

## CHAPTER X

### MY FLIGHT AT NIGHT FROM MAFETENG TO THE ORANGE FREE STATE

THE next day so many messengers arrived reporting an expected attack on the Residence, and also on the loyal natives, that my husband would not let me stay another night in the laager, and I could not leave the little ones at Wepener any longer, so it was arranged that I should leave at night. Arthur sent two policemen as an escort with me across the border, and Miss Aschmann drove me in our own Cape-cart with a pair of horses. I had to go in great haste, and only managed to take a few little necessaries with me, in order to send the two policemen back to Arthur, who could not spare them from

his small force. It was terrible work having to go off and leave poor Arthur in a state of siege, not knowing what might happen, or when he would be relieved by troops from the colony. It was an awful position for him to be in, but his courage, pluck, and energy never failed for a moment, and though repeatedly urged by the Governor and Prime Minister to 'forsake the magistracy, and retire on the Orange Free State,' he determined to stick to his post through everything, and protect as far as possible, the loyal natives who looked to him to save them from being killed by the enemy, and their cattle and other possessions confiscated by Lerothodi. This he succeeded in doing with but a handful of men. To return to our flight to Wepener: As we were going along at a rapid pace, some messengers from Lerothodi rode quickly after us and overtook us with messages from the Chief to me:

'The great Chief Lerothodi sends kind greetings to the wife of Mabekabek, and wishes to know why she is leaving the

district to-night, and begs that she will return at once to the Residence, where she will be quite safe, and free from all danger.'

I returned my compliments and thanks to the chief, and replied 'That Morena Mabekabek had given me directions to leave at once, so that I must obey.'

Whereupon, the messengers were very angry, and seized our escort of two policemen and carried them off as prisoners to Lerothodi's village with their horses, where they kept them until Arthur heard of it, and sent for them, and Lerothodi then, very reluctantly, let them go. Meanwhile Miss Aschmann and I drove on alone as fast as we could to the border, but just as we crossed over into the Orange Free State, two Basutos met us, more than half drunk, dressed in blankets hung over their shoulders, and carrying heavy clubs and assegais in their hands. They immediately stopped our horses and were very impudent, and asked 'what two ladies were doing driving alone at that time of night.' Miss Aschmann was, for the

moment, paralysed with terror, as they looked so wild and fierce, and there was no one near us in the midst of the veldt, the bright moonlight streaming on us, and the two gaunt savages, who stood at our horses' heads, refusing to let us go on our way. I immediately called out to them very loudly, 'Leave go of our horses this instant, and if you *dare* to touch one of us you will be reported to Mabekabek and to your chiefs also, and be punished by the Government. Drive on instantly,' said I in a commanding tone to Miss Aschmann (who by this time had recovered), and I took the whip and lashed up the horses to a quick gallop, and on we simply *flew*, leaving the two wretches somewhat astonished.

We had a terrible drive that night altogether, as we had to get through several rivers on our way to Wepener, and the late rains had greatly swollen them. We had the greatest difficulty in getting through the last one, as it was very deep and often unfordable after heavy rains. But Miss Aschmann, being a splendid whip and very strong,

we managed to get the horses through somehow. The colonial girls possess wonderful strength and courage, but it was *awful* work. The current was so strong that the horses could hardly get through it, and I really thought we must have been carried away and drowned. As it was, they swam through with the cart, and the water came right in, so that we had to tuck up our skirts and get on to the seat, but arrived in Wepener very wet and in a miserably cold and hungry condition. Here I was thankful to get to a little inn, kept by a German and his wife and daughter, after having first driven to Dr and Mrs Reece's house, whence I fetched my little children. They were all well, and the little baby none the worse, apparently, though he was only a few weeks old. The good folks gave us one little room with one bed for the children, Miss Aschmann, and myself. We managed to sleep a little, being worn out with fatigue and anxiety, but could not get warm, as there was no fire; but after much coaxing and persuading I got the landlord to let me have a little fire in the one sitting-

room, which was crammed with other refugees from Basutoland, and their children, and I got some warm milk for the poor baby, and some bread for the children and ourselves, and a little Cape pontac (wine).

The Consul and his wife came down to see if they could do anything for us, as of course all were in terrible trouble and distress. I was in the greatest anxiety about my husband for weeks after this, as all sorts of rumours kept coming in from Basutoland, and no one knew what to believe. I lived in a state of terror as to what I might hear next. A messenger would come in breathless, and assure me that I must never expect to see my husband again, as he could not possibly escape, Lerothodi having offered £100 for his head, and that being very tall and big he was a splendid mark for the enemy. It is impossible to describe the anxiety that I passed through during the Basuto campaigns.

