest-hearted matron, when I state that I frequently consigned the useless sluts of mothers, their tender though very dirty offspring, together with the skipper and the shipping agent to a far warmer latitude than Cape Stiff.

Anyhow there is one thing certain, that had it not been for Quin and myself, things must have gone very hard with our miserable fellow-passengers, so perhaps after all it may have been Providence who sent me along to pay our passage money,

without first of all making full inquiries, as to who might be going with us, though at that time I was fully convinced to the contrary. However, the longest voyage must end some time or other, so after losing our fore and main topmasts and being nearly cast away in the Channel, thanks to the old man having taken in an overdose of the book of Deuteronomy mixed with O.P. rum, we dropped our anchor at Gravesend, where I thankfully went on shore, after enduring one hundred and twenty-seven days of unsophisticated—(the word begins with an H).

On reaching London, I found my family were over in Paris, so left the following night for the gay city.

CHAPTER II

I START AGAIN ON THE LONG TRAIL

FIVE weeks of civilization were quite enough for me, and as the doctors strongly advised me not to risk the winter in Europe, I determined to skip it, by taking a cruise round Africa. I was guided in this choice by the fact that one of my elder brothers, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, was stationed on the East African coast, and as it was expected, his ship would be shortly returning to England, to be paid off, I thought that perhaps if I picked him up at Zanzibar, he might be able to give me a passage home, failing which, I would find my own way through the Mediterranean and get back to England at my leisure. Perhaps I might get some shooting but I was then like the majority of Britishers, even at the present day, profoundly ignorant of Africa. I therefore booked passages for myself and Quin by the mail boat to Zanzibar, taking him with me because he sternly refused to be left behind. The voyage out to Cape Town was a pleasant one and I found life, on a first-class mail boat, very different to that which I had experienced on board the *Electric*; so that by the time we reached the Cape my health had improved wonderfully and I was again nearly fit.

On arrival in Table Bay I discovered, that to reach Zanzibar, it was necessary for passengers,

proceeding round the coast, to tranship into a small coasting steamer that, stopping at all the intermediary ports, dropped the mails and passengers destined for those places, that had been brought out by the ocean boat; so that after bidding farewell to the Cape Town crowd the rest of us, proceeding further, were transhipped and in a couple of days continued our voyage.

It was on a lovely afternoon that we steamed out of the dock, not a ripple on the water and every promise of a continuance of the fine weather, for which I was thankful, as the discipline on board, struck me as being very lax indeed, many of the crew being drunk and even some of the officers, slightly resembling teetotallers on strike. Moreover the ship itself was simply crowded with passengers. I did not however bother myself about this state of affairs, as in the bright sunshine it did not seem possible any serious disaster could happen and once out at sea both officers and men would quickly sober up. The afternoon passed away and I thoroughly enjoyed the splendid coast scenery, which was very distinct and when the first dressing-bell rang, went down into my cabin, to change into dinner kit.

I had been surprised, all the afternoon, at the closeness we had been keeping to the shore, but on making inquiries, had been informed, that it was customary for boats, proceeding up the coast, to hug the land, so as to avoid the strength of the great current that sets round the Cape and that on such a bright, clear evening there could be no danger. Well, I was just proceeding leisurely to remove my coat, when the ship gave a bump

and I distinctly heard her tearing holes in her skin as she scraped over a reef; then came another bump and she sat tight. In a moment the shrieks of women and children, together with the shouting of men, plainly let me know something out of the common had happened. Hastily opening my dispatch case, I grabbed a roll of notes, which with a few valuables I thrust into a waterproof sponge bag and made fast to my person; then with Quin, who had rushed to me, at the first alarm, tackled to to help a lot of women and children, who shrieking with fear, were trying to get on deck. Here for a time confusion reigned. The boat was crowded with passengers, among whom were many children of Israel, most of them foreign Jews, on their way to the diamond fields, and these beauties, what with their selfish cowardice and lamentations, made infinitely more row than even some of the most nervous women; in fact a lot of them had to be rather roughly handled, before they could be reduced into a state of quietude. Both Quin and myself had taken an active part in quelling the disturbance and as soon as this was done I was able to take a look round. It was still broad daylight, the sun not having yet set, and how on earth the officer of the watch and the quartermaster at the con, had managed to pile us up, where we were, the Lord himself only knew. One thing however was plain as a pikestaff, the ship was a hopeless wreck and the captain and crew, as a whole, were quite incapable of coping with the disaster. The skipper and chief officer, did wander around for a bit as if they were dazed, but, as far as I heard, gave no orders at all, though the second

officer, a fine young fellow, kept his head and behaved, as all the world expects, a British seaman to do when faced with sudden danger; in fact, it was entirely due to his exertions that the bulk of the passengers were saved. As it was evident nothing could be done for the ship, he gave orders for the two quarter boats to be lowered and this, with some trouble, owing to the unhandiness of the half-drunken crew, was done but on reaching the water the port boat immediately filled, she being so sun-cracked as to be quite unseaworthy. The stewardess also did her duty well, as she procured and issued out to the women a number of life-belts, though the sight of these, necessitated our again having to knock down a few Jew boys, in order to prevent them from grabbing and annexing these useful articles. Nor was it only the children of Israel who showed such quite unnecessary anxiety for self-preservation; as a nasty, oleaginous missionary, belonging to some fancy religion or other and who weighed at least nineteen stone, made a most determined effort, to capture one of the belts from a diminutive German sheeny who had surreptitiously sneaked it. The struggle was most diverting, for as the Puritan sky-pilot tried to buckle the belt round his enormous corporation, Shylock, clinging to him like a limpet, tried to find protection within the same apparatus, while both of them vociferated and declared that he individually had the sole right to the life-saving girdle. It would have amused me greatly to have watched the tug of war between Jew smouser and Christian soul-catcher to its bitter end but the plucky stewardess wanted the bone of contention for the

use of a woman, so requested the worthy Quin to procure it for her; which he did in a summary manner as, on their refusing to part with it, he quietly knocked them both down and handed over the belt to its rightful owner. I may here state that the language of the bereaved devil-dodger, as he wallowed in the scuppers, was quite unfit for publication, being such as would have made a camp of mule-packers either blush or turn green with envy. In the meantime another boat had been got into the water, which with the serviceable one already lowered being filled with women and children shoved off for the shore on which they safely landed. The boats then returned to the ship, and although the sun had set and it was by now nearly dark, succeeded in taking off two more loads, which also reached their destination in safety; both boats however, were somewhat damaged, in fact so much so, as to render it impossible to make more trips that night, even had the darkness permitted the attempt to be made.

When the boats left for the last time, those of us who remained on the ship, saw we must pass the night where we were; there was no danger to be apprehended so long as the calm continued but should it come on to blow, or a heavy ground swell get up, the wreck would soon be knocked into scrap-iron and all of us be summoned, to toe the line before Davy Jones. It however struck me, I might just as well parade before that potentate, in a well-fed condition as in a fasting one, so calling Quin, we dived down into the saloon, to see what we could discover in the way of rations. The saloon was half full of water but on the sideboard,

and quite dry, were a ham, tongue, and other cold comestibles which, wrapping up in a tablecloth, I took on deck; Quin at the same time managing to get into my cabin, where he rescued my ulster and portmanteau undamaged and on our second trip, we burgled the bar-room door and brought on deck a good supply of bottled ale and spirits. These provisions were thankfully received by our brother unfortunates so we squatted down on deck and made a good square meal. All this time the captain had remained within his deck cabin and neither by word nor deed, had tried to do anything for the safety or encouragement of his passengers. Not that we, who had voluntarily remained on the wreck, wanted his condolence or sympathy, for we were all men who had knocked about the world above a bit, knew the danger we were in and were quite ready to face it without squealing. One of our number, a man bound for Natal, and who had been a fellow-passenger on the ocean mail boat, I knew to have been a master in the mercantile marine, so as I handed him my tobacco pouch, I said, "Mr Jackson, you're an old shell-back and knowing the coast well, I think it would be better for the rest, if you were to direct us to take such steps, as you may deem fit, to give us a fighting chance for our lives, should it come on to blow." "Well," he replied, "you see it's this way, the ship's captain is still on board and it would be taking a great liberty on my part, should I issue any orders or in any way appear to take the command out of his hands."

Now this was quite right and, I had no doubt, was strict etiquette but then as the ship's skipper

had shut himself up in his cabin, I considered, he had voluntarily abdicated the command and that it was our duty, to do the best we could for ourselves. These ideas, myself and some of the others urged on Mr Jackson, until at last he consented to give us the benefit of his experience. After he had taken a good look round he said, "I don't think we shall have any wind to-night but if a ground swell comes on, as it is quite likely to do, the boat will part amidship, just abaft the funnel and the fore part sink; so get as many ropes as you can and stretch them from the after bollards, round the mainmast and the companion hatch, in order that we can have something to hold on by, should the sea break over the stern part, which is firmly fixed on the rocks and will, I think, hold together for the night." This we did and as we were joined by the boatswain and two others of the crew, now fairly sober, we made a good job of it, completing just in time, for a heavy ground swell shortly set in when, as Jackson had prognosticated, before midnight, the hull of the ship parted, the bows disappearing in a whirl of foam, while the stern part on which we were, remained intact; and although we soon got drenched, by the seas that broke over us, still, thanks to the stretched ropes, there was but little danger of any of us being swept away. Morning came and as the sun rose, the heavy swell subsided, which was very lucky, for had it continued or increased, the remains of the hull would have soon been knocked to pieces and moreover the boats would not have been able to again get alongside. This however they did and we were all, eventually landed on the beach where we found the passengers,

who had come ashore the previous night, in rather an evil plight. I had however come off fairly well, as I had saved my money and valuables and Quin had managed to bring on shore a portmanteau full of clothes. One individual had however fared even better than I (let us designate him as Smith). Well Mr Smith had been a fellow-passenger on the ocean boat, and on leaving Southampton had worshipped so devoutly at the shrine of Bacchus that, after we had been a few days at sea, the captain and doctor had forbidden him to be served with any more of his favourite potations, thereby reducing him to a term of enforced sobriety. Of course as soon as the boat reached Cape Town he made up for lost time and treated himself to a scrumptious bust but as he was booked through to Port Natal, where he resided, some friends had collected him and put him, very full indeed, on board the coasting steamer; when he promptly turned in so as to get a good snooze, which would render him fit to continue his devotion to the rosy god. He was therefore enjoying a refreshing siesta when the boat struck and peacefully slumbered through the subsequent turmoil. It was therefore only on the stewardess, who was, in the most plucky way, making a last survey of the cabins to see that none of the women or children passengers had been overlooked that he was discovered. "Get up, sir, get up at once!" cried the stewardess, shaking the sleeping beauty. "Eh what, oh mine's a brandy," grunted the bacchanalian relapsing into slumber. "But, sir, you must get up at once, the ship's ashore and wrecked," screamed the plucky woman. "Eh what, what's that,



SHIPWRECKED BUT UNCONCERNED.



ship's wrecked is it, then go and tell the captain it's his business not mine, I'm a first-class passenger go night," and the imperturbable inebriate turned over to continue his rest cure. "But, sir, you must get up, indeed you must, the passengers are leaving the ship," and she shook and pulled him with all her strength. "Can't have got to Natal yet and I'm booked through," quoth Smith, but it was no use, the brave little woman stuck to him, pulled him out of his bunk and drove him up the companion way, before her, in the same way as she would have driven a marauding hen out of her back garden. On their arrival on deck, she busied herself getting the women and children into the boats, while he loafed about in a disconsolate sort of a way, not taking the slightest interest in anything that was going on and eventually, after the last boat had pushed off, he drifted out of everyone's ken and was not missed until next morning, when the question was passed round, "Where is Smith?" He was certainly not on deck, and as no sea, heavy enough to wash him away, had broken over us during the night, Jackson opined he must have gone below, and started off down the companion steps to look for him. On reaching the saloon he found the water to be up to his shoulders but by wading and swimming he managed to get into the state-room, which he shared with Smith, and there he found that philosopher comfortably asleep in his top berth, with the water only an inch under the bunk boards. Jackson quickly and I fear rather unceremoniously woke him up, when the delinquent, coolly taking his neatly-folded clothes, watch and cash, from under his pillow, tied them

to the top of his head with the bed sheet, slid into the water and followed his rescuer on deck, where he carefully dried himself, then calmly dressing, went on shore, the only one, out of that shipwrecked crowd, who had thoroughly enjoyed a night's repose. Now I leave it to you, my reader, to decide, whether his philosophical conduct was caused by hardihood or brandy or did he trust Old Nick to look after his own? anyhow, he scored. The wretched women and children, in fact all the people, who had landed the previous evening, had passed a miserable night camped out on the beach but during the day carts and carriages, sent from Simon's Bay, arrived and took us all back to Cape Town. I have given a full account of this wreck, not because there was anything out of the common about it, but because it was responsible for my passing thirty years in South Africa, an idea that had never previously entered my mind. On reaching Cape Town I found I should either have to wait there a month for a boat, to take me on to Zanzibar, or proceed slowly up the coast, putting in time at Port Elizabeth, East London and Port Natal, at the last of which ports the East Coast boat would catch me up and take me on. I chose the latter course of procedure, as I had already exhausted the sights of Cape Town and being unacquainted with any one residing there, I thought I might better kill time at one of the other ports, especially as the hotel accommodation at Cape Town was, at that epoch, vile. I therefore returned to the ocean boat and went in her as far as East London, which was her destination, and her port of departure for her return journey to England; so that on reaching

there I had to land and wait for the coasting steamer that was to take me on to Zanzibar. This sounded bad, but when I got on shore I found it to be far worse than I had even anticipated, as I quickly discovered the place to be the protoplast of hell upon earth, tenanted by the scum and refuse of the seven seas. Let me explain. At that time the breakwater and the harbour works had just been begun and all ships, trading to the port, had to lie out in an open roadstead, the dangers of which were very manifest, by the number of wrecks piled up along the beach. This being the case, all passengers and goods, consigned to East London, had to be landed in cargo boats that were hauled over the bar and into the river along a huge hawser, leading from the wharf to a buoy moored out at sea, to which the tightly-battened-down barges were towed and from whence, having picked up the hawser, they were dragged along it by their crews. This was savagely, hard and very dangerous work and the men forming the crews, were perhaps the roughest and most abandoned toughs in the world; being chiefly composed of runaway sailors, of every nationality, so that, the East London serf boatmen were, at that time, the terror of the South African coast. Well it may be easily imagined that a small colonial seaport town having a large percentage of its population composed of such a type of mankind, drawing big wages, and who were able to buy vile brandy (known as Cape Smoke) for ninepence per bottle, besides obtaining other liquor by the unorthodox way of broaching cargo, was not the most reposeful nor pleasant haven in which to pass a fortnight; and before I had been

an hour in the frowsy, boozing den, miscalled an hotel, I was thoroughly sick and disgusted with the place and longed to clear out. But where was I to go? I was as ignorant of South Africa as an English colonial secretary and knew not which way to turn, when happening to look out of the window, I saw coming along the road, a sergeant dressed in the uniform of the 24th Regiment and immediately went out and accosted him, asking for news of his corps, many of the senior officers of which I knew well, and was delighted when he informed me, that his regiment was quartered at King William's Town and that many of my old friends were still serving in it. He also informed me that King was only a short journey by rail, that I could reach there the same day and that the hotel accommodation there was much better than at East London. This was indeed good news, so Quin bundled our traps across the river to the station and the same evening we found ourselves camped in King William's Town, where I obtained comfortable quarters.

CHAPTER III

A SOUTH AFRICAN PICNIC

My old friends in the first battalion of H.M. 24th Regiment, received me very kindly and I enjoyed for a couple of weeks the *bon camaraderie*, always to be found in the society of an English regimental mess, so was quite sorry when the date of my departure drew near. Now during the whole time I was located at King William's Town, rumours were afloat that the natives, especially the Gaika tribe, were in a state of great unrest and threatening to raid into the Cape Colony, so as to wipe out the Fingoe tribe, that had lived for many years under the ægis of British protection. These Fingoes, had originally been the slaves and helots of the Gaikas but now having waxed fat and consequently cheeky, were very much inclined to fancy themselves quite as good as their former masters. I do not wish to imply that they would have dared to stand up against the Gaikas in battle, no not for a moment but having lived for some years under the tuition of missionaries they had lost their pristine humility, so that at beer-drinkings and other native social gatherings, they were more than uppish in their manners and gave their whilom lords and masters to understand, that they considered themselves to be on a level plane of equality. This impudence on the part of the Fingoes, was ex-

tremely galling to the haughty Gaikas, who still regarded them as their dogs and chafed at the idea, that the absurd British law did not allow them (the Gaikas) to take big sticks and reason their one-time despised slaves, back again to their original subservience. Both tribes were rich in cattle, and each tribe longed to possess his neighbour's, and when a nigger languishes for anything, be he so-called Christian or Pagan, he usually tries to obtain it by the simple method of thieving. Numerous stock robberies had therefore occurred, for some time, along the frontier, which helped to fan the embers of jealousy into the flames of war. For the last year or more, there had been bickerings and trouble on the border, though no one believed it would come to actual blows, as all white men, border traders and settlers as well as officials had a great respect and liking for old Kreli, the paramount chief of the Gaikas, who together with the seniors of his tribe earnestly desired to maintain peace. Kreli had however a son named Segou, a bitter hater of both white men and Fingoes, who was the head centre and leader of the young bloods and warriors, always the most turbulent faction among native tribes, and this fellow together with his tail, puffed up as all niggers become when they have waxed fat, determined to raid and loot the Fingoes, even at the risk of bringing on a war with the white man. These tribal frictions at length culminated during a big beer-drinking match, held by some Fingoes in British territory, but at which some Gaikas were present; a row started, blows were struck, blood was drawn and the Gaikas, few in number, had to bolt across the frontier, return-

ing shortly afterwards in strength to revenge the insult. The Fingoes squealed loudly for British protection, the Gaikas made a big raid over the border and the war began. Well to make a long story short, the news of the Gaikas' raid and the declaration of the war reached King William's Town the night previous to my contemplated departure from there, and of course, the chance of a scrap caused much pleasurable excitement among my kind entertainers; so much so, that their elation became infectious, spreading even to myself, the consequence being, that I at once offered my services to the General, Sir Arthur Cunningham, and volunteered to join any irregular force it might be deemed necessary to raise. The General being pleased to accept my offer, in a couple of days, I was again in the saddle, ready to play once more the game I loved so dearly. The disturbances in South Africa, during the years 1877 and 1878, are called the Gaika and Galeka Wars, and I suppose it is right to speak of them as such, although there was but little hard fighting done, and as for privations they were entirely absent, at least so it appeared to Quin and myself, who had both of us experienced, what genuine hardships and bitter savage warfare really meant in New Zealand. Of course there were some men who grumbled at the work and commissariat but they were creatures who, having most likely been brought up on scraps and meagre diet in their youth, would find fault with the cuisine and accommodation of the Savoy or Cecil hotels; certainly they were not hall-marked lost legionaries.

Now I must confess to liking a good dinner and snug bed myself and blame no man for looking

after his personal comforts, even in the field, but I thoroughly despise and have always had the utmost contempt for a thing, posing as a man, who whines about the roughness of his rations, so long as he has any to eat at all, or of having to bed down in the rain and mud, when the glorious game of war is afoot. Bad scan to a rotter of that sort, he is quite out of place at the front; he should bury his weapons and take the billet of head swab-wringer in a London cook-shop. Of course a soldier must be fed and should be well fed, but I assert and maintain that the mobility and usefulness of H.M. troops, both Imperial and Colonial, during all the wars in South Africa, were most unnecessarily hampered by the long lines of wagons, employed to lug along superfluous luxuries and kit that were never even dreamed of in the New Zealand wars.

As far as the fighting went, I was not fortunate enough to be present at any of the three engagements, that took place in the Transkei, which by a stretch of considerable imagination might be called battles, though I had my share in many skirmishes and cattle-lifting operations. The major engagements were brought about by the natives attacking various patrols; in the first of which, they drove a party of the Cape Frontier Armed and Mounted Police off the field; in the second they were badly beaten by the Cape Volunteers; and in the third a couple of companies of the 24th, a few of the Naval Brigade and a party of Carrington's Horse, drove their whole army, together with that of the Galekas, which tribe under their chief Sandilli had broken out, helter-skelter off the field, a defeat which dis-

heartened both tribes to such an extent that they retired into their most inaccessible fastnesses and refused to come out and fight again in the open. True there were a few other skirmishes, and the troops were given the chance of showing their inaptitude at bush fighting, especially at the Peiri Bush, some twenty miles from King William's Town, where some marvellous combined movements, as useless as they were elaborate, consumed time up to the middle of 1878, when the death of Sandilli, killed by a chance shot, put an end to the Galeka resistance. The Gaikas, had earlier in the year caved in, and for some months all the work of the forces was devoted to the attempt of catching old Kreli, in which they were unsuccessful, as the poor old fellow was so popular, that neither white settler, official, nor native, would give him away. The first field service I was called upon to perform, opened my eyes as to the impedimenta, thought necessary in South Africa, for a patrol or small war party to encumber themselves with. It happened in this way. At the moment I was in King William's Town, when one day Lieut. Colonel Puleine, at the time town commandant, sent for me and on my reporting said, "Oh, Browne, I want you to start off this morning with whatever spare men can be scraped together and go by train to the railhead at the Kei Road Station, from whence you will have to get on, as best you can, to a railway bridge that is built across the Buffalo River, and some miles further along the semi-constructed line, as the O.C. of the volunteers guarding the bridge earnestly demands help, stating he expects to be attacked by overwhelming numbers. I can't understand this, as I have never

apprehended any danger in that locality, but must of course send the required assistance, as the O.C. at Kei Road has not a man to spare. Of course you are fully aware, that I have no duty men to spare you, so I have given orders to collect every man in town fit to carry a rifle. You will have a queer lot, officers' servants not at the front, together with both tommies and volunteers dismissed from hospital, as fit for service, in fact they will be a scratch pack, but they are the only men I can send and I don't believe there is the least danger of your having to fight. You will draw rations at the Kei Road and assume command of the post on your arrival, and now as your train will start at noon you had better get ready." I was off to my quarters like a shot, where I extracted a wild howl of delight from Quin by the old days' magic words "swags and haversacks, rail at noon, on foot." There was no need to say another word nor give any more directions, so I turned my pony and cantered away, being quite certain that, bar an earthquake or sudden death, the worthy man would be at the station with our two swags ready packed, together with four days' rations ready to be humped, at 11.45 to a minute. I was a bit rushed with work that morning and as it was a long march from the barracks to the station, my, somewhat motley, crowd had to fall in at 10 o'clock, so I had no time to ask many questions of the camp adjutant when I took them over. Now as I said before, this was the very first war party I had ever taken command of in South Africa, and I was much surprised to find them paraded without swags or even great-coats, carrying nothing except their rifles, ammuni-

tion pouches and water bottles. True the Colonel had already informed me that we were to draw our rations at Kei Road, but how about blankets—were the men to draw them there also? I put the question to the camp adjutant who replied, "Oh, no, the blankets, packs, etc., have been sent on to the station in a wagon," and I marvelled. On reaching the station I found Quin with his own and my swags done up in the old New Zealand fashion. I at once entrained the men and after a short, though roundabout journey, arrived at Kei Road, the temporary terminus on the main line from East London to Queenstown, then under construction, though the work had been stopped owing to the war. Kei Road was also an important place, as it was the point from which the rations and stores, required for the use of the troops in the Transkei, were despatched by bullock wagon to the front. Our train was met by the O.C. of the place and a commissariat officer, the latter of whom, after the usual salutations, requested me to step into his office and sign receipts for rations, stores, etc. This I did, and was nearly struck dumb, when I cast my eyes over the long list of comestibles that it was evidently considered necessary, for a detachment of less than one hundred men, proceeding on an urgent though short expedition, to burden themselves. I had in my innocence and ignorance of South African methods of procedure, imagined that, as in the New Zealand wars, each man would have been served out with about four pounds of cooked meat or perhaps bacon, and four pounds of biscuits, which with a blanket and his private little odds and ends he would have to hump on his own

back; in fact Quin had packed our swags with that idea but when I came to study that list, what did I see? I rubbed my eyes but there it was, written in a clerkly hand, so many pounds of fresh meat, sufficient for two days' consumption, so many pounds of bully beef enough for six days' consumption, with even quantities of flour, biscuit, baking powder, compressed vegetables, tea, coffee, sugar, split peas, lime juice, rum, pepper, salt, cocoa, and great Scott! could I credit my eyes?—jam! Nor was this all for as I was gasping for breath, up bustled a smart commissariat sergeant, with what he called a supplementary list of luxuries, which had been purchased for the benefit of the troops by kind-hearted, patriotic Colonial ladies, and of which a portion was to be issued to my party. Oh, ye gods of war! what was the noble game coming to? I glanced at the proffered document, and there plainly writ, was preserved milk, arrow-root, corn-flour and the Lord only knows what else. I was completely flabbergasted, and under the impression I had gone dotty or at least had got a touch of the sun, I turned to the commissariat officer and said as coolly as I could, "I think there must be some mistake here. I'm going on Active Service and, maybe, will have to fight in a few hours' time, so how in the name of all that's righteous can you expect my party to hump this grocery shop on their backs?" "Hump it on your backs!" quoth he. "Why, two wagons have been requisitioned for you, and as they are already packed, come over to the mess and have a drink and a mouthful of tiffin while they inspan the oxen." The suggestion was a good one, absorbing tiffin,

would give me time to recover my equilibrium and I badly wanted a drink to soothe my ruffled nerves, so, was in the act of accompanying him, when up doubled a sergeant of the Ordnance Department, who requested me to sign another receipt, for tents, camp kettles, baking pots, tools and sufficient miscellaneous articles, enough to stock a hardware shop. "Sir," said he, saluting, "everything has been packed on the wagons, would you like to inspect them?" "No, thanks," I replied, "for if I do, I may find warming-pans and infant feeding-bottles, and by the great gun of Athlone, I draw the line at them." I went to the mess and tried to eat tiffin but my meal was spoilt, as my brain buzzed with the list of stores I had signed for and I asked myself could this be war, or was it a big picnic I had shipped for? I could not make it out, and visions, rose before my mind's eye, of the dripping New Zealand bush, the snow-covered fern ranges and the icy-cold river beds, as they did also, of outfits of, gaunt, famished men, half clad in ragged shawls and jumpers, loaded like pack mules, who, with only a few mouthfuls of putrid salt pork and mouldy biscuits, twixt them and starvation, toiled on uncomplainingly to serve their Queen and flag. No matter, I mentally gasped, as I gazed out over the bright, sunlit, open veldt and swigged off a glass of ale, new countries new ways of doing things, and maybe, we will be able to serve our dear and gracious Queen and the glorious old Rag, as well with our waist-belts tightened, with split peas, arrowroot and jam as we did in the old days, when the said belts hung loose, on a regimen of corrupt pig's flesh and de-

composed biscuits. On the other hand, how we were going to catch a mobile enemy, lugging along, as we were about to do, food and ordnance truck, sufficient to stock Whiteley's Stores, was beyond my comprehension, so I relegated the matter to Old Nick; maybe the niggers would come to our whistle and allow themselves to be killed in a decent manner, anyhow there's the fall in, so that I shall shortly ascertain how the oracle is worked in South Africa.

Of course, during tiffin, I had tried to gather all the information I could, about the road we were to travel and the nature of the fighting I might expect, either *en route* or on our arrival at our destination; and had been assured that the road was a very good one, running through bare open country, without any cover or bush, the whole way, that could give an enemy the remotest chance of forming an ambuscade; moreover that my spans of oxen were very good ones, in the fittest condition and that I should reach the bridge long before the sun set. So far so good, but when I spoke about the chances of a scrap, a badly-concealed grin ran all round the company and the O.C. said, "Ah, well, you must tell us all about the fighting when you come back, for my own part I don't believe you will see a hostile nigger." This was not cheerful news, nor could I understand it, as why on earth should a post commandant squeal so loudly for help, unless the said post was in the greatest danger; anyhow my orders were to go to his relief, so that when the bugle sounded the fall in, I thanked my entertainers for their hospitality and proceeded to my wagons.

On reaching them, I found the oxen inspanned and the men in their shirt sleeves ready to move off, but the worthy Quin was half daft with excitement at the novel outfit, for on seeing me he rushed up and babbling in his talk exclaimed, "Oh, be the holy piper that played before Moses, look at this, sor, sure they are sinding us to foight nagurs wid long carts, each cart wid a tint on its tail, propelled by bulls, sor, wid horns reaching from Hell to Galway and not a tail tween tin of thim, sor, and yer honour, sor, no man humps onything but his own four bones yer honour, and av he gits tired av thim, sure he puts thim in the tint of the cart he does, and sor, there's oat male an pay male, and the Blessed Saint Biddy only knows whot beside, an' be this an' be that, sor, av the foighting is only aqual to the ating Africy will be a hard place to bate it will." Cutting my faithful henchman's panegyrics short, I formed our small column of march and moved off.

The road I found to be a very good one, the wagons were light, the oxen in good fettle and as the men marched in their shirt sleeves, only carrying their rifles and belts, we slung along at a good pace, reaching our destination a couple of hours before sunset. As we approached the place, I was destined to receive another surprise; I could see the iron bridge spanning the river and noticed it had been sand-bagged at both ends, which had turned it into an impregnable fort, at least against savages unprovided with artillery, especially as no high ground commanded it in any way. The defenders were evidently on the alert, as the bridge

simply bristled with bayonets, and the tents of the garrison had all been lowered by the simple plan of pulling the foot of the pole out through the doorway. Come, said I to myself, this looks as if there were fighting going on and I swept the veldt on both sides of the river with my glasses, but although the country was as open as a calm sea and for miles absolutely devoid of cover, still I could not see a vestige of any enemy so marched on till we reached the camp at the end of the bridge. After waiting a few minutes for a passage to be made through the sand bags, a big fine-looking, bearded man came out, evidently in a state of extreme nervousness, who after ejaculating, "Thank God you have arrived in time," introduced himself to me as the O.C. of the post. After he had read the written orders, I had received from Colonel Pulleine, I asked, "What is the matter? where are the niggers and when do you expect to be attacked?" "Oh," he replied, "I expect to be attacked every moment, that bush," and he pointed at one at least twenty miles away, "is chock full of them, but I have taken every precaution and have kept the men standing at their alarm posts." "Since when?" I queried. "Oh, since yesterday morning," he replied. "Then dismiss them at once to their ordinary camp duties, one sentry on the top of those sand bags is quite sufficient," and in a few minutes the camps were pitched and the men were comfortably making a lusty supper, off the sumptuous rations we had been provided with. Next day I started back to King William's Town, taking with me the officer who had caused the scare, where he was examined by a medical board, when it turned out

the poor fellow had had a bad sunstroke in India. He was invalided to Cape Town where he died shortly afterwards, fully convinced to the last he was surrounded by hordes of niggers ravening for his blood.

CHAPTER IV

PULLEINE'S LAMBS

"They don't know much of soldiering, and nothing more of drill, Their discipline is awful, and their language is worse still ; Sure, it's enough to dazzle you, to hear the blanks and d——ns, That punctuate the sentiments, of Pulleine's ruddy Lambs."

QUIN.

ONE of my earliest commands, and certainly one of my most amusing and interesting was thrust upon me at very short notice. In February 1878 I was the guest of Colonel Pulleine of the first 24th Regiment (now the South Wales Borderers). After dinner, over cigars he said to me, "Maori, I have raised a regiment of Rangers called after me. I've no possible chance of looking after them myself and the men, though of magnificent stamp, require a taut hand, and to be knocked into shape. I want you to ride to their camp across the river to-morrow, and take command." I hesitated and pointed out that I was a cavalryman and did not care to have anything to do with foot sloggers; but he insisted, saying I had already been put in orders for the post. I was by no means keen on the job, for the men had already made a name for themselves and Pulleine's Lambs, as they were called, were more feared by the citizens than the Kafirs. But orders are orders and I obeyed. This is how Pulleine's Rangers had been raised.

A railroad was being constructed from Kei



THE SENTINEL LAMB.



Road to Queenstown but the work had to cease when war broke out and it became a problem what to do with the men employed thereon, huge English navvies of the old type. Other works had also ceased, so Pulleine's Rangers became a refuge for the rowdy, dissolute and the desolate. I had been told that a man brought before the magistrates, for a rowdy drunk, or other like offence, was often asked, "Will you go to gaol or join Pulleine's Rangers?" But it is only fair to say, that in the field, away from town and the canteens they were a very fine set of fellows. I was not altogether happy when, at daybreak next morning, I rode across the bridge to the camp. Colonel Pulleine had told me that, as is usual in hot countries, the parade would take place before sunrise. Well, here was the camp, but where were the men? and above all where was the sentry? Presently I saw a rifle leaning against a bush; I rode up and saw a man sitting under the bush. He had no boots or socks on, and wore only a tattered shirt and a pair of trousers, of which the less said the better. The most noticeable thing about him was a huge black eye, and I don't think you could have put your finger upon a sound spot on his face. He had no hat but in his hands he held a tin pannikin, which he turned round and round and gazed into its depths with his undarkened orb. I opened a conversation with, "Who on earth are you?" He replied, with much bad language, "I'm the —— sentry, and if I'm not —— soon relieved I'm darned if I don't go home. Who the Hades are you anyhow?" I intimated as gently as seemed necessary that I was his new commanding officer

but this information did not seem to strike him as a matter of any importance, for slowly finishing the contents of his pannikin, he said, "Just you ride up to the —— camp and tell that —— corporal o' the guard that I want to come home." Argument with this chap seemed useless, so I made my way sorrowfully up to the camp. I could not see a soul about. I looked into the guard tent, and found the guard, more or less battered, fast asleep. I struck the tent sharply with my sjambok but could get no answer, so I rode over to the officers' lines. I dismounted at the first tent. It was fastened up, so I thrashed it and shouted. A sleepy voice inquired, "Who the such-and-such a place was there?" I replied, "I'm the new commandant. Come out at once and speak to me." There were muttered ejaculations, with much scuffling and presently two dishevelled objects, who might have been anything, appeared. "Your name and rank, sir?" I said to the elder of the scarecrows. "Lieutenant So-and-So," he replied. Then to my inquiry, "Why are not the men on parade, sir?" he replied, "I do not think they care to turn out this morning." "Go and find the regimental sergeant-major, if you have such a person in this camp," I said, and he shuffled off. The other fellow I sent to wake the rest of the officers, and by this time I had determined, in my mind, to make more than one man's life miserable and to generally twist and cut the tails, of at least, that mob of Lambs. Presently there appeared a smart-looking but still rather drunk fellow, trying, as well as he could, to button his tunic. He was the sergeant-major and had served in the regulars.

"I'll try, sir, but I don't think they'll come," he said when I had ordered him to turn the men out. "Have you any old soldiers, mounted police, or any men who have ever been under discipline before? If so march them here." He saluted and presently marched up twenty or thirty men to me. I told them I meant to have a change in the camp at once and ordered them to assist the sergeant-major in turning out the other men. The force of discipline remained strong and there were some brisk and lively minutes while they jumped into the tents and threw out the occupants head first, and so finally Pulleine's Rangers fell in. They mustered about two hundred in all and then I inspected them. Ye gods! what a crowd of drunken scoundrels they were. To the officers I said, "Go at once to your posts and proceed with the drill." Only one officer knew anything about drill and what he knew was immaterial, but at last I set the men lounging about, marching you could not call it, then sadly rode back to tell Colonel Pulleine that, until about seventy men had been discharged and some competent officers secured we could never form a corps. This was done, and so we raised Pulleine's Lambs, a terror to the country and a nuisance to myself.

A month to six weeks' hard work and the depot of Pulleine's Rangers, at King, presented a very different appearance to the fold of Lambs that I had taken over in February; and one day General Thesiger (afterwards Lord Chelmsford) ordered me to take command at a farm, belonging to a big colonial pot who was difficult to get on with and who required much tact to handle. When I took

over command, the garrison consisted of two companies of Pulleine's Rangers, two detachments of regular infantry and a body of Carrington's Horse. Every morning the owner of the farm, who would not have been able to have lived there had it not been garrisoned, came to the orderly tent with complaints of the most frivolous nature, one of them I remember being, that the men sat down under the shade of his trees. He owned a valuable old cock ostrich, and one day he came whining to me with the complaint that the bird had been stolen by my men. I said, "What rot! what could they do with it? It's only strayed away." But he argued on till in despair I ordered the bugler to blow the alarm, which meant that every man would go to his alarm post and leave the camp empty.

"Now," I said, "we will go round and search." We looked into every tent, in the water carts, in empty ammunition boxes, and to my annoyance, he even accepted my invitation to search my own tent. Then I took up my parable and told him some home truths. That night there was an awful row in the lines of the Rangers. Fighting went on at a high rate, the air quivered with language and more blood was spilt, in five minutes, than in the whole of a colonial action. I turned out the rest of the camp, got the rioters tied up to wagon wheels or pegged out and the next morning had the worst cases brought before me.

The first was a huge navvy known as Kentish Jim. "You are charged with creating a disturbance in camp and resisting the picket. What have you got to say?" He thumped a huge fist

down on the table before me and said, "This is what I've got to say." The colour-sergeant on duty said, "Stand to attention." Again the huge fist shot out and a gigantic arm swept the astonished and horrified regular aside, with the words, "Get thee away, thee blooming militiaman, I'm a-talking to the commandant." Then he turned to me with "You're the gent as axed me a question and this is all I've got to say. I'll be durned if I'll have any of that ruddy duck cooked in ma pot." I gave the fellow three extra guards, though it was impossible to deal with men so lacking in any sense of discipline, and the next day he was brought before me again. While on sentry over two prisoners (regulars) he had handed his rifle to one of them and sent the other to the canteen. When I asked him what he had to say for himself, he launched out, "Look 'ere, mister, I calls this blooming rot. Yesterday morning, as ever was, sergeant comes to me and says, 'Jim, you're for extra guard this morning,' an' I says, 'Right, Sergeant.' So I togs up smart and gives me old gun a rub up and falls in. Then 'e puts me in charge of two prisoners, who were to dig a 'ole so wide and so deep by twelve o'clock. So I says, 'Right, Mr Luftenant,' an' marches off. Then I says to the prisoners, 'Now you Tommies, dig that 'ole,' and they only says, 'You walk about sentry.' And, sir, it 'ud give yer stomachache to sees them Tommies start to dig. So I says to them, 'Tommies, the gel'tmn says as 'ow the 'ole must be dug come twelve o'clock, thee knows more about gun than oi does, one of yer take the gun an' I'll shift the muck.' So one of the Tommies took the gun an' I soon dug that 'ole bigger than I was tole

to. Then I says to t'other Tommy, 'Ere, lad, thee's doing nowt, take this crown to the canteen and get beer and smokes.' And 'e did so, and we was a-sittin' happy by the 'ole having our beer an' smokes, when up comes officer, an' told me I was a prisoner. Now I axes you, sir, wot the 'ell's the use of that? "

I forget how I punished the fellow, but not much could be done with a man whose ideas of soldiering were so lax.

Later on in the year I was ordered to proceed with my men to the Transkei and take command of a station, of considerable importance, called Quintani, where among other details that I had under me was a detachment of mounted infantry belonging to that glorious old regiment, the Connaught Rangers.

CHAPTER V

FATHER WALSH

I THINK it was in June and July 1878 I took over the command of Quintani and there, as I said before, I found a detachment of mounted infantry belonging to the Connaught Rangers; they were a warm lot; fine fighters, but having no sense of *meum* and *tuum*. Nothing was too hot or heavy for them to steal. If it were too hot, they would sit down while it cooled; if it were too heavy, they would fetch a bullock cart to carry it off. How they stole a mission bell, for instance, is a Transkei tradition but that is another yarn. One morning soon after I took command they besieged my orderly tent, and intimated they all wanted to see me. I said, I could only see one at a time and presently the colour-sergeant ushered in a big Irishman with a mouth like a torn haversack. "Plaze, sor, we hear you do be an Oirishman." I owned up cheerfully and asked him what he wanted. "Sor," he said, "we do be onaisy about our sowls." "Sowls!" I exclaimed. "You can rest perfectly contented that every man in the detachment is irretrievably lost. You haven't got a sowl among the lot of you possible to be saved." He overlooked the remark, and said, "Sor, we do want to confess." "Better not confess to me," I said,

"or I'll have to send every one of you down, to your headquarters, for a courts-martial." "But, sor," he begins again, "we do sadly want a praste." "A priest!" I exclaimed; "why, a whole college of cardinals could do you no good but I'll send down country and ask for a priest to be sent up." He thanked me, and the deputation went back to its lines with sighs of relief. The following Saturday, Father Walsh turned up and from the first I took a great liking to him. He was certainly one of the finest men I ever knew in South Africa, or anywhere else, as far as that goes. Father Walsh was a big, raw-boned, Irish priest, with a fund of droll stories, the courage of a lion, the tenderness of a woman, and a hearty laugh that was worth its weight in rifles, when the corps, he happened to be with, was fighting in a tight corner. A few years afterwards, in the first Boer War, he happened to be besieged in a lonely fort and in spite of the wishes of the young officer, in command, he refused point blank to consent to a surrender; and he so fired the little garrison with his own unquenchable courage that they held out till the war was over and made one of the few bright spots, in a long story of British disasters.

All this is a matter of history, as South Africans know, and it is for me to tell of the man as I met him. Well, Father Walsh reached my camp on a Saturday afternoon and we had a pleasant evening. I had had a church rigged up with tarpaulins and next morning he set to work to try and ease the consciences of his parishioners. Knowing that he could not, as a Catholic priest, break his fast before saying Mass, I asked him "when he would have

breakfast?" The holy Father hove a sigh, that nearly blew me out of the tent and said, "I shall be late, very late, as I shall have to hear the men's confessions first." "Father," I said, "before you have got half through those blackguards' sins, it'll be dinner-time and more, I recommend you, so as to expedite matters, to take them by sections; however, I'll have breakfast ready when you're through." The day was miserably cold and wet, when about noon the Father bustled into my tent exclaiming with unction, "Ah, ah, me boy, I want a drop of comfort before breakfast." The whisky bottle was brought out and saluted and then we went together to the mess tent. No sooner had we entered, when Quin rushed in with the principal dish, a steaming, savoury, game stew, the odour of which being tempting enough to make an anchorite break his fast during a black Lent. Unhappily, as Quin entered the tent, he caught his foot in the curtain and in a twinkling the boiling hot stew was pouring all down the wrong side of the holy man's neck.

Up jumped his reverence foaming. "Och, yer clumsy blaggard," howled he, "if I were Major Browne now, I'd call ye a —— scoundrel, but as I'm Father Walsh, I only tell ye, ye potato-faced Irishman, don't ye do it agin. And seeing by the cut ov yer ugly mug you're Irish and knowing you didn't come to yer divotions this marnin, I'll be after yer wid a kippeen as soon as I've broken this black fast, bad luck to ye."

Then we soothed and scraped the stew off the holy man and he settled down to his breakfast, when presently, being pacified and comforted he

forgave the worthy Quin and the camp, purified by his past labours, rested in peace.

Towards the end of 1878 the regular troops moved back to the base and Colonel Pulleine commanding at Ibeka asked me to march down to King William's Town, a large party of his Lambs whose time had expired. Some of the Lambs, who had been sent down previously, had given a lot of trouble, getting drunk, raising Cain, and roaming about the country to the consternation of the settlers, who had by this time begun to rebuild and re-occupy their ruined homesteads and who held Pulleine's Lambs in greater fear than they did the Kafirs. On the morning we started down, Pulleine by way of a joke, said he would bet me a dinner I didn't get my party down intact; which wager I laughingly accepted. As my party marched on to our second night's halt, at the Kei River drift, I saw, to my annoyance, that the hotel and canteen had been re-opened, so I rode on to warn the proprietor, saying to him, "You may sell the men all the beer you like but no hard tack" (as we called spirits in that part). "If you disobey," I continued, "I will make it hot for you, and if you're fool enough, to let the men get drunk, they'll make it hotter still." He agreed. He knew Pulleine's Lambs by reputation and swore he would not sell them a drop of spirits. When the men arrived, I had the arms piled and before I dismissed them, I warned them, saying they could have all the beer they wanted but no spirits. Then hot with my long ride I went with my four officers, down to the river to bathe. We were all swimming about, enjoying ourselves, when suddenly there was

a report and a bullet splashed up the water near my head. Then another whizzed past me and looking up, I saw three of my precious men, standing on the trestle bridge, that crossed the river, taking aim at me. I was exceedingly annoyed, I hope it was not wrong of me, and I swam ashore at a racing stroke, urged on by another bullet that whistled over my head. When I landed I did not stop to dry or dress, but rushed along, stark naked, to catch the fellows as they came from the bridge. On my way I caught up an ox-yoke and armed with this I met them and dealt out impromptu justice that soon squashed the mutiny, of which nothing more was said. I don't think the fellows wanted to kill me. Their idea was to give me a scare by way of protest against my temperance measure. They however got but little by it. One of them had gone down with a broken jaw and another with a smashed shoulder, while I had difficulty to save the life of the third as my servant Quin was proceeding to batter his brains out when Kentish Jim seized him and dragging his prey from Quin lashed the bounder more dead than alive to the wheel of a wagon where I kept him all night.

Then as a female face at the hotel window was looking rather scared, I bethought myself of my clothes, and dressed.

I marched my party to the base, leaving the two injured men in the Koumgha Hospital and as by doing so I could not claim that the party was intact Colonel Pulleine won his bet and received his dinner.

Before I quite disband the Lambs I think I

might say something more about some of the extraordinary men who formed the nucleus of the regiment and who as a class have quite disappeared from both England and the Colonies. Wonderful men they were. I had never met them before. I shall never meet their like again, so here goes for my last yarn about the Lambs although many of them served under me the following year in Zululand, showing that the spirit of the Lost Legion exists in the heart of the untutored navvy as well as in the heart of his better born and educated countryman.

CHAPTER VI

THE IDIOSYNCRASY OF THE BRITISH NAVVY ON FIELD SERVICE

It was in 1878 I joined Pulleine's Rangers. The yarn of how I came to belong to the Lambs has been told and also how they were recruited, and in that yarn I stated, that the nucleus of the regiment was composed of some two hundred British navvies of the old type, that is now almost extinct. They were mostly men of from thirty-five to fifty years of age, big, burly, powerful men who could work like horses when they were on the job and who could drink like the Sahara Desert when they were not.

To see those men shift muck, as they termed soil, was a treat and to see them shift beer was a marvel. They were not the kind of men whom you would make welcome to a tea-fight, or a muffin wrangle, but at any other sort of combat their company was to be desired and the stiffer and closer the engagement, the more would they have been appreciated.

They were a very fine lot of men, a class quite distinct to themselves and after the blue-jacket quite the handiest man I have ever met; of course I do not include the regular Frontiersman as he is in a manner born to bush and veldt work.

In town they were a nuisance to everyone, the

military as well as the civilians hating the sight of them as it meant extra guards and pickets for the military and the civilian knew that his town would be painted a more vivid scarlet than even an up-country colonial desires. Yet they never, to my knowledge, went out of their way to interfere with anyone and certainly never molested any inoffensive man, woman or child. But their drunken sprees were colossal, their drunken gambols elephantine, and as no law-abiding citizen can look on at and enjoy more than two fights at a time, it becomes somewhat monotonous when there are perhaps a dozen going on in each street, simultaneously, so Pulleine's Lambs were voted a nuisance and cordially detested.

The language of the navy was in a marked degree free. True, he was somewhat handicapped as regards the number of adjectives he possessed, but he tried to make up by repetition what he lacked in quantity. He was also in a sense colour blind, or rather I should say he only saw things in one colour, as he invariably described all things animate and inanimate a brilliant crimson. He did not use these two words but implied that colour by a shorter and perhaps more expressive term.

In town these men were a nuisance, as I have stated, but get them up country, away from the beer and vile Cape brandy, and they became quite different.

Of course, in one sense of the word, you could never make soldiers of them, yet once in the veldt with a little tact you could do anything with them. What Tommy called hard work, road-making, entrenching, and fort-building was to them child's

play and as soon as the drink was out of them, they were most obedient and obliging. Their ideas of discipline were undoubtedly crude; no chicken ranch was safe and they were all born poachers, but then in the veldt, these slight failings did not matter, as hen-roosts are few and far between and the game laws such as they were did not hold good in war-time.

One of my greatest difficulties, up country, was how to punish them, not for crime, for where there is no drink and nothing to steal there is but little crime; but for such offences as being late, or dirty on parade, it was necessary to inflict certain small punishments, and these consisted for a time of doing the camp fatigue work, such as digging ash-pits and other holes in the ground for camp use. This sort of work is hated by Tommy but it did not do for my men and I had to change it, the reason why I will tell you.

Our camp was at Quintani, in the Transkei, and we were a long way from any neighbours.

The work was all done. The camp safely entrenched and comfortable and there was little or no fatigue to be done in quarters when the men were not out on patrol.

One day, it had been necessary for me to punish two men for being dirty at inspection and they were ordered to dig an ash-pit, another man being put on sentry over them. This man, I have yarned of him before, was a huge navvy called Kentish Jim. As I was strolling about round the fort I saw him in charge of the delinquents and walked past him. After he had saluted me to the best of his ability he said, "Beg pardon, sir. You

are a gentleman and I can talk to you." I said, "Not now; if you want to speak to me you must do so when you are off duty." He looked unhappy but said no more. That evening, seeing him hanging round, I called him and said, "Now then, what do you want to say to me?" Quoth he, "Look 'ere, sir. This morning as ever was, just as I was a setting down to a game of banker, sergeant 'e comes to me an ses, 'Jim, you do sentry go over them two —— as got toko from commandant this morning.' I ses, 'Right, sergeant,' and I does it. Now what I wants to know is, who you were a-punishing of—me or them two ——? You ses to them, 'You two dirty —— I'll give you two —— fatigues coz yer can't keep yer —— selves clean, you did.' " I could have taken my oath I had never made any such remarks but I did not want to argue so I let it stand at that and only replied, "Well?" He continued: "Then the sergeant he tells me to take the two —— swine and make them dig that 'ole, and stand by while they did it, or walk about with a —— gun on shoulder to see they didn't run away. W'ere the 'ell are they going to run to? They wants their dinner come 12 o'clock they do. They don't want to run away and I wanted my —— game of banker I did and I had to play silly —— I 'ad, with a —— gun on my shoulder, and about that —— 'ole, call that punishment, do you? Why, to dig a 'ole like that wouldn't make a man sweat a pint o' ale out of him if he was lucky to 'ave one. No, by gosh, when you wants a —— 'ole dug you tell me an' I'll do myself proud to dig one for ye, and you let them dirty swine play silly —— with their —— guns

and Jim will get his game of banker and put a —— 'ed on the man as don't do as you tells him, there now."

I liked Jim, but had to tell him that that sort of discipline would be against the Queen's Regulations, but he was a sceptic. "Ah don't believe," said he, "the good old Queen, Gord bless her! ever regelated any such —— rot. No, it's old Gladstone's work, the old fule, with his Bulgan 'trocities and sich like, —— him."

Jim was decidedly a Tory, but he had given me a hint and consequently punishment by fatigue was put on one side and pack drill or punishment guards, such as doing sentry go over the water-carts or the cook-house, were instituted instead; this they hated and in a very short time punctuality and cleanliness were amply enforced and practised.

I had no chance, unfortunately, of taking these men into a fight, worth speaking about, but I could see how keen they were for one. No march was too long and no shortage of rations ever stood in the way, but the Fates were not propitious and the niggers too broken to stand, so towards the end of the year I received orders that we were to be disbanded and that I was to take the last detachment, consisting of about 120 men, down country for that purpose. I had already taken down one big detachment about which I have yarned before. That party had been paid off in King William's Town and had raised such ructions that it was determined to give another town the benefit this time, and Koumgha, a small town in the Ciskei, and about half-way down to King, was selected, at which to give the Lambs a chance of

blowing off some of their steam, blue some of their money, and quiet down before reaching King.

Koumgha was a small dorp containing a F.A.M.P. barracks, three canteens, a few stores and a church. It was also garrisoned by some companies of the 88th Regiment and the Lambs could not do much harm there.

Well we reached the place near mid-day, piled arms and formed camp. The paymaster was there to meet us and after dinner the men received four days' leave and one month's pay.

I had had the arms, ammunition, etc., placed in store and the fun began.

Now it is not my intention to write about the gambols and the bust of the Lambs but only of a small section of them. Suffice it, they bought all the women's clothes in the stores, they dressed up in them, they danced unholy dances, they fought many fights and painted the dorp a very vivid red indeed. But there were eight men who took no part in these frivolous proceedings. They were quiet, staid men who had been mates for many years, always working together on the same railway construction, and having all things in common. They had occupied the same tent and had always, while with me, kept themselves apart from the other men, so they were known to myself and the other officers as the inseparables.

These men when they received their pay expended it on bread, cheese, bacon, beer, gin, tobacco, etc., and betook themselves with their stores and blankets down to the river bank where, in the most methodical way, they camped under some willow trees, running a rope round their camp

to show that for the time being it was private property and would be defended as such by force of arms. After clearing the ground and making down their beds, they sat down to eat, drink and enjoy themselves.

Any visitor was welcome to food and drink, but after he had been entertained he must pass on. The following afternoon I was out for a ride with one of the officers of the 88th when we passed close to their camp and to my utter surprise we saw the finishing round of a tremendous fight between two of them.

Calling the eldest member of the party to me I said, "Sorry to see you chaps fighting; what is the row about?" "There ain't no row, sir, but we'll be proud if you and your friend will drink a drop of beer along with us." He then continued: "We be all mates as you know, sir, and we have got a big job on the road as soon as we get's to King."

My curiosity was aroused, so we dismounted and accepted their hospitality as far as having a glass of beer.

The other men after saluting, still sat, in a listless way, smoking their pipes and saying nothing. Presently one huge fellow got up and going over to another, who might have been his twin brother as far as size went, said to him (but without the least animus or ill-will in his voice), "Bill, I bees a better man than you be." The other looked up and leisurely taking his pipe from his mouth, wiping it on his sleeve and putting it carefully away drawled out, "No, you ain't, Dick." Then the two of them quietly and without any

haste, stripped and set to to fight, two others without comment getting up to act as seconds. They fought four fast rounds but without the least bit of bad spirit and when at the end of the fourth round Dick was grassed by a tremendous cross-counter he was promptly helped up by the victorious Bill and after they had mutually assisted one another to wash and dress, they resumed their seats, their pipes and their beer without any elation on the part of the victor or depression on the part of the vanquished. As for the others they seemed to look on the whole incident as not worth talking about.

Just as we were mounting the same thing occurred again, one giant lounging up to another with the formula, " Alf, I bees a better man than you be." " No, you ain't, Jack," and they started another desperate fight without the slightest bad blood or more bad language than they commonly used in ordinary conversation.

My curiosity was now thoroughly roused and getting our host out of earshot of the others I asked him the cause of all this fighting. He scratched his head and said, " Well you see, sir, it's this way. We be mates. We be each man as good as the other, and we takes on contract on the line as soon as you discharges us. So we is just trying who is best man to boss the show."

" Why, will he get more money than the rest? "

" No fear, we keeps all money in the same bag, but us must have a gaffer and best man must be he." Now it seemed to me a long and painful way to try who was the best man. A spin of a coin might have decided it, but no, they had four days' leisure, and how could they put in those four days

in a more genial or delightful way than in fighting with their best friends, solving the problem and enjoying themselves at the same time.

Of one thing I am certain, that men who could punch and take a punching from his pal without a murmur would be an awful fiend in a hand-to-hand fight with an enemy and I have always had a deep feeling of regret that I never had the chance of taking that gang into a real good scrap, as I am sure they would have exhibited a form that would have made that fight a record.

CHAPTER VII

LOOT AND SOME LOOTERS

THE word loot to a fighting man has a significance that renders it almost sacred. It has buoyed up many a weary and foot-sore warrior on a long and fatiguing march and has encouraged men, in many a deed of daring do, from the hour that Tubal Cain forged the first sword-blade till the present time. For although, in these degenerate days, it is inveighed against by the Exeter Hall, cum-kid-glove, anti-fighting, peace-at-any-price crowd, yet, it has been the incentive of nearly all the wars, great deeds of arms and conquests, that have ever taken place, since man first of all began to war against his fellow-man.

Nor are the days of loot over, in the super-civilized countries of the period. Only a few years ago the godly Germans looted China, of her ancient scientific instruments and everything else she could lay her claws on; while even among the most sanctified in our own goody-goody country, does not a right honourable gentleman (!!) boast of robbing his neighbour's hen-roost? Why, therefore, should the poor, hard-fighting Tommy, be prevented from gathering a little of the fruit, that may come in his way, after he had run all the risks to win the battles for his nation, who pocketing the lion's share of the plunder, calls him a thief and

marauder. The art of looting may be divided into many sorts. You can loot the enemy, you can loot the non-combatants, and the looter may be looted. What, may I ask, has become of nearly all the prize-money, earned by the army and navy for the last two hundred years, and who has looted our sailors and soldiers of their just share? I am going to spin you a yarn, the rights and wrongs of it you must, if you care to read it, decide for yourself, but it will point out how a poor, hard-working colonial commandant, through no fault of his own, nearly got into serious trouble through the anxiety of some kind-hearted Tommies who only wishing to please him started marauding. The facts are as follows.

In 1878 I was in command of an important post in the Transkei called Quintani, some twenty-five miles from the Headquarter Camp at Ibeka. About mid-way between these posts was a ruined mission station, that had, previous to the outbreak of the war, been a thriving concern. The enemy had however looted it, and burnt it down, but, as it afterwards turned out, had left the detached wooden belfry standing, and in it swung a scrumptious bell, which I believe had been the gift of some well-meaning but misguided English ladies. Now among the different details of my garrison, as I have previously mentioned, was a small detachment of mounted infantry belonging to that gallant and distinguished regiment known as H.M. 88th Connaught Rangers. This glorious corps, during the Peninsular War, not only earned for themselves an undying fame, by their splendid fighting qualities, but they were also designated, by General Picton,

for other qualities they must have possessed, as the Connaught Robbers, and the detachment that served with me had both these qualities largely developed. Now these M.I. were on the whole a very fine lot of men, for although, the Fates being against us, I had no chance of witnessing their undoubted courage in the field of battle, yet their cheery behaviour in camp, their good humour, their anxiety to oblige, and as soon as they discovered I was a countryman of their own, to render me any trifling service that lay in their power to offer, was quite enough to make me pleased and proud to have the honour of having them under my command. This good-will, or rather the ways they took of showing it, was at times very embarrassing to me and on two occasions nearly landed me in deep water. *Par exemple.* First of all, in the Ciskei, where I originally made the acquaintance of the mounted company of the 88th, having, for a short time some of them attached to me the same boys placed me in what might be called, a very serious dilemma and through them I suffered a most unholy fright. I was at the time stationed, some miles from King William's Town, and in close vicinity to my camp were many farmhouses that had been abandoned by their owners, on the outbreak of the war, who had left most of their furniture and many of their belongings, as well as poultry and vegetables in the gardens, behind them. Some of the latter, I must confess, came in very handy for our mess, that consisted of myself, a sub belonging to the Rangers, and three colonial officers, all of them very good fellows, so we lived and dined well in peace and harmony.

Of course there were strict standing orders against looting of any kind, or the destruction of property; and these orders had just been renewed by General Thesiger, on his taking over command, and were fairly well carried out. No Tommy however can understand why, he should not eke out his hard rations, with a few vegetables growing to waste, and as far as the poultry were concerned, I had the solemn assurance of our cook, Tim Muldony, as well as my own servant Quin, ably substantiated by Dennis O'Sullivan and Mike Doolan, henchman to the Ranger officer, "that the hins, poor craters, were that lonesome on the disarted farms, that they came into camp of their own free will and that, there was no way, at all at all of kaping the poor bastes from getting into the pots, God bless thim." So that of course after the hins had insisted on serving themselves up, of their own accord, I could have no further scruples against eating them. This was all very well, as long as no tell-tale feathers flew about the camp, but one lovely evening, after a hard day's patrol, dinner being over, and we squatting on ammunition boxes, yarned over our pipes, I was unfortunate enough to remark with a yawn and a stretch, "I wish to goodness I had the sofa, out of such and such farmhouse here; it would be awfully comfy to lie on and make one's tent look home-like, and if we only had the piano, you So-and-So could give us some music these glorious nights."

These careless words of mine, were, of course, regarded by my officers as empty talk but they acted far otherwise on Mike and Dennis who chanced to overhear them and who, in their kind-hearted,

blundering fashion, sought to pleasure me. Next morning I started with the mounted men and some Fingoe levies on a three days' patrol and while returning was met by a mounted orderly, with a message, that the General would inspect my camp that afternoon. It was a matter of hard riding to get there before him but we managed to reach the post as his escort crossed the ridge not two miles away. One glance round the camp to see it was all spick and span, then I rushed to my tent to try and make myself look pretty. The Ranger officer had reached his a moment before and I heard a wild yell of consternation rise from it, which was augmented by my own pious ejaculation of "Oh, Hades!" an exclamation that, under the same circumstances, might have been uttered with perfect propriety by the Blessed Saint Patrick himself. Yes and more, for there, right in front of me, in my very own tent, stood a splendid sofa covered with gorgeous chintz; while the Dead March from Saul, played in a minor key, proclaimed the nature of the surprise packet that had reached my unfortunate and evidently despairing companion. There was no time for fuss or inquiries, we had to bolt on to the parade ground, to receive the General whose party was by now entering the camp. I had never met him before, but had a few days previously acknowledged a memo, directed to all post commandants, ordering them, to on no account allow the property of the refugee settlers to be interfered with. Well here was a pretty kettle of fish. He might want to stay the night at my camp, when naturally I must offer him the use of my tent until his own was pitched. He

might want a meal and the Lord only knew what plunder had arrived in the rough mess hut during my short absence. Rumour reported him to be a very strict, stern officer and judging from my own tent, the whole camp might have become a repository for stolen property so that, as he rode up to the parade I was in a mortal blue funk, while visions of courts-martial danced before my mind's eye, and as I gave the order to "present arms," I devoutly wished that the ground would open and swallow me up. Had I only known then, what a kind-hearted, courteous and considerate man I had to deal with, I might have spared myself half my apprehensions, for directly he rode up to me he said, "Please dismiss the men at once, Commandant Browne, I see you have just come off a long patrol, I have no intention of troubling you to-day but will inspect you on my return." On my asking him if he would not dismount and have some tea, he answered, "Oh, no, thanks, I shall ride on to Haynes' mill, but, before I go let me impress on you the absolute necessity of seeing that the General Order regarding the deserted farms is carried out to the letter, as so many complaints have come in from the owners, but I am sure you will do that. Good afternoon. Come, gentlemen, let's move on." With that the dear, good fellow rode gaily away, leaving me planted there, offering up praise and thanksgiving to the Blessed Saint Nicholas (patron of defaulters and worse) for my merciful escape. Then to interview the delinquents. So after dismissing the men, I went with the other officers to the mess hut, which was also used as the orderly room. On reaching it, I might have again

broken out into pæans of gratitude for my wonderful preservation; as the hut built of grass and covered with a bucksail, that had at the moment of my departure, only contained an old packing-case for a table, and empty ammunition boxes for seats, was now furnished with a fine hardwood dining-room table, eight chairs and two bent-wood American rockers, while round the flimsy, grass walls, through which the wind had beforetimes whistled, were now hung curtains of various patterns, to say nothing about lamps, and goodness only knew how much other gear now embellished our, at one time, sordid hut. If there was anything wanting to make the tableau complete, there stood the four sinners, all in a row, evidently expecting unlimited kudos and each with a suppressed grin of exaltation and self-satisfaction, spread all over his expressive mug; that tempted me sorely to take and knock their blundering heads together.

We entered the hut and sat down. For a few moments I said nothing but only regarded the quartette with as grim and stern a look as I could call up, until, I saw the complacent smirk gradually die out of each face and they began to get decidedly uncomfortable. Then I said impressively, "I am sorry for you men, but there is no hope for you. You will all be certainly hung in three days' time; so I should recommend you all, to turn to and make your sowls, for mercy you can't expect in this world."

A wild howl broke from the four miserables. "Och, willie waroo," whined Mike, "is it to be hung we are, sir? an' what for at all at all?" "Didn't we do it just to make your honour and our

officers homelike and comfortable?" groaned Denis. "And me," yelped Tim, "wid the most lovely turkey in the pot, so tinder it's just falling to paices it is, an' divil a feather flying about to give it away at all at all. Och murther, Major, it's not thaives we are; sure did we not lave the illigint stove half-way, so heavy it was, it near bruk our backs, it did." "An' if we did drink wan bottle of whisky," chimed in Quin, adding more with sorrow than contrition, "didn't we lave tin bottles behind us?" Then all together in chorus: "Och, Major dear, sure it's yerself as will spake the good word for us, sure you'll not let that blaggard Provost hang us, och mille murther an' turf," etc. etc., and the laments of the sinners rose high.

"I should like to speak for you," said I, "but you have heard the orders read and you have broken them with your infernal marauding. No, I fear there's no hope for you." Then turning to the other officers I asked, "What do you think, gentlemen?" "No, sir," said one of them, "not the least hope in the world, the General is sure to hang them as an example to others." "Yes, sir," said another, "but perhaps if you spoke very hard for them he might let them off with twenty-five lashes apiece and ten years' prison; that is to say, if they have taken nothing that can't be replaced." "Och, och, by this and by that," roared Mike, "we'll take ivery bit ov it back, even the stove, if we do break our backs wid it, the black baste, may the cuss o' Crumell rest on it, we will indade yer honour." But the humour of the whole show was getting too much for me and I also wanted to slake my thirst, so to cut it short I said, "Quin, get us

something to drink and have a bath ready for me in ten minutes. The rest of you scoundrels get about your business, until the Provost and escort come for you; but here you, Doolan, run to the conductor and tell him to have a wagon inspanned to-morrow morning; and as for you, Muldony, if you give us a good dinner to-night maybe I'll spake the word that will save that fat back of yours from a scratching. Be off wid yer now." Exit the bandits, while we sat back in the luxurious chairs, laughed our fill, congratulated ourselves on our miraculous escape and drunk the General's health out of cut glass tumblers, instead of the usual chipped pannikins. A few minutes afterwards, I revelled in a big bath, instead of sponging myself out of a stable bucket, and for that night we all enjoyed, what the worthy Quin called "civoilized convaniences," even to the use of the piano. Next morning the wagon returned all these "convaniences" back to their proper places, even the stove, bad scran to it, so that the General when he inspected my camp, which he did three days afterwards, found it pure and clean in more ways than one and had only praise and good words to give me; which would not have been the case, had he done so, on the date he originally intended. But it was the mission bell I started yarning about, so let me try back and regain the spoor.

Well the only thing of any appreciable value, left at the plundered and burnt-down mission, was the wooden belfry with the bell still slung aloft in it and this attracted the attention and excited the predaceous instincts among a party of the aforementioned M.I., who while acting as escort, to a

ration wagon, had to outspan and camp near the mission for a night, on the trek from Headquarters to Quintani. Now the road ran some little distance from the mission and as the bell was not noticeable from it, neither myself nor officers were aware of its existence, but two of these Tommies, with the usual restlessness and inquisitiveness of their kind, must needs go and poke about where they soon discovered it. Of course the first thing to be done, was to pull the still attached rope, when the bell gave out a doleful clang. "Be gobs but that's a foine bell, Moike," quoth Pat. "It's all that an' more, Pat," assented Mike. "Sure 'twould be an illigent thing to put up in camp an' bate the hours on," said the first villain. "It's a bhoy of discarnment ye are, Pat, but how'll we git it down? An' maybe it's sacrilege 'twud be." "Divil a bit," asserted the tempter, "sure it's only a nagur convinticle, and thim black heretics at that, an' tell me, didn't they burn the church down thimselves, the black-advised divils; an' whose to know they didn't burn the bell down too, bad luck to the blaggards. Anyhow we'll have the blessed bell. Sure 'twill pleasure the Major, he's so proud of the camp, he'll be woild deloighted wid it."

There was no need of further argument; the brace of worthies promptly set fire to the long, thick, dry grass that had grown, in rank profusion, round the foot of the wooden edifice which, being sun-dried, quickly ignited and soon the pride of the late mission came down with a crash.

It took all hands and a couple of yokes of oxen to drag the fallen tinkler up to the wagon which had to be half unloaded before it could be stowed

away, and then having made everything fast again, the sacrilegious gang, thoroughly pleased with themselves, ate their supper and slept, I have no doubt, the sleep of the just, without any twinges of remorse or conscience. Now it must have taken these fellows at least two hours' real, hard work, to carry out their nefarious act, which if they had been ordered to do as a fatigue, after a day in the saddle, they probably would have grumbled at, deeply if not loudly, yet here for sheer mischievous devilment they had imposed the labour on themselves and then retired to rest as contentedly as a pack of school-boys after a feast of stolen fruit.

Two days later I was sitting writing in my tent when, to my unbounded astonishment, I heard the hours of noon struck on a fine-toned bell and at once ordered the word to be passed for the sergeant-major who belonged to Pulleine's Lambs. On his arrival I demanded, "Where did the bell that has just been struck come from?" "I dinna ken," he replied; "'tis those wild Irish (he was an Ulster man himself) have just rigged it up, sir." "Go and fetch their sergeant-in-charge," I said, and presently as smart and trim a man, from West of the Shannon, as ever served Her Gracious Majesty, stood before me. "Sergeant," said I, "where did you get the bell from that I have heard struck?" "Oh, sor, we've just put it up, thinking 'twould be a convaniency to bate the hours on, sir, an' ud please yer, sir." "Yes, but where did you get it from?" "'Deed, sir, I didn't get it at all at all; sure 'twas Corporal Finacune an' the last escort as got it, sure 'tis a wee bit ov a bell, sir, and a convaniency to bate the hours on, yer honour,

an' no use to them black nagurs at all at all, sor."

"Here let me see your convaniency and go and bring Corporal Finacune to me." So leaving my quarters I walked to the guard tent and there in front of it, slung on strong poles, was a splendid bell that I knew, although no judge of the cost of musical instruments, must, with the transport, have cost a lot of money. But how the deuce could it have fallen into the clutches of these beauties? One glance was enough to show me it was a church bell, but there were no churches within a hundred miles of that part of the world and I did not know, nor could I conceive that a nigger mission should have ever possessed such an expensive article. Anyhow, Corporal Finacune might be able to throw some light on the subject; presently he hurried up. "Corporal," said I, "where did you get this from?" "Sure, sor, 'tis a bell, sor." "Yes," said I, "that I can see for myself, but where did you get it from?" "And we thought it wud be a convanience to bate the hours on, sor, and be a pleasure for ye's, sor." "Yes, but where did you get it from?" "Is it get it yer want to know, sor? Sure we didn't get it at all, sor, we just fetched it along, sor, as we thought it would be a convaniency—" "Yes, yes, but where did you fetch it from?" "Fetch it from, sor; sure we didn't fetch it at all at all, the wagon fetched it, sor, and we thought it wud be moighty convanient—" "Confound your convanient, how did it get on the wagon?" "Sure, sor, did we not near break our hearts, let alone our backs, lifting it in the wagon, an' we thought—" "Damn your thoughts, where did you lift it on to the wagon?" "Sure it was on

the road from Ibaky, sor; 'twas Pat O'Rafferty an' Mike Frinch as found it, lying lonesome on the felt, poor thing, and onable to bate itself at all at all, it was so we thought it wud be conva—" "Oh, bad luck to your convaniency; if you fellows don't take care, a courts-martial will find it convenient to put more stripes on your back than you will ever wear on your arms; now be off with you." Exit Corporal Finacune and the sergeant, the former trying to look dignified, but just as they passed out of earshot, I heard him mutter, "No matter, sergeant, we've got the bell and the Major's as pleased as if another boy's best girl had just kissed him." Now as I said before, I was quite unaware that the looted mission had ever possessed a bell and all my officers were in the same state of blissful ignorance, so that although the conversation, for the next few days, dwelt on the subject, of how the deuce a bell of that size had ever got into such a remote part of the world, yet, as none of us ever dreamt that it could belong to the mission we kept it in camp and made use of it as a convaniency to bate the hours on; moreover men belonging to the Lost Legion are used to finding queer things, in out-of-the-way parts of the world. I had once, myself, found the figure-head of a big ship on the top of a mountain in the centre of the North Island of New Zealand; so that shortly we ceased to talk about it and with the exception of hearing the hours beaten on it forgot it altogether. I individually, I must confess, delighted in it, as in more ways than one, it gave tone to the camp and I have always been very particular about the neatness, comfort and appearance of my temporary homes. Besides

which it was safe where it was, should I be called on, at any date, to return it to its rightful owners.

Time passed, the boys of the 88th had rejoined their own regiment, when I was visited by Colonel Glyn, then in command of the Transkei, and on a tour of inspection. I had known him many years and the inspection being over, we were sitting in my tent chatting, when the confounded bell struck the hours of noon. The Colonel, good man, was at the moment imbibing liquid refreshment, and as the clang of the first beat struck his ear, he gave a jump like a wounded buck. "Good God, Maori," he spluttered, in the midst of his coughing, for the liquor had gone the wrong way and nearly choked the dacent ould gentleman; "what on earth have you got there?" "Oh, it's only a bell, sir, we beat the hours on," I remarked innocently enough, surprised as I was at his flurry and heat. "Only a bell!" he howled; "only a bell. Oh, Maori, you sacrilegious beggar, you're in for a pretty scrape; here are all the dignitaries of the Church complaining to the General and raising Cain in the press, accusing the troops of being marauders and with sacrilegiously stealing some infernal bell or other. I have denied this, but here I find the beastly thing in your camp, sir. Why on earth can't you leave their wretched missions alone, sir? You'll find yourself in the wrong box, sir, if you interfere with these missionaries and their loot. What the—which the—where the—" and the dear old fellow bubbled away until I thought he would chuck an apoplectic fit. Then at last I took the chance of getting a word in edgeways and explained matters so as to somewhat pacify

him, while a good lunch soon afterwards and a better dinner that night thoroughly restored me to his pristine friendship. Still, all that afternoon and evening I noticed the old fellow cock his ear whenever the bell was struck and several times I heard him mutter, "A very fine bell that, deuced good tone, handy to have in a big camp, thrown away here," etc., etc., and next morning after a good breakfast, just previous to starting off, he said, "Maori, have that bell put into my wagon, I shall take it into Headquarters and see that it is returned to the proper authorities; by doing so, I shall doubtless make your peace with them, especially as I shall tell them you will pay all expenses of having it re-hung, etc., and I think you will have got off very luckily. Good-bye, my dear boy, ride in and see me at Ibeka, if you have a chance and you might try to pick up a few partridges on the way; those we had last night were very good. And now then take care of yourself, and whatever you do, don't steal any more church bells. Good-bye," and with this parting benediction the dear old chap cantered gaily away in a heavenly temper and, I have no doubt, as full of good intentions, concerning the bell, as Hades is of non-juring parsons. His parting order was obeyed, the blessed bell was sent into Headquarters and for some days myself and men missed, with regret, its silvery tones; but it was gone, and there was the end of it as far as myself and Pulleine's Lambs were concerned. Yet I was destined to hear it again and that not in its mission belfry. No, it was still doing better service in the world. For on my riding into Ibeka, a short time afterwards, not for-

getting to take with me some partridges, as instructed by the Colonel, I was guest in the camp of his gallant corps and again heard and recognized those sweet tones I knew so well, announcing the hours as they had done for me.

"You have a fine bell there," I remarked to a pal. "Yes," said he, "a very fine one, and we're all very proud of it; the Colonel brought it back with him the other day. I wonder where the old boy picked it up—quite an acquisition to the camp, is it not?" "Yes, quite," said I, with a heavy sigh, and for a few moments I meditated on the dishonesty and looting propensities of some people in this world.

Many years have passed since then, but sometimes I wonder, whether that bell still records the hours for that gallant regiment, or if it has gone back, to summon greasy niggers to attend worship they don't understand; as it was originally intended to do by its benevolent though misguided donors. And now before I spin you grimmer yarns let me tell you a brace, that I trust will amuse you as during a war humour and pathos are often told off in the same half section.

CHAPTER VIII

GRAND ROUNDS AND THE BLUE-JACKET SENTRIES

YES, I have often stated and still maintain that the gallant blue-jackets, who served Her late Gracious Majesty, were second to none, either as fighting men, during the stress of war, or when out for a frolic in times of piping peace and moreover that their quaint acts and remarks have often caused a hearty laugh to those, having a sense of humour, who have been lucky enough to serve in the same outfit with them in the field, or to have witnessed their high jinks during their well-earned hours of liberty. Let me spin you a yarn about a brace of them I came in contact with in the Kafir War of 1877.

It happened in this way and the scene was Ibeka, the Headquarter Camp of the British Field Force in the Transkei, and the date some time in December 1877. At the outbreak of the war, H.M.S. *Active*, then flagship on the South African station, had landed a strong party of blue-jackets, who came up-country to bear a hand in twisting old Kreli's caudal appendage, and on the day the occurrence I am going to tell you about happened, had marched into Ibeka and pitched their tents at some distance from the remainder of the camp, which was a very straggling one spread out on the crest of a long ridge.

Now at this time there were many shaves and picket-line yarns (rumours) flying around and on the day the blue-jackets joined up, it was reported that the enemy was going to make a night attack on the camp, so that although none of the senior officers believed this to be likely, still the O.C. considered it to be prudent to make arrangements, so as to give the Kafirs a warm reception should they attempt any such movement and in consequence sentries and pickets were doubled, while the remainder of the men were warned to hold themselves in readiness to turn out at a moment's notice. As it chanced, I happened to be field-officer on that night, coming on duty at guard mounting, and of course a portion of my work consisted in visiting all the posts, pickets and sentries during the night.

This was rather a long and tedious job as the camps of the various units were much scattered and at a considerable distance from one another, so that it necessitated my making my rounds mounted and even then it would take me a long time to do the work thoroughly. The night turned out to be a very fine one, with a splendid moon, that shed so brilliant a light, that I could easily have read big print by it; not a breath of air, not even the smallest bit of mist in the sky, so that the whole country lay open like a book. The long grass round the camps had been all burnt away for a considerable distance, so that not a single man, much less a large body of the enemy, could possibly approach our lines without being immediately spotted. At 9.30 p.m. my orderly together with four other troopers and a trumpeter

brought round my horse and I started my first tour of inspection. "Not much chance of any fun to-night, boys," I said, as I swung myself into the saddle and let my eyes range over the moonlit veldt; "this is not the sort of night a mob of niggers would select on which to rush a camp; but no matter, half sections right, walk march," and we moved off.

In due course of time, after visiting all the pickets and outposts of the main camp, I at last approached the lines of the Naval Brigade, which were on the extreme left and some little distance away from the other units. As I rode, towards their advanced post, I could plainly see the two men on sentry, one of whom was standing up, while the other, in accordance with orders, was lying prone on the ground, and of course they had not the slightest difficulty in both seeing and hearing my small party of horsemen as we approached them. We were still perhaps a hundred yards or more from them, when the man standing up brought his rifle to the port, emitting, at the same time, a bellow that boomed across the silent veldt and for a minute quieted the chirping of the astounded ground crickets. "'Alt, who goes there?" "Grand Rounds," I replied, wondering if his stentorian hail had alarmed the whole camp and fully expecting a general turn-out, or at least the pickets would stand to their arms. Of course I had brought my party promptly to the halt and for some moments waited patiently for the continuation of the challenge, viz., "Halt, Grand Rounds, advance one," etc., but somehow that blue-jacket did not seem to be fully conversant

with military tactics or etiquette, for after shuffling about for a few moments and fumbling with his rifle he brought it to the order and, in what was evidently meant to be a propitiatory tone of voice, rumbled out, "Come on, Mr 'Orse Hoffer, I knows as 'ow you ain't no ruddy nigger." As this was evidently all the military ceremony I was going to receive, with a quiet chuckle to myself and a smothered guffaw from my troopers, we rode up to him, when I repeated to him the usual formal challenge and gently intimated that as in a short time I should be again passing his post I should expect to be challenged in a proper manner. This I did, not that I was a pedantic stickler for red book formula or ceremony and well knew that a sailor makes a sentry second to none in the world, still as I was forced to again pass his post on my return journey, approaching it from the other flank and being sure Jack would make an awful hash of the challenge, I was prompted by the imp of drollery to hear how he would mix up the instructions I had bestowed on him. To my gentle admonition he respectfully replied, "Ay, ay, sir," and I continued my rounds. After I had visited the other posts and made certain everyone was on the *qui vive* I wheeled about and returned towards the right of the camp, eventually reaching the one at which I had received the unorthodox greeting. As I rode towards the spot I could plainly see the same men were on guard though they had changed places, *i.e.*, the one who had been originally standing up was now lying down, so that our approach was challenged by another voice of perhaps not quite such a voluminous timbre, but still quite loud enough

to wake a stone-deaf man, and again, "'Alt, who goes there?" rumbled across the moonlit veldt. Again my party halted and I answered, "Grand Rounds;" but again, notwithstanding my previous careful instructions, the sentry was evidently flummoxed; for after hawking and clearing his throat a few times, he turned to his recumbent companion and giving him a kick in the ribs, that was enough to stave in the plates of a battle-ship, he growled out in a voice, meant to be a whisper but which was audible at twice the distance we were apart, "Jack, Jack, rouse up, ye lazy swine, 'ere's that — as calls hisself Grand Rounds come agin, git up yer waster and sling him 'is ruddy patter." Up jumped Jack and the earth shook with his bellow: "It's all right, Mr Grand Rounds, pass and all's well."

ARCADES AMBO

There is no doubt that even in England itself, the country that boasts of being the birthplace of free parliamentary institutions, and of possessing the most ancient Parliament in the world, one that has existed for hundreds of years and has been the model from which all other nationalities have more or less copied their houses of representatives, that many queer fish are, even at this modern epoch, being returned as M.P.'s by the free and independent electors. Yet such queer fish, and so many of them, are returned as members that a looker-on, possessing no party politics, may often wonder what on earth ever induced human beings,

outside a madhouse, to elect such utter rotters to represent them at the grave deliberations that frame laws for the guidance and safety of our mighty Empire.

This being so, in the Mother Parliament, it is not to be wondered at that in the Colonial houses of representatives some very strange species of bipeds, who emerging or being extracted from the back blocks or up-country constituencies, take their seats. It may be true that these creatures are cute and crafty men, in their own pettifogging line of business, and are quite capable of roping in their full whack of whatever is going worth having, yet so far as the knowledge of the Empire's history, let alone that of classic nations, are as ignorant as the beasts that perish. This being the case, at the present moment, it can be easily understood that years ago, when representative government was first granted to the various Colonies, the queer-ness of the politicians who attended them was more remarkable, and that very many of them were as unfit to legislate as they were to mix in polite society.

It was in the year 1878, when the Gaika and Galeka Wars were still in progress, that I was ordered to proceed from Cape Town to East London in command of a party of irregulars destined for the front, and for that purpose we embarked on one of the Union Company's ships which was proceeding to Natal, calling in at all the ports along the coast. At the time of which I am writing there were no railway communications between Cape Town, Port Elizabeth or East London, and any travellers journeying from the capital to the

eastern provinces of Cape Colony, must proceed by ship, via one of these ports, so that many more passengers were sea-borne in those days than there are at present. The voyage also took longer time, as not only were the boats slower but the loading and discharging of cargo, at the various ports, were far more difficult, breakwater and harbour accommodation being then in their infancy.

Few people who travelled in those days will ever forget the horrors and dangers of the swinging basket, the foul stench and discomfort of the filthy serf boats, or the vile language and the brutal blackguardism of the ruffians who manned them: truly travelling in South Africa is luxurious in these days to what it was in the seventies. Well one fine afternoon we steamed out of Cape Town docks, the boat being fairly full of passengers bound up the coast, as well as my filibusters. The passage was a very pleasant one and I enjoyed it thoroughly, laying in as much fun as possible so as to last out a long stay up-country as I knew my destination was the Transkei and there was no society to be got up there. In the saloon there was a typical South African crowd as well as a number of new chums transferred from the lately-arrived mail boat. Here you could see a group of over-dressed Hebrews, whose villainous faces and worse manners stamp them as denizens of Houndsditch and the various continental Juden Strausse returning from their home trip to their I.D.B. pursuits at Kimberley.

Eyering them with contempt and aversion are a few diamond-diggers returning from the Old Country. Then you have a handful of military

men *en route* to join their various corps at the front, while merchants, returning from England, and Cape Town, together with bagmen, interior traders, farmers and a sprinkle of Germans, Dutch and Portuguese collectively make up a polyglot gang rarely met with in other parts of the world. Acquaintanceship was very easily made on a South African coasting steamer and, before we had been twenty-four hours on the water most of the passengers, with the exception of the I.D.B.'s, who frequented the smoking saloon and liquor bar, were on speaking terms, so that the conversation became general and many a good yarn was spun and listened to with avidity. Now amongst the passengers were two men between whom no special amenity was exchanged; the rest of us soon tumbled to that fact and at first rather wondered at it, as there was no very striking difference to be observed between them either in breeding, manners or conversation. They were both of them middle-aged, vulgar, ostentatious, ignorant cads who, having for some incomprehensible reason been returned as members to the brand-new Cape Parliament, were on their way home after having misrepresented their constituencies in the deliberations of the Colony.

What their original quarrel was about none knew nor cared, but it was generally supposed that each man gave the other credit of having overreached himself in some piece of underhand jobbery, which as they were, both of them, up-country canteen and winkel keepers was more than probable. Be this as it may the brace of them were inordinately proud of being M.P.'s, and each

man tried to run the other down and belittle him behind his back, while both of them bragged enormously of his own sterling qualities that had raised him to the proud pre-eminence of senatorial rank, of his visits to Government House and his own unrivalled knowledge.

Well, we reached Mossel Bay and anchored there for a couple of days and then steamed on to the Nysna where we again dropped our mud hook. This latter place is celebrated for a forest containing a large number of elephants and is the only district in Cape Colony where these majestic animals still exist and in which they are strictly preserved by the Government.

This being the case the conversation, in the smoking-room, naturally turned upon elephants and as there were two or three interior traders and hunters among the crowd, elephant yarns were the order of the day. Now for various reasons this conversation greatly interested me. True I had only been a year in the country but had already gained sufficient experience to grasp the fact that, the great drawback to South Africa was the lack of sufficient transport. I had experienced the heart-breaking slowness of the ox-wagon for military purposes and had heard how difficult it was to convey heavy machinery to the diamond fields, so that hearing there were numerous elephants so adjacent to Cape Town, I asked the question why they were not captured, tamed and trained as is the case in India. To this query of mine an old settler answered that, it was an accepted fact, the African elephant was untamable but to this I disagreed, asking if the attempt had ever been made

and arguing that the elephants used in Europe by the ancients, notably by Phyrus, were most probably African ones and that the Carthaginians certainly used them.

Now, there were some dozen men in the smoking-room, at the time, imbibing their anti-tiffin bitters, among whom was one of these obnoxious M.P.'s and the discussion became general each man giving his opinion.

One of the military men quite agreed with me, stating that it was an historical fact that Jugurtha had to pay a yearly tribute to Carthage of so many elephants and that it was an indisputable fact that Hannibal imported them into Spain and took them across the Alps, with him, when he invaded Italy, these beasts being, in his opinion, African ones. Up to this time the M.P. had sat silent, none of us taking any notice of him, but it was contrary to the bounder's nature not to try and shove himself to the front, so he burst into the conversation with the remark, "Of course, 'e 'ad helephants with 'im, or 'ow could he have pulled 'is cannons over the 'ills, trek oxen could never have done it." For a minute we all stared at him in awe and silence, then a grizzled old interior man articulated, "Hannibal, you say, pulled his cannons over the Alps with elephants?" "Ja, how could 'e have pulled 'is big guns over with oxen or mules?" and it was only the thick upper deck which prevented the roar of ribald laughter, that burst simultaneously from all of us, reaching and disturbing the sweet little cherub that sits up aloft. Anyhow, if it did not disturb the aforesaid cherub, it considerably disturbed the M.P., who opened his little pig's eyes

and glared at us, evidently shocked and surprised, that humble, insignificant mortals should dare to laugh at any remark made by a man of his rank and smell. But he could not overawe us, for the more he glared the more we laughed, until at last he wheeled about and stalked out of the port doorway with a look of indignant disgust on his face, that simply sent us into fits. Just as his back disappeared out of the port door, his hated rival entered through the starboard one, who looking round demanded, "Wot are all you gents laughing habout? Tell us the joke." As soon as one of us could get his wind he informed the new-comer we were laughing at his brother member's assertion that Hannibal had made use of elephants to draw his cannon across the Alps. At once the second Solon broke out—"Ho, ho, ho, the ignorant ass, as if 'Annibal would 'ave tried to 'ave pulled his cannon over the Halps. Not 'e, why, he'd have loaded 'em up on the elephants' backs, just the same as I've seen pictures in the *Illustrated London News* of the Army carrying theirs in India and Hafghanistan. That's how 'Annibal got his big guns over the Halps, you bet." Again from sea to heaven went up a mighty roar, at which the bumptious rotter opened his mouth and stood speechless, glaring at us like a lion at bay, then turned his back and leaving his bitters untasted stalked out, in exactly the same way as his opponent had previously done. Of course the joke ran all through the ship, and up to the time they landed at Port Elizabeth they were pestered with queries as to the weight and number of Hannibal Barka's train of artillery.

CHAPTER IX

THE ZULU ARMY

TOWARDS the end of 1878 all the Imperial Troops in the Transkei and at King William's Town received orders to proceed to Natal as a dark thundercloud lowered over the garden colony of South Africa and that great and good, though in the future to be much maligned, statesman Sir Bartle Frere was taking, with his usual acumen, such steps as he could, to guard against the threatened danger.