I wrote to Captain Hunt, the Civil Commissioner of Aliwal North, and implored him to try and hurry up the relief to Mafe-

teng, and also to send up more ammunition to my husband, as he had very little indeed, and he writes as follows :

‘ ALIWAL, 25th July, 1880.

‘DEAR MRS BARKLY,—Your messenger arrived at twelve noon to-day with Mr Barkly’s letter and telegram, also your letter and telegram. I have sent Mr Barkly’s telegram to the Colonial Secretary, Cape Town, and a copy to the Commandant-General, King William’s Town, to save time and let them know what is going on. Enclosed I send copy of my telegram to the Commandant-General, King William’s Town, a copy of which I have also sent to the Colonial Secretary. Had I listened to red-tape, Mr Barkly would not have had the little ammunition which I sent him. It is terrible to think of the way in which Mr Barkly has been left to the mercy of these pet savages. Under such circumstances he would, I think, have been perfectly justified in leaving the place to be sacked.’

[The Cape Government wished him to do

so, and repeatedly telegraphed, 'If necessary, retire on the Free State,' but this he refused absolutely to do.—F.A.B.]

'I have my clerk Mr Hood, my chief constable and others out arranging with Captain Aschmann (my messenger) about what quantity of arms and ammunition he can take to Wepener for you for Mr Barkly, and have told them to hire a second cart if necessary. I hear the telegraph wire is cut between this and James' Town; if so, it will soon be in order again; but unless proper measures are taken immediately regarding assistance to Mafeteng, I shall take upon myself to act as I think fit, and do what I think ought to be done. The C.M.R. can't be here until Tuesday, and as regards Mafeteng, they might as well be in Cape Town. If the yeomanry do not get direct orders, I shall not wait long. I have sent to them already, and will let you know the result before closing this. Please send all that is in this letter or any enclosure to Mr Barkly, whom, I trust, I may assist in relief, and that he may retire safely on Wepener.



Mrs Hunt is writing you, and when you come to Aliwal, expects to see you, and will do her best in a small house. If you require express-riders, get them on account of Government, as they are Mr Barkly's for Government duty. Let me have any telegrams, and I will countersign them for free transit.

'2.30. P.M. *Sunday*.—Your express-rider wishes to start now, so I send this. Captain Aschmann had not arrived about an hour ago. I shall send about twenty boxes of snider ball cartridges, and I expect twenty snider carbines in two carts, and another I have given Captain Aschmann orders to hire. I have seen Captain Parker of our yeomanry, and told him to hold himself in readiness for Wepener and Mafeteng, and told him if he does not get orders from headquarters, I shall take upon myself to order them off. You shall hear more by the ammunition carts. Heartily wishing Mr Barkly success, and that he may soon be with you in Wepener, and sincerely condoling with you in his present position, and still

more with you all being left to make good  
your escape how best you could,—Yours  
sincerely,

‘S. T. C. HUNT,  
‘*Civil Commissioner.*’

## CHAPTER XI

### SIEGE OF MAFETENG

As the authority of the Government had ceased to be recognised by the Basutos, and the police courts were of necessity closed, my husband thought it prudent (as did the other magistrates) to prepare to defend his court house in the too probable event of an early attack upon it; and the following letter gives an account of it:

Extract of letter from Commandant Barkly to his father.

'27th *July*. — I have just paraded my small forces, eight white and thirteen black, all armed with sniders, and told each man

off to his loop-hole. I believe they will all fight, and if so, we can hold the place well. I telegraphed to Sprigg to-day, to the effect that though no outrage had as yet been committed by Lerothodi, I might be attacked at any moment, and could only hold out for a limited time.

‘Masupha has attacked a loyal chieftain, a Fingo, living with his people not far from Advance Post, Cannibal Valley; being in Masupha’s district, he was of course under his rule, but like all Fingoes very loyal to the Government. Although they objected in common with others to the disarmament policy, yet they resolved to obey, and had given up their guns when ordered to do so. Masupha routed poor Tukunya with his commando, and they had a sharp fight, the Fingoes defending themselves very bravely. But the enemy was too strong for them, and burnt their village and took nearly all their cattle. Overpowered by the numbers, Tukunya and his people fled to Maseru where they took refuge. Tukunya was the same Fingo chieftain who,

when you were here in 1870 or '71, accompanied Masupha with his men all in "full dress," viz., with shields and feathers. Bell has been obliged to abandon Advance Post, and he and Alfred Hatchard have been ordered by Griffith to join the garrison at Maseru, with their police and loyal natives. This of course has delighted Masupha. Officials and loyal natives being driven out of his territory, he now reigns alone in his glory.'

Extract from a letter to myself :

'Your note reached me last night by a native runner, whom you sent in with eggs and meat, for which many thanks. He had to crawl on his hands and knees and cannot bring much, as he might be attacked at any time, and would then have to fly for his life.