Earlier in the year the 90th Regiment under Colonel E. Wood, one battery of Artillery under Colonel Tremlett and the Frontier Light Horse (late Carrington's Horse) under Commandant Redvers Buller had marched overland, so that by the end of October all the regulars had vacated the Transkei and the country was handed over to the care of Colonial officers and magistrates. I was myself still at Quintani, waiting to be relieved, when it was my intention to return home, but the same day my relieving officer arrived, I received a letter from Colonel Glyn telling me, that he had not the slightest doubt, but that war was imminent with the great Zulu nation, that, in case it took place, he would command one of the columns intended to invade Zululand, and requesting me to come down country, for, as he was sure I should offer my services, he was making arrangements for

me to be appointed to his command. This was very flattering and as I had no wish to arrive at home during a winter, although thanks to the splendid climate of the Transkei I had quite recovered my health and strength, I determined to comply with his wishes, especially as I was certain the Zulus would put up a fight well worth a Lost Legionary, out of employment, taking a hand in. I therefore packed my belongings into a mule cart and, with Quin, started hot-foot for King William's Town, which we reached on the morning of the same day, the 24th, entrained for East London; so that I was able to have an interview with Colonel Glyn who directed me to remain in King and assist Commandant Rupert Lonsdale to raise officers and non-commissioned officers, who were to form the staff of one of the regiments of Natal natives, the General contemplated organizing for the ensuing war.

On the completion of this work, which lasted only a fortnight, myself and Quin started as an advance guard to East London, so as to secure accommodation for the 60 officers and the 120 non-coms. that had been engaged, should the state of the weather render the river bar uncrossable. I had just finished the business and was making for the hotel when, from out of a gang of loafing surf-boatmen rose the titanic roar, "Gord strike me lucky, if there ain't my old mess-mate and skipper," and in a moment my hand was nearly wrenched off by old Jack Williams, who had formerly been an old tent-mate of mine, when I had originally joined the Lost Legion, some years previously, in New Zealand and whom I had last

seen as bos'n on board a brig, of worse than questionable morality, among the South Sea Islands. I was very glad to meet the old pirate once more, while his delight was expressed so noisily, that it immediately attracted all the roughs in the vicinity who were thunderstruck to see one of their no class fraternity shaking hands with a smartly-uniformed officer and at once crowded round us in such a manner as to incommode and annoy me. This old Jack spotted and immediately started to remedy after his own fashion which was effectual if not polite.

"'Ere sling yer ruddy 'ooks, yer steamboat, makeshift, brass-polishing sodgers, who axed yer to shove yer blooming oars in? Do ye think as 'ow an hoffer as is a gen'leman wants to be lumbered up with the likes of ye? Yer rotten beachcombers, 'ere get." And they got, with the exception of one huge ruffian who demanded, "Who the 'ell was a-going to make 'im shift 'is kedge?" Old Jack quickly set his mind at rest on that point, as without another word, he sprung at him, seized him by the collar and waist-belt, shook him as a dog shakes a rat and hove him, staggering back, until he collapsed into a muddy sluit, which contained old-time fish heads and other decayed, unprofitable matter; where he lay vomiting language filthier than even the ditch in which he reclined. I fully expected that Jack's impetuosity would cause a row, as the cursing blackguard had evidently a following, but my surmises were incorrect as after hauling their mate out of his wallow, they retired uttering threats and maledictions, couched in language, sufficiently torrid as to have blistered

off the white-wash from the inside of a newly-built Nonconformist conventicle. So it was evident to me, that Jack Williams had established a reputation, among the unhung blackguards of East London boatmen, such as to make him feared and respected. Truly a man can thrive for a long time, in many classes of society, on his reputation, be it either for sanctity or high-toned blackguardism. As soon as we were alone, Jack demanded, "where I was bound for." And on my informing him I was *en route* for Natal he at once exclaimed with more cuss words than I care to recount or any printer would dare to set up, for if he did, they would most certainly fuse his machine, "Wot, going up to fight ruddy niggers are ye and got Quin along with ye too, I'll bet, so be it as 'e's still alive and hearty. Well darn my rags if old Jack Williams don't sign on the same ship's articles, seeing as 'ow I 'aven't done a bit for the Queen and flag, Gord bless 'em, since we was up Taupo way. Wot do yer say? don't throw up a good-paying, steady job? D——n jobs when there's fighting going on; I ships I do and so does my mate; you can trust 'im, we signs on to-night we do, and if ye want any more men there's a few 'ere about among this scum as I'll answer for. Yes, I'll 'ave a drink along of you and I'll be a proud man if ye'll let me pay for it; 'twon't be the first un we've 'ad together, old mess-mates as we are; though in course the likes of you can't be pals with the likes of me, I'm on the foke-sel head I am, and you're on the ruddy poop you are, so as I signs right on, just give us yer flipper and let's have a last hand-shake, God bless yer." Old Jack rambled on till we reached

the hotel and had our drink, but he was wrong about the last hand-shake, that eventuated many years afterwards, as it was gripping my hand, in a far-off country that, world-wanderers as we both were, neither of us had at that time ever heard of that old Jack Williams one-time pirate, filibuster, sea-ruffian and loyal soldier to his Queen and country, took his last departure from land, mast-headed his top-sel yards and set sail on a longer voyage than even he, tough old shell-back as he was, had ever previously signed on for. But that day was still far away in the womb of futurity and even had we been able to foresee the event it would not have spoilt our drink as Lost Legionaries learn, early in their career, to laugh at the nose of the grim monarch come he as he may. That evening Jack brought up and introduced to me Bill Conway (his mate) who had likewise used the sea all his life and possessed an unholy knowledge of the South Sea Islands; in fact it is my belief, though old Jack would never own up to it, that both of them were badly wanted in those parts of the world and had had good and sufficient reasons for transferring their persons from the romantic islands to the more prosaic continent of South Africa. Of course this was only conjecture on my part but I noticed once or twice, on my mentioning the Brig Karl and Bully Brag, both of them wilted and seemed strangely uncomfortable, especially about the neck. However it was no business of mine and I had seen many a man, whose departure from his country had simply been an act of injustice to the common hangman, die like a hero in the dense bush of New Zealand and sure it's much

better and a heap more economical to let a real fighting man, who had run foul of his country's laws, die fighting for his flag, than to put the said country to the expense of judges, juries, sheriff, hangman and rope to ensure the same purpose. Next morning Commandant Lonsdale and his party arrived, the bar was propitious, the tug with the boats were ready and as the tide suited in less than an hour we were on board the Union Company's s.s. *Nubian* and on the third morning, after leaving East London, dropped our anchor off Port Natal, as Durban was commonly called in those days. Here we also found the bar on its best behaviour so quickly landed and marched the men to the rest-camp at Durban. The following day we entrained for Pine Town, from whence we started to march to Pietermaritzburg, but at a place called Camperdown we found the General's mule cart, the driver of which handed Lonsdale a note, which contained the order that he and myself were to make use of the cart and report at Pietermaritzburg without a moment's delay. Of course we entered the cart and started gaily on our way, but before we arrived at our destination, and just as we had reached the bare top of a high hill, we were struck by the most terrific thunderstorm I ever have had to face. The driver lost his head, the six mules maddened by the vivid lightning and the lashing hail became unmanageable, we had to jump out and rush to their heads, the force of the wind overturned the cart, and for at least twenty minutes, if ever two men, on this earth, smelt h—it was Lonsdale and myself. I had experienced as heavy squalls of wind before, and since then have

seen hailstones pierce corrugated iron roofs like rifle bullets, but I have never before or since seen such lightning and certainly never want to again. It seemed as if we were enveloped by continuous electric flashes that came so quickly one after the other as to be contiguous and so close to us that if one of us had let go his grip on the mules' head collars, he could have dabbled his hands in liquid flames. Nor could we use our hands to shelter our eyes as we had to hang on to the mules and the skin on my face seemed to grow hot and blister as if Ould Nick was shaving me wid the spear-head he wears at the end of his tail. Well the storm like everything else came to an end, so that after we had righted the cart, straightened out the mules and harness, and administered toko to the cowardly driver, we again got into the cart and arrived, drenched through and plastered with mud, in Pietermaritzburg. Here I stayed a week and as the final arrangements, *re* the formation of the projected invading columns, had not been definitely settled, by Colonel Glyn's desire I marched with Lonsdale's party through Grey Town and the Thorn country to Sand Spruit where we formed a large camp on a flat and awaited the arrival of his native rank and file, who were to be handed over to him there, by the resident magistrate of the district. While we are halted here I think I may tell you some few facts about the Zulu army we were to encounter and which was the most perfect organization ever completed by a savage race; in fact Tchaka, the founder of the Zulu nation, planned and enforced universal conscription to its utmost limitations. I am therefore quite justified in

stating that the whole of the Zulu people was really an army as both boys and girls had to serve in regiments and although I do not wish to infer that the women went on the war-path, still every girl was bound to join a female regiment (*ibuto*) and forced to parade when her *ibuto* was ordered to dance before the king or even to marry when the girls composing her *ibuto* reached a marriageable age. The boy however went through a very severe course of training, beginning while still young to prepare for his military service and as no deformed children were allowed to exist and no peace-at-any-price fathers or radical orators were tolerated for a moment, the lad was very anxious, or at least had to pretend he was, to become a warrior.

As soon as a youth was ten years old he might be inspanned to carry the swag of his father, uncle or elder brother on the war-path; which would consist of a sleeping-mat, water-calabash, cooking-pot, docha-pipe, a few pounds of dried meat or mealies and perhaps a spare assagai and knob-stick. When he reached the age of fourteen or fifteen he would be drafted with other boys of his own age to the nearest military kraal where he would have to do fatigue duties, herd and milk cattle, fetch firewood, etc., at the same time being taught how to use his arms, how to fence with sticks, military drill and dances. During this period of his training, provided he wanted to eat, he had to skirmish around and find or steal the materials for his meal as the only provision for his sustenance, made by the kraal commandant, were a number of the wildest cows, drawn from the royal herd entrusted

to the care of the regiment, and these unruly animals the recruit boys had to run down, hold and milk before they dined. This was very rough training and a boy had to be soundly constituted to survive the ordeal of his initiation into military life. As soon as a lad was old enough to be considered fit for active service he might be drafted into a regiment, or if there were enough boys fit for the purpose they might be all formed into a new regiment, each sub-tribe forming its own company, while warriors of repute were selected by the king to officer it. A Zulu regiment numbered from three to six thousand men and had its own kraal at which the men on duty lived, and a newly-formed regiment would have to build its own barracks, break up ground for cultivation, and when this was done it would receive a name from the king and be considered a unit of the royal army. Should any individual soldier or number of soldiers greatly distinguish themselves in action, he or they might be drafted into one of the royal regiments and also be rewarded by receiving permission to marry—a reward highly thought of and much prized, as he then could mount the head ring (*kehla*), the mark of manhood, which would not otherwise have been granted to them until they were at least thirty-five or forty years old, nor would they have been permitted to marry till then.

A warrior's war outfit consisted of a shield made out of dried ox-hide, oval in shape, about 2 feet 6 inches wide and long enough for the owner to look over, when he held it by the middle of the strengthening stick that ran up it lengthways. His offensive arms consisted of from two to three

assagais, one of which would be the stabbing assagai (*bogwan*) that had a blade of at least a foot to 18 inches long fixed to a strong shaft of wood of about 2 feet in length. This weapon, as formidable as the short stabbing sword of the ancient Roman soldier, was never thrown but only used in hand-to-hand combat, while the others, if carried, being much lighter might be thrown, though the Zulu warrior was not encouraged to throw his assagai but was taught to rush in, defend himself with his shield and stab home with his *bogwan*. He also carried a knobkerry and a plain stick both made of hard wood. His food, carried for him by a boy, consisted of a small bag of dried meat and grain, but as all the kraals, on the line of march, had to contribute to the maintenance of the king's troops very little food was carried on an expedition. A force equipped, as above, could easily march 30 miles a day and put up a big fight at the end of their journey or if necessary cover 50 miles a day and continue to do so for weeks at a stretch, so that an army opposed to them must always be on the alert as no cavalry could keep pace with them over rough and broken country. Their favourite time to attack was the early morning, their plan being to surprise and envelop their enemy, when they would rush in and kill everything with the exception of the girls and cattle.

The Zulu discipline was very strict, disobedience or neglect of duty being punished by death; in fact death was the only penalty served out and the guilty one might not only bring death to himself but to all his family and friends; so it behoved a Zulu soldier to obey and obey smartly. He showed

no mercy, he expected none, and when ordered on active service he well knew he must conquer or die for certain disgrace and death, probably torture, awaited a beaten army. A Zulu soldier, whether married or not, had to put in six months out of the year, under arms, at his military kraal; the balance of the year he might go home but was always liable to be called out at any moment, not only in case of war, for his regiment might be required to do duty at the royal kraal, also at certain feasts the majority of the army would be mobilized, before the king, for the purpose of showing off their capabilities in drill and dancing. At such times petitions might be presented to the sable potentate, who also took the opportunity of rewarding or punishing those brought before him. The most frequent petition was for permission to marry and at times the king would allow aspirants to holy wedlock to prove their right to be considered men and perhaps test their capability of managing a wife in the following way: A wild and savage bull would be turned loose into a large enclosed space and a dozen love-lorn young men sent in to kill it with no weapons except their bare hands; should they succeed in killing the bull the king granted their request and they were contented; while if the bull killed them they were also contented or at least never complained.

There was great rivalry between the various regiments and even between companies of the same regiment and the king would occasionally allow, or even order, one corps to fight another, in which combat only sticks were permitted to be used, but as a shillelagh made of hard and unbreak-

able wood and handled by a man trained to use it, is by no means a despicable weapon very many on both sides would be maimed and killed.

The Zulu march was usually conducted in single file, the companies moving in parallel lines, while each regiment would take its own line for the objective point, and on reaching that point, or rather some given spot a few miles short of it, the leading files of each petty column would halt and the rear close up, until each company formed a dense mass of men in a ring formation, as the Zulu was quite incompetent to form or advance in line.

The regiments having converged together the chief *induna* (General) would give his orders for the attack and the regiments be formed up to carry them out. In case it should be a laager, camp or village to be stormed, the youngest regiments would be placed on the flanks whose first duty was to surround and completely envelop the enemy, thereby preventing the escape of any fugitives and these men were called the horns of the army. The main body, called the chest of the army, never moved until the flankers had taken up their positions. Then a combined attack would be made but always the junior regiments were first engaged.

The Zulu well understood the utility of a flank attack and should the position of the enemy be so extended or their numbers be so great that the Zulus could not surround them they would still try to out-flank them, but all attacks, whether frontal or flanking, were first made by the youngest regiments and should these be beaten back then the more matured and veteran soldiers moved forward to do the work. The oldest veterans

formed the reserve which encouraged the fighting line and killed any combatant who turned tail.

The Zulus had no field ambulances, so after a fight the wounded were examined by their *indunas* and if found to be unable to march or to be otherwise seriously hurt were put to death, usually by drowning, provided a river was close at hand, otherwise he was put out of his misery by his nearest relation. After the fight at Rourke's Drift we found on the banks of the Buffalo nearly one hundred blood-stained shields on which their wounded owners had been carried down to the river so as to be drowned. The Zulus were very superstitious, being great believers in omens, witchcraft, divinations and bone-throwing and also believed that the moon exercised great power for good and evil and that at certain phases of the luminary it was lucky or most unlucky to undertake any important act especially that of war.

The numerical strength of the Zulu army has always been disputed but I am of opinion that it must have been near sixty thousand men at the declaration of the war and these men, trained as they were and as mobile as monkeys, were not an enemy to be sneezed at, much less to be treated lightly. Now I have told you something about the Zulus I will go on with my yarn. Two days after our arrival at Sandspruit, some two thousand five hundred natives reached us who had to be formed into battalions and companies and put through such drill as it was possible to teach them in less than a fortnight. Of course to try and teach a mob of savages, who did not understand one word of English, in such a limited space of time, the

intricacies of company drill or battalion movements was absurd and I was far from pleased, after we had been at the game for a week, when the General, as he passed through on his way to Helpmaker, told me I was to take command of the 1st Battalion of this nigger regiment. However the eve of war is not the time to grumble and I remembered what slashing good fun I had had in days gone by with the native contingents in New Zealand, so although I had been looking forward to having the command of a troop of mounted scouts still I made the best of it and set to with redoubled energy to knock my battalion into shape. Three days after my appointment to the 3rd Natal Native Contingent we were ordered to strike camp, proceed to Rourke's Drift and remain there till the arrival of the rest of No. 3 Column, to which we belonged.

CHAPTER X

ADVANCE INTO ZULULAND

BEFORE daylight on the morning of the 10th January 1879, the headquarter column of the Zululand Field Force began to cross the Buffalo River at Rourke's Drift and enter Zululand.

I had a few days before been appointed Commandant of the 1st Battalion of the 3rd Regiment of the Natal Native Contingent, composed of ten companies. Each company consisted of three white officers, six white non-com. officers and one hundred or more Natal natives. The exact number of natives I never knew but I had about twelve hundred of them in all.

The officers were chiefly a smart lot of young Colonials, most of whom spoke Zulu, all of them good shots and fine horsemen.

The non-coms. were a motley crowd, a few of them old soldiers and ex-clerks, the majority of them runaway sailors, ex-navvies, and East London boatmen. They were an awful tough crowd, but they looked a hard-fighting lot and though their language was strong, and they were evidently very rough, they looked also very ready, and I afterwards found that most of them did not belie their looks. The greater number of both officers and non-coms. had served through the Gaika and Galeka wars of 1877 and 1878, and many of them had been under me before.

The column was commanded by General Lord Chelmsford and was composed of both battalions of the 24th Regiment, one battery of Royal Artillery, two companies of Mounted Infantry, the Natal Mounted Police, the Natal Carbineers, and the 3rd Regiment of Natal Native Contingent, of which Commandant Lonsdale was commandant-in-chief, I commanding the 1st and Commandant Cooper the 2nd Battalion. Of course we had doctors, ambulances, commissariat officers and the usual miles of wagons, without which no column can march in Africa.

The morning was very cold, the dense morning fog, for which Zululand is famous, hung close to the ground, and although it was midsummer the cold bit, causing us to shiver in our thin khaki clothing, whilst the naked natives turned blue, their teeth chattering like stone-breakers at work.

There were four crossing-places to the river, a very rapid one and on that day in flood.

Two of these were fairly practicable drifts (fords), and two ponts that had been put together by the Royal Engineer officer and some of my non-coms. These drifts were above and below the ponts and my orders were that I was to cross at the lower drift, line the ridge on the other side and hold it while the 24th, the guns and the wagons were got across by the ponts.

The Mounted Infantry were to cross after my men and the mounted volunteers were to cross after Commandant Cooper at the upper drift.

Well before daylight in the bitter fog, we came down to the drift. The river was full, rapid and very cold and looked far from tempting. How-

ever orders must be obeyed so we hardened our hearts and dashed at it, the natives all locking arms and rushing in *en masse*. My horse was nearly carried off his feet but having been used to crossing bad rivers in New Zealand, I kept him up and over we got. I do not know how many of my natives were lost. I had never received a long roll of them when I took over the command, and but few returns were ever sent in.

A most dashing act was done at the drift by Captain Hayes who was in command of my rear company.

One of the Mounted Infantry, a poor horseman, lost control of his horse, and horse and man were swept down the river. Captain Hayes who had crossed, dashed in and saved both. This was done under the eye of the General who mentioned it in dispatches, and who rode that night to my camp to thank Captain Hayes personally.

Now we were in Zululand, cold, wet through and shivering with our tempers short and crisp. The Colonial can grumble just as well as an old Tommy, and he has, as a rule, more command of language. However it did not take me long to get my men into line, and we pushed on, up the rise, and took possession of the top of the ridge, which we lined.

Just then the sun came up and away went the fog. For the first hour or so we enjoyed it. But when our clothes were dry we began to get dry ourselves and I may say we dried very quickly and soon began to scorch.

There was no shade and as the sun increased in heat, there we lay on that bare ridge and roasted

all that live-long day. Certainly we had plenty of water nearly as warm as ourselves, but that scorching sun would have been less intolerable had we been on the move.

There was no enemy in sight, nothing to do, conversation died away, it was too hot to sleep, even the East London boatmen could not curse, and the only thing I could do was to stick four assagais into the ground, rest a shield on them, lie with my head in the shade of the latter and think of iced drinks.

How we white men longed for the enemy or anything to break this monotony, but no enemy came. Although Serhio (one of Cetewayo's principal *indunas* (chiefs) and one of the chief causes of the war) had his kraal only a few miles off, he refused to call on us for afternoon tea, but we called on him for early coffee next morning.

However the longest day must have an ending and at dark the pickets were posted, and we were ordered down to the camp that had been pitched in a long line on the Zulu bank of the river.

Now I do not want to rake up old stories or say anything unkind about men, most of whom are dead. But in the book of Standing Orders, issued to all commandants, the first order was that no camp should be pitched without being laagered. Yet here was a camp, stretching away in a long line, without any attempt at a laager or any other defence.

After a feed of bully beef and biscuit washed down by a pannikin of muddy coffee, the first food that day, I had just finished my pipe and was rolling myself up in my blankets when the orderly

officer arrived with the order that I was to parade eight companies of my men before daylight and join the party that was to attack Serhio's kraal next morning.

It seemed I had hardly been to sleep, when the faithful Quin roused me up with a pannikin of coffee and it was a case of turn out and get my men together. We had some trouble in turning out the natives but it was done at last and we marched off, being ordered to take post in rear of the mounted advance guard, the sun rising as we crossed the ridge and advanced on the precipitous Krantz where Serhio had his stronghold.

As we got nearer we could hear the lowing of cattle, the sound coming from a deep cleft running into the precipice. Just then the screen of mounted men moved away to the right and left and I received orders to advance to the front.

It may be as well here to say something about the arming of my motley gang. My officers and non-coms. were each armed with M.H. rifles and each carried seventy rounds of ammunition. Fifty more M.H. rifles were distributed amongst the natives, but as they were quite ignorant of the use of rifles, and the M.H. is not a rifle to be played with by a duffer, we were ourselves in far greater danger of our own men than the enemy were. Fifty more old muzzle-loading rifles were provided but I did not fear these so much, as the natives usually forgot to tear off the end of the paper cartridge or placed it in ball part first, so that the rifle refused to go off. We certainly had no time to instruct them in musketry but as only five rounds, per man, was issued, I trusted, with luck,

to get through the job without being shot by my own niggers.

The rest of the force had shields, assagais and knobkerries and I made up my mind that the closer the action was the safer it would be for me. I therefore determined to charge the first moment I could. But alas! I did not know then, in what an awful funk the Natal Kafir was of the real fighting Zulu.

Anyhow the mounted men cleared my front and I pressed on, passing Lord Chelmsford and his staff who up to that time had accompanied the advance guard. The General returned my salute and calling me over to him said, "Commandant Browne, those Krantzes are full of cattle; go down and take them but on no account are you to fire before you are fired at." He also said, "I shall hold you responsible that no women or children are killed."

He then wished me luck in the most kind and courteous manner—a manner that endeared him to all of us. No General that I ever served under in South Africa, was so respected and liked as he was, and certainly, no Colonial officer ever said a word against him or blamed him for the awful disaster that came later on.

Well I got my men into line and advanced to the first fight in Zululand. Previous to moving off I repeated the General's orders to my captains, at the same time telling them to impress on their men that any man who hurt a woman or a child would be shot at once. I then gave the order to advance, and we moved on to the Krantz in what might be called a line, but a very crooked one, as a

South African native cannot walk in a line, draw a line, or form a line, and if placed in a line will soon mob himself into a ring.

The Krantz was a precipitous mountain about 500 feet high, and where the enemy and the cattle were located was in a deep cleft running in V shape, the foot of the hill being covered with boulders and bushes.

My men advanced leaping and jumping, singing war-songs, sharpening their assagais, and looking so bloodthirsty that I feared they would kill every woman and child we came across. But as we drew nearer the scene of action, their zeal for fighting—like Bob Acre's courage—oozed out of them. Their war-songs dwindled away and they seemed indisposed to come on. In fact some of them suddenly remembering they had important business to transact towards the rear had to be encouraged with the butt of the rifle or the ready boot of my non-coms. As the native must be led, myself and all the officers were in front. This being the case, and we being far more in funk of our playful savages armed with M.H. rifles than of the enemy, I gave orders that there was to be no firing but that we must trust to the steel.

As we neared the place I observed I could send a party to the right and left of the V-shaped entrance. I therefore detached the two flank companies, and when they had moved off to their assigned places I again advanced.

A voice hailed us asking by whose orders we came. My interpreter and right-hand man (Capt. R. Duncombe) answered "by the orders of the Great White Queen" and the enemy, or those of

them who had exposed themselves, at once ran back to cover. I again ordered the advance; a few shots were fired at us, and I immediately gave the word to charge and led it, followed splendidly by No. 8 Company, commanded by Captains R. Duncombe and O. Murray. A ragged volley was fired at us by the enemy, but we charged on through it and up the rising ground to the mouth of the V which we found to be full of boulders. I had gained the mouth when I looked back. Ye gods of war, what a sight for a commandant! No. 8 Company, led by two of the best Colonial officers I have ever met, were on my heels, but the rest. I saw their backs in a mad stampede while among them raged their furious officers and non-coms.

Above the rifle shots rang out their wild imprecations while with butt, fist and boot they tried to instil courage into that awful mob of cowardly Kafirs.

Now I must say a word about No. 8 Company. Among my 1200 men I had 300 real Zulus. They were the remains of a young Zulu regiment that had been destroyed by Cetewayo's orders the year before. He had ordered a fight to take place, with sticks, between them and his own royal regiment. The youngsters had beaten their seniors, and this so enraged the king that he turned Serhio's regiment, armed with shields and assagais, on to them who had decimated them. This was not cricket, as the boys had only their sticks, however some of them had escaped to Natal with Esikota, the king's youngest brother, and these 300 men were quite game to return and play another match, backed

up by white men, with their destroyers. Their contempt for the Natal Kafir was unbounded, and they were splendid fighting men. They formed three of my companies, Nos. 8, 9 and 10. No. 9 was in camp. No. 8 was with me and No. 10 was one of the companies I had sent to work round the enemy's flank.

I left off, as our charge swept into the mouth of the V. Here the Zulus, who had up to this time been firing at us from under cover, met us and for a time we had a sweet hand-to-hand fight. Shield clashed against shield, assagai met assagai and the hissing word "Guzzie," as the stab went home, was answered by the grunt or yell of the wounded man. I had my hands full and had to use freely both sword and revolver. The enemy fought splendidly but my men would not be denied. Had not Serhio been the *induna* (chief) of the Impie who had killed their brothers, and would they not have their revenge?

My white officers and non-coms. also fought like fiends and we drove them back over the rocks and round the rocks until at last they took refuge in rear of the cattle jammed into the narrow end of the V. These had to be driven out before we could get at them again and it was done; also a lot of women and children were brought out. Thank the Lord none of them hurt, and they with the cattle were removed to the open. We now found that the enemy had retreated by a narrow path to the top of a cliff about 60 feet high and had blocked the path by rolling big boulders into it.

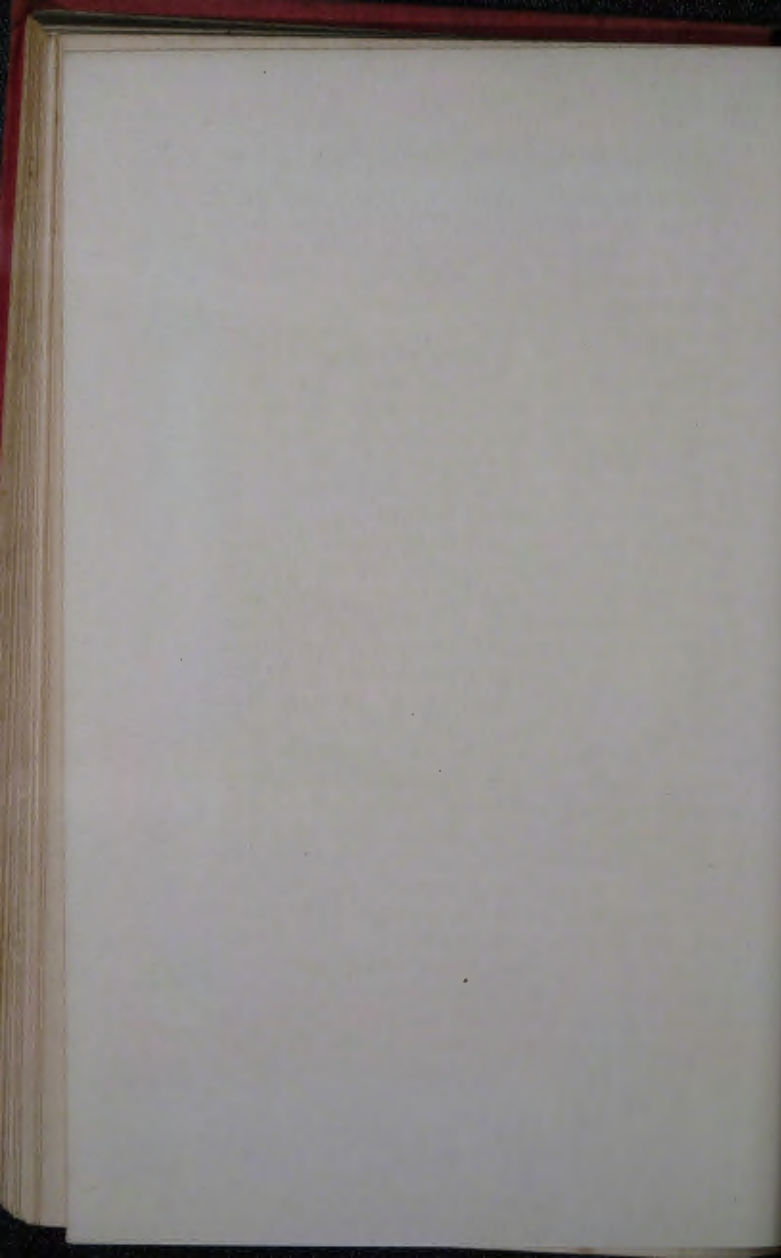
They opened fire on us, which although hot

was very badly directed and my officers and non-coms. returned it with interest.

Just then Lieutenant Harford of the 99th Regiment, who was acting as S.O. to Commandant Lonsdale, came up to me. He was a charming companion, one of the very best, but he was a crazy bug and beetle hunter, and would run about on the hottest day with a landing-net to catch butterflies and other insects. He moreover collected and treasured snakes, scorpions and loathsome beasts of all sorts. He had never been under fire before and had on two or three occasions talked to me about a man's feelings while undergoing his baptism of fire, and had expressed hopes he would be cool and good while undergoing his. Well we were in rather a hot corner and he was standing to my right rear when I heard an exclamation, and turning round saw him lying on the ground having dropped his sword and revolver. "Good God, Harford," I said, "you are hit!" "No, sir," he replied, "not hit but I have caught such a beauty." And there the lunatic, in his first action, and under a heavy fire, his qualms of nervousness all forgotten, had captured some infernal microbe or other, and was blowing its wings out, as unconscious of the bullets striking the rocks all round him as if he had been in his garden at home. He was just expatiating on his victory and reeling off Latin names—they might have been Hebrew for all I knew or cared—when I stopped him, and told him to get as quick as he could to the right flanking company and hurry them up. He looked at me with sorrow, put his prize into a tin box and was off like a shot.



CHARGE AT SERHIO'S KRANTZ.



All this time my bold runaways had been absent, but now they returned in this manner.

There was in the second 24th a major (Wilson Black by name), and Commandant Lonsdale having been knocked over by sunstroke during the previous day, Major Black had been placed, for the time being, in full command of the 3rd N.N.C.

He was a Highlander, brave as his own sword, tender-hearted as a woman, hospitable as a Maori, but with a temper well, may I say it, just a little peppery. He had served through the Crimea and Mutiny with, I think, the Black Watch, and I had only met him the night before.

Up to this time he had been with the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd, but when he saw the undignified retreat of the greater part of my men, he drew his sword, and quickly bringing forward a strong party of the 24th, with fixed bayonets, he rode right at them. They were now between the devil and the deep sea. They were already catching to badly from their own white officers and non-coms., and as if that was not enough here comes a man on horseback followed by a lot of those red soldiers, who with flashing steel, were rushing right at them. It was too much. They had to turn back and with their officers trying to get them into some sort of shape they were driven at the point of the bayonet back to me. When they arrived Black burst through them and joined me. At once they halted. Forward they would not come, back they could not go, for there was that awful line of the red soldiers with fixed bayonets, and among them raged their own white men. So they did just what I expected they would do; every man of

them who had a gun let it off, quite regardless as to the direction the business end pointed, and they fired away as fast as they could load.

In vain their officers ordered them to cease fire, in vain their non-coms. kicked and cuffed them; fire they would and fire they did so long as they had a cartridge left.

Well that was a very sultry spot indeed for the time being but there is an end to most things in this world and, thank the Lord, their fire-play soon ended.

Some of them rammed their cartridges down bullet first so they became harmless as their rifles refused to go off, and as it does not take a raw savage long to let off five rounds of M.H. ammunition when he aims at nothing the firing died away and we were again able to pay attention to the Zulus. We also counted our dead and wounded and I found that my beauties had bagged thirty-two of themselves, but I could well spare them.

I do not believe that the enemy were responsible for a single one, their fire having been kept down by my officers who perforated every head that was raised to fire at us, so the firing ceased. Yet we were at the base of a 60-foot perpendicular cliff and could not get at them and I saw at once that we must wait for the flanking companies to work round. They were having a hard job getting at the spot on account of the roughness of the ground but there was nothing else to do.

Major Black thought otherwise. How he expected to scale the cliff I know not, but he got to the foot of it and shouted for rifles to come on. He was standing with his back turned to the rock and was

waving his sword when the Zulus hearing him rolled over some stones; one struck the gallant Major on the—well, not on the head—and he fell on his knees and poured out a volume of Gaelic that filled my non-coms. with delight.

It might have been prayers he was letting go, but the volubility and unctuousness forbid that idea, and they all thought, though they could not understand one word of his orison, that he was using very bad language indeed and all the more they admired him.

A few minutes before Colonel Glyn and Major Cleary had come up and were standing by me. We were unable to restrain our laughter and burst into a roar as Black limped up to us cursing, in good Anglo-Saxon, the Zulus for wounding a gentleman in a place he could not show to anyone but the doctor.

However he was not much hurt and soon recovering his temper joined in the laugh.

The flanking companies had by this time worked round and Lieutenant Harford who had joined one of them shouted to the Zulus that if they surrendered they would not be killed.

This they did, and the fighting, as far as I was concerned, was over for that day.

The mounted men who had gone to the top of the hill had a sharp skirmish with a large party of the enemy, these being joined by the Zulus who had escaped from me. But they were easily routed, the troopers pursuing some distance and killing a good few.

Leaving one company behind me to collect our own wounded, I joined the main command

with the rest of my men and we returned to camp for the night. Serhio had been well punished, his big kraal had been burned, two of his sons were among the dead, some of his daughters among the prisoners, and his pet herd of cattle had been captured.

If you wish to know the cause of the war I must refer you to Blue Books for the information. It was no business of mine and my opinion was not asked on the question.

Next day (the 12th) we rested in camp, and my natives asked for an ox, to medicine themselves with. This I gave them hoping the ceremony might instil some courage into them, as they swore it would, but I had no idea of the diabolical cruelty they were going to practise on the poor beast or I would have seen them in Hades first. Anyway, something must have gone wrong with the performance as their courage did not increase but rather diminished. However I will not touch on the subject of Kafir witchcraft, but pass on.

During the day the General visited my camp and kindly thanked me for the work of the day before. He also requested me to present to him Captains Duncombe and Murray.

The same evening I received orders to strike camp, and at daylight to move out to the scene of the late fight, and camp there with the object of making a road over a swamp, so as to allow the heavy wagons to advance.

We moved out and camped, but when it came to road-making trouble began.

The Colonial officers turned sulky. They had come out to fight not to make roads. None of

the natives had ever used pick or spade before, and it took me all my time to get them turned to. Certainly it is not a pleasant job to make roads in Zululand during the summer-time, the sun hot, flies bad, and men sulky. The Colonial officers were not at their best, and men who would willingly stand up to their middles all day long in the drift of a river plugging oxen over, grumbled and swore. It required no small amount of tact to get them started, but when they saw me off shirt and turn to, they could not hang back and once started we soon made things hum and the road grew apace.

In this manner things went on till the 19th of January. On that morning I was visited by the General and his staff. He informed me that news had been received that the Zulu army was to leave Ulundi that morning to attack us, and ordered, in case he was attacked, I was to move down and attack the right flank of the enemy. I suggested that as I lay in their road, they would eat me up long before they reached him. He thought not, but I requested the chief of the staff to allow me to take my men off work and laager my camp.

This he refused, but as soon as the staff left I altered the position of my wagons, told off my white men to their respective posts and made what preparations I could in case of a fight. I took no precautions, for my natives, with the exception of the Zulu companies, as I knew that the Natal Kafir would bolt at the first onset.

That afternoon I received a note from Captain Duncombe who was in command of the picket

on the top of the hill, informing me that there was a large number of cattle in the valleys on his right, and requesting me to come up at once. This I did, taking with me two companies of my Zulus, the other one being on picket with him. On joining him on the top of the pass we moved carefully to the edge of some very rough ground consisting of deep valleys, and on looking into these we saw a large number of cattle herded by a few unarmed Zulus, who called to us to come down, as they wished to surrender themselves and the cattle. This was a temptation, a very nice bait indeed, but I saw through it. I had matriculated in ambush work in New Zealand, had had more than my share of it and with all my faults I have never been deemed a greedy or covetous man, so directed Captain Duncombe to shout to them ordering them to come up and surrender on the top, but this they refused to do. Captain Duncombe then at my request called Umvubie, the head fighting *induna* (chief) of my Zulus and asked him what he thought of it. He at once replied, "That is a trap, those bushes are full of Zulus. If we descend they will kill every one of us, but we shall have a good fight first. I and my brothers are ready to descend with the chief."

Now this was startling. I had no doubt that what Umvubie stated was true, and if so a large body of the enemy—how large I knew not—must be on the General's right flank.

I immediately sent off a runner to the H.Q. camp, with a note to that effect, and, as it was approaching sunset, retired to my camp, leaving Captain Duncombe with a few good men (well

hidden) to keep watch for any moves they (the Zulus) might carry on.

The Zulus, seeing I had retired, came out of their ambush, some 1500 strong, and started towards a large military kraal which we knew to be several miles down the river. I partook of early coffee at that kraal later on.

Seeing they left the cattle behind, Duncombe and his men, as soon as they lost sight of the enemy, descended into the valley, captured some 150 head of them and brought them into my camp.

On reaching my camp I found Major Black had arrived, bringing with him two companies of the second 24th. I reported to him what I had seen and Captain Duncombe coming in shortly afterwards, Major Black at once sent a report into the H.Q. camp.

The night passed quietly, but my natives were very restless and evidently in a great funk.

Next morning Captain Hallan Parr, one of the staff, came out with orders to Major Black and myself that we were to get ready to march as the whole column was to move forward, so we struck camp and packed wagons. On the General reaching us, he questioned myself and Duncombe as to what we had seen and we reported fully. This interview being over, I was ordered by the C.S.O. to move my men on and clear the road, a rough wagon track over the pass, of any boulders and stones that might be lying on it and was to be supported by a party of the second 24th, under Lieutenant Pope.

Away we went and after a few miles came to a

queer-shaped mountain that looked like a sphinx lying down, by the same token I have never seen the beast depicted standing up, anyhow the road ran between this mountain and a kopje when we at once came out on a big plain.

I had just reached here when Major Cleary rode up, who directed me to move to my left so as to be ready to encamp, he riding with me, and pointing out the ground on which my camp was to be pitched, which would be on the extreme left of the line.

The column came up, and the camp was arranged in the same form as it had been on the bank of the river, only it was much more extended. As soon as the tents were pitched, and we had had some food, I was joined by Commandant Lonsdale, who had that day come out of hospital. I was talking to some of my best officers when he joined us and his first words to me were, "My God, Maori, what do you think of this camp?" I replied, "Some one is mad." The Colonial officers were loud and long in complaint, and Duncombe said, "Do the staff think we are going to meet an army of school-girls? Why in the name of all that is holy do we not laager?"

In the evening I strolled over to the 24th lines to have a chat with the officers, all of whom I knew well. Whilst there, I had a yarn with Colonel Glyn who was acting as Brigadier-General, and would have had command of the column had not the General and staff decided to join us at the last moment. He was a very old friend of my family's and had served as a Lieutenant under my father. He did not seem to be in good spirits, but said

nothing about the camp and on my remarking it looked very pretty though rather extended, he looked hard at me, shook his head and said "Very."

That night Lonsdale came to my tent and told me that myself and Cooper were each to parade eight companies before daylight, and to clear the rough broken valleys to our right front. He would take command, and that Major Dartnell, with the Natal Mounted Police and volunteers were to act in concert with us, keeping on the high ground. I inquired if any orders had been given to laager the camp. He answered "No," adding language not very complimentary to certain members of the staff, which I fully endorsed.

CHAPTER XI

COMING EVENTS THROW SHADOWS BEFORE THEM

BEFORE daylight we moved out of camp, and while doing so I saw and spoke to Lieut.-Col. Pulleine of the first 24th. We were old friends, and he chaffed me, saying, "A lot of you nigger leaders will be knocked over to-day." I answered, "If that is so, when I return to camp I shall not find one of you alive." We laughed and parted. Which prophecy was to come right you shall hear.

At the head of my men I crossed a donga to join up with Lonsdale who was with the 2nd battalion, and on doing so he instructed me to make a detour of a hill and descend into some valleys, he working round the other side in such a manner so as to catch anything or any one who might be between us.

This movement was carried out and we captured some hundreds of head of cattle, though all the kraals we passed contained only old men, women, girls and children.

To a girl, I returned some goats which one of my men had taken from her and, through Duncombe, questioned her as to the movements of all the men. She replied, "That they had been ordered to join the King's big army." We again asked "where that was." She pointed with her

chin over to the N.E., at the same time saying, "They would attack us in two days' time." This bore out the opinion I had formed, after hearing the news on the 19th that the army had left Ulundi.

In our next drive I captured two young men and questioned them. They had no goats to be given back to them, but there are more ways than one of extracting information.

They were led apart and well questioned. War is war and you can't play at savage war with kid gloves on. The information amounted to this. They had both left the big army and had come over to see their mother. We inquired, "Where is the big army?" They pointed in the same direction as the girl had done. "When was the attack to take place?" They did not know, but the moon would be right in two days' time.

This information tallied with the girl's and Lonsdale, Cooper and myself discussed it.

The day wore on. The valleys became as hot as furnaces. We captured more cattle. So towards evening we left the low country after the most trying day and made for the high land.

On reaching it, I at once suggested we should return to the camp and inform the General of what we had learned. This was decided on and as we were then seven miles from camp Captain O. Murray was immediately dispatched, with two companies, to drive the captured cattle there. The remainder of us rested; as the white non-coms., most of whom were on foot, were very tired after their rough day's work in the stony, rugged valleys.

Poor Murray! I never saw him again. He was one of the very best stamp of Colonials, brave, loyal and true, always ready for hard work, a splendid shot and horseman. I know before he went down in the awful hell of the 22nd that he did his duty to the last, and that very many of the enemy fell to his rifle.

Evening was drawing on. We had fallen in and were preparing to return to camp when two mounted men rode up, informing us that Major Dartnell had sent them to find us, and to ask us to come and support him as he had 300 Zulus in front of him, the ground in rear of the enemy being so rough, he was unable to use his horses to advantage.

I requested Lonsdale not to think of doing such a thing, pointing out at the same time that we had no food or reserve ammunition, also that we were seven miles from camp, our white men worn out and that it would be night before we could reach Dartnell, who was over three miles from us and at least that distance further away from camp than we were.

Again was not this party of Zulus the advance guard of the big army? a trap to catch us or a small party of men on their way to join the big army who would clear out directly they saw Dartnell reinforced.

Duncombe who was asked to give an opinion fully agreed with me, but Lonsdale, who had not got over his sunstroke, was simply spoiling for a fight, so orders were given for us to advance, and away we went.

I regret to say that as we moved off four of my

officers left me without leave and returned to camp. Their punishment came quickly, they were all killed next day.

Well on we went till we came to an open valley and saw the mounted men drawn up at one end of it, while at the other end were from 200 to 300 Zulus with very rough ground just in their rear and at this moment the sun set.

I again pointed out to Lonsdale the folly of our joining the mounted men. If it was a trap and we descended, our men, or rather our white men who had been on foot all day were too much exhausted to put up a good fight.

If it was not a trap, the enemy would never stand and allow about 1400 more men to join the mounted forces but would fall back into the rough ground where it would be impossible to follow them in the dark.

However Lonsdale decided to descend, so down we went. As we advanced, the Zulus drew off into the rough ground and the night fell. There is no twilight in Zululand.