'There was a ration of horse served out to-day, and we have also managed to get hold of some geese, one or two only.

'We are hard at work all day, building new schantzes, from which we shall fire if

attacked at the court-house, levelling walls, getting wire entanglements round the schantses, etc.

‘I heard from Littleton, saying that he had sent me a lot of photographs of Cetewayo, and also that Sir Bartle Frere was very anxious to know my opinion about things in general in Basutoland. I have telegraphed freely to him, Sprigg, and Colonel Clarke, and send the telegrams to you to be sent on to Aliwal at once, as usual. I have just heard from Sir Bartle Frere. Three hundred Cape Mounted Riflemen are to be sent to relieve me as soon as possible under Colonel Carrington; they ought to be up soon. I have telegraphed both to Sir Bartle Frere and Sprigg to say that we must have reinforcements sent up here immediately. We are hard at work all day, mining, etc. Thanks for the sausages, etc. We ate them for lunch; the runner brought them all right, and didn't eat any!’

Six or seven weeks passed in a state of terrible suspense, each night expecting an

attack on the little garrison at Mafeteng, as the rebellion had fairly begun. On Thaba Bosigo, Letsea's great mountain stronghold, all kinds of war ceremonies were being performed by the chiefs and natives. Young bulls killed, the Basuto warriors given war-medicine, their arms and assegais all prepared for war in earnest; great war-dances were held, and all kinds of spells and charms used; the war rations served out by the headmen for three days' supply of mealies, or meal made of a fine wheat. These they wore round their waists, tied with a string, also a tobacco pouch filled; a powder horn slung round their necks, long feathers in their hats. Some of the men wore a necklace made of the dried bones of baboons or men's fingers and goats' horns. A wizard doctor presented me with one of these treasures, in return for giving him shelter and food for a night at Mohale's Hoek, he being nearly starved. He was Masupha's own wizard doctor, and declared that Masupha himself wore this necklace, and that if I was ill, I must scrape one of

these charms and eat it, when I should immediately be cured. (I thought I should infinitely prefer the illness to the 'cure,' but of course did not say so, and accepted the gift, as it was meant, as a great curiosity.)



## CHAPTER XII

### MY LIFE ON THE BORDER DURING THE SIEGE

I CANNOT say that life in the Orange Free State was agreeable in any way during the Basuto War, apart from all the dreadful suspense and anxiety one felt during the siege of Mafeteng, held by my husband until relieved by the Cape Mounted Rifles, under Colonel Carrington. Wepener was not a nice place to live in. The Dutch Boers were by no means sympathetic as a rule, though there were some bright exceptions. But take them as a whole, they cordially disliked the English officials and their families, and would not help them in their difficulties, but infinitely preferred the natives, and secretly assisted them in many

ways, sold them quantities of ammunition and guns, and plenty of 'Cape smoke' also, besides horses, blankets, etc. Now things are changed greatly for the better. Finding that I could be of some use to Arthur by remaining at Wepener, I remained on there for some months, and was rewarded for doing so by being able to assist to some extent by sending in small supplies of food, such as hard-boiled eggs, sausages, bread, cakes, etc., to the little garrison at Mafeteng by the express-runners who were heavily paid for their dangerous task. In fact, I was employed as a secret agent, and had to telegraph to the Governor, Sir B. Frere, and the Premier to get food in the middle of the night for the native runners who crawled through the mountains on their hands and knees constantly. A little boy from a store slept in my cottage, and was very useful to run about at night to find express-riders to carry messages, etc., until the camp was formed at Wepener, and even after Colonel, now Sir Frederick, Carington, came up, they always sent all letters

to me first, and telegrams also. The express-runners used to arrive in the middle of each night and tap at the window, when I had to take the bag, sort the letters, and find express-riders to go on to Aliwal North to the telegraph office there—a day's journey, there being no telegraph office in Wepener itself.

Mr Alfred Becker, the principal Dutch trader there, was most kind and useful in helping me in these great difficulties.

About this time I had a letter written in French, from my brother, Alfred Hatchard, from Maseru, saying that he was quite safe, and that all were in a state of siege there.

[*Copy telegram.*]

From Mrs Barkly,  
Wepener, O.F.S.

To The Hon. W. Littleton, P.S.  
Government House, Cape Town.

(Received at Cape Town, November 4th.)

'All quiet now. Great meeting at Morija to-day. Doubt if Masupha or

Lerothodi will go. Arthur got in 20,000 rounds of ammunition, besides arms, etc., to Mafeteng at night with strong escort of fifty men. Large body of Lerothodi's men were working along flank, behind rising ground, but did not appear. Please tell brother.'

Extract from letter from my husband to myself:

'MAFETENG, 25th September, 1880.

'Nearly the whole of our last mails fell into the hands of the rebels, and it is doubtful if we shall get the post to-night.

'The only means of communication now is by the native runners, who, by their knowledge of the country, manage to slip through the rebel posts on the border at night. When we are to be relieved, seems problematical. We are thoroughly shut in here at present, and can just hold our own and no more. We are pretty well off for food at present, at least for meal, flour, etc., and horse is really very good !

'Delay has done its work, and the

Tambookies under Tyali are now up, and have joined the rebels here. The "loyal" Basutos, who were numerous a month ago, are becoming almost non-existent. We are schantsed, wire entangled, mined, etc., here to any amount, but still the rebels keep off, and do not attack us, though they patrol about in companies, fully armed, and keep sending threatening messages that they are coming to kill us. All the rebels here are divided into regiments with most blood-thirsty names, such as "Fierce-eyes," "Finishers of the Wounded," etc., etc. I forget the rest, but Rolland has a list.'

Extract from letter to Sir Henry Barkly :

'MAFETENG, *August 14th.*

'The President of the Orange Free State, Mr Brand, is to be in Wepener to-morrow, and I am going in, if possible, to meet him and discuss matters with him.

'18th.—We are not actually at war yet with the Basutos, though we certainly are not at peace, and the first shot must be fired soon. I have just re-

turned from Wepener, where I went to see Fanny and the children as well as to meet the President; also to inquire about some arms which I heard were coming up; moreover, I wished to parley with some of the rebel parties who beset the border. I took no extra escort besides the orderlies I always have and one of Letsea's men. I had not gone halfway when down came a rebel headman, one Khoejane, a notorious rascal, at the head of fifteen or sixteen men armed with guns. As they crossed the road they partly halted as if to form across it, but thought better of it and rode on. I sent Letsea's man after them, however, to order them to come to me, and after some talk they all rode back. I asked Khoejane what he was about, and ordered him home. He was very respectful, and said he would go; but as the horses were very fidgetty, and it was not comfortable standing up in the cart, I got down and walked quietly up with my hands in my pockets to speak to Khoejane, upon which he shouted out, "I am going to be killed!" and galloped off as hard as he

could, followed by his men, some of whom could not help laughing at him, and so did all my escort.

‘I have since heard that Khoejane went to Lerothodi and complained of the fright which “Mabekabek” had put him in, upon which Lerothodi sent a lot of men to the border yesterday to prevent my returning. As it happened, I did not come, as I found all the arms and ammunition had been by some mistake consigned to Maseru, and had to send to Colonel Bayley, who is encamped some miles from Wepener, to ask him to let me take what I wanted. He consented to do so, and I sent a waggon to get a hundred and twenty sniders, and twenty thousand rounds of ammunition, and chartered a horse-waggon to bring them here to Mafeteng. The Dutchmen then began to give trouble; would not lend their horses, etc. At last I got them, but did not get off until one o’clock. I met my escort on the border, my own police, and Donald Fraser with eight of his volunteers; good men, who had all been in the Free State war.

'We had not gone far when I saw the advanced guard halt, and a man came galloping back to me to say that a ridge on our right was lined with rebels. I threw out flankers and moved on, and as usual they funked, and though we passed right under a lot of them armed and standing by their horses, they made no movement, and we got safely in.

'This sort of thing can't last long, however, without a collision taking place.

'Bayley's column left King William Town about three weeks ago; they went by rail to Queenstown, and are now within three days of their marching of Maseru, the whole distance of their route from Queenstown to Maseru being about two hundred and forty miles. Hunt, the Civil Commissioner of Aliwal, writes to me that a telegram was sent to hurry them on.

'Colonel Clarke comes up with Sprigg, and I shall be glad to see him. They were going to send Carrington with two hundred men from Kokstadt into Basuto land, by Phattahla Drift, which is watched



by three hundred rebels, up through the most dangerous road in the country. I have, however, telegraphed to Sprigg, Clarke, and Parr (one of Sir B. Frere's A. D. C's.) warning them against this, and recommending another route through the Free State, to a place called Greathead's Drift, which is much safer. Spies have swarmed about the camp all day, but I have not taken much notice of them. I expect three or four white men to-morrow from the Free State and some more loyal natives. I have about forty or fifty encamped above me to act as an outpost.

'I will finish this to-morrow, if I am still in the land of the living.

'*Thursday.*—No attack last night, but hear that Lerothodi's men "eat up" the cattle of one of the police living near his village; shall no doubt succeed in making them restore them. I shall try to keep Lerothodi off until relief is at hand, when he may attack and welcome.

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'News from Maseru. Alfred Hatchard is safe there, and no attack as yet; they are in tolerably strong force, thirty whites and a lot of loyal natives.'