Here we were at least eleven miles from camp, no food, no spare ammunition, well knowing that a huge army of Zulus must be in our close vicinity. Well I was not in command, but I begged Lonsdale even at that hour to return to camp. I said, "We know the camp is going to be attacked, every cock fights best in his own yard. When the General hears our news he will order the camp to be laagered and we can put up a fight there against the whole Zulu nation, whilst out here we shall be stamped flat in a minute." But no, Lonsdale would not grasp the situation, and decided to stay

where we were, with the intention of going for those few Zulus in the morning.

Major Dartnell concurred with him. They decided to form two squares, our men in one, Dartnell's in another, and we were to bivouac there for the night.

My Colonial officers were furious. Colonial officers are given to speaking their minds. Even Captain Duncombe came to me and asked me if everyone had gone mad. "What in God's name are we to do here?"

The squares were formed. We had in our square about 1400 natives armed as I have before mentioned, with their complement of white officers and non-coms., but few of the officers had brought their rifles, and very many cartridges had been lost while scrambling over the rocks and rough ground during the day. I of course disarmed the natives, who had M.H. rifles, and gave them to the officers but the ammunition was very short.

The natives were made to sit down in a square, two deep, the white men being inside. Ye Gods of war! as if Natal Kafirs in a formation two deep would stand for a moment against a rush of Zulus. Sick with disgust, as soon as the square was formed, I lay down and, strange to say, fell asleep. I had loosened my revolver belt for a minute, meaning to buckle it again, but went to sleep without having done so. I do not know how long I slept when I felt myself rushed over and trampled on. I tried to get to my feet, but was knocked down again. I then tried to find my revolver, but was unable to do so. I never let go of

my horse's bridle which I was holding in my hand, and at last staggered to my feet.

The square was broken, natives rushing all ways mixed up with plunging horses, while the night was horrible with yells, shouts and imprecations. "My God," I thought, "why am I not assagaied?" as half-mad natives rushed by me jostling me with their shields. In a flash I saw it was a false alarm. To wrench a knobkerry out of a native's hand, and to lay about me, was the work of a moment. My white men fought their way to my shout and backing me up splendidly we soon quelled the uproar and thrashed the cowardly brutes back to their places.

To pick up my revolver and buckle the belt did not take long, and then it was time to inquire the cause of the row. It seems that one of the natives had gone to sleep and had dropped his shield and assagais, and this was enough to frighten the bold Natal Kafirs into a stampede.

Yet with *these curs* I was expected to stop a rush of the finest fighting savages in the world!

As soon as I met Lonsdale I again urged him to return to camp even at this hour, and perhaps he might have done so, when Major Dartnell came over to us and informed us that he had sent an orderly back to camp to request the General to reinforce us. This would be worse and worse, with a force of men barely strong enough to meet 30,000 to 40,000 Zulus, even when in laager. It certainly was not the game to break up that force into two parts at a distance of quite eleven miles and just before a big fight was expected to take place.

Again I sat down, sick to the very heart, but of course I could say no more. Lonsdale was my chief, and it was my duty to loyally back him up and obey his orders.

About an hour afterwards, one of the horses shook himself, and immediately the cowardly hounds of Natal Kafirs again stampeded, but we were ready for them this time, and thrashed them back to their places. I then informed them that the next man who moved would be at once shot and that the two Zulu companies should charge and kill off the company to which the delinquent belonged. This threat put the fear of the Lord into them, and for the rest of the night they sat tight.

The weary night dragged on, no chance of sleep, no chance of rest, as we had to watch our wretched niggers, and I was very pleased to see the east lighten and grow pale.

CHAPTER XII

THE DAY OF ISANDLWANA

JUST after daybreak, to my unbounded surprise, the General, staff, four guns, the Mounted Infantry and I think six companies of the second 24th reached us.

Colonel Glyn rode over to me and drawing me aside said, "In God's name, Maori, what are you doing here?" I answered him with a question, "In God's name, sir, what are you doing here?"

He shook his head and replied, "I am not in command." And fine old soldier as he was, I could see he was much disturbed.

As we were speaking, I received orders to get my men into line and advance into the rough ground, into which the enemy had retreated the night before. We were now going further away from the camp; but orders must be obeyed, so getting my crowd under way, we advanced.

After moving forwards about two miles I found a party of the enemy in caves and behind a good cover of rocks and stunted bush. They appeared to be well supplied with firearms, and opened out on us, making fairly good practice.

I was just going to try to kick a charge out of my beauties, when a mounted orderly rode up with orders for me, which were that I was at once to report myself with my battalion to the General, and that he was to guide me to the place where the General was waiting for me.

Getting my men together and advising Lonsdale of my orders, I requested him to take over my skirmish, and on his relieving me with the 2nd battalion I moved down a valley and found the General and staff quietly at breakfast.

Never shall I forget the sight of that peaceful picnic. Here were the staff quietly breakfasting and the whole command scattered over the country! Over there the guns unlimbered, over the hills parties of Mounted Infantry and volunteers looting the scattered kraals for grain for their horses, a company of the 24th one place, and another far away, and yet I knew that an army of from 30,000 to 40,000 of the bravest and most mobile savages in the world were within striking distance of us, and that our camp was some thirteen miles away; left with but few horsemen and only two guns to defend, and it a long straggling camp, hampered with all the wagons and impedimenta of the column.

As soon as I halted my men, the General rose and kindly greeting me asked me if I had had any breakfast. I replied, "No, nor had any of my men had any." I might have added "and no dinner or supper the night before." Of course he understood, that as commandant, I could not eat in presence of my fasting men.

I said, "Are you aware, sir, I was engaged when I received your order?" He said "No," and turning to the C.S.O., said, "Crealock, Browne tells me he was engaged when he received the order to come here." Colonel Crealock came to me and said, "Commandant Browne, I want you to return at once to camp and assist Colonel Pulleine

to strike camp and come on here." I nearly fell off my horse. Could these men know of the close proximity of the enemy? Were we all mad or what? However I was only a poor devil of a Colonial Commandant and as a simple irregular not supposed to criticise full-blown staff officers, so I saluted and said, "If I come across the enemy?" Oh," said he, "just brush them aside and go on," and with this he went on with his breakfast.

So I kept on down that valley which presently opened out into a big plain, and on the far side of it, about thirteen miles off, was a queer-shaped mountain, the ground gently rising to the base of it. With my glasses I could discern a long white line which I knew to be tents. The name of that mountain was Isandlwana and the time was then 9 a.m. on the 22nd January 1879.

We marched very slowly on, the day was intensely hot, and my white non-coms. who were on foot very fagged. They had had a very hard day the day before. They had had no sleep and no food, and somehow over the whole command there seemed to hover a black cloud.

However push on was the word, and at 10 o'clock myself and Adjutant-Lieutenant Campbell, who were riding some distance in front, flushed two Zulus. They bolted and we rode them down. Campbell shot his one, but I captured mine and on Duncombe coming up we questioned him.

He was only a boy and was frightened out of his life so that when asked where he came from, he pointed to the line of hills on the left flank of the camp saying "he had come from the King's big

army." "What are you doing here?" we asked, to which he replied "that he and his mate had been sent by their *induna* to see if any white men were among the hills" we had just left, "but as they were sitting resting under the shade of a rock they did not hear the white men and were caught." "What was the size of the army?" He answered, "There were twelve full regiments" (about 30,000 or perhaps 36,000 men).

Now here was the fat in the fire with a vengeance.

The big Zulu army within four miles of the left flank of the camp, Colonel Pulleine without mounted men, or only a few, only two guns, not more than 900 white men in all, the camp not laagered and the General away on a wild-goose chase, at least thirteen miles from him.

I was unaware, at the time, that Colonel Durnford, R.E., had, that morning, reached Isandlwana; he had some hundreds of natives and a rocket battery with him.

I at once wrote a note to the following effect:

"10 a.m.—I have just captured a Zulu scout who informs me the Zulu army is behind the range of hills on the left flank of the camp. Will push on as fast as possible. The ground here is good for the rapid advance of mounted men and guns."

This note I sent by a well-mounted officer with orders he was to ride as fast as possible.

The next thing was to try and advance as fast as I could. I rode forward and used my glasses, but everything so far was peaceful.

Just then I met two boys loaded with food. They had been sent out to me by the kind forethought of Lieutenant Beuie of my battalion.

They also brought me a note from a great chum of mine, Lieutenant Anstey, first 24th, who told me he and Lieutenant Dailey had gone to my tent the night before, and as they had found a good dinner spoiling, they had eaten it, but sent in return a couple of bottles of whisky. I was never fated to see any of these kind-hearted men again but it is the fortune of war. Well these loads were indeed a godsend, and I divided the food and drink among my non-coms. who were on foot and it just bucked them up and gave them heart for further exertions. I would not have minded having some myself, but I was mounted, and they were on foot, so after a ten minutes' halt I again gave the word to move on.

At about 11 o'clock I was on ahead and looking through my glasses when I saw a puff of smoke rise from the hills on the left of the camp. It was followed by another. They seemed to come from a huge black shadow that lay on the hills. Presently another puff and in a moment I knew they were bursting shells. Not a cloud was in the sky, and I knew that the black shadow resting on the hills must be the Zulu army moving down to attack the camp.

At once I dispatched the second message:

" 11 a.m.—The Zulu army is attacking the left of the camp. The guns have opened on them. The ground here still suitable for guns and mounted men. Will push on so as to act as support to them."

This I dispatched by a mounted officer, and at the same time my first messenger returned. He informed me he had delivered my note to a S.O. who had read it, and told him to rejoin me, and that I was to push on to camp.

But now my brave barbarians, with their wonderful eyesight, had seen the dreaded foe, and they refused to march. They could not run away as the Zulus were between them and safety, but it took all the muscular persuasion of my officers and the dauntless blackguardism of my non-coms. to kick a crawl out of them.

Umvubie of No. 8 Company helped me at this juncture to solve the problem. He said he and his men would march in rear and kill everyone who lagged behind, so at last I got a crawl out of them. I rode on and used my glasses.

I could now see the troops lying down and firing volleys, while the guns kept up a steady fire. The Zulus did not seem able to advance. They were getting it hot, and as there was no cover they must have suffered very heavy losses, as they shortly afterwards fell back. The guns and troops also ceased firing. At about midday I was looking back anxiously to see if the mounted men and guns were coming up, when I heard the guns in camp reopen again; and riding forward, we were then about four miles from the camp. I saw a cloud of Zulus thrown out from their left and form the left horn of their army. These men swept round and attacked the front of the camp, and I saw the two right companies of the 24th and one gun thrown back to resist them. There was also plenty of independent firing going on within the camp, as if

all the wagon men, servants, and in fact everyone who could use a rifle was firing away to save his life.

I at once sent another messenger with the following note:

"The camp is being attacked on the left and in front, and as yet is holding its own. Ground still good for the rapid advance of guns and horses. Am moving forward as fast as I can."

My second messenger joined me shortly after this and told me he had delivered my note to a staff officer and had received orders for me to push on to camp.

At 1 o'clock the camp was still holding its own and the Zulus were certainly checked. The guns were firing case and I could see the dense mass of natives writhe, sway and shrink back from the steady volleys of the gallant old 24th.

I had given orders to my men to deflect to their left so as to try to get into the right of the camp, and the officers and non-coms. were forcing the brutes on, when about half-past one I happened to glance to the right of the camp. Good God! what a sight it was. By the road that runs between the hill and the kopje, came a huge mob of maddened cattle, followed by a dense swarm of Zulus. These poured into the undefended right and rear of the camp, and at the same time the left horn of the enemy and the chest of the army rushed in. Nothing could stand against this combined attack. All formation was broken in a minute, and the camp became a seething pandemonium of men and cattle struggling in dense clouds of dust and smoke.

The defenders fought desperately and I could see through the mist the flash of bayonet and spear together with the tossing heads and horns of the infuriated cattle, while above the bellowing of the latter and the sharp crack of the rifles could be heard the exulting yells of the savages and the cheers of our men gradually dying away. Of course I saw in a moment everything was lost and at once galloped back to my men.

There was no time to write, but I said to Captain Develin, a fine horseman and a finer fellow, " Ride as hard as you can, and tell every officer you meet, ' For God's sake come back, the camp is surrounded and must be taken.' "

Then getting my officers together, I said to them, " Our only chance is to retreat slowly," and ordered them to form their companies into rings, after the Zulu fashion, and retire, dismounting themselves and hiding all the white men among the natives. This we did, and although there were large parties of the enemy close to us, they took no notice of us, and we gradually retired out of their vicinity. When we had got to a place, about five miles from the camp, where I thought my white men and Zulus could put up a bit of a fight in case we were attacked, I halted and determined to await the course of events. During the retreat I had often looked back and seen that the fighting was over in the camp, but that one company, in company square, was retreating slowly up the hill surrounded by a dense swarm of Zulus. This was Captain Younghusband's Company. They kept the enemy off as long as their ammunition lasted, then used the bayonet until at last overcome by

numbers they fell in a heap like the brave old British Tommy should.

Well here we were. The white men worn out and hungry, but most of them determined and I had the satisfaction to read on the grim, dirty faces of my roughs, that no matter what they had been in the past, they meant to stick to their work, do their duty like men and if necessary die game.

Curses not loud but very deep, went up for a time, and one or two of Lord Chelmsford's staff must have felt their ears tingle.

We sat and lay where we were. There was nowhere to go, nothing to be done, we had no food, and very little ammunition, but we had some water and tepid and muddy as it was it was thankfully used as there was no shade and the sun shone like a ball of fire. As soon as I had made what few arrangements I could I told the men to get some rest, as I was convinced that later on, we should be called upon to retake the camp, as through that camp was the only possible retreat for the General's party and ourselves.

After a time Captain Develin rode up to me. "Well," said I, "who did you see?" "I first saw Major Black with the second 24th and repeated your message—he at once turned back. Then I saw Colonel Harness with the guns—he at once turned back. Then I saw the mounted men, and they turned back." "Well," said I, "where are they?" "Why, sir," he replied, "as we were marching back we met the staff and the troops were ordered to go back again, so I came on alone."

Why had this been done? Those who want to know had better get the book Miss Colenso wrote in

defence of Colonel Durnford, and if they study the evidences recapitulated in that book, especially that of Captain Church, they may find out. I am only writing of what I actually saw myself, and have no wish to throw mud at anyone.

Some time later I saw the M.I. come out from the hills on to the open ground, form up and dismount. I at once sent an officer to their O.C. to tell him that if he would support me I would again advance. He acknowledged my message but sent no reply, and shortly afterwards he again mounted his men and returned to the hills.

The long afternoon passed slowly away, and towards evening I saw a small body of horsemen riding towards us. On using my glasses I discovered it was the General and his staff and I at once mounted and rode to meet him.

He looked very surprised when he saw me and said, "What are you doing here, Commandant Browne? You ought to have been in camp hours ago." I replied, "The camp has been taken, sir."

He flashed out at once, "How dare you tell me such a falsehood? Get your men into line at once and advance." I did so and led my 700 miserales supported by the staff against the victorious Zulu army.

We moved on about two and a half miles until we had opened out a good view of the camp, when he called me to him and said, in a kindly manner, "On your honour, Commandant Browne, is the camp taken?" I answered, "The camp was taken at about 1.30 in the afternoon, and the Zulus are now burning some of the tents."

He said, "That may be the Quartermaster's

fatigue burning the debris of the camp." I replied, "Q.M.'s fatigue do not burn tents, sir," and I offered him my glasses. He refused them, but said, "Halt your men at once," and leaving me, rode back to the staff and dispatched an officer to bring up the remainder of the column.

I had just halted my men and placed them in the best position I could, when to my utter astonishment I saw a man on foot leading a pony, coming from the direction of the camp, and recognized him as Commandant Lonsdale.

He came up to me and said, "By Jove, Maori, this is fun; the camp is taken." "Don't see the humour," I said, "but go and tell the staff; they won't believe me."

He had had the most wonderful escape. As I have said before he was still suffering from sunstroke and having somehow lost the battalion he was with, had ridden towards the camp. More than half stupefied by the great heat, he rode into it, and all at once awoke to the fact that the camp was full of Zulus, some of them wearing soldiers' tunics, and that the ground was littered with dead men. He then realized the situation at a glance and in less time than words can tell, he turned his pony's head and rode as hard as he could away. He was pursued, but the ground was good-going, and his pony "Dot" a very smart one, so he got clear away and joined us.

Well, again a weary halt. As we lay we could see long lines of Zulus marching along the hills on our right flank. They had with them many of our wagons, most probably loaded with their wounded men, or plunder out of the camp.

At last just as night fell, we were joined by the remainder of the column that had been sent for and we were then formed into line of attack. The guns were in the centre, flanking them parties of the second 24th, my battalion in line on the left, Cooper's battalion in line on the right, and the mounted men in front and on the flanks.

The General spoke a few words to the men and then ready once more, away we went to recapture the camp, or as Umvubie would say, "To die, but have a good fight first."

The night, as we were nearing the camp, became very dark and I received orders that I was to retake the kopje at all costs being at the same time warned that if my men turned tail the party of the 24th (under Major Black) who supported me, were at once to fire a volley and charge. This was pleasant for me but of course I recognized the necessity.

The word was now given to move on. At the same time the guns opened fire so as to clear the ground in front of us of any large bodies of Zulus who might be there.

I dismounted and made for the kopje, dragging with me the principal Natal *induna*, whom I had clawed hold of by his head ring, swearing I would blow his brains out in case his men turned tail. He howled to them not to run away, but behind them came the 24th with fixed bayonets so that no matter what funk the natives were in, they had to come on.

It was as dark as pitch, and soon we were stumbling and falling over dead men (black and white), dead horses, cattle, ruined tents and all the

debris of the fight. But up and up the kopje we had to go, for every now and then Black's voice would ring out, "Steady the 24th—be ready to fire a volley and charge." Up and up we went as the shells came screaming over our heads; the burning time-fuses in the dark looking like rockets. Every time one came over us my wretched natives would utter a howl and try to sit down, but bayonets in rear of them will make even a Natal Kafir move on, and they had to come.

At last we arrived at the top, no living man was there and as the shells just passed over us I told my bugler to sound the "cease fire." He could not sound a note, so I shouted to Black that we were on the top and asked him to have the "cease fire" sounded. This was done and up rushed the 24th, who, when they reached the top of the hill, broke out into cheer after cheer. My Zulus to keep them company rattled their shields and assagais, for had not we retaken the camp; or rather perhaps I ought to say, reoccupied it. Anyhow we were there.

Dear old Black came up to me, and on shaking hands, lamented we had not had a fight. He then poured me out a cup of sherry from his flask. I wanted it badly as it was over forty hours since I had tasted food, and my throat and mouth were parched and dry with shouting, mingled I fear with cursing.

However the Zulus could not have removed all the food from the camp and we were bound to find some. So I called for my trusty Irish servant, who was a past master in the art of looting.

He was serving as senior sergeant of No. 8

Company and I told him to take some good men and see what he could find. The remains of the hospital lines were close to us so down he went. He was soon back again with plenty of bully beef and biscuits and drawing me aside, slipped into my empty haversack a bottle of port and a bottle of brandy, also a large packet of tobacco. I said, "What have you got for yourself, Quin?" He replied and I know he grinned, "Troth, sor, is it so short a time your honour has known me that you can't trust me to look after meself." Well the bully beef went round, so did the biscuits and the brandy. And so did not the port, for Black and I drank most of that. However there was enough for everyone, and we had a rough but a square feed.

Just as we officers had finished and were sitting smoking, I looked across the Buffalo Valley. By the road it was a long way, but as the crow flies quite a short distance, and in the direction I knew Rourke's Drift to lie I noticed a lot of tiny flashes. I called Black's attention to them, saying, "Those flashes must be musketry." He looked in the direction indicated and said, "Yes." I told Duncombe to call Umvubie and ask him. Umvubie at once said, "Yes, the Zulus are attacking the white man's camp by the river." I said to Black, "Do you know if the store camp was laagered?" He talked in Gaelic for a few minutes. He might have been praying but it did not sound like prayers, and just then all along the Natal bank of the Buffalo huge fires broke out and Duncombe exclaimed, "By God, the Zulus are in Natal! Lord help the women and children." There could be no

doubt about it. The fires we saw were the friendly kraals and the farmhouses burning, and all we could do was to echo Duncombe's prayer, "God help the women and children." In a few minutes we saw a great flare over Rourke's Drift, and thought that the base hospital, the store camp and all our supplies were in the hands of the enemy. We had not been very joyful before, but now we felt very sick indeed. If the Zulus chose to raid Natal there was nothing to stop their doing so. Our retreat, also, would be cut off. What was to become of us did not bother me. No one depended on me, so I was like Umvubie, expected to be killed but hoped to have a good fight first.

Well the night wore away. We could get no sleep as we were too crowded to lie down and the kopje we were on was all covered with stones.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MORNING AFTER ISANDLWANA

JUST before daybreak orders were given to fall in and as soon as I got my men into their places I galloped across the camp to my tent to try and save some papers, medals, etc.

My God, in the grey dawn, it was a sight! In their mad rush into the camp, the Zulus had killed everything. Horses had been stabbed at their picket lines. Splendid spans of oxen were lying dead in their yokes, mules lay dead in their harness and even dogs were lying stabbed among the tents. Ripped open sacks of rice, flour, meal and sugar lay everywhere. They had even in their savage rage thrust their assagais into tins of bully beef, butter and jam. Among all this debris singly and in heaps, or rather in groups of two or three, lay the ripped and mutilated bodies of the gallant 24th, showing how, when their formation was broken, they had stood it out, and fought back to back or in groups until they had been run over and destroyed. That they had fought to the last gasp could be seen by the number of dead Zulus who lay everywhere in amongst them, the bayonet wounds on their bodies telling of the fierce, though short combat that had taken place after the right horn of the Zulus had swept round the hill. I had just time to get to the door of my tent, inside of which I saw my old setter dog, dead, with an



A LAST SALUTE.



assagai thrust through her. My two spare horses were also lying killed at their picket rope, with my Totty groom dead between them. As I said before, my camp was on the extreme left of the line, and the best part of the fighting had taken place there.

I saw the bodies of two of my officers lying dead with heaps of empty cartridge shells by their sides. Both had been splendid shots and I bet they had done plenty of execution before they went under. As I reined up I glanced out to the left and left front of the camp, and saw heaps and heaps of Zulu dead. Where the volleys of the 24th had checked them, they lay in lines, and the donga I had ridden over on the morning of the 21st was chock-full of them. Surely the 24th had died game, but bitter as I felt, a thrill of admiration passed through me when I thought of the splendid courage of the savages who could advance to the charge suffering the awful punishment they were getting.

I had not time to dismount as I heard the bugle sound the advance and I galloped back to my men as fast as I could without trampling on the bodies of my poor comrades. On my way I reined up my horse sharply, for there lay the body of my old friend Lieut.-Col. Pulleine; I could do nothing for him, and it at once flashed through my mind our last words of chaff, so I saluted the poor remains and passed on as quickly as I could to my men.

When I reached them I asked the Adjutant if any orders had reached us. He replied, "No, sir. Everyone has moved off except ourselves and the rear-guard of M.I. which Major Black has taken command of." Good old Black, I thought, always

at the post of honour. Well he rode up to me and asked me "What I was doing there?" I said, "Waiting for orders." He made a few remarks in Gaelic and then said, "Come on, old fellow. Move off just in front of me, and if these black devils come after us we will have a nice little rear-guard action of our own."

I did so, and sorrowfully returned by the same road we had so gaily advanced along three days before. A few shots as my officer picked off scattered Zulus was all that happened. But as we crossed some high ground we saw a large party of Zulus away to the left.

They stood still for a few minutes when they saw us, then broke up and fled all over the country. This was their beaten army retreating from Rourke's Drift. We afterwards heard that they did not know that we had been out in front of the camp, but thought they had killed all the white men. They therefore imagined that we were the dead men come to life again, that we were ghosts, and in superstitious terror fled away from us.

We descended the steep pass to the Bashie River, halted for a few minutes to let the men and horses drink, then moved on to the high ground.

As we came to the top of a ridge, we saw the advance guard on the top of another ridge signalling. I said to Black, "Who on earth can they be signalling to?" "The Lord only knows," he answered. But all at once a tremendous cheer broke out in front and ran along the column towards us, and Lieutenant Harford galloped back with the joyful news that there were white men signalling from the

ruins of the base camp, and that the camp must have held out and beaten off the attack.

Our men began to cheer, and everyone was delighted. We had been very sick the night before when we thought the camp at Rourke's Drift had been taken and destroyed. Now we knew it was safe the reaction was very pleasant.

Yes; it was true a deed had been done by one company of the second 24th, assisted by a few irregulars and civilians, that has never been surpassed in the annals of British warfare. They had beaten off an attack of 4000 Zulus. True, they had an improvised laager of biscuit-boxes and mealie sacks and behind these they had done wonders. But how about the camp at Isandlwana? How about those 900 white men lying exposed to the vulture and the jackal in the camp a few miles behind? How would that fight have ended if they had had a laager, and why had they not one? In another hour we were back at the Buffalo and again lined the same ridge we had sweltered on during the 10th, but this time we only had to wait while half the 24th crossed and only four guns. That long line of wagons that had taken such a tedious time to cross, where were they? They were stranded only a few miles away with two guns and 900 good officers and men.

Well everyone crossed and Black and myself rode down to the drift last of all. Giving him the post of honour as he was entitled to it I rode in front of him, as we came to the water, so that he was the last man of No. 3 Column to leave Zululand—that is to say he was the last living man but there were plenty lying unburied, exposed to the

sun, wind and rain, the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, and who was to blame? Who promulgated that book of orders the first of which was that no camp should be pitched without being laagered?

In writing this I have only stated facts that I personally saw, and I have tried to hurt no man's feelings who may be alive nor throw a stone at the memory of any man who may be dead.

The 3rd N.N.C. lost 18 officers and 36 N.C.O.'s, only 3 officers escaping. I do not think we lost many men as I am sure the Natal Kafirs bolted very early in the day. I must however make exception of the one Zulu company left in camp. They sat tight until the enemy closed in. Then they charged and were killed to a man. But as Umvubie would have said, they had a good fight first.

It must have been about half-past three on the afternoon of the 23rd of January 1879 when Major Black and myself rode across the drift out of Zululand and proceeded at once up to the base camp.

My men, who had crossed before me, had sat down on a small flat to the right rear of the store and I joined them. They were not in a pleasant frame of mind, most of the officers slack and despondent, the non-coms. hungry and savage, while the natives clamoured to be allowed to go home. It therefore behoved me to buck them up and the first thing was to get the white men to make the cowardly niggers hold their row. Both the battalions had clumped together and it was absolutely necessary to enforce order and discipline. Getting the officers together I soon talked them into

a better humour. I pointed out to them that one defeat had not ended the war and that, as we all must want to play a return match with the Zulus, we must do our duty, bide our time, and hope for better things. This quite satisfied them and they expressed their intention of backing me up.

I then turned my attention to the non-coms. I have already told you what sort of men they were, the majority of them being the driftweed of the seven seas—runaway sailors and East London boatmen with a sprinkling of ex-navvies and old soldiers. For the last three days they had been overworked, underfed and had had no sleep or rest at all and as they were a wild, lawless crowd they were inclined to be mutinous. However I knew them and they knew me, and I wanted to keep them for future service, as I was sure that, tough as they were, it would be hard to collect a more reckless or pluckier lot north of Hades.

They all sat or lay in a clump some 100 in number belonging to both battalions, and as I approached them they looked as ugly a lot as any man would care to face without having iron bars between you and them.

As I came to them only a few stood up but a smart "shun" brought all to their feet.

I opened fire with: "Now then, my lads, how many of you are fit for duty? I want you to turn to at once, and help your officers to quiet those howling niggers. Those of you who are fit fall in, in rear of me." My servant Quin and all the old soldiers at once fell in, but the others stood muttering and grumbling in their throats.

Then I let them have it hot and strong. First

I pointed out to them the fact, that the 24th and the guns were alongside, and it wanted very little of that sort of talk and behaviour to make me go to Colonel Glyn and get him to turn them on to such a set of mutinous scoundrels, and after I had called them by the names they most understood I turned to the leader of the sea pirates and singled him out.

This man—Jack Williams—was an old shell-back of the stamp that is now as rare as the dodo and as he had served with me in New Zealand we knew one another.

He was a man of past middle life, grey and grizzled, about 5 feet 9 inches in height but of enormous width and strength. His face, arms and breast, nearly burned black with the sun, were all covered with the marks of ancient knife and bullet wounds. He had been to sea nearly all his life and had passed most of it in the South Seas and on the Pacific coast. A sandal-wood trader (*i.e.*, pirate), a black-bird catcher, a filibuster and blockade runner, with Walker and Garibaldi, in Central America and there were but few scenes of bloodshed on that lively coast that old Jack had not played a part in. Yet I could not help liking the old buccaneer. His wide-open blue eye and fearless expression of face always made me think of the old Elizabethan sea-dogs which was strengthened by his kindly ways (when not roused) and his homely Devonshire speech. He could neither read nor write but was a born leader of men and I knew if I could get him on my side all the other pirates would follow like sheep.

Well I had given them their dressing-down so it was now time for me to give them their spoonful

of jam. I told them there was plenty of good fighting in front of us and that none of them need repine because we had got one licking, but they surprised me, insomuch that although they had behaved, during the last three days, when our lives had not been worth a rotten orange, like men, yet now we were in comparative safety with food and rest before us they should turn to and begin their monkey tricks, and I wound up by saying that their mixed conduct made me look on them as nothing more nor less than a lot of bally conundrums, and "as for you, Jack Williams," turning sharply to the old buccaneer, "you are nothing more or less than an *Ornithorhynchus Platypus*." *

The old sea-dog broke into a broad grin; never before in all his long and wicked life had he ever been called by such a name.

He had served under many a Yankee skipper and many a blue-nose mate, but none of them had ever coined such a cuss word as that. It was medicine to him and he hugged himself enraptured.

Stepping out from among the men, he made me his very best sea-bow. Then turning to them and slapping one huge fist into the palm of the other enormous hand he harangued them.

Quoth he, "See 'ere, mates, when a hoffer, as we know to be a hoffer, and a hedecated genelman to boot, speaks you fair like as man to man, and goes so far as to call you uns a lot of blankety-blank comumrums and me, Jack Williams, a ruddy horni-korinky palibus, I say as how that's the hoffer I stands by and sticks to. Ain't I right, Bill?"—this to his chum. "In course ye are,

* The Australian duckbill.

Jack," came back the ready answer. "Then fall in astarn of the commandant, yer bally comum-rums!" and the whole of the pirates fell in ready for anything. It is written somewhere that a soft word turneth away wrath. In this case a hard word stopped trouble.

In a very short time the niggers were reduced to silence and sorted out into their respective companies. Just then Lonsdale came up, he had been making arrangements for rations. I made my most despondent officer quartermaster so as to give him something to think about and a ration party having been told off to go and draw them, I went with Lonsdale round the laager to have a look at the debris of the fight. He told me that three of our officers had escaped and got into Rourke's Drift. Two of them, however, he was sorry to say, had ridden on, the other, a Dutchman, named Ardendorph, had remained, had fought bravely and was well spoken of.

He also told me that the company of the second 3rd, who had been left in the base camp to help the commissariat officers, had behaved shamefully, that they had bolted, officers and men, and that though they had been entreated to stay and fight had run like curs and that the garrison had with difficulty been prevented from firing on them.

I will not mention the officers' names although I remember them. They rejoined, were promptly kicked out, and were slated in all the Colonial papers. Let them rip.

And now I must give you a short description of the place, the defence of which not only saved us, but, I think, in a great measure saved Natal.

It had been a frontier trading post, and consisted of a comfortable bungalow with a store some 15 yards from it; both buildings stood in line some 200 yards from a steep hill and were about 1000 yards from the drift across the Buffalo River. Both buildings were built of brick and thatched. In front was a fine orchard and between the orchard and the houses ran a natural step or ledge of rock 3 to 4 feet high so that the buildings stood that height above the ground in the orchard. Along this step of rock was placed a line of biscuit-boxes and on the top of these sacks of mealies (Indian corn). These formed a breastwork of about 3 feet or 3 feet 6 inches, giving a height from the ground in front of about 6 or 7 feet. The breastwork was therefore low enough to enable the defenders to use their bayonets over and was high enough to cover them when firing, from behind it, in a crouching position. There is no need to describe the rest of the work as the principal fighting took place here. The hospital (bungalow) had been roughly loopholed, so had the store. Just in the rear of the latter were large stacks of forage but there had been no time to remove them nor the heavy, dry thatch on the buildings. Had the Zulus set fire to these stacks the thatch on the store must have been ignited and our men burned out. But they did not, for although they attacked from the right and rear, they got such a pasting, during their advance, that they swept round the buildings, took cover in the orchard and attacked from there.

They certainly did set fire to the hospital but that gave the defenders light to sight their rifles

During the afternoon it was discovered that a large number of wounded and worn-out Zulus had taken refuge or hidden in the mealie fields near the laager. My two companies of Zulus with some of my non-coms. and a few of the 24th quickly drew these fields and killed them with bayonet, butt and assagai.

It was beastly but there was nothing else to do. War is war and savage war is the worst of the lot. Moreover our men were worked up to a pitch of fury by the sights they had seen in the morning and the mutilated bodies of the poor fellows lying in front of the burned hospital.

The evening drew on and Lonsdale went into the laager for orders. He returned and told us that the white troops were to hold the laager and that we were to remain outside. This was as absurd as it was shameful; not only were our white officers and non-coms. to meet, 'unprotected by the laager, the first rush of the Zulus, in case of an attack, but we should have been swept away by the fire of our own friends inside it.

We were also to find the outlying pickets and the advanced sentries. Our natives, with the exception of the Zulus, were quite useless for this service. In fact they had all taken refuge in the caves and among the rocks of the mountain, and sternly refused to come out. And now there was a row. Of course the roster was lost and I regret to say that the officers and the non-coms., furious at what they considered their unfair treatment, refused to turn out. Lonsdale, Cooper and myself talked it over with them and at last we said we would take the outlying picket ourselves. Har-

ford at once chipped in, so the most dangerous picket that night was formed by three commandants and a staff officer.

Quin, my servant, swore that I should not go on picket while he was to the fore and Captains Duncombe, Develin and Hayes volunteered for the other picket. Of course when we were moving off everyone wanted to come and the cuss words and recriminations flew like hail. We quieted them down. We took one picket, Captain Duncombe and three other officers formed the other; there was not much choice between them. Inlying pickets were told off and as soon as it was dark we took our posts, extending the Zulus in a chain between them. The night was very dark but passed off quietly although there was a false alarm at the laager, and most of our white men who had remained there got inside. I don't blame them. What was the use of staying outside to be shot down by their own friends?

CHAPTER XIV

LIFE AT ROURKE'S DRIFT

IN the morning on our return to camp we heard that the General, staff, guns and mounted men were leaving for Helpmaker. Previous to his departure the General sent for me and kindly asked me, "What I should like to do?" I told him, "I should like to remain with Colonel Glyn if he had any use for my services." Colonel Glyn, on being asked, was good enough to say, "He would be very sorry to lose me and hoped I should remain."

During my interview with the General I asked him, "If he had received my messages on the 22nd?" He told me, "That he had never heard a word about them," and was very much surprised when I told him what they were. He also asked me what I thought ought to be done with my natives and I told him the majority were worse than useless. I should like to keep the Zulus but the others were quite impossible and recommended that they should be at once disbanded.

He shook hands with me, said some very kind things about my services, mounted his horse and rode away. Lonsdale went with him, leaving me in command of the 3rd N.N.C., and I at once set to work to disband them.

First I sent for Umvubie and his Zulus and through Duncombe made them a speech. I told

them they had behaved like men and that the Great White Queen would hear of their courage.

It was true, I was going to send all the other Kafirs home, as they were cowards and women, but I wanted the Zulus to stay with me. Umvubie talked to the other head-men for a few minutes and then said, "If you let these common low Kafirs go home and we remain, they will raid our women and cattle. We should like to stop with you. You white soldiers are men and fear nothing. If you did you would not stop here, but if you want us to remain march us and those dogs to the back of the hill, we will kill them all and then we will remain, otherwise we must go home to protect our property and wives."

Umvubie's idea of solving the problem was sound. He and his 200 men were quite ready to attack the 1200 Natal Kafirs and I firmly believe would have killed them off, but it would not do, so I had to tell them, with regret, that they must go. They formed up, called me their father, which was not true, gave me the royal salute, to which I was not entitled, and moved off to their camp.

Umvubie paused for a minute to beg my permission to be allowed to kill only a few of the Natal Kafirs, who he was sure had annoyed me very much. Alas! I could not grant his modest request, so again saluting he sorrowfully departed after his men. In the meantime the other natives had fallen in and had gathered round me in a ring.

I told them in a few plain words what I thought of them. Of course I spoke through Duncombe and I guessed from his vehemence and impassioned

gestures he was emphasizing my remarks with a few of his own. I told them that the Great White Queen would send them women's aprons when she heard of their cowardice and that they had better go home and dig in the fields with their wives. This is the greatest insult you can offer a warrior and they hung their heads in shame.

But when I told them to go, and advised them to continue their journey to a country even hotter than Natal, they waited not for pay nor rations but those of them who had guns threw them down and the whole of them breaking ranks bolted each man for his own home. The Zulus, forming themselves into solid rings, marched past our group of officers, raising their shields in the air, in salute, and rattled their assagais against them; then breaking into a war-song marched proudly away, every one of them a man and a warrior. So exit the rank and file of the 3rd N.N.C.

Now what was to be done with the officers and non-coms.? All the former and some of the latter had horses, so with Colonel Glyn's sanction I formed them into a troop and we took on ourselves the duties of scouts and other things.

But there was lots of work to do besides. The dead to be buried, the smouldering hospital to be cleared away and the laager to be strengthened and made defensible, so officers and men turned to and worked like niggers, when driven by a strong armed overseer.

We had by this time learned our lesson and there would be no more camping without laagering.

Everyone was pretty sick; the first 24th had lost their Queen's colours, their band instruments



UMVUBIE REQUESTS TO BE ALLOWED TO KILL JUST A FEW NATAL KAFIRS.



and had been fearfully cut up both in officers and men. The second 24th had lost both their colours, their band, and a lot of officers and men. We had lost everything except what we stood up in. We had neither tents, blankets nor greatcoats; not a spare shirt or a spare pair of socks to our names. I had a tooth-brush but I believe it was the only one in the crowd and I was selfish enough to keep that to myself. We had however plenty of food and drink (vile Natal rum), tobacco (Boer)—splendid it was but at that time I had not learned to appreciate its good qualities—lime juice, soap, tea, coffee and sugar in abundance but we were short of ammunition. The reserve ammunition had, for some extraordinary reason, not been brought up to the base and many an uneasy glance was cast at the small pile of ammunition boxes. There is a good story about the reserve ammunition. It was being brought up to Helpmaker and had reached Sandspruit at the foot of the hills, when the O.C. of the wagon escort heard the news of the disaster. It was night and he had it all buried so as to prevent the Zulus getting possession of it in case he was overpowered. After reaching Helpmaker in safety a party was sent to find it and bring it in, but the rain had removed all marks and traces and although lines of soldiers were formed who advanced prodding the ground with their cleaning rods no ammunition was ever found during my stay at Rourke's Drift. We were therefore miserably short of ammunition and not at all comfortable in our minds until somehow we received a wagon load from somewhere and then we prayed for the enemy to come on.

The next day the two officers who had escaped on the 22nd, but who had not remained at Rourke's Drift, returned, and one of them informed me that he had got away in company with two of the officers of the first 24th, one of whom carried the colours of his regiment.

The story he told me was that they all three reached the river and plunged in. One, Lieutenant Coghill, got across safe. The other officer, who carried the colours, Lieutenant Melville, had his horse shot in the middle of the river where he lost the colours which were swept away by the current.

Lieutenant Coghill at once re-entered the river and went to his friend's assistance and they got him to the bank; here Lieutenant Coghill's horse was shot and my officer's horse turned turtle over a boulder but got out safe. The three officers scrambled out unhurt and my officer ran after his horse, caught it at the top of the hills and got away.

I immediately reported the story to Colonel Glyn and Harford and myself determined to go down the river-bed and look for the colours. Major Black was also very keen on the job. A few days afterwards the river went down and a party of my officers started off to try and find the lost flag. I was awfully disgusted, for just as I was mounting, Colonel Glyn called me and told me I could not go as he wanted me.

The party left however under the command of Major Black. They found the remains of poor Melville and Coghill and buried them. Then Harford and a few of the officers entered the river bed and found the colours some way lower down.

They returned to the laager and as Black handed the old flag over to Colonel Glyn the excitement was tremendous, the Tommies and everyone cheering like fiends. The following day Colonel Glyn, Major Black and the colours were escorted by the officers of the defunct 3rd N.N.C. to Helpmaker where they were handed over to the keeping of the two companies of the first 24th stationed there.

The reason I had been unable to take a hand in the finding of the colours was, that Lieutenant Chard, R.E., had been taken very ill, and as I was a bit of an engineer I was used to superintend the building of the fort. But shortly a company of the R.E. turned up and I was once more able to be in the saddle with my boys.

The rains now came on with fury—rain, hail, thunder and lightning, such as is never seen in England, and we had on an average about four heavy storms during the twenty-four hours. There we were without tents, blankets or great-coats and we had just to grin and bear it. True, the storms only lasted a short time and then the sun would shine out and dry as quickly, but we usually had one storm at least during the night and then as the sun was absent we had to lie wet through the remainder of the night and shiver in the mud or sleep as best we could. We did everything possible to keep the laager clean but notwithstanding all our efforts it got very muddy.

It was not so bad when you were once down in the mud but it was very nasty to have to get up and then lie down again as would be the case if we had a false alarm. Of these we had but few

and that notwithstanding the awful strain to their nerves the men had suffered by the disaster at Isandlwana, yet it speaks volumes for the second 24th and my filibusters to be able to state that during the whole time we garrisoned Rourke's Drift not a single shot was fired in the way of a false alarm. The same cannot be said of the relieving forces when they reached the front, when disgraceful false alarms, such as at Fort Funk, became common. However I will now tell you of the great and only false alarm that took place at Rourke's Drift.

We had attached to us a civilian doctor, a very good fellow, who had seen much service and who had distinguished himself in the Russo-Turkish War. He however had had a bad go of fever and his nerves had gone all to pieces though he still did his duty. Well one night I was lying down fast asleep in the angle of the laager I was in charge of; the aforesaid angle, having been the ancient pig-kraal of the farm, was by no means a pleasant bedroom although airy enough, and we had just had our usual rain-storm, when I was suddenly woke up by the doctor who in an excited tone said, "For God's sake, Commandant, get up, the Zulus are on us." I was up in a second and the muttered order, "Stand to your arms," was answered by a rustle as the men rose from their mud beds and manned the parapet. The pig-kraal angle was the most exposed portion of the laager and being nearest the river was most likely to be attacked first. A sharp click as the breeches of the rifles were opened and shut, a sharper rattle as the 24th stood to arms and fixed bayonets and every man was at his post.

Not a further sound, not a word spoken.

I got into the most advanced spot and peered out into the darkness but could see nothing.

A bit of a moon and the stars gave a glimmer of light that would have flashed on the Zulu spears and given them away had they been there, but I saw not a spark nor flash.

I could see the white range marks that I had had put up and had any large body of men been between them and me they would have been obscured, so evidently my corner of the laager was not in danger of immediate attack.

Just then Colonel Glyn (the O.C.) came round. "What is it, Commandant Browne?" he said to me. "I don't see anything, sir," I replied; "there can be no large number of the enemy on this front." "Who gave you the alarm?" "Doctor ——" The Colonel turned sharply round. "What is it, Dr ——? Why did you give the alarm, sir?" "Good God, don't you hear them, sir?" said the medico, excitedly. "Hear them? Hear what, sir?" snorted the enraged Colonel. "Why, the frogs, sir," ejaculated the doctor. "The Zulus are waking them up as they advance."

A dead man could have heard the frogs. Anyone who has ever been in Natal or further north knows the diabolical row the frogs kick up, after rain, and the frogs round Rourke's Drift were like a strong-voiced crew at a chanty.

Curses not loud but very deep saluted the doctor from all sides and he retired in disgrace after an unpleasant *tête-à-tête* with the O.C., while the rest of us sought our mud beds again in disgust and disappointment. Rome was saved by the cackling

of geese and they received great kudos. But the frogs lost their chance of similar worship at Rourke's Drift owing to the absence of any enemy. Anyhow the only thing expended was cuss words and they, at Rourke's Drift, were too plentiful to be missed. No ammunition was wasted as would have been the case later on in the war.

And now my messmate Harford got into disgrace. He was a gallant officer, a splendid companion, but, and the but is a very big one, he was a mad naturalist. He caught bugs and beetles both in season and out of season. I told a tale about him before in this yarn, but the awful tale I am going to relate now is one that even after a period of thirty years makes my blood run cold. For he committed a sin that in comparison made the seven deadly sins look trivial beside it. The crime was this, but I must give a short prelude so that it may be understood in all its hideousness.