## CHAPTER XIII

### WEPENER

WEPENER, 11th September. My husband wrote and told me that he had got safely back to Mafeteng, with the ammunition and five waggons, but that the rebels were furious at his having got in unmolested. Lerothodi sent messages to say that he 'would crush him under his feet shortly,' and also that 'a high reward (£100) would be given for his head.' These terrible words filled me with horror, and living alone in a cottage near the Dutch church, with only my little children and an old Zulu in the house, my readers can imagine my anxiety and fears for my husband's safety all through those dreadful weeks and months.

No words can describe what I went through at that time, but I determined to remain on the border as long as I could, and was thankful afterwards that I had done so.

Though many were the hardships and privations that the poor little children and I endured in Wepener, especially when the troops came up, provisions and fuel being so very difficult to obtain, and the prices of everything enormous, we often had nothing to eat, or no means of cooking, and had to make a fire of old chairs, or bits of wood out of the roof, or even of match boxes! A neighbouring trader kindly let us sometimes send a joint to be baked with his own, and we got on somehow or other. My little baby Bertie, whom I thought I should never rear, began to get stronger by degrees.

My husband and I were much cheered and comforted, however, throughout all, by the kind and sympathising letters and telegrams which we received, both from the Governor and Lady Frere, and also from Sir G. Sprigg and others, speaking in most flattering terms of my husband's extreme

courage and bravery in holding the siege of Mafeteng for so long. The following message from Sir Bartle Frere to Sir Henry Barkly is but one among many sent :

‘Tell Sir Henry Barkly that his son is rendering most gallant service. The cool courage and foresight exhibited by him under the most trying circumstances are beyond description. But I have seen these things. The way in which he and a few others in Basutoland have conducted themselves during the past few weeks, raises them into the foremost ranks of British heroes.’ (Message sent through Sir Charles Mills.)

Extract of a letter from my husband to his sister, Miss Barkly :

‘MY DEAR BLANCHE,—The approach of the C.M.R. has set all the rebels patrolling the border between Basutoland and the Orange Free State in greater force than ever. Ridgway (a trader) with his waggon was stopped this evening by two parties

in succession, but after a good deal of questioning and talk was allowed to go in. Sprigg is coming up at once with Colonel Mansfield Clarke and Mr Orpen. I shall send a strong escort to escort Aschmann in with the ammunition to-morrow, with orders, that if the rebel chief, Koejana, rides after them, to wheel about and take him prisoner and bring him in here. He is the ringleader in all the disturbances on the border. The Paramount chief, Letsea, has evidently no power now to keep the Basutos quiet, even if he had the will; for it is only yesterday that Letsea's men visited Koejana to make him promise to behave himself. But he did not keep this promise. I have now several schantses on the heights, and have altogether seven points defended here, so that even a large body trying to surround the place would meet with a warm reception. Lerothodi has not yet come back to this village.' (My husband was Lerothodi's magistrate, the eldest son of Letsea, and the great soldier of the Basutos.)

## CHAPTER XIV

### COLONEL CARRINGTON ARRIVES AT WEPENER

ARRIVAL of Colonel Carrington at Wepener, from Port Elizabeth, with two hundred and fifty men of the Cape Mounted Rifles, mounted, on his way to relieve the garrison at Mafeteng.

*September 15th.*—I was indeed thankful to see Colonel Carrington arrive in Wepener with the two hundred C.M.R. He came at once to call upon me, and I handed him a letter from Arthur, with the directions in Greek characters as to his route while crossing the border; he and his officers were in capital spirits, and delighted at the idea of 'tackling the Basutos,' as they called it, and lost not a moment after getting my husband's message in continuing their march to Mafeteng.

Harry and Nancy, who at this time were very small children, were delighted to see the soldiers arrive, and immediately gave them all kind of useful information about disarmament, state of Basutoland, and disobedience to the Government on the part of the chiefs, which seemed to amuse them greatly. Harry said, 'My father has killed lots of Basutos,' Nancy adding, in a sepulchral tone, 'And he eats them for lunch.'

The rebels didn't lose much time, but attacked the column about a mile from Mafeteng.

Arthur turned out with his police to meet Colonel Carrington on hearing the sound of firing. The following extract from his letter to his father will describe the day's proceedings far better than I can :

'MAFETENG, BASUTOLAND,

'15th September, 1880.

'MY DEAR FATHER,—Long before this reaches you, the telegraph will have given you news of the commencement of hostilities here. On the 13th, Colonel Carrington



marched in, and the rebels appeared in arms, about seven hundred strong altogether, between Lerothodi's and the border, besides some four hundred or five hundred of Molitsane's men who were posted to the left on the Bushman's Kop road. I had everyone under arms and my horses saddled, and at the first sound of firing manned all my schantses, and leaving the garrison in charge of my clerk, young Surmon, and three or four volunteers who are acting as officers, rode out with sixteen or eighteen native police, and three or four Europeans to reconnoitre. I was not long in coming upon the enemy. About two miles from here, there is a line of strong Kopjes to the right of the road, and these I found held about three hundred Basutos. I inclined to the left, and showed up parallel with them, keeping about three hundred yards away (good range for my rifles, but out of shot of two-thirds of their guns), and formed behind a rising ground which gave me some shelter.