The 24th had a small amount of reserve mess stores at Rourke's Drift, we had nothing, and although there was plenty of Natal rum I could not face the filth; vile stuff it was and hot enough to burn the inside out of a graven image. This being so the 24th, like the rattling good fellows they were, always asked me over to their corner whenever they opened a bottle and I had my tot.

Well just about this time a Natal man rushed through a wagon load of stores and asked leave to sell them. I happened to have about £2 in my pocket at the time of the disaster and after buying two night-caps and some spoons and forks for Harford and myself, I asked the man if he had any liquor. He said he had a big square rigger of gin for

his own use but not for trade. I offered all the money I had left and an equal-sized bottle of Natal rum for it and we traded. Well now there was corn in Egypt and I could, in a small way, return the hospitality of the 24th so I at once sent round to my friends to come to my corner, that evening after inspection, and partake of the plunder. They had run out of spirits and the news was joyful.

I handed the bottle over to my servant Quin and told him to guard it with his life, and he swore he would do so. I was called away and I left Quin on sentry go over that precious bottle; he placed it carefully between two sacks and sat down on it so I thought it safe and attended to my duty. That afternoon we had our usual rain-storm and when it was over Harford came to me and asked me if he could have some gin. I was very busy at the time and said "Certainly, ask Quin for some."

Now it struck me it was strange that Harford should ask for it as he never touched spirits, but I thought he might feel chill after the rain and want a tot to warm himself.

Well the retreat was blown, the men manned the parapet, the O.C. inspected, and the men fell away. In a few minutes round came my friends, anxious for the tot they fondly expected to be in store for them.

"Hoots, Maori, where's the drappie?" said Black. I turned to Quin, who was standing stiffly at attention, and at once saw the worthy man was disgusted, sulky, almost mutinous. "Give me the bottle, Quin," I said. "Better ask Mr Harford for it, sir," he answered, with a grin on his expressive mug like an over-tortured fiend. "Har-

ford," said I, "where is the gin?" and at once my heart darkened with apprehensions. "Oh, Commandant," quoth he, "I have caught such a lot of beauties," and he produced two large pickle bottles filled with scorpions, snakes and other foul creeping beasts and reptiles. "Do look at them." "But the gin, Harford?" I murmured, so full of consternation that I could hardly articulate. "I've preserved these with it," said he, utterly oblivious to his horrid crime. "What!" yelled I. "Oh yes," said he, "this is a very rare and poisonous reptile indeed"—pointing to a loathsome beast and beginning to expatiate on its hideousness and reel off long Latin names. "I don't care if it is a sucking devil," groaned I, "but where is the gin?" "In these bottles," said he, and so it was, every drop of it. Ye Gods! The only bottle of gin or any other drop of decent drink within 100 miles of us had gone to preserve his infernal microbes, and a dozen disgusted officers, who were just beginning to grasp the awful situation, were cursing him and lamenting sadly, oh, so sadly, his pursuit of Natural History, while dear old Black had to be supported back to his angle making remarks in Gaelic. He was such a good fellow he was soon forgiven, but I do not think the dear fellow ever quite understood what an awful sin he had committed or realized what a wicked waste of liquor he had perpetrated.



THE CRIME OF THE NATURALIST.



CHAPTER XV

COLLECTING INFORMATION AND OTHER THINGS

BUT now the weather cleared up, the flooded river went down and the days passed joyously and profitably in scouting down it.

My orders were that I was not to cross the river unless I considered it was fairly safe to do so or unless I considered there was something to be gained by my running the risk in crossing it. Well of course there was a great deal to be gained by doing so. The Zulus had kraals on the other side of the river—were they not hostile? and therefore to be plundered and destroyed. They had cattle, goats, fat-tailed sheep and fowls—were not these something to be gained?

They had our big camp to plunder—might we not have a little loot to repay us?

No matter, my reader, what your ideas are, as regards plunder, you would have agreed with us if you were living on bully beef—everlasting bully beef. Yes, bully beef for breakfast, bully beef for lunch, bully beef for dinner—yea, and if you were peckish, during the night, bully beef for supper! *Tout jour*, bully beef! I am willing to allow that bully beef is an excellent substitute for food but at the same time beg to assert it very soon becomes monotonous and we became desirous for a change. So our friends the enemy possessing all the toothsome dainties I have enumerated above

we were very often tempted to cross that river and help ourselves to them and at the same time play old gooseberry with their owners.

So we used sometimes to cross that river, before daylight, and beat the Zulus up in their kraals when blazing huts, cracking carbines and revolvers would make them understand that we were still alive and kicking and then all the Zulu men having been killed or escaped, each one of us jumped what he could, one man a sheep, another a goat, others pots of Kafir beer; the fowls stupefied by the smoke of the burning huts would be caught, have their necks wrung and be tied to the Ds. of our saddles and then off we would go driving the cattle before us like a lot of jolly old Border moss troopers.

Troth myself and my pirates lived high and I always took care that the O.C.'s mess had a good joint or a pair of fowls. "Maori, where on earth do you get these things from?" he would inquire. "Find them down the river, sir," I would reply, and he would go away, shaking his head and muttering to himself biblical remarks about Ananias, d——d thieves, will get themselves all killed, must put a stop to this, etc., etc., but he dined well and no stringent orders were promulgated.

One evening the O.C. sent for me to dine with him. I had sent him a pau (bustard) I had shot with my revolver and as he had also received some small stores from Helpmaker we fared sumptuously. After a tot and a smoke he looked at me and said quietly, "Maori, do you think you could catch me a live Zulu?" I said, "I don't know, but I will try, sir." He said, "Don't hurt him too much as I must question him. I am very anxious to

obtain information on certain matters and it is the only way I can obtain it." I said, "Had I not better question him outside, sir?" He said, "No, I'll have none of your Spanish Inquisition tricks. You bring him into camp, I will question him myself." I was not at all sure the dear old man knew how to extract information out of a native but I always obey orders, that is, if my inclinations are not too strong the other way. So talking the matter over with Captains Duncombe and Develin we determined to cross the river during the night and lay an ambushade for any man who might be travelling from kraal to kraal. This we did and hiding our horses among some bushes and rocks we lay dogo by a footpath and waited.

About 6 a.m. along came a native and we were on him before he could let a yell out. I had him by the throat and threw him. Duncombe had him by the arms and Develin tied them. In a few seconds we were mounted, a rheim was passed round the Zulu's neck so that he must run or hang and we were just starting when a lot more natives appeared. Duncombe had the prisoner, so at once cantered off while myself and Develin turned to cover his retreat. We were both dead shots and the party of the enemy were so surprised and astonished that they stood stock still. Crack, crack went our carbines and over rolled two of them. We loaded again. Both our horses were trained shooting horses and stood like rocks. We let rip and over went two more; again we fired and browned them, the M.H. bullets at 100 yards range would go through two or three men, so they

let go a yell and bolted. So we turned our horses and cantered after Duncombe, who was riding as fast as he could get the prisoner to move. A little persuasion from the butt end of a carbine made him mend his pace so that we reached and crossed the river without being cut off and brought our capture to the laager in triumph.

Our prisoner turned out to be a seasoned warrior instead of a young man so Colonel Glyn could get nothing out of him and gave orders that he should be taken down to the drift and let go.

He was also unkind in his remarks to me and blamed me for bringing him such a man as if I could pick and choose, besides he had only requested me to catch him a nigger and had not specified what sort of a one he wanted, but then this world is full of injustice and a scout must not be cast down if he gets his whack of it.

Now we had a picket on the top of the hill at the rear of the fort and they reported that they daily saw a Zulu at the top of another hill, overlooking the fort, who evidently took stock of everything that went on. After a few days this bounder, evidently thinking he was quite safe, began to send up smoke signals and this piece of cheek roused the bile of the O.C. Several parties were sent out to catch him, but he could see them leave the camp and he would disappear into some very rough ground. One night the O.C. sent for me and said, "Maori, I want you to put a stop to that fellow, it is simply disgraceful you have allowed this kind of thing to go on so long." Here was more injustice; he had entrusted the suppression of the Johnnie to others and now blamed me, but I have

found it sound policy never to argue with or point out his faults to a choleric or liverish senior so I wisely said nothing but accepted the rebuke and the contract with equanimity.

It was evident that the Zulu must cross the river somewhere and I had noticed while scouting down our side of it a spoor leading in the direction of the hill from which he carried on his observations. At this spot there was a large mealie field abutting on the rough ground on the bank of the river, then some open ground and then some small patches of mealies. I had noticed that the spoor ran from the big field to one of the small patches and I determined to try for him there. Taking my two officers, Captains Duncombe and Develin, with me, we left the laager a couple of hours before daybreak and rode down to the spot, hid our horses and lay dogo. As soon as it was light we observed carefully the far bank of the river, the near bank we could not see, and the open space between the big field of mealies and the patch. Develin looked after the bank, Duncombe watched the open ground and I let my glance wander everywhere. One of us, therefore, if he came, was bound to spot him. It had not long been daylight when Develin whispered to me, "There he is." There was no morning mist and I just spotted him slide down the far side of the river bank, where we lost sight of him. We could now all concentrate our attention on the open ground and presently Duncombe spotted him crawl from the mealies and start squirming towards one of the small patches for fresh cover. I must say he did it splendidly; his naked body blended with the colour of the ground and would have been un-

seen by an untrained eye. He was evidently paying most attention to his right flank on which side was the camp from whence he might expect danger but we were on his other side and well concealed. We could easily have shot him but I wanted to capture him alive. My last capture had not been a lucky one and I wanted to take a prisoner to the O.C. as I knew he was most anxious to obtain information. Well we watched our friend gain the small patch. We could hunt him out of that if he tried to hide there, so we mounted and went for him. He must have been well on the *qui vive* for we had not gained the open when he burst out of his cover and was running like a scared cat, for the big field, to try and regain the rough ground by the river bank, where he, at all events, would be safe from capture. But it was not to be. He ran well and was within thirty yards of his refuge, when my horse, the fastest of the three, overtook him and a tremendous smash, between the shoulders, from the butt of my carbine sent him rolling over and over like a shot rabbit. Before I could pull up my horse, the others were up to him and had tied his arms so that when I rode back to them he was sitting up looking very cheap. As he was still a bit sick I gave him some water and looked him over.

I was out of luck again, for instead of being a young fellow as I had hoped, he turned out to be a fine old war-dog, so it was good-bye to any chance of getting any information out of him. His field kit consisted of the usual Zulu outfit, one skin apron in front and one behind with the usual charm, etc., but there was one etc. he had no right to wear



COLLECTING INFORMATION FOR THE O.C.



and that was a piece of turkey-red cloth bound round his head. This was the uniform of the Natal Native Contingent and on Duncombe demanding why he wore it, he answered, so as to deceive the red soldiers if he chanced to meet any. This was a fatal admission as it at once turned him into a spy.

I almost felt sorry for the poor chap, but a scout must have no feelings and years of savage warfare had blunted any I might have ever possessed, so as soon as he had recovered his wind a rheim was passed round his neck and we trotted back to camp. On our arrival there we handed over the prisoner to the main guard, which during the day used a wagon outside the laager for a guard-room, and I at once reported to the O.C.

He ordered me to return to the prisoner, question him and then to report anything I might find out. This I did but of course could get nothing out of him, though he owned up readily he was a spy and that he wore the piece of red stuff round his head as a disguise. I was turning round to return to the O.C. when I struck my shin, which I had badly bruised a few days before, against the boom of the wagon. The pain was atrocious and I had just let go my first blessing when the Sergeant-Major, a huge Irishman, not seeing my accident, asked, "What will we do with the spoy, sor?" "Oh, hang the bally spy," I ripped out and limped away, rubbing my injured shin and blessing spies, wagons and everything that came in my way. On my reporting to the O.C. that I could get no information, but that the man owned up to being a spy, he ordered the Camp Adjutant

to summon a drum-head courts-martial to try him. Paper, pens and ink were found with difficulty; true, there was no drum but a rum keg did as well.

The officers, warned, assembled and the Sergeant-Major being sent for was ordered to march up the prisoner.

He stared open-mouthed for a few seconds, then blurted out, "Plaze, sor, I can't, shure he's hung, sor." "Hung!" exclaimed the O.C., who was standing within earshot. "Who ordered him to be hung?" "Commandant Browne, sor," replied the Sergeant-Major. "I ordered him to be hung?" I ejaculated. "What do you mean?" "Sure, sor, when I asked you at the guard wagon what was to be done with the spoy did you not say, sor, 'Oh, hang the spoy,' and there he is," pointing to the slaughter poles, and sure enough there he was. There was no help for it. It was clear enough the prisoner could not be tried after he was hung, so the court was dismissed and there was no one to blame but my poor shin.

By this time myself and my boys had made ourselves decidedly unpopular on the other side of the river. No decent kraal could retire to rest and be sure they would awake in the morning to find themselves alive or their huts and cattle intact.

The Zulus also could not understand, as my servant Quin expressed it, our field manœuvres.

Had they not beaten us at Isandlwana? Had they not taken our camp, killed all the defenders and captured all the camp contained? Were not the bodies of 900 white men lying unburied there, a feast for the asvogel and jackal?

and yet we who ought, by all the rules of the game (according to their ideas), to have run away to the sea, were not only sitting tight in a miserable camp, close to the scene of our disaster, but were sending parties of white devils across the river who killed men, burned kraals and swept away their cattle but who would not wait to be surrounded and killed. In vain they laid ambuscades and displayed tempting baits of cattle; on those occasions, it would seem, the white men did not hanker after beef and the traps were of no avail. Yet something must be done to put a stop to the nuisance so they appealed to the powers of Hades and sent for two first-class, up-to-date witch-doctors and explained their troubles to them. Could they drive us away? Why of course they could, provided they were well paid for the undertaking, so preliminaries being fixed on a satisfactory and business-like basis, the devil-dodgers started in to work the oracle.

Now the wind in Natal usually blows two ways during the twenty-four hours and most days it would blow across the river towards the camp all the afternoon. Accordingly one day we saw two natives appear on the bare ridge on the Zulu side of the river (the same ridge I wrote about in the first part of this yarn) who lit a fire and began to dance and gesticulate round it, the wind blowing the smoke towards us. We could not make out their game on the first day, but when the same thing happened the second day I inquired of some friendly Kafirs what these bounders were up to. They informed me, with awe, that the two natives were very powerful witch-doctors, that they were

burning mutti (medicine) and parts of the dead body of a white man, so that the smoke should blow across to us, frighten us and make us run away to the sea.

Now this was, clearly, not cricket; moreover it was against my principles to allow the remains of one of my comrades to be subjected to heathen rites, so I determined, although not a very religious man, to assert the powers of Christianity over Paganism.

I spoke to Develin on the matter. He had been a very well brought up young man, before he had joined the Lost Legion, and although his morals had somewhat deteriorated since that period yet he fully agreed that these cantrips must be put a stop to and expressed his feelings in pungent words.

But how was it to be done? There was no bush nor stones on that infernal ridge that would afford cover to a cat and everything of that kind was far out of rifle-shot of the spot where these brutes carried out their unholy rites. However I be-thought myself of a natural fold in the ground I had noticed during the 10th of January when we had lined that ridge all day and I mentioned this to Develin. He thought this would do provided we got there in the dark and lay perdu all morning. If they came again we should have them at about 400 yards range and both of us were certain for a much longer distance than that. Warning Develin to say nothing to anyone, so as not to cause unnecessary jealousy, and telling Colonel Glyn I was going out for an early scout, I forgot to tell him the purpose lest he should forbid the move-

ment. We left the laager some two hours before daybreak, on foot, crossed the river, got into the fold of ground and lay low. We had plenty of food and drink with us and we determined to stay there all day. We were going to pit M.H. carbines against Satan and we felt like Crusaders at their very best and holiest moments. The day dragged a bit and it was very hot, but we meant to make it hotter for those bally rain-makers if they came and at last they did. They came up the Zulu side of the ridge and went to the same place where they had built the fire before and lit another upon which they threw a lot of stuff that made a big smoke which the wind blew in the direction of the laager. Then they began to dance round, point their sticks at the camp and utter cuss words and incantations. Disgusting-looking beasts they were and no doubt were more revolting in morals and manners than they were in person and field-kit. Troth they looked fit and proper servants for the Evil One, at least I am ready to bet that no one else would have had them in their service and although they were not aware of the fact they were very soon to join their master. For by this time we had them covered. "Take the small one," I whispered to Develin. "Right," he replied. "Are you ready?" "Yes," said he and we both let go. My man spun round and round and then fell into the fire, getting a taste thereby of what was in store for him later on. Develin's one collapsed in a heap and never moved.

We strolled up to them. My fellow had been hit through the throat, as I had taken rather too full a sight, but kicked the bucket when we reached

him. Develin's one had been shot through the heart and on turning the body over we found it was a woman. We neither of us expressed any regret as a she witch-doctor is at least ten pieces of pork worse than a he one and as we walked back to the laager we patted ourselves on the back to think that we had put out of mess two of the foulest monsters that Providence allows to cumber the earth. *Vive la carbine à bas Satan !*

CHAPTER XVI

UNDER ORDERS FOR THE CAPE

BUT the good times were drawing to a close, for one evening two orderlies arrived from Helpmaker with dispatches and shortly afterwards Colonel Glyn sent to ask me to dinner. We dined and as soon as we were alone, he said, "Maori, I have had bad news." "Good God, sir," I replied, "not another disaster?" He said "No, but orders have come for you and four of your officers, Captains Duncombe, Develin, Hicks and Hayes to proceed to Capetown to assist Lonsdale to raise a regiment of Irregular Horse."

I was dumfounded, I could not even cuss. I did not want to go, I was quite happy where I was, I was at the front; if I went back to the base I might be kept there, besides I wanted to remain with Colonel Glyn. He was a sportsman, a good soldier, had seen many years of colonial service, valued Colonial Irregulars, understood myself and my band of filibusters and would look over our little eccentricities provided we did our duty and fought well. I might even be attached to some Staff College man, far too highly educated to have any common sense or knowledge of savage warfare and this I dreaded. In fact I was in the deuce of a stew. All this and more I pointed out to the dear old man and begged his aid to extract me from the soup. He said, "I have wired to the General

requesting him to allow you to stay. I cannot receive an answer for two days; you can stay till then."

Seeing I was very downhearted he said, "Maori, you may go down the river to-morrow, and if you cross I may look over it for once," and he winked a wicked wunk.

I left him and went to my angle disconsolate but hopeful. After the evening's inspection I summoned my officers and told them I intended to take early morning coffee at a military kraal some miles down the river. One or two of them opined it was rather a big order. I allowed the fact and pointed out that everything depended on our surprising them, and to enable us to do that orders must be implicitly obeyed. They agreed, and Duncombe and I made our plans. We both knew the place as we had scouted it well. My plan to which Duncombe agreed was this. He was to take half a dozen men and to ride to the windward side of the kraal, they were to take with them a number of rope torches well covered with tar; these we had by us.

Just as daylight came they were to light them and throw them over the palisading on to the huts. The last few days had been very hot and dry and the thatch would burn like wild-fire. The gate of the kraal—and there was only one—was on the leeward side and I was to take up my position there, with the rest of the men (54 in number), and knock the stuffing out of the Zulus as the fire burned them out.

This was very simple. The native sleeps heavily during the early morning and we knew our ground. Just after midnight we moved out of the

fort and proceeded on our way, crossed the river and took up our positions without being discovered. A small ridge of stones about 150 yards from the gate afforded my men splendid cover; it also concealed our horses and enabled us to keep them just in our rear so that we could mount and bolt at once if the Zulus proved too strong for us. Half a gale of wind was blowing from the right direction, which drowned any sound our horses made and we waited impatiently for the dawn. Presently it came and I could distinguish the gate of the kraal and also see the foresight of my carbine. This was the right moment for Duncombe to begin. Suddenly a glare of light, then a burst of fire as torch after torch was thrown onto the huts. His bugler sounded as loud as he could and then galloped round the kraal sounding. My bugler did the same. Duncombe at once joined up with his men. Wild yells rang out as the flames, before the strong wind, swept over the kraal. The huts were close together and in far less time than it takes me to write it, the whole place was burning and flaming like the mouth of Tophet. The gate was burst open and out rushed a swarm of Zulus mad with surprise and terror, to be met by a steady volley from my men. Every bullet told at that range and it staggered them, but they had to get out or burn. The flames were behind them and above them, the bugles were sounding, they must get out somehow and escape somewhere, so they broke through the fences and thorns and ran for the hills. Volley after volley was poured into them but go they must and a lot broke away to the flanks and escaped.

Oh, but we got a bit of our own back that day!

"Stand to your horses" was the order quickly given, a hurried glance over the men to see no one was left behind, then mount. In a moment we mounted and started at a canter and time it was to go. The Zulus had recovered from their surprise, the war-cry was being shouted on all the hills and crowds of natives were pouring down after us to cut us off. But we had the start of them, the ground was good-going for our horses and we were over the river before they could get up to us.

On our own side I halted, dismounted my men and gave them a taste of long-range shooting which surprised them, making them shake their shields and spears in impotent anger, but at last tired of losing men, without being able to hurt us, they drew off and we went home to breakfast, well pleased with our little jaunt, not a man or horse wounded.

The next day passed and during the evening orderlies turned up with the General's wire, and I heard with deep regret that I and the officers named must proceed at once. This order being imperative, we were to start next morning at daylight and make the best of our way direct to Pietermaritzburg without any delay.

I called my officers and non-coms. together and broke the news as gently as I could and then the row began. They swore I should not go or that they would all go with me, that I was their commandant and they would be all blankety, blankety, blanked before they served under any other. Dear old Glyn and Black came out and spoke to them. They liked the Colonel but they admired

Black immensely. Could he not swear in a language simply heavenly, and although they understood it not, was it not all the more to be admired? So that when Colonel Glyn promised them that Black should command them during my absence they became pacified though the air of the pig-sty angle was very sulphurous that night with muttered oaths.

Now my man Quin, with all his good qualities, was a bad horseman, so I told him I must leave him behind as the ride would be a very hard one. It took the worthy man quite ten minutes to grasp the fact, then when he had done so he saluted me gravely and said, "I'll be blanked if I stop, I'll desert and follow you down on foot." I tried to argue with him but it was no good, go he would and go he did. I had a good strong, quiet horse, so I mounted him on it, but what he suffered on the journey only the Lord knows. He never complained but I saw the blood running down his saddle-flaps before the first day was over. Next morning at daylight we started and I said good-bye to Colonel Glyn and all the officers of the 24th with deep sorrow. Colonel Glyn expressed his regret at my departure, told me to hurry up with the recruiting and promised me that in the event of his commanding a column in the new campaign, I should have a command of Irregular Horse under him. This comforted me. Then I had to say good-bye to my officers and non-coms. This was very painful for all of us. Had I not fought with them, starved with them, lain out in the rain and hail with them and above all had I not twisted their tails for them when they required it?

The feeling towards a comrade is very strong in the Lost Legion, and as I rode away after a hand-shake all round the air seemed to burn blue and smelt like a cart-load of Tandstickor matches on fire. However the last hand-grip, the last cheer, in which the men of the 24th join, is given and we ride away. I with a hump on me as big as a baggage camel's.

But we are used to partings in the Lost Legion, and though we are heading for the base instead of for the front, yet we soon bucked up. A pipe in the delicious morning air, a good horse between your knees, and good trusty pals with you, would make the most pessimistic misanthrope who ever croaked buck up, chuck his chest and sing.

We reached Helpmaker, where Captain Uptcher, first 24th, a very old friend of mine, gave us a good breakfast. Then our horses having finished their water and feed we started again for Greytown. It was a hot and long trek through the Thorn country, a bit of rough desert no good to man or beast, and a hot, dreary ride it was even for us officers, trained and hardened horsemen as we were, while poor Quin must have suffered awfully. We soon began to pass lots of outspanned, loaded wagons; these had been abandoned by their owners and drivers the moment they heard the news of the disaster, and there they remained, unguarded, for weeks. We helped ourselves when we required anything but pushed on as quickly as we could. Evening came on and our horses began to get very jaded and knocked up but they carried us through the thorns and at last we were on the borders of civilization. A large farmhouse attracted my atten-

tion and I determined to camp there for the night. When we reached it, we found it deserted. It must have been left in a hurry, some calves lay dead in a pen and ducks, hens, pigs, etc., roved about at their own sweet will. The stable door lay open so we soon had our horses watered, groomed and fed and then entered the house to look after ourselves. It was a fine, nice place well furnished and must have belonged to very well-to-do people.

In the dining-room we found the table had evidently been just laid for breakfast, when the owners received the news of the disaster. The coffee-urn was on the table, while the food, dried up and mouldy, still on the dishes, was soon thrown out. Quin and Develin started a fire and made free with a splendid ham, hanging up. Hicks and Hayes found plenty of eggs and wrung the necks of a few ducks. Duncombe and myself had a look round. In the principal bedroom a gold watch and chain had been left on the table also a handful of gold and silver coins. There was plenty of spirits and bottled ale in the pantry and as by this time the cooks had prepared a sumptuous feed we were soon enjoying it. Then for bed.

I decided that we five officers should split the night into equal watches and said I would take the middle one, the worst, then threw myself on a bed and was asleep before I had time to think where I was.

Quin was exempt from guard as he was cook, and would have to get early breakfast ready, but when he awoke me before daylight, I found my

kind-hearted officers had made another arrangement for sentry-go, leaving me out. They argued that if Quin was exempt through being cook I was also exempt as O.C. therefore they had done it all themselves. They had also groomed and fed the horses so that after we had finished a good though rough breakfast we were ready to start. My officers by acting as they had done were only acting in accordance with the way we have in the Legion and nothing more was said about it.

We reached Greytown before noon and I reported myself to a Major of the 4th King's Own who was Town Commandant. He said his orders were that I was to go on at once by post-cart, but that it could only carry two and would not be ready to start for three hours, when it would call for me at the hotel.

I decided to take Quin with me, as he had had quite enough of the saddle, and that the officers should stay the night in Greytown and ride through with the horses next day. But how about money? We none of us had any. Quin hearing my remark produced from his pocket a handful of gold and silver. I also caught the glimmer of a gold watch and chain. "Here you are, sor," said he with a grin, "here's my savings." "Your stealings you mean, you d——d marauder. I've a good mind to hand you over to the Provost Marshal. Hand over that plunder." "I scorn the imputation, sor," said he, "sure I'm only saving the people's goods from them bloodthirsty scuts of savages." However before I left I found the rightful owner who thankfully receiving his watch and chain, returned Quin the money for his trouble in saving it and re-

fused any offer of recompense from me for having made use of his house and food.

Well we reached the hotel and I informed the landlord of our plight and requested him to cash a cheque for me. He received us with open arms. "Cash a cheque for you? I'll cash fifty bally cheques for you, but no money of yours or your officers is to be taken in my house. No, you've been fighting for Natal you have. Come right in." Then to his wife: "Bet, open some champagne and get the best lunch going you can." Then bustling to his safe he took out £25 and said: "Here you are; if this is not enough I'll send to the bank for more. Now drink up. Here's to you. Sit right down and tell us all the news from the front."

I divided the money between my officers and myself. Quin was already provided for and was coming with me, but the others would have to pay their way down with the horses and the days of loot were past.

We had a good lunch, drank a few bottles of fizz with the hospitable landlord and others who had flocked to hear the news. Then the post-cart drawing up Quin and myself got in and drove off followed by a rousing cheer.

What a glorious drive it was, up-hill and down-hill, round corners with a precipice on one side and the hill on the other. The six mules galloping with their ears back as if Old Nick was after them and the cart swinging and bounding behind them as if it was an air balloon. Risky it looked but the old-time Natal post driver was as fine a whip as any the world could produce and knew his work

and the road to perfection so the actual danger was very small.

I had been through it often before, and enjoyed the pace and the rush through the air but not so the worthy Quin. He was new to it and it fairly astonished him. "Hould fast, your honour," he would yell, as we turned a sharp corner. "Just look at that now. We'll be wanting wings to fly through the air, like birds, just now. Holy Moses, that was a squeak. Oh, wirra, wirra, what are we here for at all, at all."

Then his conscience, or what he wore for one, would prick him. "Holy Mary, I wish I had left that watch and chain alone," he muttered. "Sure it's to a priest I'll confess as soon as I see one, by this and by that I will." "Do so to the Provo-Sergeant, Quin," said I. "I will not, sor; he would not understand me good intentions, and sure it's bad the likes of them think of the likes of you and me, sor." There were plenty of relays of mules and the miles flew past, while the time passed quickly, shouting at the racing animals and listening to Quin's pious ejaculations, so that we reached Pietermaritzburg before evening after a most pleasant drive.

We found the town all laagered up and every one very nervous. As we drove through the streets men and women came rushing out and shouting the usual silly questions: Will the Zulus be here to-night? Is there any danger? etc., etc.

Dropping Quin at the Crown Hotel with orders to get my traps, that had been left behind, out of store, I drove straight to the Headquarter Office and reported myself. The General and most of

the staff were away, but the senior staff officer took me up to the gaol to report my arrival to Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Henry Berkley. Queer place of abode (I thought) the gaol, for H.M. High Commissioner and the Governor of Natal but it was the safest spot in the town so they roosted there.

That being over, Captain Grenfell, the S.O., said to me, "Have you saved your dress clothes?" "Yes," said I, "they are here." "Then as it is guest night at the club come and dine with me." "Right," said I and we parted. On reaching the Crown Hotel I found Quin had got a hot bath ready for me, shaving kit and dress clothes already laid out.

I had a look at myself in the glass, for the first time, and I did not feel proud of myself, but after a shave and a wallow in a hot bath, and oh, the enjoyment of it! self-respect again returned and then the comfort of being clean and dressing once more. *Figurez-vous* the easy dress suit, the clean boiled shirt with the polished front to a man who for over a month has lived day and night in breeches, boots and a tattered patrol jacket.

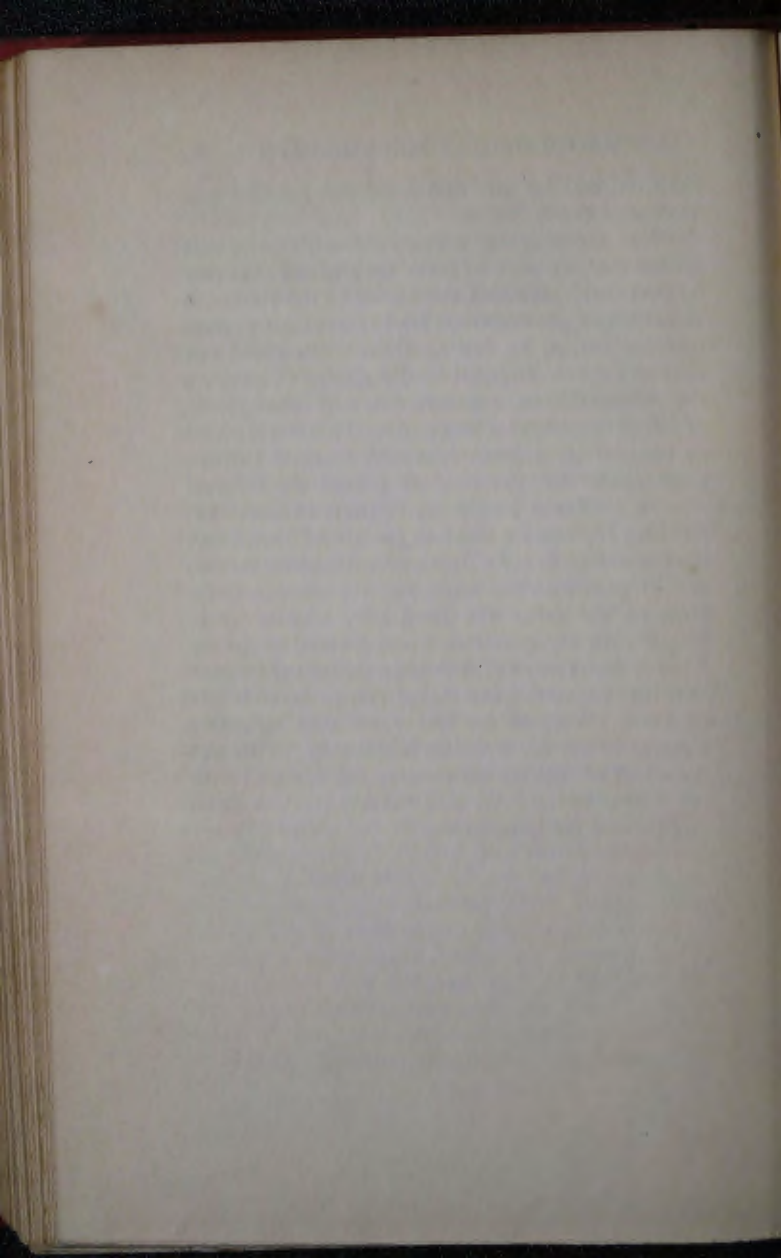
"Sor," said Quin, when he had finished dressing me, "will your honour be getting drunk to-night?" "No, Quin," said I. "Then with your honour's lave I will, sor." Of course I had noticed that he had already laid a good and solid foundation for a big bust. "Quin, have you confessed yet?" "I have not, sor, I will wait till I get to Cape Town; maybe there will be more to confess and I'll make one job of it." "Mind the Provo-Sergeant, Quin," said I. "I will, sor," said he. "I have seen him, he is a townie of mine, and if

he is sober at tattoo it won't be my fault." So I left him and went to the club and enjoyed a good dinner. Serviettes, spoons and forks, finger glasses! By Jove, I was in a new country and I who had that morning picked the leg of an underdone, tough duck, held in my fist, enjoyed all these. Then the news. We had heard nothing at Rourke's Drift for weeks and everyone had plenty to tell me and plenty of questions to ask me, so a very pleasant evening was passed and I returned to my hotel and to bed.

What a night I was having! Fancy, clean sheets, clean pyjamas, mosquito curtains, how I luxuriated in them all but fell asleep before I had time to thoroughly enjoy them. Next morning Quin woke me and brought me early coffee. "Well, Quin," said I, "did you enjoy yourself?" "I did, sor. I had two fights I remember well and two more I misremember but they were good, and with your lave, sor, there is a man waiting now for me at the bathing-place. He's a fine hefty lad and they do say he is a boy with hands on him he can use. When your honour can dispense with me I'll be with him and it will be the father and mother of a fine fight; sure the others was only Rookies and of no account." "And the Provo-Sergeant?" I asked. "Faith we put him to bed as drunk as David's sow, by ten o'clock last night, but I've sent to wake him up so as not to miss the diversion this morning." "All right, Quin, lay me out some white clothes and you can go." I believe the fight was everything that could be desired. The fine hefty lad proved to be good with his hands, for although Quin was the victor, yet he had his

work cut out for him and I did not see him any more that day.

Next morning my officers arrived and it was settled that we were to leave for Durban next day by post-cart. We sold our horses to the Remount Department, got our traps ready and about 10 a.m. the cart turned up but no Quin. We could not wait so Captain Grenfell kindly offered to have all the police-stations, guard-rooms, and other places of refuge searched for him and send him on if found so we started without him and reached Durban that night. On the way we passed the General and his staff and I paid my respects to him. On reaching Durban we went to the Royal Hotel, and next morning, to my unbounded astonishment, who should walk into my room but the missing Quin. How he got down the Lord only knows. Quin fenced with my questions when I asked about his journey but I have always been under the impression that he must have stolen two or three horses *en route*. Anyhow he was there and strangely anxious to get my traps on board ship. This was done and at midday we crossed the bar and with our bow pointing S.W. said "*Au revoir*" to Natal and steered for Cape Town.



PART II

CHAPTER I

LONSDALE'S HORSE

WE had a very pleasant though slow trip to Cape Town and one I thoroughly enjoyed as it was such a complete rest, not that my health required repose and I was naturally burning to get back to the front but there was much satisfaction, on a dark stormy night, to listen to the howl of the wind, the wash of the waters and the splash of the rain on deck and be able to say, "Thank the Lord I've not got to visit outlying pickets to-night," or coiled up in my comfortable bunk grunt to myself, "This is better than a wallow in the mud on the lee side of a wet bush." But such selfish and sybaritic meditations were however subject to rapid change and I would fret and harass myself with the questions—"Are they having any fun at the front?" "Are the Zulus on the move and hostile?" May be they are attacking Rourke's Drift or Helpmaker at the present moment and my late comrades are fighting for their lives and the honour of our grand old Queen while I am snoring like a fattening ox in his litter, or gorging myself at a luxuriously-spread table, drinking iced drinks, while they, grimy with sweat, dust and

blood, are facing death and the devil, playing men's parts in the most honourable of all games, namely, that of war, and doing it on bully, biscuit and muddy tepid water. Faith and when these thoughts entered my brain I would fret and worry, for my vivid imagination pictured the scene of a Zulu attack and I could plainly see with my mind's eye the long lines of rushing, yelling, whistling savages, note their flashing assagais and waving plumes, hear the clatter of their red, white or black shields, but above all the gallant, bronzed-skinned warriors themselves as they charged madly home to victory or death. On the other hand I could see the stern faces of our noble Tommies, in whose eyes shone the British lust for battle as they calmly emptied their rifles, on the muzzles of which glanced the silvery bayonets so soon to be dappled red. I could see the calm, collected officers giving their orders and the gallant old Colonel standing in the midst of the turmoil as cool as if in his garden at home. All this I could see but my thoughts dwelt more on my own particular crowd, the reckless lost legionaries I had so lately commanded, and I seemed to hear their wild cheers and imprecations and noted their savage eagerness to get to hand grips with their foes. Oh, but at such moments the longing to get back to my Lambs, at the front, seemed to be almost more than I could bear and I would pace the deck like a caged lion, cursing the luck that had sent me away from the game I so fondly loved and the boys who might be playing it. Quin at such times would try to comfort me. "Sure, sor," he'd say, "there's devil a bit of fun going on up there at all at all, nor there won't be

till the reinforcements come out. The Ginerl, dear man, can't move, sor, and the black hathen, bad luck to them, will be busy waking their dead, licking their wounds and witch-doctorin' their dirty sowls. So rest aisy, sor, sure we'll soon raise the men and be back again in toime to take the floor when the new divarsion starts and it's thin it's ourselves who'll be better for a few weeks' good aiting and drinking and soft lying and thin yer honour has not cologued with a lady for years; troth we'll both be more civilized after a little famale society, God bless thim." "Yes, Quin," I'd chip in, "and there's that long-deferred confession of yours you have to make. Sure if you let it stand over much longer you'll have to get relays of priests to hear it all, and by gad, if it's Father O'Connell who has to hear all about your villainies, troth it's myself as will speak the word to him that will put a stop to your aiting, drinking, debauchery and philanderings. I know your little ways, Quin my boy, it's the morals of an old tom cat you're acquiring. Faith it's another jaunt up into the Uriwera country you are wanting to cool you off, for it's too fat and lusty you're getting." At the receipt of this broadside the worthy faithful fellow would retire with a broad grin on his expressive mug, muttering, "Maybe the holy man would say to yer honour—'Troth, Mejor, 'tis yerself and yer man that makes a foine half section, for there's a pair of ye's as the devil said to his horns'—but sure, sor, it's not my place to know what his riverence says or thinks." On my way down the coast we took on board, at East London, a middle-aged American gentleman who turned out to be a

splendid companion, chock-full of dry humour and yarns of the late Civil War, in which he had seen much service. His arrival on board, inside a swinging basket, was by no means dignified, as he was shot out on deck like a bag of monkey's rations and sat there for a minute or two tenderly rubbing certain portions of his human corpus while his spirit-guided language wandered into flowery realms of quaint though very sincere invocations against the ship, the surf boat and the sea, while his peroration anent the man at the steam winch was so sublime that it made the donkey-engine manipulator, an artist himself in cuss words, turn green with envy and open his mouth in awe and astonishment. Much amused I tendered a helping hand, which he accepted and regained his feet, whereupon, after he had subjected me to a close scrutiny, he said with great solemnity, "Sir, I am indebted to you for your courtesy, please accept my thanks." I bowed and he continued: "I guess, sir-re, judging from your dress and appearance you are a British fighting man, is that so?" Again I bowed and he went on: "Wal, I calculate, that the weather signs your face shows, you air just down from the front, on duty. Yes, sir-re, men resembling yourself and these other gentlemen don't have no urgent private business, family or otherwise, as to make you howl for leave, when thar's a dog and monkey time, with bullets flying up on the frontier. No, sir-re, I've been there some and know." Again I acquiesced, and he drawled on with such enhanced gravity, that had it not been for the burst of supernatural eloquence which he had let fly a few minutes before I should have thought that he

was a fancy religion sky-pilot about to give tongue. "Wal, gentlemen, that being so, I should like to take up my parable and tell you, that you Britishers deserve all the Hades that the tarnal niggers gave you the other day, yes, gentlemen, and more, you strangers can take my word for it. Providence never intended this d——d country for anyone bar Niggers, Flies, Missionaries and Jews. No, God Almighty never wanted you Britishers nor any other civilized white man to enter South Africa and did his best to keep us out or why in thunder did he place a damned bar across every harbour mouth? Yes, sir-re, he did it, to keep us white men out, and as we lack gumption not to take his hint, you Britishers get your gruel from a lot of d——d Ethiopian minstrels and I, Colonel Cyrus P. Stanwood, late of the Confederate Army, comes nigh to breaking my darned crupper bone, busting my pants and using profane language boarding this packet.

"And now, sir-re, if you'll add to your courtesy by pointing out the direct trail to the bar saloon I suggest we, and these other gentlemen, make a bee-line for it and imbibe cocktails to the health of the great and good Queen, the President of the United States, a lost cause, and all fighting men. Say, strangers, shall we get?" We got.

The advent of Colonel Stanwood was indeed a Godsend to us, as the coasting boat on which we travelled put into every port *en route* and we also were delayed by heavy weather, so that his quaint yarns and dry humour helped to pass the time which otherwise would have hung heavily on our hands. The boat was, moreover, crowded with the

widows and orphans of the 24th Regiment, who had been embarked at East London, and very many of these forlorn creatures benefited largely by his open-handed generosity; he was a wealthy man who, not being goody-goody, believed in relieving distress with dollars and not with good advice, tracts, and red tape, which so many people in England believe in. Faith he was a white man and one who acted up to the maxim that "blood is thicker than water."

We reached Cape Town, where I found that Lonsdale had already started to form the nucleus of a regiment. He had taken down with him from Rourke's Drift a captain named Gordon and had inspanned a fine young Englishman—Kynnersley Gardner—whom I had been messmate with at Kei Road and who had seen service with the 88th and 24th, during 1877 and 1878, as Adjutant and Paymaster. These officers had already recruited one troop which was despatched to Durban under Gordon a few days after my arrival. Our office was within the castle and I was soon busy at work passing and attesting men, Quin acting as a most efficient recruiting-sergeant, and Gardner giving me great assistance. We had no difficulty in getting men but when it came to clothing and equipping them it was quite another pair of shoes. There was no spare clothing or equipment in the Government stores, so Lonsdale had to employ local Hebrew contractors who not only broke faith with him as to the date the goods were to be delivered on, but also eventually robbed the Government of a vast sum of money. I have no space to descant in this book on the shameless robberies

perpetrated by civilians and others on the Imperial Exchequer during the Zulu and subsequent wars in South Africa, nor to animadvert on the folly, if not worse, of officers placed in high authority who made contracts with and confided in men well known to be the most infernal rogues in the country, but this I hope to do in a following work, when I think I shall open the eyes of my readers as to how their money has been spent. But now to continue. There was great trouble after Isandlwana in getting Totty or native wagon-drivers and voerloupers, as all the coloured people in South Africa dreaded the name of the Zulus, so that no sooner had I recruited a considerable number of men for Lonsdale's Horse than I was dispatched into the Caledon, George and other outlying districts to buy horses and recruit Cape bastards, as it was fondly hoped that the latter, having a strain of white blood in them, might not be so nervous as Colonial or Natal Kafirs. I however obtained but few and was sadly hampered by the missionaries, at the various mission stations myself and Captain Develin visited. *N.B.*—I shall give my experiences with missionaries, I.D.B.'s and Army contract swindles in the book I have already mentioned it is my intention to publish. As regards the horses, I obtained a considerable number fairly cheap and of good quality and sent them down to Cape Town, where they were grabbed by the Imperial Remount officers for the regular regiments, so Lonsdale's Horse went short.