‘Presently a messenger came down and

shouted that he wanted to parley, so I sent forward a native constable to him, who reported that Lerothodi was commanding the rebels in person, and wished to know if I meant to fire on him. I said I should not commence firing, but would of course return it, and added that he had better go home. The messenger returned, and I moved forward to meet some videttes of the C.M.R. who now came in sight, and sent one of them back to tell Carrington the road was commanded in his front by a strong party of rebels. Lerothodi sent to me again to say that he wanted to see me himself, to which I replied that if he would ride forward with two or three men I would do the same. The answer came that he would do so if he could, but was prevented by his people. I heard he was himself in the road with about twenty men, so I rode forward with a white volunteer and my chief constable, who is a connection of Lerothodi's. As I came up I saw a queer spectacle. Lerothodi dismounted was engaged in a violent struggle with two of his men, who were forcibly holding him

back. I shouted to him, and he waved his hat to me, but as I rode on they all prepared to retreat, so I stopped and told Dechaba (the chief constable), to ask what on earth they were afraid of. 'Of Morena's (the chief's) revolver,' replied the heroes. Accordingly I divested myself of this deadly weapon, dropped my reins, and rode in among them unarmed, with my hands displayed to show that 'there was no deception.' Lerothodi then shook off his brother who was detaining him, and came up to me with proper salutations, calling me his father and his mother and so on, after Basuto fashion. I shook hands with him, and said that out of friendship for him I had come to try and save him from utter destruction if possible, and told him that nothing could delay or stop the march of the Cape Mounted Rifles, whatever he might think, and that if he attempted it he would simply be sent flying (which occurred accordingly, five minutes afterwards). I then suggested that he should withdraw his men and surrender to me *pro forma*

as proposed by Mr Sprigg. When I would inflict such fine as I thought proper, and refer the sentence for confirmation. He said he would do this if I would stop the "policies," which of course I could not do, a fact of which he was perfectly aware. By this time Carrington had bent to his right, and moved up with his waggon, out of range to the rear of my police. Lerothodi pointed to the column, shouted and stamped with rage, seizing his gun (a very neat Snider sporting rifle). I laughed at him, upon which he put down his gun and calmed himself a little. A moment afterwards he snatched it up again, however, and pointing it at Dechaba, said he would disarm him.

'I told him not to make a fool of himself, and shaking hands with him again, turned to go as the rebels were unslinging their guns and preparing for action; just as I turned, one of them fired and the ball passed over my head. To do Lerothodi justice, he "went" for the man, who swore it was an accident. I must own, however,

that I did not expect to get back alive to my men. No more shots, however, were fired till I rode down to meet Carrington, when three or four were sent after us, very wild ones. I sent my police forward in front of the column as guides, and was riding along talking to Carrington, when down came the whole body of Basutos mounted, apparently to get possession of the rocky rising ground, where my men had been drawn up. We were too quick for them though, and it was held in a moment by my police, and a troop of the C.M.R. The Basutos dismounted and opened fire which of course was promptly returned; down went three or four of Lerothodi's men, when they ran to their horses and galloped up the sides of the Kopje. Carrington called his men in and went on with his waggons. But I galloped round the Kopje with my police and half-a-dozen volunteers, who had come out with Carrington, and who joined me and we "letrip" to use the Africander expression, into the fugitives pretty smartly, taking a

prisoner or two; and as we afterwards heard, wounding Lerothodi's horse, and hitting several rebels. The wounded Basutos, however, can always ride away, their vital power is extraordinary, and I've seen a man ride some distance with a shot through the lung even. Some, however, fell and have since been found dead in the sluits. A troop of the C.M.R. came out and joined us, and the enemy were pursued beyond Fraser's place, where one was cut down by Shervington of the C.M.R. and several more shot, some rallied on Fraser's Kopj, and fired down at us, but their bullets fell short. We captured several waggons and some horses. Montague, with two troops was sent out along Bushman's Kop road, to engage Moletsane and Sefadi's men who were attacking loyal natives, and he routed five hundred of them and killed five, capturing a lot of sheep and cattle. So ended the 'battle of Mafeteng' in which the Basutos displayed great cowardice, as indeed I always expected they would in the open. My police, however,

did splendidly. Since then we have destroyed a lot of villages. I was out all day yesterday with my police and a troop of C.M.R., under Shervington. We drove in about five hundred of Lerothodi's men and burnt five villages. The rebels only fired at us at long ranges, but had some good rifles among them and sent several shots over and amongst us at seven hundred or eight hundred yards range. No one was hit, but I had to dismount my men and open a smart fire on one lot who held a village. They soon left it, however, and I went on and joined a troop of C.M.R., which had moved round on the other side of the hill and we descended, the rifle bullets plunging into the ground about us, from Lerothodi's Kop one thousand yards off at least. We had, however, driven off the rebels and came home, firing a couple more villages as we passed, we succeeded in drawing out most of Lerothodi's garrison, which is stronger than we supposed, and he is besides backed by Moletsane and Sefadi, who could muster twelve hundred men at

least, at very short notice. We were talking of attacking him, but I don't think we shall try it until reinforced ; it wouldn't do to fail, and we might be surrounded and cut off, as there is a kloof on this side through which Sefadi's men could come in our rear, two hundred men is not half enough for the work we have to do, and the horses are in poor condition after their long march. We are of course safe enough here, but shall be able to do little more than hold the place, and keep the Wepener road open for the present, and as I hear that the rebels are again blocking the road, we shall have to go out and give them a lesson, before they will leave our communications undisturbed even on that side. Fanny has taken a house at Wepener, she and "the band" are quite well, but she is of course, rather anxious. I wish for the sake of the children and herself, I were in a safer position, though as far as I am personally concerned, I like the soldiering in the field, as much as I used to hate playing at it, in the long valley, at Aldershot years ago.'



## CHAPTER XV

### SITUATION IN CAMP

SEPTEMBER 22ND.—After the first fight and attack on Mafeteng my husband wrote to me, and I think that an extract from his letter will be interesting. They had great difficulty in getting anyone to go in to Wepener after the fight, as the border was so strongly watched by the rebels, but Captain Montague, C.M.R., volunteered, and got safely into Wepener, quite alone. He came straight to my cottage to bring news and letters from my husband. His pluck in riding alone through the enemy's country was greatly admired and commented upon. Arthur says :

‘We had a hard fight yesterday, but, thanks to good stone walls and intrenchments, are not much the worse ourselves, though very tired. We gave them an awful hammering. My shoulder is so sore and stiff with constant firing that I can hardly move my arm. I shot two men and a horse, and I believe I hit another man, but of this I am not certain, but as I fired about ninety or a hundred shots, I daresay I accounted for more. They were in such masses that one could hardly see the effect of the fire, but it must have been very severe, as though they removed most of the dead men, they left a hundred dead and wounded horses, fifty-nine of them in front of my schanse, where the attack was hottest, and strings of led horses were seen carrying off the dead and wounded, who were, I daresay, nearly a hundred in number.

‘We had the whole district upon us, seven thousand at least. Letsea had been playing traitor. After all there were a lot of his people out, among them Kugane and his men, the scoundrel whom Letsea sent to remain

with and "*protect*" me. He was acting as *guide* to Lerothodi. The rebels charged us repeatedly and got within fifty yards of the schanse, some of them. There are three dead horses of theirs in Hawkins's garden, and they burnt his house. One fellow is lying shot through the head behind a pile of stones, which they had put up to fire at us from not twenty-nine yards off. Their intention was, no doubt, to get under the ledge below Hawkins' house, dismount, and reach the schanse. Three hundred or so did get there, but our fire was too deadly and they could not show above the ridge.

'One chief with about two hundred men made a splendid dash along the road, and was only stopped when about a hundred yards from Aschmann's. He was afterwards shot, and when he failed, one thousand five hundred at least, under Lerothodi himself, advanced upon us at a thundering gallop. I ceased firing and let them come on, and a very pretty sight it was. The very ground shook under the thunder of the serried troop, at four hundred yards I fired a volley slap

into them, and thus turned them off to the right.

‘Lerothodi however, and about five hundred of the boldest men advanced again, and, notwithstanding our fire, which sent men and horses rolling in all directions, got under the wall of Jacob’s field, beyond Aschmann’s, and also under Hawkins’ Krantz. We slated the party under the wall terrifically, and the police from Aschmann’s garden fired at them too. They could not move out, and, though their fire was hot, it did not reach us in the schantse, while nearly every shot of ours told upon them. We fired, however, with the bullets whistling over our heads, and a lot struck the big rock in the centre of the schantse, but all too high to do damage to us.