I was therefore very pleased when I received orders to return to the front though my joy was tempered by being directed to call in, *en route*, at

East London and King William's Town so as to take on the men recruited at those places. This I did and reached Durban with some sixty tattered demalions, without either arms or uniforms as there were no stores to be obtained in King. On landing in Durban I found everything in an absolute state of chaos. Store-ships and troop-ships began to arrive and no provision had been made to receive or distribute the stores, equipment or clothing, etc., as it was landed. The Durban wharves, much smaller in those days than they are now, were soon covered and cumbered with mountainous heaps of all sorts of goods which the single rail on to the town vainly tried to reduce; nor when the trains were loaded could the stuff be handled at the small town station so that in order to clear the trucks, for fresh loads, all their contents had to be dumped down along the line, where they were piled up in inexorable confusion, no one knowing or seeming to care where any stated supplies were or how they were to be come at. On my reporting myself to the General commanding the base of operations, he was good enough to thank Providence for my advent, stating as his reason that the hundred or more men, recruited in Durban, for Lonsdale's Horse, were lawless banditti, a menace and terror to the town and a cussed nuisance to himself and that he must detain me at Durban to curl their tails. He was certainly very kind about my detention and asked me to dine with him the following evening, provided that in the meantime I had not been butchered by my men. This was by no means cheering news for me who had fondly hoped to

get on to the front next day, and recollections of poor Pulleine's Lambs flashed through my mind while my heart grew dark with apprehensions of a long detention at the base. Nor were my misgivings unfounded for on proceeding to the camp of Lonsdale's Horse I found the men all the General had described them to be, and worse, in fact he had been most charitable in his description so that I had to buckle to and knock them into shape. My word it was a job; Lonsdale advised me he had forwarded uniforms and equipment for two hundred men. Where the cases were the Lord only knew and as He would not tell us we had to prospect and overhaul the miles of jumbled-up stores heaped along the railway lines to find those that belonged to us. After days of searching we found some, and with great trouble I managed to get two more troops equipped and sent to the front while I also got the remainder of the condottieri out of Durban to a place called Saccharine, where they could do but little harm and their vagaries not be criticized by an unappreciating public. All this was a fearful nuisance to myself, longing as I was for active service, but I did however manage to get a few hours at the front and had the great good luck to just drop in for and take a hand in the battle of Ginginhlova. I had had to make a flying trip up to the base camp at the Tugela River reaching there three days after the relief column had started in to succour Pearson's men beleaguered in Etchowe, and while I was talking to Colonel Hopton of the 88th, who was in command there, an important dispatch arrived for Lord Chelmsford who had gone on with the relieving force.

This was my chance, and I begged the Colonel to allow me to carry it on, which after some demur he consented to let me do. Overjoyed at my miraculous luck I was soon in the saddle and by riding hard overtook the column as evening came on and they were forming laager or trying to do so, for when I had delivered the dispatches, I looked about and marvelled at the confusion going on. At that time I had never before seen a laager formed, no more had any other English officers then present, and in my humble judgment it would have been sound policy for the Chief Staff Officer to have pointed out the position on which he wished the work to be formed and then to have left the detail of the movement to be carried out by the Dutch and Colonial conductors, most of whom had probably been born in laagers, or at all events knew how to bring up and swing the long teams of oxen, so as to ensure each wagon reaching its proper place. Had this been done the laager would have been formed in a very short space of time and the troops would have had ample opportunity to eat their suppers and make themselves comfortable, but this plan would have been far too simple for the British Staff College man of that epoch, so instead, excited staff officers and Aldershot-trained transport conductors who, until a few days previously, had never seen, much less handled, a South African bullock wagon and who could not speak one word of Dutch or Kafir, took the contract in hand and of course tied the long teams of oxen into knots and made such a mess and confusion as would have delighted any old mummy ever embalmed in the War Office. Three times these energetic,

zealous, but, for laagering purposes, utterly incompetent officers essayed to form laager and three times they ignominiously failed, and it was not until hundreds of soldiers had been employed to pull and haul on the wagons that at length a formation was completed which although it might gratify a Staff College man would have excited derision in a dopper boy of tender age. No sooner were the wagons in position than the troops were set to work to dig shelter trenches, which when completed were at once manned, the Tommies being kept in them all night, and continuously on the alert, a very bad precedent for youths of immature nervousness, especially as, during the whole night, excited officers wandered to and fro fussing and worrying their men with such exhilarating warnings as "Close up, men, close up, close up, be ready men, be ready, the Zulus might break through here," etc., etc., until the wretched, town-bred conscripts shivered with apprehension in their wet jackets, for as we had heavy rain during the night and as some wiseacre thought it might spoil the laager to unpack the men's greatcoats and blankets the miserable lads were subjected, unprotected, to the wet. Also for the same reason, the majority of the troops went without food, which was a very bad preparation for youthful street arabs to undergo just on the eve of being introduced to an enemy. It must be remembered that the regiments sent out to Natal, after the disaster of Isandlwana, were the first products of the then newly-invented short service system; that their ranks denuded of seasoned men were for the most part filled with boys and that the majority of the non-commis-

sioned officers, the real backbone of the fighting line, were of such tender age as to be utterly valueless, so far as giving confidence to their squads on the field of battle, this in itself being a great source of danger. Again, the men being chiefly recruits, drafts from the linked battalion, or volunteers from other regiments did not know their officers and, for the same reasons, the officers did not know their men, while the total absence of old and tried soldiers in the ranks left the youthful conscripts without the steadying leaven so absolutely necessary in an untried body of men going into action for the first time in their lives.

It is therefore not to be wondered at, that some of the troops employed in South Africa during the latter part of the Zulu War, acted in such a way as might well make their old regimental ancestors squirm in their bloody graves and on several occasions filled their officers with consternation. Strange as it may appear, still it is, alas, nevertheless true, that Englishmen are quite incapable of learning a lesson, for the salient faults and mistakes made in a campaign, although animadverted on at the time by the Press and fully acknowledged by the authorities, are quickly forgotten or ignored, especially so when this country is engaged in savage warfare, for the absurd blunders made by our ancestors in the American forests one hundred and fifty years ago I have individually seen perpetrated in New Zealand and South Africa. There is an old quotation that reads somewhat in this way, "Those whom the gods mark for destruction they first drive mad," and in my humble opinion the great majority of the British nation are rapidly

qualifying for lunatic asylums; for here are a people who having been taught, by bitter experience in the past, the utter inutility of putting young and insufficiently-trained troops into the field, deliberately shutting their eyes and ears to the lessons we received in South Africa and Egypt, and pinning their faith on mobs of semi-organized youths, known as territorials, and that, not for a war of conquest but for the very existence of the homeland. There is no excuse for the callousness of the English nation, *re* their safety, for they have not lacked warnings; these they have had in plenty, and to a knockabout Frontiersman like myself it is more than incomprehensible why such warnings should be disregarded especially when emanating from such a man as Lord Roberts.

Surely his frequent speeches and letters, noted as they are by the public Press, should be attended to: for he is a man grown old in the practice of warfare and has studied his noble profession from A to Z—yet notwithstanding these his most solemn warnings are either taken no notice of or treated with unmerited contempt. Yes, the population of these islands are content to allow the safety of their nation to slide as if it were no business of theirs to bear a hand for the protection of their own homes and firesides. Nor will they wake up until they see the scuppers of the roads run crimson and the red cock crowing over their own homesteads.

Then by the Lord Harry it will serve them right; for when a people are so sunk in sloth that they will not learn the use of arms, so as to protect their flag, country and personal property, they

deserve to be kicked into a more healthy frame of mind. And now you may say, "What is this outsider talking about? He is not a Staff College man, nor has he ever held a Royal Commission." Both remarks would be quite true, but then the writer has experienced many years of rough warfare and, on several occasions, has had to face the music in the company of semi-trained, unreliable men, so that he can speak from bitter experience.

CHAPTER II

GINGINHLOVA

THE morning of the 2nd of April 1879 dawned damp and misty, and the men looked haggard, depressed and far from lively, but as it was the General's intention to halt where we were for the day, so as to give the oxen and men a much-required rest, preparations were made for breakfast. These, however, were quickly interrupted, the alarm was given, and at 6 a.m. two strong columns of Zulus came in sight who fording the Inyezani River advanced to the attack, both columns throwing out clouds of skirmishers to the right and left, so as to surround the laager, and while they carried out this movement two other dense columns appeared from the direction of the Amatikulu bush whose horns rapidly thrown out quickly joined hands with those already mentioned. The celerity and precision with which these movements were carried out was simply beautiful, for, in less than ten minutes after the heads of the columns had appeared, the laager was completely enveloped; a signal was given and the gallant savages started a charge that for very many of them was to be their last on this planet. The engagement was commenced by the Gatling guns at the range of about one thousand yards but the enemy closed in very quickly and soon everyone who could use

a rifle was banging away for all he was worth so that the enemy paused when about four hundred yards distant and opened a tremendous fire which was however so badly directed that but few casualties occurred among our men.

I was at this time greatly amused at the tactics of an immensely big and fat old Dutchman, one of the grand old Trek Boers, who although he had not seen his knees for ages was as full of fight as an old buck goat. Troth and he fought comfortably, for sitting on the padded driving-box of his wagon with a case of ammunition on one side of him, and a big square rigger of gin mighty convenient, he picked off Zulu after Zulu with the rapidity of a boy looting a cherry tree, while every time he made a shot he deemed worthy to be commemorated he would treat himself to a klein soupje of gin, chuck a chuckle and rub with gusto the elephantine protuberance that occupied the locality of his anatomy which in his youth he had called his waist. Faith, he was a broth of a boy and did honour to his parents' and tutors' upbringing.

The enemy did not pause long for presently they must have received some order, or, more likely, seen some signal, for a tremendous whistle and yell went up and simultaneously they launched themselves at the laager. It must have been about 6.20 a.m. when the Zulus made their first great effort to storm the front, right, and rear faces of our defences, and their advance was indeed a splendid sight, as just at that moment the sun came out and shone full on the lines of plumed warriors, who, with their arms and legs adorned with streaming cow-tails and each brandishing

his coloured ox-hide shield and flashing assagais rushed forward to what he fondly hoped to be an orgie of blood, with a dash and élan that no civilized troops could have exceeded. This magnificent charge, beautiful as it was as a spectacle, was a trifle too enervating for the over-worried, unfed and somewhat nervous youths who had to face it, very many of whom more than wobbled in the shelter trenches. In fact it was only the frantic efforts of the officers of one regiment that, on the death of their Colonel, prevented their men from making a clean bolt of it, and that just at the most critical moment when the charging Zulus were within one hundred yards of the shelter trenches. Troth it was a near call and for a few minutes it was a toss-up whether the laager at Ginginhlova was not to be a second shambles like Isandlwana. Now the blue-jackets, or rather a portion of them, had taken charge of the right front of the laager, and in their usual make-yourself-at-home, handy sort of way had constructed, out of their kit-bags and anything else they could get held of, a rough sort of bastion in which they had planted a Gatling gun, and as I had no men to look after and had never before seen a machine gun in my life, I went over to their post to watch it work, and was much struck by the cool, dare-devil bearing and splendid self-reliance of my old friends whom the Maoris years before had called the Ngati Jacks, who were as they always have been in the past, and please God always will be in the future, when in action thoroughly enjoying themselves as it is only a right and proper frame of mind for men to be in when they are doing work for King and Flag.

Comparisons are, I know, odious, but no impartial looker-on that day could have been present without being strongly impressed with the difference between the conduct of the mature blue-jacket together with that of the stalwart jolly and the half-baked nervous boys in whose company they were fighting.

When I reached the Gatling the Zulu skirmishers were beginning to close in and the cool, staid old shell-back in charge of the gun was simply popping at them in a quiet leisurely sort of a way, a proceeding that did not seem to meet with the approbation of a youthful ordinary seaman who was assisting him, and who, as I came up, said in rather an excited manner, "Fire quicker, Quarter-master, for Gawd's sake, fire quicker." "Fire quicker," growled the ancient mariner, pausing to expectorate a much-chewed quid. "Fire quicker, yer young scupperling, fire quicker be d——d, wait till the black —— come thicker," and for a few moments he continued his deliberate manipulations. Presently came the rush, the before-mentioned Colonel was shot, his regiment became worse than wobbly and the ordinary seaman had no longer need to exhort his senior to expedite the juice distributor which, fortunately not jamming and being backed up by the steady fire of the blue-jackets and jollies, in my humble opinion, saved the whole outfit from being cut up both physically and morally.

The Zulus' rush was only checked when they were within twenty yards of the laager, some of them falling shot dead at even a closer distance, while one small boy, a mat-carrier, crossing by a



PRESSED INTO H.M. NAVY.



miracle the zone of fire, reached the Naval Brigade bastion, where one of the blue-jackets spotting him, leaned over, grabbed him by the nape of the neck and collected him, kicking and squirming, inside the work, where after he had been cuffed into a state of quietude his captor kept him prisoner by sitting on him till the end of the engagement. This youthful corner-man, preserved alive as a *spolia opima*, was adopted by the crew of H.M.S. *Boadicea* as a mascot and, if I remember rightly, was subsequently entered into the Royal Navy, a proceeding that reflects great credit on the handy men, although I have sometimes thought that considering the manner in which he was first of all captured and detained, that the Exeter Hall gang would have wailed over him as a brutally pressed boy. After enduring considerable punishment, which would have been heavier had the troops' shooting been better, the Zulus fell back, but only to try and come on again. This effort, however, was a failure, being quickly checked, and large numbers were seen leaving the field, whereupon Captain Barrow's Mounted Infantry and every man in the laager, who could raise a horse, dashed out in pursuit. Of course I joined in the fun, fondly expecting the fugitives, of whom there were several thousands still in the vicinity, either on the tops of the hills or running in front of us, to make another attempt to put up a fight, but this they did not do, as those on the hills remained there until dispersed by the shells and rockets, and those in the valley simply ran on till they were either shot or sabred, without making any combined attempt to retaliate on their pursuers.

Personally I was very busy. I had lost very many dear friends at Isandlwana, so wanted *utu* (Maori for payment or revenge) and, as I was well mounted and had used a sword from childhood, I took it, but I had time to notice the sole attempt at resistance that, to my knowledge, was made by one of the fugitives. The Mounted Infantry had been raised by Captain Barrow and was composed of men drawn from every regiment, the only test as to efficiency being the individual's statement that he was able to ride; of course some of them could do so, but the majority, when mounted, looked as uncomfortable as a lot of moulting devils squatting on icebergs, and it certainly would have been much safer for themselves, comrades, and especially horses, as well as rendering them more dangerous to the enemy, had they been served out with shillelaghs instead of swords. Be this as it may, as there was no cavalry in the country, two hundred foot soldiers were clapped into the pig-skin and issued with carbines and swords in lieu of their rifles and bayonets. The carbine was all right, as it is a much handier weapon for a mounted man to use than a rifle, and of course the men, having been trained to the use of a rifle, could use the shorter weapon just as well, but when it came to *l'arme blanche* it was quite another thing. They sadly wanted another hand, for you see, being human, they only had two and when mounted these were both fully occupied; one holding the reins so as to try and guide the horse, the other being required to hold on with so as to retain their seat in the saddle. A sword was therefore to the majority of them more of an encumbrance

than a useful lethal weapon. It however had to be used, when the pursuit took place, and although but few of the men had the slightest idea how to handle them, still they drew them and gaily followed their flying enemies and of course by doing so they required their right hands to grasp the sword-hilt instead of the cantle of the saddle, thereby throwing on the left hand the double duty of holding the reins and gripping the gullet plates of their saddles which sadly interfered with the menage of their horses. Again, although a South African horse is as a rule most tractable and one very easily trained, still, like most other quadrupeds, he objects and maybe kicks, should his rider all of a sudden require him to gallop after a mob of howling niggers and at the same time lop his ear off, slog him over the head, or amputate a steak from his hind quarter with a long flashing thing he has never seen before but which he finds out cuts worse than a sjambok. Nevertheless and notwithstanding these manifold drawbacks both men and horses did very well, both being actuated by the highest possible motives, viz., the soldier to do his duty, the steed, because the rider using his spurs as accessory grappling irons kept them firmly fixed in his quivering flanks, and so the gallant Mounted Infantry rode hell for leather after their foes. Now it came to pass as I, riding my own line and being very busy using only the point, chanced to notice a big fine Zulu louping along through the long grass, and had half a mind to go for him, but at the same moment he was charged by a M.I. man, who galloping recklessly past him made a most comprehensive cut

at him, which however, although it failed to annihilate or even wound the Zulu, still drew blood, as it lopped off the ear of his own horse, a proceeding that the animal resented by promptly kicking off its clumsy rider. The Tommy was however true grit, for in a moment he regained his feet and hanging on to the reins which, good man, he had never let go, he turned on to the astonished Zulu and discharged on to the latter's hide shield such a shower of blows that the noise sounded like a patent carpet-beater at work and effectually prevented him from using his assagai. Again, I was on the point of going to our man's assistance and had swung my horse ready to do so, when up from the rear galloped another Tommy who, holding on to the pommel of his saddle with his left hand, flourished his sword and shouted, "Let me get at the bleeding blighter, Dick," and then delivered a terrific cut which in this case missing the crow etched the pigeon as it nearly amputated poor Dick's sword hand, who might well have ejaculated, "Lord save me from my friends." This, nor any other pious cry he did not use, as his remarks, on receiving the wound, were of a decidedly declamatory nature and were sufficiently comprehensive so as to embrace not only his enemy and his rescuer but also all things animate and inanimate within the district. The blighter had however come off badly for he had been knocked end over end by the rescuer's horse, and before he could regain his feet the rider, whether voluntary or involuntary, was precipitated on to the top of him and without further delay, discarding his sword, grabbed the Zulu's knobkerrie with which he proceeded to bash

its owner over the head, so seeing they were all right I devoted my attention to my own work.

The battle of Ginginhlova was most decidedly a victory, the Zulus having been beaten off and their army pursued for over seven miles with very heavy loss, while it enabled Lord Chelmsford to immediately relieve Colonel Pearson's beleaguered column at Etchowe which was the objective of the expedition. Yet it caused every officer, of any experience, who witnessed the action grave anxiety, as the conduct of the young troops engaged was far from creditable and their behaviour did not improve. I have no wish to rake up old scandals, which some apologists declare ought to be forgotten, but I assert and maintain that the nation who, after the experiences of Zululand and Egypt, still rely on young and green troops for their preservation, while they ignore the solemn monitions of their most experienced men, deserve to lose their nationality and become slaves. Of one thing I am sure, and that is, it was the conduct of the young troops and the folly of very many of the senior officers that encouraged the Dutch Boers to declare their independence and subsequently to fight for it. The remainder of the 2nd of April the troops rested, and on the following day the General relieved Etchowe and I made the best of my way back to my Lambs fairly well pleased with my outing though if possible more anxious to get back to the front than ever.

CHAPTER III

DETAINED AT THE BASE

THE battles of Kambula and Ginginhlova had secured the safety of Natal. Troops were rapidly pouring in and were being as quickly as possible dispatched to the front. A very strong column was being formed under General Crealock to advance into Zululand from the coast and all hands looked forward to the culminating fight that, in the natural course of events, must take place near Ulundi, so that it was a moot point as to which column would first reach the goal and enjoy the big battle. It was about this time I received a letter from Colonel Glyn advising me to try and join him with as little delay as possible and it tried my patience sorely when I received orders to remain at the base and continue to act as shepherd to Lonsdale's Lambs. However there was no help for it and I had to conform to the admonitions of the Catechism "by doing my duty in that state of life in which it had pleased Providence or the Devil but mainly, I think, the Officer Commanding the Base of Operations to place me," though I fear the language I used very often in communing with myself, for I was never a grumbler, a thing I despise, is not to be found in a catechism or other goody-goody literature promulgated for the benefit and enlightenment of youthful niggers.

While in Durban, previous to the relief of Etchowe, it had been the custom for all officers not on duty to go down to the docks, so as to meet and welcome the reinforcing regiments when they landed, and I happened to be present on the landing of a portion of the crew of H.M.S. *Shah*, who were to serve with the Naval Brigade. The General, together with the fine old Commodore and the staff, were all there, and very many civilians had gathered for the same purpose, everyone standing at the town end of the wharf, so as to allow the landing party room to form up. The blue-jackets came ashore in boats, and as the landing-steps were narrow, only one boat-load could be disembarked at a time, the men on landing being formed into squads and moved forward so as to make room for those following.

Well, the first squad landed, formed, and, in charge of a huge petty officer, came tramp, tramp along the wharf to take up their position where they were to wait for the remainder of their ship-mates, and when they reached a point, just opposite the staff, the petty officer considering he had allowed sufficient room for the remainder of the landing party to form on, bellowed out "'Alt," but there was no halting in that squad as, perhaps owing to their novel surroundings or peradventure not knowing the meaning of the word, they continued their steady tramp, tramp, tramp. Again the petty officer bellowed "'Alt," with a volume and tone of voice sufficient to have arrested the flight of a runaway comet, but again no response from his contumacious or heedless men, who still continued to gain ground with their ceaseless

tramp, tramp, tramp. Thunder and turf, this was too much for the equanimity of that petty officer. Nelson may have disobeyed orders but *his* squad might not, so after one more ineffectual bellow of halt he rushed at the leading file and landing him a punch in the ribs that would have stove in a pulpit howled out, "Heave to, you ——" and the convoy promptly hove to.

The incident was so comical that all us lookers-on, including the General and staff, burst out laughing while the grand old Commodore turning to the General remarked, "My men may not be very conversant with military tactics but you will find them all right when the fighting begins." And true enough we did. Lonsdale had sent up plenty of officers all of them very good fellows and fine recruits for the Lost Legion, though unfortunately they were only recruits, knowing nothing about drill, or any other military work, so they were of but little use to me as I had the trouble of training them as well as inculcating the rudiments of drill and decorum into an unruly gang, composed chiefly of runaway sailors and unrighteous surf-boatmen. I was therefore glad when there arrived a real live adjutant, one who had served several years in a crack hussar regiment. He reported himself ready for duty one morning at daylight and accompanied me to the early drill parade, where he turned to and worked like a horse, yet, although he was very smart, both in his drilling and appearance, there was still something in his manner that led me to believe that early as it was in the day he had been kissing the baby (imbibing over-proof rum), nor as the morning passed could I

disabuse my mind that he was not rather more than half-seas over, still he did his duty well and relieved me of a lot of hard, tiresome work, so I was duly thankful. Lunch-time came and cool drinks were in demand; we had had a morning's real hard work under a blazing sun, and what with drilling, giving instructions and a powerful lot of denunciations my throat resembled a lime-kiln, and not doubting he must be also equally parched I said to him, "Have a drink, Captain So-and-So." Quin had at that moment brought me a glass, that at a pinch might have been used as a stable bucket, full of iced ginger-beer in which was concealed a liberal soupçon of gin (the very best drink I know of for a thirsty man who has been overtaking his voice in a very hot climate), that under the same circumstances would have tempted the Grand Worshipful Master of any band of red-nosed teetotallers to break his pledge, pawn his sash and go on the bust. I was therefore more than surprised when my new friend replied, "No, thank you, sir, I never touch liquor except when at meals." Here was a paragon and one to be treasured especially as at tiffin he only consumed a solitary glass of claret, and discoursed the while on the evils of imbibing numerous and mixed drinks, giving his hearers to understand that he was a staunch supporter of a moderation that he carried nearly to the extreme of total abstinence. All this was very nice; I was a most modest consumer of alcoholic beverages myself and, as the rest of the officers rather resembled the Sahara, I hoped the virtue of the new adjutant might be contagious and that they would all go into training so as to qualify

themselves as candidates for a Zulu Band of Hope. Yet, still, somehow, his abstemiousness was a trifle too ostentatious and certainly could not account for attacks of shakiness, very perceptible at the daylight parade; but then he had served in India, and everyone knows that dingai fever is prevalent in India, and perhaps such early rising did not suit his constitution. Yet as he was wont to retire to the privacy of his tent the very moment he could do so without the fear of being disturbed, I opined he ought to rise fresher in the morning than was the case. However, as he did his duty remarkably well and was always ready for hard work my suspicions died away and he became very popular right through the corps. So things went on smoothly till we shifted camp to Saccharine where for over sixty hours we could get no stimulants at all, so that perforce Lonsdale's Lambs, *nolens volens*, were quite sober for the space of some forty hours.

Now as our officers and non-coms. carried swords and, inasmuch as none of them, on joining, had the remotest idea of how to use them, I had made it a practice to give them an hour's instruction every evening, and on the second day of our enforced sobriety they had fallen in for their accustomed drill.

Coming on to the parade ground I missed the adjutant, so thinking that, indulging in a short siesta, he had not heard the bugle, I dispatched a non-com. with my compliments and a request that he should forthwith attend the drill. And by the Lord Harry he immediately complied with my command, for no sooner had the non-com.

entered the tent than he reappeared running like a scared cat, yelling, "Wille willoo, blue murder," and faith I for one could not blame him, for, in close pursuit, running with big leaps like Satan chivying a fancy religion minister, followed the adjutant who, drawn sabre in hand and clad in his native modesty, plus a cholera belt, devil a rag more, unless you count a tin helmet case, worn in lieu of a *chapeau*, and a pair of jack spurs buckled on to his bare shins, as clothing, gave tongue to the most blood-curdling threats and denunciations. The fugitive shot past me with the quite superfluous announcement, "'E's a-comin', sir, 'e's up the ruddy pole 'e is," and at once dodged round the nearest tent while his pursuer charging up to me halted and made a most formal salute, at the same time remarking, "It is hot enough to make a moulting devil sweat snow-balls." His statement might be true, but neither time nor place were suitable for a discussion on climatic heat, so I quietly ordered him to hand me his weapon. This, the habit of discipline still being strong, after a moment's hesitation, the poor fellow did, and I sent him back to his tent under the escort of two powerful officers where he rapidly lapsed into a state of dangerous dementia, which the surgeon-major declared to be D.T.'s, and on making strict investigation I found out that my abstemious adjutant was a hopeless secret dipsomaniac and had acquired his dose of the rats by being suddenly cut off from his regular tonic. Well, poor chap, he was invalided and I applied to Major W. F. Butler, C.B., at that time Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster-General at Durban, for another and as there

was a plethora of ex-military men in Natal, at the moment seeking employment, he kindly dispatched one to me the following day. In my application I had intimated that I should prefer one who was not a secret absorber of alcoholic beverages, and in the chit the orderly brought back the A.A.Q.M.G. informed me that although he knew but little about the officer he was sending, still he could guarantee that he did not ambuscade his liquorish propensities. So far so good and I retired under my mosquito netting at bedtime feeling at peace with the world.

Next morning, *sans* an adjutant, I was very busy indeed, so much so that it was near tiffin-time before I got back to the lines when I at once asked Quin, "Has the new adjutant arrived?" "Begorra he has, sor, and he's the only cool spot in camp this blistering day, sor," replied the worthy man with such a note of admiration in his tone that it quite puzzled me, so I continued, "Only cool spot in camp, what do you mean?" "Mane, sor, why sure, sor, whin he dismounted out of an impty truck he swaggers up to the tent, sor, an' sez he to me sez he, 'Me man,' sez he, 'is it the Commandant's man ye are?' 'I am,' sez I, 'at this moment;' for sure, sor, it's putting a stitch in your honour's pijammies I was; 'but there are toimes,' sez I, 'whin I'm drill-instructor, recruiting-sergeant, provost-marshal, squadron-leader and the divil only knows what else besides in this camp, glory be to God.' 'Ah,' sez he, 'it's plinty av work ye have to do in this camp,' sez he. 'You're right, sor,' sez I, 'but as I suspicion it's the new adjutant yer honour is, and as I'm doing duty, for the



GUARANTEED NOT TO AMBUSCADE LIQUORISH PROPENSITIES.



moment, as the Commandant's man, sure it's the head he'd knock off ov me if he knew I was discoursing yer honour widout askin' ye av it's a mouth ye've got on ye, for maybe it's a drink, or some breakfast, or a bath ye may be wantin' an' me cologuing here,' sez I. Wid that he laughs an' sez he, 'It's a bath an' a drink,' sez he, 'ye may give me an' I don't care a tinker's damn if the one's as dape as the ocean an' the other's as long as a priest's conscience,' sez he. So there he is, sor, in the bath-hut, yer honour, settin', as much av him as he can get in the tub, sor, wid a stove-pipe hat full of ice on his head, sor, an' he's giv' me strict orders, sor, to bring him an iced gin sling ivery fifteen minutes, sor, an' troth he's a punctual man, sor, for listen to the tares av him, an' av yer doubt him being a cool spot jest step into the hut, sor, an' judge for yerself. Oh, holy Saint Bridget, jest listen to him." There was no need to strain my ears, for the shout, "Hi, bring along that swizzle," boomed along the lines and made many a thirsty old shell-back jump, as if he had been bit on a tender spot by a Gally Nipper.

Inquisitive to see the man who could make himself at home 'in such a debonair manner I walked up to the bath-hut, a rough-built grass structure in which was the half of an old sugar puncheon that served the purpose of a bath, and rapped on the door with my sjambok. "Come in," roared a stentorian voice, and entering I discovered the tub to be full, of a portion, of a huge red-faced man, on whose head was set an old-fashioned high hat from which ran large drops of moisture resembling gigantic tears. In his dexter

hand he held a long sleever full of some cunningly-mixed drink, while his sinister claw gripped and gracefully waved a black cigar that was long enough and strong enough to make a jury dessle-boom for a buck wagon. "Good morning, Captain West" (which was not his name), quoth I, "I am very glad to see that you have arrived and that my man has made you comfortable. Is there anything else you would like before tiffin?" "No thanks, sir," the monster replied. "My wants are few, trivial, and easily satisfied, but if your man were to add another glassful of gin and double the allowance of Angostura Bitters to my next glass of swizzle it will improve it and I shall be quite ready to join you at tiffin." "Cool card," said I to myself, as I walked away to our mess tent, "and most certainly not a secret imbiber, but we shall soon see how he shapes." Presently he joined us at tiffin and consumed sufficient bottled ale as would have floated a jolly boat, and knowing the quantity of swizzle he had imbibed before, I marvelled greatly at his capacity to carry it without turning a hair; for I am certain that if the amount of moisture he had absorbed, with impunity, had been spilt in the centre of the Great Thirst Land it would have formed an oasis, and that by no means a small one. Troth he was a powerful drinker and mighty droughty, but his worst enemy could never have accused him of being a sly boozier. During lunch he discoursed on the West Indies, where he had seen several years' service in the Royal Artillery, and spoke highly of the climate, assuring us, that among the islands an active man might acquire a thirst that necessitated considerable ingenuity

to quench. He also quoted certain insular tipples, that required to be drunk on the spot to be thoroughly understood and appreciated, but which he promised to concoct, on the morrow, for our edification; in fact he waxed so eloquent that he would have afforded great amusement and instruction to a blue ribbon army in a state of mutiny. In person he was gigantic, being over six feet two inches in height, broad in proportion, and possessed a hold-all that would have done credit to a city alderman, so that it certainly required a considerable quantity of liquid to irrigate his frontiers. Yet at the same time he was a smart soldier, who knowing his work did it well and during the whole time he was with me I never saw him a least bit the worse for drink. Of course there were some very queer fish in the ranks, most of their prototypes I had met before, but one day there joined such an extraordinary new chum that I think I may be pardoned for describing him and his advent into the Lost Legion, as it was represented by Lonsdale's Horse. It happened this way. One morning I was returning from drill when I met the worthy Quin who accosted me, saying, "Plaise, sor, there's a man in yer tint who tells me he's come to stop." "Who is he?" said I. "An officer or a civilian?" "Sure, sor, 't 'ud puzzle Ould Nick to tell ye but he's dressed beautiful an' carries a sword that's a trate to look at, while the cheek of him's unbounded; maybe he's the Prince Impariel himself, sor."

I went to my tent where, reclining on my deck chair, was a young man of some two-and-twenty summers, who rose with some difficulty on my

approaching him, tendered me his hand and offered me a letter; at the same time expressing a fervid hope that it was near tiffin-time. Previous to opening the letter I took a good look at my visitor, and faith he was an object worthy of scrutiny. Let me commence with his wearing apparel, for indeed he was clad in raiment such as I had never seen before in a camp of Lost Legionaries. To begin with his hat was a veritable sombrero, beautifully embellished with a broad gold band and voluminous lines to say nothing about an immense pendent plume of white ostrich feathers that, curling half-way round his hat, fell gracefully over his shoulder. The *chapeau* was splendid but the remainder of his habiliments far surpassed it in grandeur, for his tunic was made of purple velveteen, brass-bound all over, white doeskin riding-breeches and tall jack-boots, such as are used by His Majesty's Horse Guards, to the heels of which were buckled huge Mexican gilt spurs. Troth he actually blazed in the brilliant sunshine and fairly rattled when he moved, for he had fastened on to his short, fat carcass every blessed patent contraption that an oily-tongued, outfitting tradesman could persuade a moneyed new-chum mug to purchase, as being absolutely indispensable to a young gent contemplating going to war, so that had it not been for a huge scimitar like the one Blue Beard flourishes in pantomime, and a brace of revolvers carried most ostentatiously, I might have mistaken him for a peripatetic Christmas tree on the trek. I opened the letter and glanced through it; it was from a pal on the staff and was laconic, simply informing me that

the bearer, Mr M'Cuckoo, had been sent out to the General with strong letters of introduction, requesting him to place the sucking hero in a rough irregular corps, so that he might obtain copy, as the said S.H. intended to take up literature as a profession, and it was thought that six months' service at the front, in a corps of Colonial Horse, would be highly beneficial to him, as he intended to write a book on the Colonies also. He had made himself an infernal nuisance at the base, so that the General, knowing Lonsdale's Horse to be composed of the very toughest material out of Hades, had directed the M'Cuckoo to be sent to garner copy in their ranks, and my correspondent led me to believe that, so long as the General never saw him again, no questions would be asked, even should he, the M'Cuckoo, meet with an untimely death, during the process of his garnering. I gazed at the poor young man with a feeling akin to pity for well I knew that like a youthful bear he had all his troubles before him, so I said to him compassionately, "See here, young man, have you not made an error? A trooper's life in an irregular force is by no means an easy one, and you will find very many of your comrades rough and prone to make it hot for men whose manners differ from their own. In fact I think you had better study Colonial human nature from a distance, you will find it more conducive to personal comfort and you can gather copy, whatever that may be, at your leisure." Now my advice was good and was kindly meant, but it is quite astonishing, when you come to think of it, how much good advice we have all tendered gratis during our peregrinations through

this world, and devil a bit of it has ever been acted on. It was so in this case, for the new chum waxed indignant and assured me he was quite competent to hold his own, and was capable of roughing it with anyone, as he had camped out for a week, during the previous summer, on the banks of the Thames.

Well it was no business of mine to argue with him, so sending for a Troop Sergeant-Major, I took him to the office tent where he was duly attested and handed over to the Troop Sergeant-Major, who in due course introduced him to perhaps the toughest tentful, and oh, Lord, that's saying something, of men in Lonsdale's Horse. Well the officers' tiffin bugle went and we were all busily employed rustling our 'curry and rice when in came the new chum. "Major Browne," quoth he, "I am surprised at your sending me to consort with such low, common fellows as there are in that tent. I should much prefer joining your mess and living with the officers." The poor devil had got so far in what might have been an eloquent harangue when he was unceremoniously waltzed out of the mess tent and relegated back to the company of the low, common fellows in his troop's lines. The following morning I was not in the least bit surprised, when weighing off prisoners, at having him brought before me charged with creating a disturbance in the camp. But oh, what a terrible change one short twenty-four hours' residence, in the tents of the ungodly, had effected in the person and habiliments of the whilom gay and festive new chum, for I could see with half an eye that my prognostications *re* the young bear and his troubles

had come to pass, and that *ursus juvenus* had decidedly come to grief while garnering copy in the fold of the Lambs. Faith he was a deplorable object, for his face looked as if he, or someone else, had been burnishing the inside of a camp kettle with it, and he had a pair of the blackest eyes I have ever seen in my life. Troth and maybe it was only right they should be in mourning, if they could but see the devastation that had befallen their owner's magnificent garments. For alas! the gorgeous sombrero had had its roof kicked out and minus gold band and penache hung loosely in the wretched defaulter's hand instead of being knowingly cocked on the side of his head, and if the state of the *chapeau* was deplorable what word could describe the pitiful condition of yesterday's resplendent purple, brass-bound coat, to say nothing about the immaculate white breeches and lustrous jack-boots, all of which looked as if they had been drawn through a duck puddle and a very dirty puddle at that. Well might the unfortunate seeker after copy have exclaimed, with Moses or the other old fossil, "*Sic transit gloria mundi*," for by the Lord Harry he had been changed from a splendid outfitter's model, that might well have been exhibited in the window of a West End emporium, into a scarecrow that would have failed to frighten the callowest of young rooks. "You are charged," said I, "with fighting and creating a disturbance in the camp. What have you to say?" "Please, sir," he replied, "I created no disturbance and did very little of the fighting. I only refused to peel potatoes, as I consider it is derogatory and menial to do so, and

when that man Hicks told me I was slushy's mate and ordered me to skin spuds I refused and called him a low fellow, requesting him at the same time to confine his remarks to his other low companions, whereupon he used disgusting and calumniatory language and went so far as to insult me by throwing a potato at me which hit me in the eye, so I threatened to horsewhip him and he assaulted me most brutally, then the Sergeant-Major came up and I was put in the guard tent and I wish to lodge a complaint against all the men in the tent, their conduct having been most ungentlemanly." I was not surprised at his last remark but turned to his antagonist, also in durance vile under the same charge, and demanded his excuses. He was a diminutive Cockney sailor but, small as he was in stature, his hide covered a sufficiency of brazen blackguardism to have superabundantly rationed a giant, and as at one time he had been, at least as I was creditably informed and could well believe, the terror of Tiger Bay and Ratcliffe Highway, he was without doubt a tough enough nut even for Satan's back teeth to crack. Well, I looked at the *multum in parvo* of villainy and could scarcely forbear laughing at the comical expression the little scoundrel wore on his scarred and weather-beaten but otherwise droll phiz, as he answered me: "Vell, your vorship, the last gent as spoke 'as perwerted the truth for yesterday 'e comes hinto the tent where hi being horderly, was a-peeling taters and says hi to 'im, 'My lord dook, if you'll be so kind as to divest yerself of them gadgits, and yer Sunday-go-to-meeting clobber and 'elp me to skin these 'ere spuds ye'll do more

good nor yo've hever done afore;' hand vith that 'e starts in hand says 'e, 'Yer howdacious, low-born skut, hif yer dares to hagain haddress yer disgusting hobervations to me hi'll kick yer blooming hinnerds hout,' whereupon hi sez to him, 'My Lord Marquis, go heasy,' but 'e hups hand 'eaves the blessed taters at me and haggerawates me by plunging 'is 'ead hinto the blooming bucket han' kicks up such 'ell that the Sergeant comes along hand runs us into the ruddy clink. 'E's dangerous 'e his, yer vorship, hand I'm feared of 'im, hi ham," and I believe the little beast winked but whether from cheek or nervousness who could say. However as he had visited the orderly room tent before I gave him seven days C.B. while the M'Cuckoo I admonished, sending for him later on, to my tent, when I gave him some more good advice and offered to give him his discharge. This however he refused to take, and I admired his pluck, as he asserted he had joined in pursuit of copy, and copy he would have, and if copy meant black eyes, faith he captured copy for he was never without one, more often a brace of darkened optics, during the whole time he was in Lonsdale's Horse.

About this time Lonsdale came up, himself, from Cape Town, bringing with him some sixty men and forty horses, so I fondly hoped I should now be allowed to proceed to the front; but alas! no such luck, as his accounts were in a state of inextricable confusion and his presence was needed at the base so as to try and disentangle them. I was therefore ordered to remain in charge of his Lambs until such time as he could straighten up matters and act as his own shepherd; truly my

luck was in decadence. A week or two passed and I received some more cases of equipment, but ye gods! what trash it was; shoddy is not the word to use when describing it, for the tunics fell to pieces as the men tried them on, and as for the riding-breeches, they split across the knees and seat when the men tried to mount. If the clothing was bad, and it was damned bad, the saddlery was worse. You could not have hung a cat with the head-stalls or reins, they were so rotten, and I took one of the saddles and tore it in half, through gullet-plate and cantle, with my hands; snapping the stirrup leathers afterwards in the same manner. Nevertheless I managed to get another troop equipped and dispatched to the front and was then left with some hundred and twenty tattered demalions, in rags of brand-new uniforms, without a horse for them to ride on, or a rifle for them to use. The men themselves were disgusted, many of them having come out from England, at their own expense, for the purpose of seeing some fighting, and here they were stuck, a few miles out of Durban, without a hope of smelling powder. One day the Acting Adjutant-General came out and inspected our camp together with the rotten equipment. He informed me there was no chance of receiving other stores from imperial sources, nor could he hold out any hopes for a further supply of horses and under these circumstances he asked me what I should suggest doing with the men, whereupon I recommended their immediate disbandment as it was utterly useless keeping them, where they were, doing nothing. I was somewhat prompted by my own desires in giving this advice and maybe,

I was a little bit selfish in doing so, but the truth is I was heartily sick of Lonsdale's Horse and simply hungered to get back to the front, which I knew I should not be able to do so long as that gang of irresponsibles remained as a menace to the peaceful inhabitants of Durban.

CHAPTER IV

FLOORED BY A MULE

Two days after the Assistant Adjutant-General's visit I received orders to march the unemployed Lambs back to Durban, where they were to be embarked on board the hired transport *Ontario*, on which they were to be paid off, taken down to Cape Town and disbanded; the A.A.G. not wanting Durban to be overrun by such a mob of undesirables. So far so good, but you can fancy my disgust when I found out I was under orders to shepherd them down to the Cape; for the A.A.G. informed me, that as he was sending an imperial paymaster with his pay-chest, down in the ship, for the purpose of settling up with them, he did not think it safe for either of these to journey, in such company, without my being there to protect them; so that he must request my compliance with the order. Moreover he had another reason for sending me to Cape Town which he explained to me as follows. A vast number of mules had been purchased, in both North and South America, for transport purposes and these playful, domestic animals were being sent over from the land of their birth to Cape Town in sailing-ships, from which, on their arrival at the Cape, they were transferred to steam-ships and sent on to Natal. Well it seems there had been an awful mortality among these quadrupeds *en route* from Cape Town to

Durban, some ships losing over twenty per cent. of their cargo; so that the General, knowing I had had considerable experience with the long-eared stock, and, maybe, imagining, that because I could manage human roughs, I should also be able to manage animal ones, desired me to go down the coast in the *Ontario*, which was fitted up for the purpose of carrying live stock, so as to get rid of one batch of kicking bipeds and bring up another of kicking quadrupeds; he evidently considering the latter cargo to be the most valuable, as he exhorted me to take great care of the mules, and to see none of them died or had to be thrown overboard, but he expressed no anxiety whatever about the men, and evidently cared not one jot if they were all thrown overboard, so long as he, individually, never saw them again. Lonsdale's Horse was by no means popular, at that epoch, among the imperial authorities but he essayed to hearten me up by informing me the ship would proceed straight to Cape Town and back again, not calling in at any of the intermediary ports, and that on my return he would facilitate my efforts to rejoin Colonel Glyn. He also assured me that my late services were fully appreciated, although they had been rendered far from the fighting line, in fact, being an Irishman, he had a fellow-feeling for a poor countryman in distress; for was not he himself jammed at the base? and he blue mouldy for want of a bating or other warlike divarsion; so with only a grumble, to myself, I took my Lambs to Cape Town and got rid of them. On reporting myself to the O.C., Cape Town, whom I found to be a fussy old woman, he or she informed me that

the cargo of mules were ready for embarkation, that they were to be shipped by contract and that I had nothing to do with them, until such time as the vessel would be loaded and ready to go to sea. To these arrangements I demurred, stating that, in my humble opinion, the great mortality among the mules had been caused by faulty loading and I expressed a wish to be present and superintend the embarkation of the long-eared animals myself. Faith if I had asked him for a subscription of a tenner, for the purpose of furnishing little niggers with flannel petticoats and moral pocket-handkerchiefs, he could not have been more perturbed. The silly old image simply bubbled like an infuriated turkey-cock, demanding if I thought he and his officers did not know their work (I would willingly have wagered good money that the only animals of the asinine species they had ever handled was when they shaved themselves) and finished up by ordering me not to go on board the ship until she was ready to start, nor to interfere with the embarkation in any way.

Truly England need not have sent so far afield for mules, she had very many of her own breeding, that no great trouble would have discovered, however orders are orders so I went nowhere near the docks for three days, but on the evening of the third I received a written order, directing me to report myself on board the ship at 2 p.m. on the following day, so as to take over military charge of ship and mules. This I did, accompanied by two naval officers, who were going round to Simon's Bay in the *Ontario*, and by the blessed piper who played before Moses, the state of that ship would

have shocked an atheistical anarchist. She lay alongside the western end of the inner dock, and her decks together with the wharf were crowded with a mob of drunken coloured men and women among whom, here and there, appeared the red coat of a soldier. With great difficulty, and then only by the free use of my own and Quin's riding-whips, were our party able to reach the ship's bridge, and there I found the O.C. Cape Town in a state of nervous excitement that was simply pitiable. It seems that I was to take up with me two hundred Cape bastards, who were to look after the mules *en route*, and to act as drivers when we reached Natal, and in their contract of enlistment it was stipulated that they should receive one month's pay in advance, so that they could hand it over to their families previous to the ship's sailing.

Now as these people could give no guarantee that they would keep their part of the contract, provided they had been paid on shore, the O.C. had decided that they should be paid on board, hand over their money to their women folk and then go to sea. This was a lovely theory, one well worthy of a Staff College man, but when it came to be tested, like many other theories emanating from the same source, it was mighty nigh impracticable; for as each Cape boy had brought with him a dozen or more relatives and friends to see him off, the family parties together with the drivers themselves had succeeded in getting beastly drunk on vile Cape smoke, and had gathered round them all the low and criminal, coloured riff-raff of Cape Town. Again no one knew who, among this unruly and drunken mob, were the real drivers and who

were not, also there were hundreds of coloured scoundrels present who would gladly have drawn a month's pay and then given us leg bail and indeed most of the drivers would, did they but get the chance, play us the same trick. True we had on board some thirty soldiers, but they were men belonging to different regiments, and most of them defaulters who had been left behind in Cape Town jail and who were now being sent up to join their respective corps. These men, having obtained Cape smoke from the boys, were now not only very drunk but inclined to be mutinous so that they were quite useless and the O.C., notwithstanding the fact that he was a great authority on pigeon rearing, was at his wits' end to know how he was to pay the drivers and get the ship away. On our mounting the bridge he was walking up and down, metaphorically wringing his hands, blaming everyone with senile wrath and on my saluting said querulously, "Why have you not reported before, sir? You should have been here hours ago; see what a confusion your dereliction of duty has caused." I had no intention of being jumped upon by a man who ought to have been retired from the Service as useless years ago, so I whipped out his own written orders, and as a quartermaster at that moment struck four bells (2 p.m.) he could blame me no further on that tack, so he attempted to shuffle out of his responsibility by ordering me to see the Cape boys paid, and then to take myself and ship to sea, or to the devil, or anywhere else I had a mind to go to, so long as I rid him of my presence. This was not complimentary but I did not care a tinker's curse for his wrath, so I plainly

told him, it was no duty of mine to pay the drivers, but if he would send me a party of twenty-five artillerymen, from the castle, to clear the ship and keep order, I would be responsible for the payment of the darkies and go to sea but insisted that I would inspect the mules previous to doing so. He raved at what he called my d——d colonial impertinence but I stood to my guns and refused to go to sea until I had thoroughly inspected the stalling of my cargo, as there was a heavy sou'easter blowing and I knew that a ship, loaded with live stock, would roll awfully in the heavy sea that must be running outside the bay.

Seeing that I was determined, he at last gave way and said in a grumpy manner, "Very well, your orders are to proceed to sea the moment the drivers are paid; you have nothing to do with the stowage of the mules, that has been done by contract. I shall go to the castle to have my lunch and will send you the party of artillerymen you so needlessly require, and I shall report your conduct to the General." And with this parting shot the old fellow took himself off. By the skipper's advice the ship was hauled into the dock entrance where she lay moored, so that no one could either board her or leave her without using the single gang plank that communicated with the dock wall, then the artillerymen being in sight, the paymaster brought forth his chest and the fun began. The first lot to start the tambourine a-rolling and give us trouble were the Tommies, some twenty of whom being by now mad drunk were decidedly dangerous, so much so that one of them made a most unprovoked attack on a commander in the

R.N. who, dressed in full uniform (he had just come from Government House), was speaking to me. Over into the scuppers rolled the representative of the senior service, where for a minute he lay, brass-bound cocked hat, epaulettes, sword and all, muttering in his amazed astonishment, "Floored, by gad, by a drunken swaddy." The half-mad brute was making another rush at his victim when I landed him a straight right-handed drive under the ear which knocked him down an open hatchway. Then ructions started, his maddened comrades rushed at us four officers but they had no chance. Quin and the ship's officers sprang to our assistance as did the sergeant and the sober men of the party, while the paymaster and his clerks, thinking the stramash to be a prearranged attempt to rush the pay-chest, drew their revolvers and sat down on the top of it. Forcing their way through the mob, up rushed the stalwart gunners, and in less time than it takes a cat to comb its whiskers the mutineers were knocked down, then picked up, and so as to assist them in keeping their equilibrium they were humanly lashed along the weather rail, so that the south-easter could sober them up nicely, which in a few hours it did. Then came the job of paying the Cape boys. Driving all the mob aft, I ordered all the boys who had signed on to file along the port alley way, on to the fore deck, which one hundred and forty of them did, and as each boy was paid, he was allowed a minute or two to hand his cash to his friends and then he was politely requested to step down the fore-hatch, and while doing so he was relieved of any unnecessary cargo he might be carrying in the way of Cape

smoke. Some of them resisted and these were promptly lashed along the lee-rail so that the ship should be evenly trimmed; for all things should be properly attended to on board a ship about to sail.

It was by now sunset and after I had had the ship cleared of all the coloured rabble I had a much-needed drink. I had previously dispatched Quin, and a corporal of the 17th Lancers, who chanced to be on board, down below by way of acting as scouts and they, on their return, reported that in the cellar (as Quin termed the lower deck) were nearly one hundred loose mules who, *sans* head-stall or rheim, roamed about playing up hell and kicking one another to death; "and, sor," finished up Quin, "it's more than a man's life is worth to go among thim." So much for contract stowage. I was disgusted but in no ways surprised for I was by this time acclimatized to the incompetence of the majority of the young officers sent out from England for special service, and I cussed the silly old woman who had refused to allow me to superintend the embarkation of the mules.

However it was no use cussing, the mules must be head-stalled, rheimed and put into their stalls, if we wanted to save a single one of them alive. It was blowing half a gale of wind and the job must be done at once, so stripping off my uniform and donning an old pair of overalls down I went accompanied by Quin, the corporal of the 17th Lancers, two members of the crew and some half-dozen of the least drunken drivers. I also took the precaution to request the paymaster and the two naval officers to come with me, so as to be able to substantiate my report, in case I should

get into hot water for refusing to put to sea until my cargo was properly stowed, and then down we dived into the bowels of the big Dominion, four-decked, liner.

A Kentucky mule may be safely backed to kick the eye out of a mosquito, just as a pastime, but when he feels thoroughly aggravated and really means conscientiously to do his darndest his saltatorial powers are quite beyond human ken, for although he is only supplied by Nature with a brace of hind legs, yet these are so marvellously gifted that they are able to kick you in fifty different places at one and the same moment, while his muscular development is such, that even one kick, which may be likened to a stroke of lightning, will in all probability cause a family bereavement. Bad scan to them, I hate them, and have just cause so to do, as I will tell you.

The *Ontario* was a four-decked ship and when we reached the orlop deck, and, by the dim light of a few ship's lanterns, gazed down into the murky depths of the lower hold, we saw a sight that might well make the bravest of the brave give pause, for few men have the ambition to be kicked to death by a mob of ungodly and unsympathetic mules and there in that wet, dark, lower deck were nearly one hundred of the beasts, who without a vestige of halter, head-stall or rheim were cruising about, and so as to keep their hands, or perhaps I should say feet, in practice, were trying to kick one another to bits.

Troth, the thuds of the rib roasters, that were being served out, did not sound alluring, while their shrill squeals seemed to ejaculate—"Tommy,

Tommy, come and be kicked." There is no earthly use in looking at a distasteful job; buckle to and do it, has always been my motto, so down I went closely followed by Quin and the corporal, as well as by the two sailors, as soon as they had thrown down the Cape darkies, who were more than half inclined to funk it and hang back, but encouraged and assisted by the shell-backs down they came, some of them even faster than they intended. Ye gods! the job was no fancy one, scores of the beasts were down on the wet, slippery deck, though even, as they lay prone there, they still lashed out with an ardour that would have been highly commended had it not been so deucedly unpleasant. Well we tackled to and defending our legs with hand-spikes, managed with much trouble to get them, with the exception of four who were already dead, rheimed and into their stalls. We had then to tackle those still on their feet, many of whom as they rushed about kicking and squealing fell on the deck, or colliding with the bulkheads, stanchions, and one another, knocked chunks off themselves and notwithstanding all our care, occasionally, succeeded in dealing one of us a shrewd kick. Well this phantasmagoria (troth, I'm not sure if that's the right word to use but it wants a long, hard one to depict the devil's dance we had that night with those mules, in the dimly-lighted, olfactory hold) had lasted till past midnight and we had got them all rheimed and safely into their stalls with the exception of four, who lying as they did, in a corner, were hard to come at, especially as they were very busy with their heels. Quin, the corporal and myself were gingerly attempting to noose one of

them, when a Cape canary, holding a light, stumbled and fell among the struggling brutes, where, by all the rules of the game, he should at once have had the gruel, medical men call brains, kicked out. Now a drunken Cape boy, more or less, counts nothing, and had I paused to consider that fact, in political economy, I might have sat tight and not made an ass of myself, but you see for a few hours we had been working together and, in accordance with the Lost Legionary law, were at least, for the time being, mates, so like an impulsive fool I immediately jumped into the turmoil. Seizing the half-drunk bounder by the scruff of the neck and the seat of his pants I threw him, quite unhurt, clear out of the danger but in doing so my feet slipped on the wet, slippery deck, and down I fell, flat on my back, among the half-mad, wholly vicious mules, who at once proceeded to do their best to kick me to flinders. Fortunately I kept my head, and by doing so saved it, for I instantaneously jammed it between the thighs of one of the recumbent brutes, at the same time holding out my arms, which Quin and the corporal seizing, drew me out by, on to the clear deck, where I lay and used improper language. Of course I knew, in a moment, I was badly hurt, but as I was not sure where, I dispatched the corporal up on deck to report the occurrence to the senior naval officer, with the request that he would send round to the mail-boats and borrow a medico, as there was not one on board our hooker and in the meantime, as the mules had struggled a bit clear, I set the rest of the party at work to finish the job. This they had just completed when two doctors

arrived. These gentlemen had been holding a symposium on board the nearest mail-boat, and although their back teeth were nearly a-wash, as a consequence of pouring down libations in honour of sweethearts and wives, as all good sailors and soldiers should, on a Saturday night, so soon as the week's work is over and done with, not before, mind you, still on hearing a man had been hurt hurried to his assistance. A stretcher was soon rigged, on to which I was carefully lifted, quickly hoisted up to the open air and deposited in the skipper's deck cabin where it was quickly discovered that my right leg was broken in two places, my right knee-cap fractured and three ribs caved in, besides which there was hardly a spot on my *corpus* that did not bear witness to the wonderful dexterity with which an evilly-disposed mule can handle his feet. May the cuss of Cromell rest on the long-eared bastes, and I include in my toast their relations, viz., silly old O.C.'s, fraudulent contractors and drunken Cape canaries, for surely these are anathema. Well the two festive sawbones did their level best for me, but alas, although their spiritual intentions were good, still the spirits they had imbibed prevented anything like successful surgery, for when, next day, we anchored in Simon's Bay, my dear old friend, Fleet Surgeon O'Malley, coming on board to see me, was simply horrified, and declared that all the bandages and splints, with which I had been bound, might just as well have been made fast round the ship's funnel as round my body and limbs in the way they were.

No sooner were the mail-boat doctors ashore, than we put out to sea and my word we caught it,

the gale having increased so that the light ship, loaded with live stock, plunged heavily and rolled dangerously. My word, I smelt Hades with the chill off, for when I had been carried into the skipper's deck cabin, to which the kind-hearted sailor had insisted on my being taken (he met a seaman's death, a few years afterwards, going down in his ship the S.S. *Barossa*), I had been placed on a velvet-covered settee that ran athwart ship, so that when she rolled I slid along it from port to starboard or vice versa, sometimes standing nearly upright and sometimes on my head while it took Quin and the corporal, the latter being a bad sailor, all they could do to hold me on to the settee. However the longest night must have an ending and although I suffered agonies, still I was a tough bird in those days, and had had to bear pain many a time before, so I made the best of a bad job; for what can't be cured should be endured without howling and I had learned that maxim previously in the New Zealand bush.

We dropped anchor in the South African naval port at 9 a.m. and O'Malley lashed up my broken bones and had a proper cot swung for me so that when we went to sea again, which we did the same afternoon, I suffered less pain of body but was awfully cut-up, as I knew full well that there was no chance now of my getting to the front and being in at the death; faith it was cruel hard luck.

We reached Durban in due course of time and, notwithstanding a rough passage, we did not lose a single mule more *en route*, nor did we lose one during the time we were disembarking them, while nearly all, if not all of the other ships, lost a very

heavy percentage of their animals; and I assert the loss of these most expensive and much-required transport animals was wholly due to the dishonesty of the contractors and the ignorance together with the culpable negligence of the officers told off to superintend the work.

I have spun a true yarn about my trip in the *Ontario*, and had I gone to sea when fussily ordered to do so with ninety-eight mules in the lower hold, all loose, every one of them would have been shark's meat by morning. I disobeyed my orders and by doing so, not only saved the country some thousands of pounds in cash but also landed the animals alive and fit to do the work, for which they had been purchased in America, and which they could not have done had they been thrown overboard.

True I had got broken up in saving the mules, but then the mules would not have required to be saved, had they been stalled when put on board in the proper manner, so it was not my fault, who had been sent down, much against my own will, to carry out an unpleasant piece of necessary work, and I considered that it was my duty to carry out the task at the risk of my life and limb, just as if I had been ordered to undertake work of a more congenial nature in the field. Some of you, my unsophisticated readers, may imagine I received kudos for the way I carried out my orders, thereby landing a full complement of mules; also a few of you may think I obtained compensation for the severe injuries I had received in the performance of my duty but you would be wrong, for I never received one word of thanks, nor one penny

in the way of gratuity, although it is quite true I never asked for either.

John Bull, Esq., is a paradox, those of us who have served the Empire, in the Lost Legion, know it, alas! too well. A frontier war breaks out and owing to a disaster (probably caused in the first place by the authorities' parsimony and lack of foresight, such as Isandlwana) takes place; in a moment John opens his cash-box and pours out millions of pounds sterling, many of which falls into the clutches of dishonest contractors and others who, never risking their hides in action, batten like foul carrion crows at their country's expense. The climax is over, the danger past, and John Bull, no longer in a stew, buttons up his pocket and behaves in a manner that would disgrace an American-born Jew educated in Aberdeen. He is not man enough, or it is not convenient, or it would not suit the party in power to raise a scandal by bringing the big vultures to book, making them toe the line and disgorge their ill-gotten hoards, so he deliberately breaks the promises his representatives have made and robs the men, where practicable, who have risked life, limb and health in fighting his battles. What I have written above is severe, possibly bad policy, but it is the bald-headed truth and I will give you one personal experience of John Bull's roguery.

In an interview I had with Lord Chelmsford at Rourke's Drift, Colonel Glyn being present, I mentioned the fact that the majority of my officers and non-coms., being poor men, would suffer severely through losing all they possessed at Isandlwana. Whereupon his Lordship assured

me, that the officers and white non-commissioned officers of the 3rd Natal Native Contingent would be amply compensated for their losses. Some short time afterwards, by Colonel Glyn's orders, myself together with the remainder of the officers and non-commissioned officers of the 3rd Natal Native Contingent made out our claims for compensation and handed them in; my own being for seventy-five pounds, little enough to ask for considering I had lost two horses, for one of which, being salted, I had paid fifty pounds. A board of which Major Dunbar of the second 24th was, if I remember rightly, president inquired into these claims and I know that as far as my own was concerned it was approved and passed. Isandlwana happened in January 1879, my claim was approved in February of the same year, since which date thirty-three years have passed and up to the present moment, although during the years 1880 and 1881 I made numerous applications to the War Office for this sum and other amounts of money due to me, and although they never disputed the debt, I have never received one penny. Five times since that date, throwing up lucrative employment and suffering heavy monetary losses, I have at a moment's notice gone to the front when my services have been asked for by the Empire's representative, and old and crippled as fever and wounds have rendered me, I am still game to risk filling a trench should an invader's bullet find its billet in my worn-out carcase.

Now I maintain that if the labourer is worthy of his hire and compensation, when injured, working for his employer, surely the man who is hurt

or loses his health or property while being on active service, is entitled to the same consideration, from the Government he has fought for, and if this be the case, surely while John Bull was casting away millions in extravagance and useless expenditure, he might have paid the few pounds he in honour owed to the poor devils who had faced the music. John Bull however is not constituted on those lines; he had thrown away the millions while in a state of funk, the danger was now over, the men having done their work were no longer necessary, therefore let them slide and if possibly he can rob them of a few shillings, why so much the better, he can flatter his soul by calling his meanness, Retrenchment.

CHAPTER V

A LIFE THROWN AWAY

WELL now I have lodged my protest and had an old war-dog's grumble against the rotten, mean imbecility of John Bull and his red-tape brigade, let me trek on although as I left myself on board the *Ontario* with a skinful of broken bones I was in no condition to be inspanned and had to remain several weeks on board before I could land, when as I was informed there was no accommodation for me in the military hospital I had myself conveyed to Pine Town where I regained convalescence at my own expense. Truly John Bull is a generous master to serve. Whilst sojourning at Pine Town I was waited upon by one of the men who had served with me in the 3rd Natal Native Contingent as a non-com. and also previously in Pulleine's Rangers, the reason for his call being to obtain a certificate for his three years' service. In the course of conversation, he informed me that after my departure from Rourke's Drift he and some of my other men had joined Bettington's Horse and that he, individually, had been one of the party which had accompanied the ill-fated Prince Imperial on his last ride.

Now I had met the Prince on his way up country and like everyone else, who had had the same honour and pleasure, had been greatly impressed by the gallant youngster's debonair manners and charming vivacity so like every other officer

and man, in the country, deeply deplored his untimely death. Knowing my visitor to be a cool hand under fire, albeit by no means a smart soldier, I asked him to give me his version of the lamentable episode and these are the inferences I drew from his yarn. On the morning of the 1st of June, a small party of Bettington's Horse, together with a few of the Native Contingent, were detailed to accompany Lieutenant Carey, 98th Regiment, who was employed as Deputy Assistant Quarter-master-General, to examine the road along which the column was to advance from Itelezi Camp and of which Lieutenant Carey was to make a sketch. The escort paraded, and just as they were moving off, they were joined by the young Prince, who was attached to the general staff and very keen to see all that he could of the war. The small party rode out along the track for a distance of about five miles until they were some two miles from the Inshallami Mountains and nigh to the Edutu kraal, the ground they had ridden over being open country consisting of low undulating hills interspersed with occasional dongas. It was a country a mounted party, engaged in scouting, should have kept all their wits on deck while crossing, doing their work as quickly as possible and getting away as rapidly as they could; for a scout, with any knowledge of the game, would be well aware that his patrol must have been spotted on the numerous sky-lines by the enemy, and that if such an enemy were like the Zulus, mobile and enterprising, the betting was ten to one they would try to cut him off.

However the ordinary British officer was as ignorant, in those days, of scouting as a chimpanzee

is of skating, so that the observations having been made, the small party actually halted at the edge of a large patch of mealies and incredible as it may seem, off-saddled. This was a direct insult to the goddess of Chance and Nemesis was quickly dispatched to avenge such an outrage on common sense. My informant stated that neither himself nor his companions felt comfortable but of course said nothing although the natives who were with them grew very restless and somewhat excited. At last the order was given to saddle up, and they had started to do so, when someone shouted out "There are Zulus among the mealies," and two shots rang out; immediately there was a confused bustle, each man striving to complete the necessary girth buckling, etc., and before they had time to mount, a ragged volley, of from ten to twenty musket shots, was fired at them. The narrator went on to say that no further order was given, or at least he heard none, but saw Lieutenant Carey and two of his own comrades riding away at a gallop and at once did his best to mount and get clear. His horse, however, always a restive brute to mount and perhaps scared by the firing, tried to bolt but he managed to throw himself across the saddle, lying on his chest, and his horse following the others, he was carried out of immediate danger in that manner. He stated that, while hanging on in this way, he passed the Prince who seemed to be running by his horse's side, holding on to the holster, and evidently trying to vault into his saddle, which, as it was subsequently ascertained, he failed to do, owing to the holster tearing away in his grasp, as it was discovered to be constructed of brown paper, and

so the death of the Prince Imperial may be partly attributed to the roguery of a dishonest tradesman.

At a short distance from where the party had off-saddled, was a shallow donga, and my informant's horse had carried him some little way past this place, before he could struggle into the saddle, and when he had done so he reined in and looking back saw the Prince, on foot, running up the donga, closely pursued by a lot of Zulus; and that was the last glimpse any white man saw of the Prince Imperial alive.

The fugitives continued their headlong flight towards the camp until they met Colonels Wood and Buller; patrols were sent out and the remains of the unfortunate Prince were carried reverently back to the Itelezi Camp, on a stretcher made out of lance shafts, the most becoming bier for a soldier, and then sent via Durban to England. Of course there have been plenty of yarns spun as to the actual killing, but I think that, most probably, the gallant youngster, finding escape impossible, faced his enemies, did his level best, and fell with his wounds in front, a sacrifice to ignorance. In the first place, why did his party off-saddle at all, five miles in advance of the camp, where every lynx-eyed Zulu was sure to be on the look-out for scouts and patrols? Again if it was necessary for them to do so, owing to their horses being knocked up, the only possible excuse for their off-saddling, and in this case not a legitimate one, as proved by the rapidity with which they bolted, why in the name of all that's holy should they have selected the edge of a mealie field for their halting-place? There was plenty of open ground close by, and anyone with

the gumption of a gowk, although he might not have had any previous war experience and have even passed through the Staff College, would have selected a spot to halt on from which he could see an approaching enemy. It must surely have been self-evident to them all that their small party must have been spotted and be under the observation of numerous hostile natives. Moreover, why did they not all, when they had crossed the donga in safety, rein up and try to make a stand? There were five mounted men who had their rifles, and I have not the slightest doubt but that they might have given an exceedingly good account of themselves. Retreat, at the worst, was always open and five mounted men, in fairly open country, can do a lot provided they keep their heads. Again the Zulus are vile shots, so I think the betting would have been in favour of the Prince getting away, had a stand been made and a strong front shown. I therefore think I am quite right when I state that the Prince was a victim to the ignorance of one of the fundamental rules of scouting. Thank God it is very rare indeed in the British service for a stand not to be made when there is any prospect of success, though I fear my remarks on scouting, in case of another war with savages, will still be found to be in evidence.

After four months' sojourn in Pine Town my leg was well enough for me to travel, so, not caring to remain in Natal for the summer, I determined to proceed to Cape Town and decide there on my future movements. The Zulu War was over,

Cetewayo was a prisoner, all the irregular forces had been disbanded, Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had assumed the command in place of Lord Chelmsford, knew not Joseph and anyhow I was far too lame to take a hand in the storming of Seccokonie's Mountain; in fact, two medical men whom I consulted, expressed grave doubts as to whether I should ever recover the proper use of my right knee, which had been twice damaged before—once playing football, and once by a revolver bullet; and they assured me that, even should I again be able to use it, I should suffer great inconvenience and much pain from it to the day of my departure to that bourne set apart for sailors, fiddlers and Lost Legionaries. Troth and their surmises were correct, for, although it has helped to carry me many thousands of miles since then and perhaps, thanks to my having been tomahawked in the left knee, I have never noticeably limped, still at the present moment, as I sit here writing, it is giving me unsophisticated gip, and I shall presently lay down my hated pen and solemnly cuss those mules and their progenitors, they, by the inexorable laws of Nature, having no descendants, back to the time of Adam. Blankety, blankety, blank, Amen.

Having made a few remarks anent these mules and rubbed my poor old knee let me resume my pen and continue my yarn. Taking ship from Durban I reached Cape Town where I lived quietly for some months, this being the first repose I had known since childhood. I had married, as most Lost Legionaries do, when laid on the shelf, and my wretched knee prevented me from joining in any sport, except boat-sailing, even misbehaving so badly

as to break again, of its own accord, the first time I essayed to play cricket; so that it was long over a year before I could trust it at all, and then I suspicioned it as untrustworthy for years afterwards.

Well the Basuto War broke out, and although I took a hand in it, and it was in Timbuland that I lost my faithful friend and servant Quin, still I am not going to write about it in this book but so as to complete this chapter I shall spin you a yarn of how, owing to that war, an astute though I can't call him a respectable Englishman, got to windward and made a rise out of some unsophisticated Dutchmen. Well it was this way. The war broke out and, being purely a Colonial one, the Cape burghers were called out. This they hated, for although an up-country Boer is a brave man, the Dutch in Cape Town and its surrounding districts are perhaps the rottenest cowards on earth; so consequently many of those, called out for service, offered large sums of money for substitutes to risk their skins in their places. Well one day a man called at my house and requested me to furnish him with a character, as he had served for a considerable time under me, in Pulleine's Rangers and Lonsdale's Horse, in the latter of which I was in no ways responsible for his enlistment and from which corps he had been discharged with ignominy. Now in both of these regiments there had been very many unadulterated blackguards but if I had been called upon, on oath, to assign the cake to the biggest scoundrel in the combined outfits, I should unhesitatingly have called out Trooper William Jones and he would have stepped out of the ranks with a smile and gleefully owned up to

the soft impeachment. Well he asked me for a written character and claimed one as his indubitable right. This I allowed but said, "See here, Jones, you are entitled to a character, if you demand one, but the only one I can give you would cause the gate-keeper of Gehenna to refuse you admittance. Do you still want it?" "I do, sir," he replied, "although there is nothing you can say against me bad enough to describe me. I know I am a hard case," and then he added with a grin, "and quite unrepentant." I therefore took a piece of official paper and wrote a character, such as would have made Satan himself pause before engaging its bearer as a scavenger or cinder-sifter in Hades, signed it and handed over the document for his perusal. He read it, smiled, thanked me and withdrew. Some three weeks afterwards I was on board the English mail-boat, seeing a friend off, when just previous to the boat's departure, who should swagger up to me, dressed in gorgeous, hand-me-down apparel, but W. Jones, Esq. His greetings were polite and effusive, although he had not the temerity to offer me his hand but made many kind inquiries about my health and the progress my leg was making towards convalescence and wound up by saying, "I can't leave South Africa, Major, without again thanking you for your kindness, in furnishing me with that character which has proved itself to be an Aladdin's lamp. May I ask you to step into the saloon and crack a bottle of champagne with me?" I declined the proffered refreshment but as he had aroused my curiosity *re* the benefits he seemed to have acquired through being the possessor of a written

character which would have made Old Nick squirm to have in his possession, I asked for an explanation, which without the least demur he at once gave me as follows. "Well you see, Major, I worked the oracle this way. You know, sir, that the cowardly Dutch burghers, round about the Paarl and Stellenbosch, are giving big bounties for substitutes, so that directly I got the written character from you, I went to those parts and soon heard of a rich farmer who wanted a substitute for his son. I went to him, he offered three hundred pounds cash, horse and outfit. I closed. He took me to the veldt-cornet who asked me for my character. I showed him the one you had given me; he accepted me and signed me on. I pouched the cash, took the horse and outfit and that night legged it. I made for another dorp, where I sold the horse and outfit and got another, together with a bonus of three hundred pounds, from a Dutchman, who had just got married. I daresay I could have done better out of him, as he was in a hell of a funk at the thought of getting killed, but you see, Major, you had trained us never to linger when making a raid, so we went to the veldt-cornet, who when he had looked at my character, at once took me on as a substitute, and the same night I cleared out and went to another dorp, where playing the same game won the same stakes. Then I thought I would steer clear of the villages, so visited out-of-the-way farms, at each of which I showed the inhabitants the character, telling them it was an official document, authorizing me to register the names of all young men fit to bear arms. The farmers were only too anxious to make

me handsome presents, provided I would omit their sons' names from my list. I took the presents, and here I am, a first-class passenger, bound for Old England, with nearly fifteen hundred thick 'uns in my pouch; true I might have made more, but I am not an avaricious man, and I would far sooner look at that breakwater (the breakwater was being built by convict labour) from over the stern of this ship than work on it." "Yes," said I, "but how was it that these people, reading such a character, as I gave you, should have been so taken in?" "Read it, sir," the scamp replied, "devil a one of them read it, and for a very good reason, as not one of them could read a word of English; it was the lion and unicorn fighting for the crown, on the top of the official paper, that did the trick, and that's what I wanted, when I troubled you for a character. So long, Major, there's the 'all for the shore' bell ringing, good luck and many thanks as it's through you I'm in for a high old time."

As I limped down the gang plank the old text, "Out of evil cometh good," came into my mind and I wondered if it were an appropriate one under these circumstances; anyhow I had never before heard of a rascal making a big profit out of a darned bad character. Still Mr Jones made an egregious error; he should have remained in South Africa and gone up to Kimberley, where the peculiar talents with which he was so gifted would have, in a short time, placed him in the front rank of South African financiers and, like some of them, he might have become the possessor of a house in Park Lane and a place in the upper circles of English society.

CHAPTER VI

A KIMBERLEY I.D.B. REMINISCENCE

SHORTLY after the end of the Basuto War I determined to go back to New Zealand but before doing so was persuaded by some friends to run up to Kimberley, so as to have a look at the big hole. This I did, and reached the far-famed diamond fields just as they were in the transition stage, between the old methods of working and the new; for although steam-hauling engines were already employed, yet there were many of the old horse wins as well as the old, horse-driven, washing gears, still working, while the standing wires of the aerial tramways looked like gigantic spider webs, the tubs running up and down them helping out the illusion, by resembling the insects themselves. The epoch at which I reached Kimberley was also one of immense excitement; individual diggers were selling their claims for large sums of money and big blocks of shares, to company promoters. The inhabitants were mad, fortunes were being made every day and even I allowed myself to be drawn into the vortex. In less than a fortnight the slump came and I found myself stone broke, which served me right, for what business has a clean-bred Frontiersman or Lost Legionary to meddle with stocks and shares, unless they should be the stocks of rifles, or the sharing of rations and hard-

ships. However it is not my intention to write about the polygenous blackguards, nor the countless good fellows I rubbed shoulders with in the tin city of the veldt; they will require a book to themselves as I do not care to mix up yarns, of the clean deeds of H.M. Imperial and Irregular troops, with the foul chicanery and rascality of I.D.B.'s, Company Promoters, B.S.A. Co.'s guinea-pigs and fraudulent contractors, in the same work.

True many of the former either fill forgotten graves or are to be found in the gutter or the work-house, while many of the latter may be sought in the seats of the mighty, and the bosom of fashionable society, so I will just spin you one yarn, that occurred in Kimberley during my abode there, and pass on to the Bechuanaland Expedition of 1884 and 1885. Let me call it "The Biters Bit."

THE BITERS BIT

(A Kimberley I.D.B. Reminiscence)

As the weary traveller approached the diamond fields, in the early eighties, sick and worn out with the very many miles of monotonous veldt he has had to traverse from the rail-head, then and for some years afterwards located at Beaufort West, the first noticeable objects that struck his blood-shot and dust-filled eyes would be huge mounds of grey earth; and on making inquiry as to what they might be, he would be informed they were the tailing heaps and debris from the four mines, Kimberley, or the new rush as it was called by the

old diggers, Du Toits Pan, Bultfontein and old De Beers, and after passing through some of these heaps he would eventually arrive in the tin-built town of Kimberley, where he would find himself a unit of perhaps as cosmopolitan a crowd as ever assembled together on this earth; while as for languages, he might just as well have landed among the builders of the Tower of Babel, on the day they knocked off that big contract, when the necessity for interpreters was first required.

Crawling out of the coach, in which he has spent four or five miserable days and nights, he enters the Central Hotel and asks for a room. He may get one, or he may not, and he may consider himself extremely lucky should he, in the event of getting one, have the sole use of it. Let us suppose he obtains one, when he is shown into an iron box 10 by 8 feet in which he removes, with a scant supply of water, as much of the thick layer of red dust that adheres to him as he may. No sooner has he spruced up, to the best of his ability, than he adjourns to the verandah and orders the most cooling drink he can think of, so as to try and wash down the residue of dust that still sticks in his throat. Maybe he selects a bottle of Bass, which comforts him greatly so that he does not even sigh when he pays half-a-crown for the same-sized bottle that on the mail-boat cost him threepence; for has not the price of everything desirable risen at every stage of the journey, from Cape Town to the Diamond City. Thank goodness there goes the gong, so he enters the large dining-room and is shown a seat. The dinner is a good one, considering where he is, and looking round the room he is

at once struck by the various types of men who surround him and astonished by their conversation. The men are of every white nationality under the sun and are diggers, mine-managers, business men, up-country traders, diamond buyers and adventurers of all sorts, amongst them the Semitic race predominating.

Eating their dinners and drinking drinks, the price of which astonish him, all their conversation is centred more or less on the mines and he hears the price of wood, the jargon of the share and diamond market, the difficulty of procuring labour, mixed up in inextricable confusion, running through which are frequent references made about a set of people called I.D.B.'s, who are invariably spoken of with such prefixes as usually indicate hatred and contempt. Tired out he goes to bed and next morning, after breakfast, he goes out to view the wonderful tin city. It is not my intention, however, to give you a description of Kimberley in the days before bricks were made, and the great De Beers Company ruled supreme, let us therefore suppose our new chum meets a friend who shows him round and explains to him the run of the ropes. Of course the first object of interest to be looked at is the big hole and they turn down old Main Street, after a glance at the huge market square full of high-piled-up produce wagons, to examine one of the marvels of the world. Old Main Street used to consist chiefly of bars, around the doors of one of which is clustered a number of evil-looking, overdressed, underbred men, on whose faces, both Semitic and European, are stamped the lowest traits of bestiality and whose voices indicate them

to have sprung from the foulest purlieus not only of London but of all the big cities of the world. Near them are also gathered a crowd of flash, gaudily-dressed niggers evidently acting in conjunction with their white prototypes, whom they ape in manners and dress. These clusters of villainy, for scoundrelism is writ in big letters all over them, naturally draws the attention of the new chum, who demands who and what they are, and is at once informed they are I.D.B. runners and touts, when of course he asks who are the I.D.B.'s and learns that the mystic letters stand for Illicit Diamond Buyers, when he at once requests information about them and their nefarious traffic.

The intelligence he gains is astounding, for he learns that over one-third of the gems found in the mine never get into the hands of their legitimate owners but that the largest and most valuable of the diamonds are discovered in the first place by the raw, working Kafir, who tempted by his gaudily-dressed tribesman, acting on behalf of one of the white scoundrels, secretes and sells it at a fraction of its value to the said white scoundrel, from whose dirty, bejewelled hands it passes on, at a largely enhanced but still far under the market value, to the princes of the trade, whose lightning changes from Petticoat Lane to Park Lane, and who with a touch of the magic wand have transformed the ancestral fried-fish donkey tray into a thousand-guinea motor-car and a string of race-horses, have filled sober-minded business people with envy and astonishment. He will also learn that an elaborate special Detective Department

has to be run, solely to check this awful rascality, that Act after Act has been passed by the Colonial Legislature to try and put a stop to it, that a special court composed of three judges, sits to try its cases, and although the punishment for the infringement of these Acts has been increased, until a sentence of ten years' hard labour on the breakwater, together with a fine of £2000 may be inflicted, that still the illicit trade thrives and increases, while its princes may be looked for among the members of the Kimberley Club, the diamond market, the leading merchants of the town, yea and even among the directors of the principal mining companies themselves. It is impossible in a work such as this to give a full account of the ramifications of the traffic or the laws promulgated to put a stop to it but I will spin you a yarn, how on one occasion some guileless foreigners (if I remember rightly Bulgarians) played a game, not only on the crafty I.D.B.'s but also sold their astute enemies the Diamond Field Detective Department.

I must mark time for a moment, so that I may point out to you that one section of the Diamond Trade Act rendered anyone, not being properly authorized, liable to the severest punishment, for being in the possession of a rough and uncut diamond, unless such person held a permit granted from the Detective Department, and that every accredited agent of a mining company, licensed diamond merchant, or others whose business authorized him to be in possession of rough, uncut diamonds, had to keep a register, which had to be handed in to the Detective Department once a week, describing every transaction on the part of

the dealer, or every day's find on the part of the miner, which return had also to contain a description of every stone above a certain weight; so that the Department knew all about every gem legitimately disposed of on the fields. It also, in various ways, received information about other stones and sometimes made seizures of large parcels of illicit stuff, which the I.D.B.'s were trying to smuggle out of the country, on one occasion seizing illicit diamonds to the value of £60,000. Now for the yarn. It was during the eighties that the heads of the Detective Department were much disturbed and the reason of their perturbation was, that they had information that a number of very large valuable stones were changing hands in the illicit market. Of that there was no doubt, but the Department could get no information as to how they got there, as they certainly had left no trail while passing through the hands of the usual go-betweens, and it was therefore obvious they must have passed direct from the hands of the thief to those of Messrs — (here halt, no names no pack drill), a fact not to be believed, for such big fish as the princes and dukes of I.D.B.'dom were far too cute to deal direct with Swartboy, Coffee, Tinpot or any of the raw niggers who acted as skirmishers in the dangerous game. Still there was no doubt that many big stones had lately been passed and from the head of the Department down to the meanest trap-boy, everyone was on the *qui vive* with doubled vigilance; until, at last, it was discovered that this small gang of inoffensive foreigners, Bulgarians for choice, were the fountain from which the glassy stones passed into the hands

of the I.D.B. aristocracy. But how did these Bulgarians get hold of them? They were unknown to the snarks of the Department, they had no dealings with Kafirs, and when tempted by traps sternly declined to have anything to do with them. How then were they to be handled, so that they and their belongings might be searched, at such a time as it would be likely they should have incriminating evidence on their persons?

The head of the Department was at his wits' end, any day these fellows might leave the Diamond Fields and be out of his reach; while they remained there was still hope that, through them, he might rope in one of the big fish, perhaps even that big Triton Barnabas himself. Something must be done.

At last one man suggested that, late one evening, these simple foreigners should be mixed up and included in a pretended row, that police should be handy, to run the rioters in, so that on the victims being searched, at the police-station, something might be found on them that would justify their detention. This low-down trick was played the following night, and the three poor simple souls, strangers in a foreign land, all of a sudden found themselves mixed up with a seemingly drunken mob of brutal Britishers and before they could extricate themselves, a strong posse of police swept the whole crowd, paying particular attention to the inoffensive, much-protesting foreigners, into the police station; in which den of iniquity and injustice the indignant Bulgars found insult heaped on injury, as not only were their sacred persons overhauled but to their astonishment, the men who had been the cause of all the trouble conducted the

search, which resulted in the discovery of three most magnificent rough and uncut diamonds. The naughty foreigners were at once locked up and the disguised detectives returned to their office to receive the thanks and congratulations of their chief.

The special court sits, the three judges take their seats, and the benches and standing-room within the court-house are crowded with the I.D.B. fraternity, among whom are many of their princes and dukes, all anxious to see and hear a case which so much concerns their industry, and excites their sympathy. Would that I could paint the scene of the interior of that court: the vile, low-type faces of the I.D.B.'s and the hang-dog-looking blackguards in the dock, but I must get on. Well the charges are read out, the section and Act quoted, and the Public Prosecutor, thinking he has got an easy task, after stating the case for the Crown, sits down with a smug, satisfied look on his fat face. Then up jumps the defending counsel who allows that what his learned friend has asserted is quite true, in so far that the things at present before the court were found on the persons of his clients but at the same time declared their innocence of contravening the Act, as the said Act only related to diamonds, while the articles found on his clients were not diamonds at all but only remarkably good imitations of the precious gems, and as the Act said nothing against imitation diamonds being carried about either cut or uncut, and that, as there was no other law in the land that prohibited a man carrying about on his person imitation diamonds, he demanded the immediate release of the prisoners.

Had a shell popped through one of the open windows and alighted on the table with its time-fuse fizzing, it could not have caused more consternation in that court than this line of defence. Up jumped the Public Prosecutor, who declared that the things in question were diamonds, that they had been valued and examined by the leading experts on the fields; and he stuck to his guns, so did his learned brother, and the arguments waxed furious, until the final test, that of the file, was employed and amid a scene never before witnessed in that court, the stones of contention were declared not to be stones at all, and therefore not diamonds, and the bottom fell out of the case against the simple Bulgars.

If the chagrin was keen on the part of the Department, there were but few signs of triumph on the faces of the I.D.B.'s. The writer of this yarn was seated close to the bench and had a full view of the auditorium, crowded, as previously mentioned, with the fraternity, among whom sat many of the leading spirits of the trade, and possessing a keen sense of humour he relished watching the expressions that came and went on the facile countenances of the princes of the I.D.B.'s, noting fear, consternation and sorrow as the defending counsel made his assertions as to the spurious nature of the goods, and the hope and joy that shone transiently when the Public Prosecutor declared them to be good stones, while at the finals, when without doubt they were proved to be false, the Semitic faces elongated with horror, consternation and despair and the groan that went up was heartrending, as it was made evident that the guileless Bulgars

had been off-loading spurious trash among the very smartest of a very sharp fraternity, pocketing good money for worthless goods, so that if the Department had to put up with a great deal of chaff, still the wailing and woe for lost shekels among the aristocracy of the I.D.B.'s was very great. As for the Bulgars, they had to be kept for a long period in durance vile and then smuggled out of the country or they would soon have fallen victims to the fury of the I.D.B.'s, the princes of whom had for once been caught and sold at their own game.

CHAPTER VII

YARNS OF THE BECHUANALAND FIELD FORCE

It was in 1884 Sir Charles Warren organized the B.F.F. to drive the Boer filibusters out of Vreiburg and Mafeking where they had started two Burlesque Republics and had played Cain with the niggers. However I beg to refer my readers to the Blue Books of that period, in case they should want any information about the cause of the row. I, personally, like all Lost Legionaries, never bother my head about the cause of a row but am always quite contented, so long as I get my share of any of the fun that may accrue from it.

Well the Expedition, as it was called, had among other units three regiments of Mounted Riflemen: No. 1, the Jam-eaters, raised in England; No. 2 raised in Cape Colony, and No. 3 raised in Kimberley, where I was then located; and although I at first held back, for I was in a very good position at the time, making money and not expecting any fighting, yet on the arrival of a shave (rumour) in Kimberley that the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons had been attacked and cut up at Fourteen Streams, I at once volunteered, threw up everything and joined the 3rd M.R. Up to the time I joined good men had been hard to get and the 3rd M.R. was still short of over 100 men. In raising an Irregular Regiment, everything depends on an officer being known, liked and trusted, both

in action and out, before men who have seen service will throw up good billets to join and no old hand cares to serve under officers they do not know.

As I said before the evening I joined, the 3rd M.R. were still nearly a fourth of their number short and the Colonel was at his wits' end to know where and how to get them. I told him I could get them at once and to his astonishment I recruited over one hundred picked men, most of them old hands, in less than forty-eight hours. So much for my reputation gained in the past wars. These men, all of whom had thrown up good billets, proved themselves to be the finest and best-conducted men in the regiment, and the regiment itself, together with the 2nd M.R., were certainly the two finest irregular corps ever embodied in S.A. In fact the whole expeditionary force was splendidly found, equipped and organized, so that had we been properly used, as we should have been had not Mr Gladstone been then in power, all future Transvaal rows would have never taken place and S.A. might have been settled at once and for ever. As is well known we had no fighting during Warren's Expedition. The filibusters either remained quietly on their farms or returned to the Transvaal, where their leader, Groote Adrien De la Rey, a vile scoundrel and the cold-blooded murderer of Bethell and Honey, two Englishmen, promptly bolted and took refuge with Oom Paul, who refused to give him up. Neikirke, the mock president of the Vreiburg Burlesque Republic, was arrested and made prisoner and the Field Force was encamped in cantonments along the Transvaal border for six months during which

time we had some very good shooting while the Powers that were talked, and then we marched back again and were disbanded. So much for an expedition under a Liberal Government.

It was on this expedition that the small tin discs with a man's number and regiment stamped on it, so as to secure identification in case of death, were first issued in S.A. These were the cause of some rather clever verses written by Sergeant O'Harra of the 6th I.D., which describe the feelings of the officers and men, composing the expedition, so much better than I can, that I insert them here. They were recited and sung at all our camp-fires during that time and they still are heard at Regimental smokers all over S.A. up to this date.

THE B.F.F. TIN-POT MEDAL

"Oh, father! tell us, father, whose eye is bleared and dim,
Like some ancient tallow candle, an unsnuffed and seedy glym:
Oh, tell us of the medal you wore upon your breast
When you marched up thro' Stellaland, a-chucking of a chest.

"And tell us of the battles and the victories you won,
And the hardships you encountered there beneath an Afric sun;
Relate to us the legends of the Dutchmen whom you slew,
Though often told they're beautiful and wonderfully true."

"I will, my son," the old man said, in beery voice and low,
"It happened 'twas in '85, that's forty years ago,
That brave Sir Charles Warren, he, with twice two thousand men
Marched bravely up thro' Stellaland, and then marched down
again.

"And oh, it was a goodly sight to see each gallant boy
In his putties and cord breeches and his coat of corduroy;
But midst this pomp and splendour, why the thing that looked
the best,

Was the medal of the B.F.F. each wore upon his breast.

"Ay! that was a medal surely, lad, no bright and shining star,
No bronze gew-gaw for marching that, and glittering from afar;

But a simple tin-pot medal, with this touching legend stamped,
The number of the tramper, and the corps with which he tramped.