‘At last Carrington, who had been sending me up notes from time to time, sent Shervington to me to ask if they could be dislodged. Their supports were then so strong that I said No, but afterwards, when a lot of these had retired, Shervington came out with twenty-five men, and charg-

ing those behind the wall in flank, drove out the whole lot. He could not follow up, as they were too strong, but they were all exposed to our fire again, and we gave it them with a will. Carrington was then up with me, and after we had driven them off, he and I ran out and got behind a rock, and fired away at a lot who were retreating along the hill at the back, they replied smartly, but all their bullets flew over us. They then retired steadily however, keeping up a fire on us from the villages near, and the caves, etc., (they seemed nearly all to have rifles, and the ground is literally strewn with their bullets). The only firing now was from a ridge above "No. 2" the highest schantse, which you may remember is out behind the police station. A C.M.R. corporal was wounded there, and it was very difficult to communicate with it. Carrington and I went up, and were fired upon smartly both going and coming, and had to run for it going down. Their fire did not cease till sunset, and then ended the great attack on Mafeteng, which

was to have ended, we hear, in our complete destruction, and the sending of my head to Letsea. The Basutos here say, that nothing like it has ever been seen in any Basuto war before, and that they could not believe their people could fight like that. No doubt it was a desperate attempt, and they fully expected to succeed, owing to the number of their men, and the goodness of their weapons. I hardly think they will venture to try again, though they may—we are better prepared now—having destroyed Mohalie's village, (close to the Camp) which they occupied during the fight, and levelled every wall and enclosure all round. This house is fortified, and even the top has grain bags round it. The barrack is the hospital, our bedroom is the C.M.R. mess room, and the officers' tents are in the garden of the Residency. The C.M.R. were fired on a good deal, but struck only with spent bullets from a distance, as the walls, luckily, were none of them down, and the Basutos could not get close in front, and

were soon driven from Mohalie's. The scoundrels, among them a chief named Solomon Moletsane, shot several women there, it is said. One, (in cold blood) carried off my washerwoman and a lot of my shirts which she was ironing. They made no attempt on Fraser's, but I should not be much surprised if they did so to-night, as a lot of them are hanging about Diphering. I have to sleep in the schantse now, in case of night attacks. We hope Grant will turn up soon, and bring us a gun which we want badly. They say several chiefs were hit, and there was no war dance or any sign of rejoicing among the enemy at night. We are pegging out the different ranges for firing all about the schantses, and if they come again they will get a warmer reception even than last time.'

On the 27th my husband wrote to me as follows:

'CAMP, MAFETENG.

'Since I wrote, we have had a tremendous

business here, Shervington went out this morning with a party, to destroy some grass in a village beyond Fraser's. He hadn't been out half-an-hour, before 1200 rebels poured down from Lerothodi's village, in all directions, and cut him off. He held a kraal and killed eight or ten of them, before he was supported, and brought off by some more C.M.R. who were sent out at once. He manned all the schantzes and expected an attack, as the enemy were in masses all round, and a vedette of the C.M.R. was cut off and killed. The rebels swarmed down the hill sides, one of the sergeants was wounded, and a young lieutenant named Clarke turned back to assist him and was surrounded by the enemy. He was seen fighting desperately with his sword but was finally killed and the sergeant also. The rebels charged down at a party who were holding a small kopje, but retreated before their fire, and the whole bolted back to Lerothodi's. Poor Clarke was a very fine young fellow and is much regretted, his body was recovered this morning. We have been



turned out no less than three times to-day, the last, half-an-hour ago, by an alarm at Fraser's, where a volley was fired. He has 120 C.M.R. there to-night. Sprigg gets out to-morrow *if he can*.

'Give this letter, (written in Greek character) to D'Arcy as he comes up, on his arrival at Wepener, it contains secret instructions as to which road he and his men are to take to come into Mafeteng from Wepener.'

Extract of a letter from my husband to his father :

'MAFETENG, CAMP CAPE MOUNTED RIFLES,  
' 12th October, 1880.

'We are going to try and send in a messenger to Wepener, to-night, so I write in the hope that he will get in safely, the last one who came out was nearly caught. Clarke, now a local Brigadier General, with Southey, and about four hundred yeomanry, and C.M.R. with two guns, are encamped at Wepener, waiting for reinforcements before coming in, as the enemy are very strong. We are meanwhile, living chiefly

on horse, which is not particularly bad eating, we have, however, plenty of flour, groceries, etc., and we can hold out, if necessary, for a fortnight or more on short rations. We have been having floods of rain, lately, which makes life a burden, but is useful to us in many ways, keeping the rebels from crossing the river, and making the grass grow for the horses, which would otherwise have starved. The rumour we hear now, is, that the enemy's plan is to mass all the force that can be collected to attack us again, and when we are disposed of, to go for Maseru. This design is impracticable at present owing to the rivers, and if they do come, they will be beaten, as before, only a great deal worse, for we have improved our defences since the last attack, but it would take six thousand or seven thousand men (Europeans) with a good strong native levy, to bring this war to an end in any reasonable time. Brabant is expected with about two hundred yeomanry, and one hundred or so infantry volunteers. Willoughby's Horse are coming