"Nor was it worn outwardly, as if for side or show,
But jealously lay hidden, down all in the depths below ;
Amidst those lively animals we picked up on the veldt,
The fleas and ticks and others, that with Norfolk Howard spelt.

"It was a stout and goodly force, composed of the Dragoons,
Of Volunteers three regiments and some Pioneering coons :
Three batteries of Artillery were also with the chief,
Besides the men who fed the troops on wretched Bouilli Beef.

"Then there were the Telegraphists, their poles all in a row,
Which when they had not tumbled down, brought news from
down below,
Brought us news of other soldiers, and the victories they won,
While we sat still and grumbled, for our sport had not begun.

"And we also had a corps of Guides, some gents of sable hue,
Though why they called them Guides, I don't think anybody
knew ;
Unless it was that they were unacquainted with the way,
So 'Domine direge nos,' we howled when led astray.

"One day the Engineers, who were possessed of a balloon,
Sent the old chief Montsioa up (a captive) towards the moon ;
And it was a spirit-stirring sound to hear his women swear,
As they saw their lord and master floating gaily through the air.

"For 'tis the usual belief, in Montsioa's town,
That when a chieftain dies he takes a lengthy journey down ;
While a missionary murmured, as he gazed up to the sky,
'How strange that soldiers are the first to send my flock on high.'

"But at last there came an order just as if some fairy wand
Had set us all in motion and we marched on Rooi Grond :
And there we saw the Dutchman's flag float bravely o'er the plain,
So we played at body-snatching,* and we then sneaked home
again.

"Of course there was a grand review, a true red-letter day,
When all the Dutchmen came and grinned and grinning rode
away ;
So each put back his sabre in obedience to the call,
And bethought him of his medal, which made amends for all.

* The gallant poet here refers to the exhuming the body of Captain
Bethell murdered in cold blood by the Boers.

"So then we marched from Mafeking and Sitlagoli too,
Through Vreiburg, Taungs, in fact we marched the whole of
Boerland thro',

And trekking down West Griqualand, at last we reached the Cape,
Each man convinced that he at least had played the garden Ape.

"So you see we fought no battles on that glorious campaign,
For not a man was wounded, not a warrior was slain :
And the doctors had an easy time, as doctors always will,
Campaigning with a General who's fighting with a quill.

"Thus you see, my lad, the medal that I once wore next my skin,
Is no blood-stained medallion, 'tis a simple bit of tin :
But the sight of it reminds me how I wore it on my breast
When I marched up thro' Stellaland, a-chucking of a chest.

"But, youngster, there's a moral, just to end my simple rhyme ;
Don't you ever go a-soldiering in all your future time :
But if you should be mad enough, of Africa keep clear,
And whate'er you do, you idiot, 'Don't you never volunteer !'"

SERGEANT O'HARRA,
6th I.D.

And now for some camp-fire yarns. The Colonel who commanded the 3rd M.R. was without exception the very best and smartest cavalry officer I have ever served under, who although very strict on all points of duty, gained at once the respect and esteem of all the Colonial officers and men who served under him, and these would have blindly followed him to Hades had he seen fit to trek there.

This, let me tell you, is by no means usual with irregular forces, as I regret to say that most Imperial officers, utterly ignorant of very many things in the way of veldt life, and Colonial warfare, are often too foolish to take advice from men who have grown up at the game, and are in consequence looked down on and laughed at by their men, who although acknowledging their courage yet do not care to serve under them, at least not

before they have learned Colonial ways and the men are able to trust them. Well we were the last regiment to be equipped and left the base camp at Barkley West on a broiling hot day to march to Taungs. I was on that day merely in charge of my troop but the Colonel next morning put me in command of the squadron, removing the Imperial officer who had been squadron-leader to other work.

It was by no means a pleasant march; all the kit was brand new, so were the horses, many of them only half broken in, and they had only been handed over to us the evening before we started. The next night before we reached the outspan, where we were going to bivouac, the heavens opened and down came torrents of rain. For two years there had been a drought, and of course the rain at once turned the sun-baked flats, over which we were travelling, into a sea of mud and water. I was in charge of the advance guard and had reached the outspan when the Colonel splashed up to me. He was in rather a rabid state and made very many pungent remarks, on bullock transport, the weather, the horses, the men and S.A. in general, and was just finishing his oration, when, from the rear, up rode a trooper at a hand gallop. When he reached us, he tried to rein up, but his horse slid in the mud, and his new girth straps having stretched his saddle turned over so he landed just in front of the peppery Colonel with a thud and a splash like a whale breaching. This started the Colonel off again. "My God," said he, "is this the way troopers are taught to approach their commanding officer in S.A.?" Then to the

poor wretch who, covered with mud, had managed to recover his feet, "What do you want, who sent you here, what is it, can't you speak?" The unhappy trooper, who had been trying to clear his mouth of a fid of mud, stuttered out, "Captain So-and-so, that day in charge of the rear-guard, told me to tell you one of his horses is dead and what's he to do." Again the Colonel started and made unkind, if truthful, remarks about some officers, then turning to me said, "Ride back, Major Browne, find out what's the matter, put it right and hurry up those infernal wagons."

It was by now pitch dark, the rain coming down in sheets of water that converted the flat into a lake but I managed to splash back past the column, past the long line of wagons, with their labouring spans of oxen, till I stumbled in the dark against a small group of men and horses standing in the road. Now the captain I was looking for was a very tall Irishman and his one sub. was a small Englishman, who had held a commission for some years in a crack Hussar regiment. They were both well-known characters in Kimberley, both thundering good fellows, but both of them were fonder of the whisky, that is white, than of the wine, that is red. I pulled up my horse and said, "Is Captain So-and-so here?" "He is, Major, and so is Lieutenant Dickey," answered a voice I recognized as belonging to the Captain, though it was slightly disguised with spiritual comfort. "Well," said I, "the Colonel has sent me back to inquire into the trouble, what is it?" "Shure Trooper O'Flynn's little hos has dropped dead, sor. What will we do at all at all?" "Well," said I, "if the horse

is dead the only thing to do is to hold a board on it. There is no vet with the column, but we are here three officers. I as senior will act as president, you two gentlemen will act as members. We have no pens, ink or paper, and if we had we could not use them on a night like this, so that I will write out the proceedings of the board to-morrow and we can sign it then. Where is Trooper O'Flyn?"

"Here, sor." "Well tell us how your horse died."

In a voice in which whisky and sorrow blended equally the trooper replied, "The little hos carried me like an angel but all at once he fell wid me and died. God rest his soul." "Well, Lieutenant Dickey, what do you attribute its death to?" The Lieutenant who will be recognized by all Kimberley old hands by his nickname Dickey, answered with drunken gravity and becoming military promptness, "Bots, sor." "Now, Captain So-and-so, what do you consider was the cause of the horse's death?"

"Dispensation of Providence, sir," quoth he.

"Well," said I, "as none of us can see the horse, much less judge the nature of its death, to-night, we will ride back to-morrow, should the Colonel deem it necessary, when perhaps you gentlemen will alter your opinions and I may have the chance of forming one. In the meantime, O'Flyn, take off the horse's kit and carry it into camp." The trooper, muttering to himself, dragged off the saddle, bridle and head-stall, then vexed at having to carry them through the mud and rain into camp, kicked the dead horse, at the same time apostrophizing it, "Lie there, you onlucky baste, bad scan to yer soule," and at once the supposed dead animal jumped up and ran away into the outer

darkness while the rearguard and myself went into fits of laughter, which were not checked by the yells of Trooper O'Flynn, who sat down in the mud, swore he was bewitched, and refused to be comforted. There was not much damage done as the horse would rejoin the others, so calling the officers aside, I administered a word of warning to them and, also, I must confess, imbibed a strong tot from their bottle, then splashed back to my men, who were making down a very uncomfortable bivouac.

We slopped through the mud to Taungs, remained there four days, and then marched to Vreieburg, where the 3rd M.R. halted, and remained encamped. We had a very good time there, as far as shooting and sport went, but as most of my men had given up good positions and billets in the hopes of fighting we found the time hang heavily on our hands.

Among the duties we had to undertake was the guarding of the ex-president of the aforementioned Burlesque Republic. He was a fat, dirty, greasy Dutchman, and what the deuce the General wanted with him the Lord only knows, but as he was the only prisoner he (the General) had been able to capture he may have prized the evil-smelling brute at a higher figure than any of the rest of us did. This animal was reported to have had a hand in the murder of Honey; whether he had or not I do not know but he was the greatest coward I ever met and quite capable of doing anything underhand. Now a shave went round that the Boers were going to try and release him. I never believed it myself as I failed to understand what they could want

with the beast, and I am sure he was neither use nor ornament to us, but evidently the General thought otherwise and must have been very nervous about the safety of his only trophy. For one night at 10 o'clock we were ordered to parade two squadrons to escort the bounder down to Taungs for greater safety, and I was sent with one of my troops to remove him from the building used as a gaol, put him in a wagon, and fetch him along to the parade ground, where the main party had fallen in.

I proceeded to the gaol and found the news had been broken to him by Captain Pusey of the Police, who was personally in charge of him. He had been in bed when Pusey came to him and I never saw a man in such an awful state of funk in all my life. He walloped about on the earthen floor of the room, crying like a child. He refused to get dressed, begging on his knees for his life, and refused to believe us when we swore he was not going to be hung right out of hand. At last I told him that if he would not dress himself and get into the wagon I should tell my men to throw him in neck and crop, naked, as he was. Eventually we got him into the wagon and started, reaching Brussels that night, Drei Hartz next night, and Taungs the following afternoon. Here our prisoner was handed over to a guard of the Royal Scots who proceeded to fix bayonets. This was quite too much for him, he threw himself on the ground, seized hold of my spurs and refused to let go of them, insisting that if I went away the Tommies would put their knives into him, so at last he had to be removed by force and taken into the fort, howling with fear. I never

saw him again and I never want to. He was tried for the murder of Honey and acquitted, was let go and bolted to the Transvaal, where Oom Paul made a magistrate of him, for such men were the delight of his heart, so that the General lost his only trophy but the 3rd M.R. were relieved from the duty of guarding the cur.

The following day we started our return journey and after a cold march, reached Drei Hartz, where we bivouacked. The horses were picketed, the two wagons drawn up in line, about twenty yards apart, and the men lay down by troops in front of their horses.

There was but little fuel, consequently no camp fires, so after a scrambled dinner of tinned sausages and a pipe, the officers lay down by one wagon, the other being appropriated by the guard. The night was bitterly cold but we had plenty of blankets and so slept well and comfortably. Next morning I woke up before daybreak, my usual custom, and found the whole camp enveloped in a dense fog, so thick that I could not see the horses picketed a few yards in front of me and could only just distinguish the Colonel lying beside me, he being on the extreme right of the line of officers. Now given a dark morning with a dense fog, it is very easy for a man to mistake one wagon for another, and under the same circumstances two lines of sleeping men rolled up in brown blankets very much resemble one another; anyhow I was lazily contemplating a morning pipe when a figure loomed out of the fog and coming up to us let fly a terrific kick at the Colonel with the words, "Get up, you lazy bounder, and do your sentry-go!"

Up started the Colonel with a yell, trying to get rid of the blankets in which he was wrapped, and exclaimed, "I'm not a lazy bounder and I won't do sentry-go." The mysterious form, muttering "Good Gord," promptly disappeared in the fog. The Colonel seized me—I was feigning sleep and smothering my laughter—and said, "Browne, Browne, wake up! A fellow's kicked me and told me to do a sentry-go. Who is it?" "Oh, impossible, sir," I said. "It must have been nightmare." "Nightmares don't kick," he snorted, rubbing himself, "and I can feel it."

I called the Corporal of the Guard, whom I knew to be the real offender, but of course he knew nothing and swore it was impossible. Then the Colonel lay down again, cursing all Colonial and Irregular troops, especially the 3rd M.R. (of whom by the way he was very proud). Scarcely had he fallen asleep again, when for a second time a figure came out of the fog and gave him a rousing kick, saying, "Get up, you lazy bounder, and blow the reveille." Again the Colonel yelled and again the figure uttered a pious ejaculation and disappeared. "Browne, Browne," cried the Colonel, "I'm not a lazy bounder and I won't blow the reveille. Get up and find the swine who kicked me. I'll be blanked if I'll be turned into a football by your infernal men."

I groped my way round the lines but of course could not find the culprit and returned to try and persuade the Colonel that the sausages overnight were to blame for his nightmare. This only annoyed him. He got on my trek, I got the hump,

and that day's march was a very miserable one. It was also one of Bechuanaland's worst days. A strong, cold, cutting wind sprang up; certainly it blew away the fog but it raised clouds of dust that simply smothered and choked us. The advance guard, for the day, was under one of my subs., a very smart and efficient officer. Suddenly the Colonel ordered his trumpeter to blow the "Halt." In the raging dust storm my sub. did not hear it, so took no notice, and the Colonel, foaming with rage, ordered the trumpeter to gallop ahead and bring him back. Then the Colonel gathered all the junior officers together, and after telling them collectively and individually all their failings wound up with, "And now, gentlemen, I'll see if you know the bugle calls." He started the trumpeter through his repertoire, asking the officers in turn what each call meant, but the officers were sulky and not being famous for their knowledge of music either could not or would not answer correctly. I was riding by myself away on the flank, dreaming of the long drink I would have when we got into camp and paying no attention to the trumpet-calls, when suddenly the Colonel shouted, "Major Browne, what was that last trumpet-call?" Taken by surprise and following the train of my thoughts, I blurted out, "Grog, sir." I believe it was really "Right wheel!" and the Colonel's language I leave to your imagination. He cursed us all for fully five minutes but shortly afterwards rode over to me, remarked the day and the dust were sinful and tendered me his flask, which was thankfully accepted, and there the matter ended.

CHAPTER VIII

WE ALL WENT A-HUNTING THAT DAY

TOWARDS the end of our service, my squadron was sent on post duty between Vreiburg and Taungs. All chance of fighting was over but the country swarmed with game, especially small buck and hares.

We were to leave Vreiburg in the afternoon and on the same morning one of my sergeants, whose father was a well-known M.F.H. in England, suggested to me the advisability of starting a bobbery pack of hounds. I gave my consent and detailed himself and two of his pals to collect all the stray animals of the canine species that overran the camp and the rising town of Vreiburg. This they did with the assistance of two lady dogs and conveyed some twelve couple of curs of various breeds to Brussels (where my headquarters were to be) and shut them up in one of the stone forts the R.E. had built there. I marched my squadron to the same place and encamped outside the fort, but the howling and yelping of the imprisoned animals effectually prevented any of us getting to sleep that night. Next day I gave the order for a voluntary parade without arms and with stripped saddles. Every man turned up; the sergeant and his two pals, who had raised the pack, had also raised some Tommies' old red tunics

and appeared as huntsmen and whips. Well the fort gate was opened and out rushed the glad pack. Great Diana, what a pack it was, some twenty-five animals in all, ranging from half-bred deerhounds to terriers. There were bull-dogs, wagon dogs and dogs of every known denomination and many without any denomination at all, but such as they were I meant to hunt with them, so getting the men into extended order I gave the word to advance and we moved off with the huntsman, whips and pack in front of the line.

We had only proceeded a few yards when up got a hare, right under the hounds' noses, some of whom went after her. I gave the word to gallop and in a moment pandemonium started. The hare ran close on two hundred yards then turned and came back on her own spoor.

As I said before she had been followed by some of the dogs, so she had, and they were after her still but the remainder and by far the greater number of curs had at once joined in a free fight. Then the men, most of them wild, reckless young fellows, on the word to gallop, had closed in after the hare, tried to turn with her, met others who were behind them, ran into one another and upset each other all over the shop.

What with the worrying and yelping of the dogs, the galloping and shouting of the men, the ejaculation and cuss words of the huntsman and whips trying to part and straighten out the heap of fighting dogs, one might have thought Old Nick had broken loose, while to render confusion worse confounded some sixty native pioneers who were passing at the time, on the line of march, threw

down their arms and joined in the hunt, howling like wild beasts. Faith it was a sight one would only see once in your life, so I slipped off my horse, sat down on an ant-heap and laughed till I could laugh no more. Presently a new element appeared on the scene for the white officer and his non-coms., enraged at the desertion of their niggers, started hunting them, a job in which my mad troopers, not knowing what was up, and some of the dogs, joined, so that what had started as a peaceful hunt might have become a second Chevy Chase and ended the Lord only knows how. Luckily I got hold of my trumpeter and ordered him to blow the regimental call and the rally, which he did, and my men answering, I got them together, when such hounds as could be collected were escorted back to kennel.

Well, well, it's nearly twenty-five years ago, but I still laugh at the recollection of that hunt and my first and last attempt at running a pack of hounds.

What became of the hare I don't know, but I managed to pacify the pioneer officer, who accompanied me back to camp, and after I had lunched him, consented to relieve me of the majority of the pack and take them back to Vreiburg. I retained however two very good half-bred deerhounds, and a fairly well-bred pointer, and with these had capital sport. There were moreover in the close vicinity to the camp very large herds of springbok and blessbok so that myself and my men had plenty of shooting and fresh meat.

CHAPTER IX

THE JEW SMOUSER AND THE IRISH PRIEST

ONE wretched cold, wet evening I was sitting alone in my tent feeling very lonely, when I heard the sentry challenge and a mule-cart drew up. "Holloa," said I to myself, "who on earth can this be? I only hope he wants to stay the night. It will be company anyhow and I know the larder is full." Presently I heard a voice, that I recognized in a moment, say, "Is this Major Browne's tent?" and I jumped up and opened the flap, saying, "Come right in, Ikey, out of the cold and wet." In a moment there entered a big German Hebrew who spoke English with a Yankee accent and who was well known, if not respected, all over S.A.

Now in this country no one might call Ikey a desirable acquaintance for he was a Hebrew in whom there was much guile, but up-country on a cold, cheerless night he was a treasure to a lonely man with the hump. For Ikey had travelled much in very queer parts of the world, had done many queer things, alas, many of them not quite honest, but he was the very best raconteur I have ever met in my life with a marvellous fund of dry wit that was simply irresistible.

His life had been one of adventure. In Germany, as a boy, during the early forties, he had been a revolutionist, had been taken prisoner and condemned to death; he had escaped from a

fortress, got on board an English ship and been landed, penniless, in America, had drifted out to California, and been one of the men who had hoisted the Black Bear flag. Always a revolutionist he had joined most of the filibustering expeditions of those times. He had been one of the prisoners, to the Mexicans, who had to draw for the black beans, in that ghastly lottery, at La Senora, and was in fact the very individual to make a lonely man pass a very pleasant evening, provided that lonely man did not fancy himself strong at games of chance, especially with cards.

There are thousands of yarns spun about Ikey from the Zambezi to Cape Town but I will only inflict one on you, which although an ancient chestnut in S.A. may be new in England.

Ikey, years before the date of my meeting him, was a smouser, *i.e.*, a man who travelled about the country trading with the scattered Dutch farmers and especially buying their wool. A smouser's great source of profit is making quick calculations when buying and selling by which the farmer, quite ignorant of arithmetic, parts with his goods at half their value or gives double the price for what he purchases.

Well, Ikey was a smouser, and one day he visited a farmer, bought his wool and then said after it had been weighed and the price fixed per pound, "So many pounds at so much comes to so much," mentioning a sum about half the actual total. But the farmer said, "Nein, it should be so much," stating the real figure, and produced a ready reckoner! Was Ikey cornered? Not a bit. With an air of surprise he said, "Let's look at that book."

The farmer handed Ikey the book and with exultation pointed out the place.

Ikey looked at the calculation, with a sneer, then taking the book he turned to the title-page and then pointing to the date of publication said with a laugh, "Why, mein dear chap, you have got hold of one of last year's books. This year so many pounds at so much makes so much," and he won his case as the farmer looked at the date, shook his head, cursed the man who had sold him the book, declared he had been swindled and gave in. So he had been swindled only not by the man he blamed. Well, this was the old sinner who claimed my hospitality and, I must confess, I welcomed him with more pleasure than I should have bestowed on a much better man.

We had a good dinner, the rum bottle was produced, and over our pipes we sat and yarned until Ikey proposed a game of cards. Now I knew Ikey to be a professional gambler and even if I had fancied myself at cards, I should never have dreamt of pitting my skill against his, but playing for money is one of the few vices that has never appealed to me. Yet Ikey was my guest, I must amuse him, and a few games at euchre, at a tickey (3d.) a game, could hurt no one, so I consented.

Ikey produced a pack of cards and before we began said to me, "Major, shall it be with or without?" meaning should each man cheat or play fair, and of course I answered, "Oh, without Ikey, without."

Well we played two or three desultory sort of games, frequently laying down our cards and yarning, until I at last spotted Ikey pass the Joker.

At once I threw down my hand and said with a tone of sorrow and reproach, "Oh, Ikey, without, Ikey, without."

At once he messed up the cards and ejaculated, with well-feigned surprise and petulance, "Mein Gott, Major, that comes from the cursed force of habit," and we both burst out in a laugh. Well I marked that night with a white stone, for although Ikey may have robbed me of sixpence, his entertaining yarns and shrewd wit were worth far more. Good luck to the old sinner be he alive or dead.

I don't think there are any more yarns, worth spinning, about Warren's Expedition. It was a splendid Field Force thrown away, and at last the date came for us to march back to Barkley West to be disbanded.

I mentioned in my yarns of the Transkei the celebrated Father Walsh. He was with the B.F.F. as R.C. Military Chaplain and we were great friends. I was to see him for the last time on the march down country, and although I knew it not, was to say good-bye to one of the best and whitest men it has ever been my lot to meet in this world. A soldier, a gentleman and a priest. God rest his soul!

Well as I said before he was serving in the B.F.F. as R.C. Chaplain and was the admiration of all the men for his gallant defence of a fort, which I have previously mentioned. He was in very bad health, though none of us knew how bad, for his big heart kept him going while his cheery voice and hearty laugh were as mellow as of yore, although he knew well that his days were numbered and the tale short.

We were moving down country by squadrons, mine being the last, and one day, on the line of march, I was riding at the head of it. It was a beastly, cold dusty day. We had the wind in our teeth, and the dense clouds of dust and grit driven by the gale choked our eyes, mouths and nostrils, and was so bad that we had considerable trouble to force our horses to face it. The day before, during a halt at a store, two men had got drunk, and as punishment I made them walk behind the wagons and carry their saddles.

Presently Father Walsh overtook the column and rode up to me with, "The top of the mornin', Major, to ye." "God be wid your reverence," said I. "It's a bad day," says he, "but glory be I've a drop of comfort in my off wallet that maybe will remove some of the dust from your throat." With that he pulled out a bottle of whisky. "Drink hearty," said he, "the Queen, God bless her," and I had a good pull. Then coming close to me he whispered, "Major dear, there's those two poor fellows, tramping behind the wagons, through all the dust, wid heads on 'em like concertinas and tongues down to their waistbelts. You know what it is, me son! Now, Major dear, mayn't I just fall back and give 'em a drop of comfort?" "You may not, Father," says I, "for they are under guard." "I can square the guard," he wheedled. "I'll have none of your Jesuitical tricks with my men, Father," says I. "Have another pull, Major me son, the dust's still in your throat," says he. I did so and then catching his eye I could not help but laugh and said, "Well, Father, it's yourself that has the wisdom of a

serpent; be off with you and maybe, so long as I don't know about it, it will be all right." He fell back to the rear. Some time afterwards he ranged up alongside of me looking very disconsolate. "Father," says I, "my eyes are full of dust." "Rub them, me son," says he. "But my throat is full of dust too." "There is water in the Vlei, two miles ahead," he murmured still under a cloud. "But is there no drop of comfort in your off-side wallet, Father dear?" said I. "There is not, me son," said the holy man with emphasis. "Father," says I, "I'm afraid you have not been abstemious this morning." "Sorra a drop of the blessed stuff has passed my lips this day," he groaned. "But that long divil of a Scotch Presbyterian Corporal of yours has got a swallow on him as long as an ostrich, bad luck to the baste."

Then realizing that his effort to square the guard had cost us dearly, I fired my last shot at him. "Oh, Father," said I, "I have always given you the credit of possessing the wisdom of a serpent, but a man must be as innocent as a sucking dove who would trust the only bottle of whisky into the hands of a black Presbyterian Scotchman, on a day like this. Oh, Father, it's ashamed of you I am." A few more words and he said, "Maori my son, ride this way," and he edged me out of earshot of anyone. In a moment the whole personality of the man changed, from the roistering, bantering comrade to the sincere and noble priest. "Maori," he said, "we don't belong to the same Church" (but the words he uttered were far too sacred to be written here). When he had finished, he grasped my hand and wrung it. "Good-bye, Maori," said

he again, and after raising his hand in a blessing, he put spurs to his horse, and cantered away. Struck dumb with astonishment, I watched him, admiring his fine seat in the saddle, and thought to myself, "The Queen, God bless her, lost a fine dragoon when you joined the priesthood."

We reached Barkley West, paid off, disbanded the men, and in five days after the Holy Father had passed us *en route* I drove into Kimberley and found all the flags in the town half-masted. "Holloa," said I, to the first acquaintance I met, "what's the matter?" "Why," said he, "Father Walsh died last night."

Yes, it was too true, and the gallant priest knew he was dying when he said good-bye to me, but he would not tell us, for fear of causing sorrow to the wild and reckless boys he loved so well, and whom he had tried to guide by precept and example. Never had there been, never will there be, such a funeral in Kimberley as when the remains of this noble priest and soldier were conveyed to his last camping-ground, followed as they were by every class and every denomination of creed in that cosmopolitan city. Yea, not only followed but deeply regretted by all and everyone in that sinful community. His memory is however still kept green, in the hearts of the old hands who knew him, and many a yarn is still told and many a pannikin still raised, round the camp fires in S.A., to the memory of Father Walsh, priest and soldier.

CHAPTER IX

SO LONG!

AFTER the disbandment of the 3rd Mounted Rifles I turned to mine work again but have no space in this book to describe the life led on the Diamond Fields by a Lost Legionary out of harness; suffice it to say I suffered much for my folly in throwing up lucrative employment for the purpose of bearing arms while a Liberal Party was in power. Towards the end of 1886 a great boom in the volunteering movement set in through South Africa when it was determined to start two regiments in Kimberley. One of these, a mounted regiment named the Diamond Field Horse, was the resuscitation of a corps that had won considerable reputation for itself during the Colonial and Griqualand West rebellions of 1877 and 1878, and to this regiment I was appointed adjutant.

The regiment, consisting of four squadrons of cavalry, together with a battery of four seven-pounder field-guns, quickly filled and was a very fine one indeed; as at that time there was in Kimberley a large number of men who had previously served in the late wars or in one of the numerous South African Mounted Police Forces. These men all knew their work, had a liking for it, and joined readily, and it was a real treat for me to have the handling of such a fine body of men. The

officers too, albeit some of them had but a vague idea of drill, were rattling good fellows, and as all of them did their best for the good of the regiment it throve in a most wonderful manner.

The Diamond Field Horse was the first real permanent volunteer corps I had ever served in and I was much struck and greatly surprised by the rapidity with which it gained proficiency, and I am convinced that from a properly-organized volunteer corps (provided the men have sufficient élan and the officers are competent) a vast number of good useful men can be produced from its ranks in a very short time.

At this distance of time I look back with pride and I think myself laudation is in this case pardonable, that although I never had the good fortune to be able to put the last finishing polish on the Diamond Field Horse which can only be accomplished under fire, and though shortly after my leaving the corps in 1891 it dwindled away to nothing, still many of the men who had received their sole military training from me in the ranks of the Diamond Field Horse came to the front, made big names for themselves and rose to high rank in the late Boer War. This being the case I utterly fail to see why civilian troops should not be of immense use for the defence of this country provided they are judiciously trained as irregulars.

The Boer irregulars, bad as a vast number of them were, both in quality and discipline, proved a hard nut for our Imperial forces to crack and in far too many instances forced our scientifically-trained officers to hoist the white flag. Now much has been written and talked about the Dutchman's

Capt. Wollaston.

Lieut. Dowling.

Capt. W. Graham.



Major Hamilton-Brown.

Major T. Maxwell.

Capt. Ward.

A GROUP OF OFFICERS OF THE DIAMOND FIELD HORSE.



wonderful shooting powers and men who have only served a dog's watch in South Africa have declared the Boer to be a far better shot than the Englishman. This is all tommy-rot for in the thirty years I passed in South Africa I never discovered this vaunted superiority of the Dutch marksmen either at target, game or nigger shooting over Englishmen who were accustomed to the rifle. The principal reasons the British lost so heavily without administering compensating punishment were chiefly because they were usually the attacking party and did not make the full use of such cover as the nature of the ground afforded; while their opponents, skilfully hidden behind rocks and in shelter trenches, held their assailants at great disadvantage. Moreover, as they occupied positions which they themselves had previously chosen, they had carefully measured and marked the various ranges over which the British troops were forced to pass.

Now, what I want to point out is that Great Britain possesses very many thousands of highly-trained rifle shots who keep themselves in constant practice, and although it would be as useless to try and empty the sea with a sieve as to pit these men to manœuvre, or fight in line against highly-trained continental troops, still I would defy any column of the latter to advance across country in face of these marksmen for they would be lashed both in front and on flank by an incessant hail of well-directed bullets, each of which would be fired by men knowing their distance from the object and able to plug a bull's-eye three times out of four shots at 600 or 800 yards. Naturally you may say, oh, but the column would be screened by a cloud

of cavalry. True, but how many of those cavalry, horse or trooper, would be alive after they had reached within 1500 yards of those picked marksmen. Not many, I gamble, would survive to advance another 500 yards. Oh, but you remark, the column would detach strong parties of skirmishers. Yes, they might, and those skirmishers being forced to advance, even in extended order, across open fields would rapidly be picked off and soon meet the fate of the defunct cavalry screen. Then again should the column deploy into line and start volley-firing they would only present a broader target to their hidden assailants while their bullets might sow the fields without doing further damage. Of course artillery would be employed to search the ground in front of the advancing enemy, but good shots behind good cover or firing from out of ditches have but little to fear from artillery fire, while the gunners, together with the gun horses, would meet the same fate as our men suffered at the Tugela. Naturally I am not such a lunatic as to imagine that an invading army could be defeated, or its advance be permanently stopped, by a few thousand riflemen, but what I do maintain is, that its progress could be seriously hampered, that no reconnoitring party could be sent out, that no mounted officer could live, and that its field hospitals would soon be chock-full, provided it should be assailed by a few thousand such snipers, split up into small parties and judiciously led, as Great Britain could produce. At present very many of the best individual shots are in the territorial regiments, where they are comparatively useless as a few good marksmen cannot, on active

service, improve the shooting of a mass of incompetent men, but should these picked shots be drawn from their regiments, be supplemented by the crack shots out of the various rifle clubs, be banded together and be properly trained as irregular troops you could form ten or a dozen regiments that, provided each corps thoroughly knew its individual district, could hamper, check and at the same time administer such unsophisticated Hades to an invading force as would make that force fall an easy prey to the British regulars and also give time to the latter to mobilize in sufficient strength to compel the invaders to fight a decisive battle under the most disadvantageous circumstances.

Now my argument is based on the proviso that these marksmen should be properly trained as irregulars, and this could be very easily done without much expense or trouble to the men themselves, and while I am on the stump let me give vent to my ideas drawn from the experience of many years' irregular warfare, and from having had to handle and lick into shape many hundreds of men taken from every class of society; a vast number of whom were the scum of the universe who knew no more about discipline or drill than an imp fresh from the equatorial regions of Hades knows about snowballing or ice cream. Yet in a very short space of time they were fit and ready to face warlike natives in the field when they rendered a good account of themselves. Now the crack shots of Great Britain have most of them been, more or less, at some period of their lives, under discipline, so that the vast majority of them know quite enough of the simple drill suitable for irregular troops, and as

they would not require to be instructed in the rudiments of musketry most of the training that young soldiers and territorials find so irksome could be dispensed with altogether.

To make corps or rather troops (for each county's or combination of county's regiment should be divided into bands of not more than fifty or sixty men, each under its captain or leader) thoroughly proficient they must first of all learn the topography of their own district, the exact distance from ridges, woods or any commanding positions that at some future time they may be called upon to hold against an advancing enemy and the salient landmarks that enemy would have to pass during its advance. They should learn every short cut to and from such defensible positions, every lane, cross road and ditch leading in its direction, that would enable parties of the enemy to approach them by unawares, and also in case they themselves were forced to retreat they might be able to do so as expeditiously and safely as possible. All this might be done during the winter on their half-holidays or Sunday outings, and they might make their trips either on horseback, bike or Shanks' mare, the men doing the latter bearing in mind that heaps of information *re* distances and the length of time it takes for infantry to march from place to place, to say nothing about spotting cover an enemy might make use of, can be better acquired by the humble foot-slogger than by his comrades the pig-skin polisher or the bike rider. Still a combination of parties would be obviously the better way to acquire knowledge, and plans or maps could be made and tested when

they subsequently discuss the day's work and observations in their headquarters or club. In this club they could be taught by lectures and discussions the great theory of irregular fighting, which is to inflict as much injury to your assailants as you can and take as little punishment as possible in return.

And now let me tell you how this can be done. In the first place, every man must be taught to fight on his own initiative although acting under and strictly obeying orders. This would not be difficult to inculcate as the men to be trained are all brainy men who can think and reason for themselves else they would never have been able to attain a place among the picked shots of Great Britain, and would therefore be able to comprehend and act upon instructions infinitely better than the raw boys who as a rule fill the ranks of the territorials. Should this system of theoretical instruction be carried out judiciously a very few days in the year would be necessary for regimental mobilization, as the various units could be taught to take cover and act independently by themselves so that the yearly fortnight in camp that causes such inconvenience now could be dispensed with. Of course a very large percentage of these irregulars must be mounted, and for the sake of rapid action should be well horsed, care being taken that the nags should be able to jump and the men able to stick on their backs during a smart gallop across country so as to pound any regular cavalry sent in pursuit of them while falling back from positions no longer tenable. This should be easy as their supplies of rations, stores, etc., being located in

rear of them, they could work with stripped saddles while their pursuing enemy would be heavily handicapped, being encumbered and weighted by all the paraphernalia that a cavalry horse is forced to carry. Nor would any O.C. of cavalry be very keen on pursuing small bodies of lightly-equipped mounted men over a country, any ditch, hedgerow or wood of which might ambush a hundred or more Bisley prize-winners. Now very many of these crack shots can already ride, others of them could be taught, while those who have no taste for horse-flesh could still render immense service as cyclists, or even as foot-sloggers, as the latter could hold positions from whence, taking care their line of retreat should be always open to them, they could deal out death at long ranges with but little risk to themselves provided they would only learn to take cover. In the preceding paragraph I wrote the words woods, etc., now I wonder if any of the men responsible for our national safety have ever given a thought to the use that could and should be made, in case of an invasion, of the woods, coppices and spinneys so plentiful in England and if so what steps they have taken to train our officers and soldiers in the art of bush fighting. Perhaps they think that the men would instinctively and immediately acquire this most useful though difficult accomplishment, and that therefore there is no necessity for special training. Should this be the case they are blind, besotted idiots, and I recommend them to call to mind the disasters suffered by our troops in the old American wars, the incapacity of the regular troops in New Zealand from 1860 to 1866, and the unburlesquable comedies

called combined movements round the Pieri Bush and Thaba Indoda during the South African campaign of 1878. Now I never yet met an Imperial officer or soldier who, at the first go off, had the faintest idea of bush fighting, and I do not blame them for their ignorance, as how could they possibly become trained bush fighters when most probably the majority of them had never in their lives before ever entered a wood thicker bushed than Hyde Park, while the ordinary training of a soldier teaches him to fight collectively rather than individually, the latter being the first and most important lesson for a neophyte in bush warfare to learn. Most of the woods in England, being game preserves, are *tapu* as training grounds to our troops yet in case of an invasion they would be the scenes of the most desperate fighting, and in many bloody encounters the successful defence or combat in a wood might mean victory or defeat to one or the other. This is a well-known fact yet there is not one single body of men, and probably not one single officer, who has been trained to bush fighting in England, while I am creditably informed that a certain number of German Jäger regiments are put through a yearly course of instruction in forest warfare, and if such be the case may the Lord fight actively on our side should ever our untrained Tommies have to try conclusions with accomplished bush fighters in even an English wood. I have stated that the majority of the woods in this country are *tapu* (*i.e.* forbidden) to troops for training purposes and that even during the autumn manoeuvres they are kept sacred from the profane tread of a soldier. I am not going to argue on

the rights and wrongs of private property, but surely there are some wood-owners patriotic enough to allow small parties of responsible men, under the guidance of their own gamekeepers, to penetrate into their coverts, learn their geography, the lay of the land, the density of the thickets and how to get about inside it, and when it was found they did no harm to the game, even to allow them to practice skirmishing within their most sacred recesses. Should landowners permit this they would be rendering their country a far greater service than they wot of.

I must apologize to my readers for writing these last few pages, but I have been actuated by the sole wish to render my King, Country and Flag one more trivial service, hoping that an old Frontiersman's ideas, rough and incomplete though they are, may perchance fall into the hands of some man in a position to make use of them. But then when I see the profound words and writings of a great man like Lord Roberts treated with contempt what hope can there be of anyone paying attention to the scribblings of an unknown old war-dog such as myself, so let me continue my yarn now quickly drawing to a close.

Well, I was appointed Adjutant of the Diamond Field Horse and was serving with them in 1888 when Dinizulu's Rebellion broke out, and one fine day I received an urgent telegram from the Imperial authorities requesting me to proceed to Natal without a moment's delay, and in less than two hours I was in the train and on the trek once more for Zululand.

The silly policy of the Liberal Government in

allowing Cetewayo to return to Zululand had culminated in perhaps the most awful and bloody civil war the world has ever seen, in which neither man, woman nor child was spared, while Mr Gladstone's well-known cowardice encouraged a gang of Boer filibusters to enter Zululand, where they, defeating Usibeppo, a loyal chief, who had foolishly trusted to the promises made by Britain's representatives, had seized a huge tract of country and in spite of English troops being on the spot held the stolen land, which they called The New Republic. Truly if ever a man disgraced his country and his flag it was Mr W. E. Gladstone. But I am not writing a history of Zululand; it would not be a pleasant task for a man who honours the traditions of his country to do so. Dinizulu after the defeat of Usibeppo took up his abode in a small but very dense bush, one side of which bordered on the New Republic, and the fear of offending a handful of dirty Dutch land-grabbers, located on stolen property, prevented the authorities from allowing the General to intrude on what was really English territory, surrounding the bush and hiving Dinizulu in his fastness. I travelled from Kimberley in company with Colonel F. Carrington and Captain Thompson, it being intended that the former should raise a brigade of irregulars and that myself, Thompson, together with Major Dear, were to serve on his staff. Previous to our arrival at Etchowe (then headquarters) a party of the Inniskilling Dragoons, supported by two companies of the Staffordshire Regiment, had advanced to the bush, reconnoitring, but being attacked by overwhelming numbers had been forced to fall back. On

this reverse the Field Force had been reinforced by a battalion of the Royal Scots and two machine guns, the whole being massed at Entongneni and Inkonjene, where they awaited the advent of the staff before crossing the Black Umvolosi River and twisting Dinizulu's tail. Everyone had moved on, with the exception of the General, when we reached Etchowe and then we learnt that the General had modified his plans and that Colonel Carrington was to serve on the H.Q. staff, while Dear, Thompson and myself were to take command of three battalions of Natal Kafirs. This was not pleasant news for me as I had experienced the joys of commanding Natal Kafirs in 1879; however I had never been a grumbler and was not going to start that obnoxious game now, especially as there was every prospect of some good fighting in front of us, which was not to be sneezed at even with the drawback of having to share the diversion with cowardly Natal Kafirs. I therefore thankfully accepted the good luck the gods had sent me and cursed not the concurrent misfortunes, for is not this the hard-and-fast custom of Lost Legionaries when about to engage in the gentle pastime of war? As we were to take over our Christy Minstrels at Entongneni we drew horses from the Remount Department and proceeded there as rapidly as possible, the niggers being brought in and handed over to us the day following our arrival by the resident magistrates, who gave us as many instructions *re* the treatment of the sable beauties as a fussy old lady gives a new maid as to the handling of her pet lap-dogs. We were allowed no time to train or organize our savages as next day we started for



Surg. Maj. Callender. Paymaster Etting. Maj. Hamilton-Browne and family.
D.F.H. CAMP AT SPEITFONTEIN 1890.



the Black Umvolosi, which in due time we reached and crossed, and together with a squadron of Inniskilling Dragoons and the Royal Scots took post, in two parties, on a ridge some ten miles from the Quasa Bush in which Dinizulu and his hostile Usutas had their stronghold. The General and his staff joined up during the afternoon and camped with the Dragoons some 200 yards from where the Royal Scots, with whom I was, bivouacked. At dark I posted parties of my natives on outlying picket, but these heroes fled back into camp about 9 p.m., declaring the Usutu had come down to attack them. Every preparation was made to resist an attack, and having doubts as to the truth of my natives' report I volunteered to leave the camp on a scouting expedition which I did alone, not wanting to be hampered by a white companion who being a new chum would naturally know nothing about scouting and I placed no confidence whatever in the Natal Kafirs. Well, out I went alone, charmed at getting a chance of again playing the old game I loved so well and, for a wonder, found that the pickets had told the truth as I quickly discovered the bivouac to be threatened on two sides by several bodies of the Usutu, who however made no attack but simply contented themselves with jeering at us from a safe distance. Next day Captain R. Baden Powell, who was on the staff, was sent to locate a rebel kraal, his escort consisting of mine and Thompson's battalions of natives and a squadron of Dragoons. We reached the place, but found all the fighting men had cleared out, which so emboldened my cowardly beauties that they murdered two wretched old men before I

could stop them. As we returned to camp in two parties by different routes my gang flushed a big mob of cattle the herds of which were driving them as fast as they could towards the Quasa Bush, which plainly showed that they belonged to the enemy and were therefore fair loot. This being the case, accompanied by some of my men I went in pursuit and after a smart gallop headed them. The herds, all of whom were armed, bolted and my men coming up we captured the cattle and drove them into camp where I took care the whole outfit, both white and black, were liberally supplied with fresh meat, a godsend to Tommies most of whom had lived on iron rations for months. A few days after the above capture some assvogels (vultures), I mean civil authorities, appeared on the scene, who declared the cattle belonged to friendly natives and that I had followed and captured them over the border of the New Republic. Whereupon I was ordered to render my reasons in writing for committing the heinous crime of crossing the boundaries of a neutral state with armed men. The reasons I gave were as follows:—First, that it was a recognised law in case you started a fox in your own country you could follow him into your neighbour's where, provided you did not dig him out of an earth, you had a perfect right to hunt and kill him. Secondly, that I did not know where the frontier line of the tinpot New Republic was, and moreover was quite sure that on this point no one else was better informed than I. These reasons I sent in to H.Q. and as I heard no more about the matter I presume they were considered quite satisfactory. I was, however, ordered

to hand over the balance of my capture to the civil magistrates, which I did without regret as all the fattest and best beasts had been reduced to sirloins and beefsteaks and the residue were either cows or poor animals not fit to be butchered.

A few days afterwards we made the advance to attack the bush, Thompson and myself being ordered to make a night's march so as to reach the place at daylight, which we did, but the final movement was delayed until the arrival of the General, who did not put in an appearance till noon and it was past 2 p.m. before he and his staff had finished their lunch when we were ordered to advance. In the meanwhile Dinizulu, deeming discretion to be the better part of valour, deserted the bush, and retired into the New Republic, where he surrendered himself to the Boer filibusters, who unfortunately did not kill him, but handed him over to the British to whom he has been a cursed nuisance ever since. The following day I discovered a strong party of the enemy down in a deep valley and received orders to attack them, when just as I was gleefully moving off to do so, the General received a dispatch from the Governor of Natal. What its contents were I don't know, but it so disgusted the old gentleman that he immediately gave orders for the Field Force to abandon the district, so instead of having a nice little fight I was directed to march my men back to Etchowe and disband them. Nothing eventful occurred during our retrograde movement, and after remaining a few days in Etchowe, Colonel Carrington and the rest of our party returned to Durban, myself utterly disgusted at having no fun after

travelling so far in search of it, but then what can you hope for if you go soldiering when a Pro-Boer, Pro-Nigger, Anti-British Government is in power. Two days after reaching Durban the General with his staff arrived and Colonel Carrington with myself accompanied them to Cape Town, where I, bidding them farewell, returned to Kimberley. There I resumed my duties as Adjutant of the Diamond Field Horse, with whom I served till March 1891, when I was sent up in command of the De Beers Company's Expedition to Mashonaland. However, I must leave the account of my long journey, the privations of the early settlers and the shameful treatment they received from the hands of the British South African Company to another book, when perchance I may be able to open the eyes of the British public to the acts of some of the men whom at present they regard as little Imperialistic tin gods; anyhow this yarn is finished and it is the earnest hope of an old Lost Legionary that those of you who have been good enough to wade through it won't be overbored with its prosiness.

So Long!

THE END

